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Women and the Violent Workplace

Beckett, Sharon Elizabeth

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At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other University award without prior agreement of the Graduate Committee.

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Women and the Violent Workplace

By

Sharon Elizabeth Beckett

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fulfilment for a Degree

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Abstract

Globally workplace violence is a pressing concern. It is an ever increasing problem and thus an extensive field to research. Despite an increase in interest, there are specific areas of workplace violence that remain relatively unexplored, and this is further compounded because workplace violence is not clearly defined and neither is it readily understood (Dolan 2000, Webster *et al* 2007). Women's experiences of workplace violence have been overlooked, primarily because women exist within a patriarchal society, and many are deemed of a lesser value than men. A patriarchal society has elevated men into positions of power whilst women have more generally remained subordinate, and it is this which has led to many of the experiences of working women going unrecognised as violence and abuse (Morgan and Bjokrt, 2006). Subsequently, these encounters have remained unexplored and under-researched (Dale and Acik 2005). To address this imbalance my study has adopted a feminist standpoint. It is therefore based on in-depth qualitative interviews conducted with working women from a diverse range of occupations and backgrounds, and who have endured the lived reality of a working woman's life. By taking such an approach this study has identified many of the patterns and trends of physical, psychological and sexual violence that are relevant to the suffering of working women. Further, the findings identify how working women face supplementary risks to those generically posed to the workforce. Additionally, this study identifies 'risky traits' that are pertinent to the experiences of women, including systems of male power and dominance, for example, male solidarity. These are systems that exist to the detriment of women, in that many women feel fearful, believing they are isolated and indeed vulnerable in the workplace. Moreover, the workplace offers workers minimal support, if any, to female victims of workplace violence which also impacts on the health and wellbeing of working women more generally.

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Abbreviations

BCSVAW - British Crime Survey: Violence at Work

BTP - British Transport Police

CSEWVAW - Crime Survey of England and Wales: Violence at Work

CCTV - Closed circuit television

CAL - OSHA - Californian Division of Occupational Safety and Health

C & R - Control and restraint.

DHSSPNI - Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety

DOE- Department of Employment

DOS - Director of Studies.

EU-OSHA - European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

EU - European Commission

EWOC - European Wide Organisations Committee

EWCS - European Commission (2009) Fourth European Working Conditions Survey

HSE - Health and Safety Executive

ILO - International Labour Office

MHE - Mental Health Europe

NAC - New administrative criminology

NIOSH - National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health

NVivo - Qualitative Data Analysis Software

ONS - Office for National Statistics

OSHA OSH - Occupational Safety and Health

RIDDOR - Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations

RMT - The National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport

TUC - Trades Union Congress

UK - United Kingdom

USA - United States of America

VAWCSEW - Violence at Work: Crime Survey for England and Wales.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Research into workplace violence has flourished over the past 30 years (Gill *et al* 2002, Kelloway *et al* 2006); to the extent it is now deemed a pressing issue and an increasing problem both nationally and worldwide. Workplace violence is an extremely broad field to research; however, women's experiences of this have remained relatively unexplored. This neglect is evidenced by a lack statistics and evidence of women's suffering, as studies have frequently ignored the anguish of working women (DeKeseredy, 1997). To specifically understand women's experiences this thesis has adopted a feminist perspective, thus it highlights the many difficulties faced by female workers; some of these behaviours are gendered whilst others are non-gendered therefore applicable to both males and females. Therefore, this thesis brings the risk of workplace violence posed to working women to the forefront of the topic area, as well as to the discipline of criminology.

Generally 'workplace violence' remains shrouded in public uncertainty and confusion, making it difficult to fully understand this concept. The broader implication of this is that if workplace violence is not readily understood how can we identify and understand this in relation to a marginalised population? To answer this question this thesis will examine these misconceptions, in doing so it will document women's experiences of workplace violence substantiating women's experiences directly from those who participated in this study.

Much of the earlier research conducted in this field consists of isolated

assessments of violence and abuse that are relative to particular groups of workers. One of the main areas commonly explored is healthcare, in particular the Accident and Emergency Department and nursing (Waddington, 2006). As a result, workplace violence is primarily hypothesised as an issue involving 'state employed officials', for instance police officers (Jones *et al* 2011). Further, workplace violence is primarily constructed as physical violence, which is a result of the terminology used, for example 'the violent workplace'. However, despite these limitations research in this area has made many advances and a far broader range of behaviours are now considered within the spectrum of workplace violence. Further, while many studies remain focused purely on physical violence, others incorporate psychological violence in the workplace (Barron 2006, Bowie 2002, Waddington 2005).

Frequently many of the behaviours that are pertinent to the experience of working women are overlooked; hence these experiences often go unrecognised (Morgan and Bjokrt 2006). Much of the literature has a tendency to treat workplace violence in a collective non-gendered manner and therefore the majority of available literature is male-stream; that is to say it largely excludes the experiences of working women (Dale and Acik 2005). As a result, the vulnerability of working women will only really become fully apparent when gender is examined far more closely (Di Martino *et al* 2003). So, to fully understand women's experiences this thesis aims to:

- Explore what is happening to women in the workplace.
- Determine how and why women encounter workplace violence.
- Establish how women have coped with workplace violence.

- Examine the impact workplace violence has had upon women more generally.

To achieve these aims it is important to consider the different categories of violence and abuse located in the workplace ensuring that each category is treated with the same amount of rigour as the next, as some research has a tendency to skate over the top of certain types of behaviour or to completely neglect them. For instance, psychological violence is routinely ignored yet it is frequently an antecedent for physical violence.

Chapter 2 of my thesis will define workplace violence. In the process it will lay out the parameters of this study discussing how workplace violence is categorised, drawing attention to occurrences of physical and non-physical workplace violence. Firstly this chapter will focus on internal workplace violence, which is violence experienced from colleagues, co-workers and management. It will then move forward to focus on external workplace violence, violence that is experienced directly from customers, clients, patients and service users. The chapter therefore determines risk that arises from the daily interactions that regularly occur in the workplace. This chapter then turns its attention to ask what is happening to women in the workplace? In doing so it will identify patterns and trends that are relevant to workplace violence and which have been established by the British Crime Survey: Findings at Work (Budd, 1999). Hence this chapter determines what constitutes workplace violence and how this is defined, whilst simultaneously addressing the overlap which exists between workplace 'violence' and workplace 'bullying'. This chapter will therefore argue that a fine line exists

between both of these concepts which only add to the confusion that already surrounds the defining of this phenomenon (Waddington 2006).

Chapter 2 will additionally examine the different typologies of workplace violence. These are groupings specifically devised to aid the categorisation of this phenomenon which, over time, have been built upon and expanded firstly, by Bowie (2002) and secondly, by Mayhew (2003). These categories attempt to demonstrate the link between the workplace, the victim and the perpetrator, so that future change may be implemented that will reduce risk levels. Furthermore, this chapter will explore the extent of workplace violence, examining the different characteristics of the workforce which determine the level of risk posed, including for example, age and lone working. At the same time it will consider variables which are pertinent to the perpetrator and which primarily point to alcohol, drug taking and ill-health (Respass and Payne 2008).

In Chapter 3, I will discuss how, over time, a woman's position in the workplace has evolved, in the process it will explore first, second and third wave feminism so we may understand how these movements contribute to the different strands of feminist thought, for instance, liberal, radical, Marxist and socialist feminism, in this way discussing how feminism has sought to realise change and emancipate women from oppression. Simultaneously this chapter will consider how feminism has allowed women to express their experiences of ill-treatment more generally, through for example the collective view of sisterhood, and how feminist research has attempted to free women from male-stream research. It will determine how women are placed at an increased risk of violence and abuse commonly as a

result of sexual exploitation. The chapter then progresses to examine the estimated risk associated with women and the workplace, in doing so it will determine how risk is measured and the responsibility employers have to minimise existent risk levels. This chapter will discuss how employers measure risk via risk assessment, including any advantages or disadvantages of this as a tool. For example, risk assessment does not specifically examine harms pertinent to the experiences of female workers, and neither can the risk assessment keep pace with the ever changing nature of risk.

Chapter 4 outlines the methodological approach used for this study, it examines the construction of theory and outlines the research design including the method used for data collection and analysis (Gilbert 2009). It begins by contemplating why feminist research methods developed, and examines how feminist researchers have made use of all available research methods. The chapter determines that it is the approach to these methods which differ, for example, female researchers seek to reveal the reality of women's lives (Mauthner *et al* 2005, Mauthner Saul 2003), which on this occasion involves working women.

The feminist standpoint has evolved from qualitative research and methods previously constrained by male values, in that some men attempt to apply male values to women. Further this chapter will identify the objectives of my study as well as its design, detailing how a suitable method was planned and organised, how I located interviewees and how access was negotiated. It will then proceed to consider the data analysis process that I adopted; exploring the tools that were used such as NVivo, a Qualitative Data Analysis computer software program.

Additionally, this chapter will debate the advantages and disadvantages of qualitative research, considering validity and reliability and the generalisability of this study to the wider population. It thus takes into account the benefits of conducting small scale research and any difficulties that were encountered throughout the research process (Gilbert 2009, Bell 2010).

Chapter 5 is the first of four analysis and discussion chapters. This chapter re-identifies the definition of workplace violence and provides a summary of the findings of this study, considering both gendered and non-gendered violence. Firstly, it explores women's experiences of verbal-psychological violence concerning name calling, humiliation and verbal abuse. Secondly, it will examine the women's experiences of non-verbal psychological violence including the stalking/following of working women. Thirdly, the chapter will turn its attention to non-direct-physical violence which includes the throwing of objects and any damage caused, such as the smashing of windows. This is violence that is not specifically directed at the victim's body but violence which is intended to frighten and intimidate victims. Fourthly, the chapter will focus on women's experiences of direct-physical violence in the workplace, including violence perpetrated against the body and violent acts, for instance, the kicking or slapping of victims. Finally this chapter will turn its attention to gendered violence, that is to say sexual violence in the workplace. Therefore it will identify the different forms of sexual violence that were encountered by working women in this study. It will explore a continuum of violence beginning with warning signs which frequently escalate to more serious crimes, for example, sexual molestation in the workplace.

It is in Chapter 6 that the factors that place women at risk of workplace violence are identified, including any 'risky traits' recognised during the research process, including personality traits. The chapter will explore how workplace violence is a means of perpetrators attaining what they desire from individual victims and organisations, often through violence or the threat of violence. It will additionally contemplate the overall impact that workplace violence has upon women. Therefore the chapter will discuss fear as a result of unpredictability, particularly in relation to colleagues, co-workers and management a fear which leads women to 'dread' returning to the workplace, but at the same time this study will reveal how women become angry and frustrated as a result of the poor treatment that the women in this study commonly endured.

Chapter 7, 'Safety measures' in the work place, will consider who is responsible for the safety of female workers; therefore it will question the suitability of safety training. It will discuss how a lack of appropriate training leaves women unable to identify workplace violence and subsequently how this has led to the under-reporting of such incidents. This chapter will discuss safety measures that aim to minimise the risk of workplace violence occurring, identifying how these measures may frequently be compromised and at times rendered ineffective. The chapter will then move forward to examine how women cope with workplace violence, thus it will explore a range of strategies that have been adopted by the women who participated in this study, for example, avoidance, resolution, or retaliation. Additionally it will examine the effect of workplace violence, referring to how violence and abuse may result in physical and psychological health problems

which may ultimately result in absenteeism.

Chapter 8, will discuss the impact workplace violence has upon the women who participated in this study; for example it examines feeling afraid which results from the unpredictability of workplace violence, and 'shock' which is induced by acts of violence and abuse. It will also discuss how internal incidents of workplace violence has led some women to fear their colleagues, co-workers or manager to the extent they no longer wish to return to their place of work, a reflection of these poor experiences.

Chapter 9, 'patriarchy and risk: understanding workplace violence' theorises how women may be at risk as a result of an abuse of male power in the workplace, in that women fight against a system which has not necessarily been implemented with women in mind. It reveals how this system impacts on women, specifically women in charge, particularly in relation to the existence of male solidarity. The chapter then re-focuses on the exploitation of working women, discussing how fear is frequently evoked to disempower working women. Thus this chapter draws attention to how some men publically abuse working women. Finally, this chapter will refer to the question of intent, examining patriarchy as a means of either including or excluding women in the workplace.

Chapter 10, the conclusion, draws together the main points of this study which contribute to the women's experiences of workplace violence and which have been identified during the research process.

Chapter 2

2.0. What is happening in the workplace?

The workplace is characterised by the nature of the organisation and the people who work within it; it has a lifestyle of its own and it is a place where people meet, and without choice, interact on a daily basis. Sometimes these interactions, intentionally or otherwise, are unpleasant resulting in workplace violence, thus they manifest as physical, psychological and sexual harm. The aim of this research is to establish what women experience in terms of workplace violence including why they experienced this harm.

In this chapter I will argue that the definition of workplace violence is complicated, unclear and - at best - vague, not only because of the range of behaviours that the definition incorporates, but as a result of the variation found between definitions. Therefore, in this chapter I will clearly define workplace violence, laying out parameters so that I may determine what is happening to women in the workplace. This chapter will summarise what previous research in this area has already told us concerning physical, psychological and sexual violence, identifying how these behaviours occurred. At the same time it recognises any trends established by previous studies to identify any gaps that may exist.

The chapter will then proceed to demonstrate how the focus of research in this area has frequently changed. For example, historically physical violence has been researched more rigorously than psychological violence and as a consequence important issues pertaining to the experiences of working women have been

neglected. In light of this 'gap' this chapter will summarise categories of workplace violence previously offered within criminological research which link offences and offenders together, demonstrating how this has resulted in violence. For example, the type of violence a nurse experiences from a patient or a patient's relative, or violence that a barmaid experiences from a drunken customer.

Finally, this chapter will discuss current statistical knowledge presented by the British Crime Survey: violence at work study (BCSVAW), including incidents reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases, and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR). This outlines what we already know of workplace violence including recording practices, incident rates, and the rate of victimisation taking a systematic approach to workplace violence. In turn, the BCSVAW and RIDDOR report this information to the HSE who have published literature to aid the implementation of strategies, which they hope will prevent workplace violence from re-occurring in the future.

2.1. How is workplace violence defined?

Investigation into workplace violence is not new, although as a focus of criminological enquiry it represents a more recent development (Bowie, 2002). However, despite being in its early days Waddington (2005:142) suggests that the workplace has "*emerge[d] as an increasingly important site of violent encounters*". Prior to this claim Barling (1996) argues that employees who work in 'high risk' roles, particularly the emergency services (Fevre *et al* 2011), should expect to encounter violent behaviour in the workplace. This draws attention to how workers in

“*supposedly low risk jobs*” frequently experience abusive behaviour akin to violence that is experienced by employees engaged in ‘high risk’ roles (Barling 1996:30). Further, Waddington (2006) supports Barling’s earlier work by arguing that the range of occupations commonly affected by workplace violence is vast, making reference to specific working sectors such as health care. In this sector workplace violence is regarded as high risk, a serious issue and an ever-increasing problem (Beech and Leather, 2005, Estrada 2010, Waddington, 2006), believing the risk of workplace violence is pervasive across many occupations defined as either high or low risk (Barling 1996). Additionally, Waddington’s findings support those of Hock (2003), who proposes that 25% of all workplace violence is located in health care, identifying how almost half of all members of healthcare staff have been affected by violence and abuse (Waddington 2006).

During the 1960s and 1970s workplace violence not only gained the attention of workers and unions, it became a focus of academics and the government, a growth of interest which continued into the 1990s at both a national and global level. Thus the following section of this thesis will discuss the significance of this as a concern (Respass and Payne, 2008 Bowie 2002, Leather *et al* 1999, Heiskanen 2007, Lutgen-Sandvik 2009, Upson 2002/03, Lawoko *et al* 2004, Chappell & Di Martino 1998, Barling 1996).

2.2. The Health and Safety Executive and the British Crime Survey: Violence at Work

Over time, academics, employers and agencies have discussed the definition of workplace violence. Yet in spite of this discussion a collective

agreement on its exact nature has remained elusive (Dolan 2000). Indeed, much of the knowledge gained has centred on health and safety reports (Respass and Payne 2008) compiled by organisations such as the HSE, whose intention it is to develop policy which will reduce incidents of workplace violence in the future (Webster *et al* 2007).

The HSE work closely alongside other agencies, for example, trade unions, and together with the Home Office they annually commission the British Crime Survey: violence at work study (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2010). Moreover, since the mid - 1980s they have regularly published literature concerning the prevention of workplace violence in the hope that this will raise awareness, aid the development of policy and promote good working practice between all organisations (Webster *et al* 2007, Packham 2010, Upson 2002/03).

Similarly, the BCSVAW have published reports based on their annual findings concerning the extent of workplace violence in the United Kingdom (UK). By doing so they have identified patterns and trends relating to the incidence of workplace violence including levels of victimisation. Frequently, however, the incident rate is higher than the number of victims which is a result of repeat victimisation in the workplace. In contrast to this, reports produced by the HSE have flagged up issues concerning the responsabilisation and prevention of workplace violence; hence reports aim to raise awareness levels as opposed to recording occurrences. In essence they have attempted to increase the understanding of employers, employees, and trade unions alike in matters relating

to internal workplace violence experienced from managers, colleagues and co-workers, and external workplace violence experienced from clients, customers, patients and or service users. In this way, the HSE have attempted to “*provide a framework of response*” which identifies, prevents and manages problems surrounding harassment and violence in the workplace (Sweeney *et al* 2011:5). Moreover, the HSE have endeavoured to establish the responsibility for preventing workplace violence through the determination of appropriate measures which will both prevent and manage incidents, proposing that this responsibility lies solely with the employer. At the same time they acknowledge that workers play an important role in the identification and the reporting of incidents (Sweeney *et al* 2011).

The BCSVAW record the level of workplace violence by classifying the different types of offences that occur, for example, physical violence or the threat of violence. There are, however, limitations to this process, a result of the survey’s criminological foundations – limitations which restrict the gathered information – thus the BCSVAW only record violence perpetrated by strangers, for example, customers, clients, patients and service users (Upson 2002/2003, Budd 1999, Packham 2010). Further, it only records physical violence or the threat of violence; disregarding sexual and psychological harm. Similarly, it ignores internal workplace violence experienced from colleagues, co-workers or management (Webster *et al* 2007).

By adopting a systematic approach the BCSVAW has provided an insight into what is happening more generally in the workplace (Waddington 2005). This was perceived this as a ‘positive’, as research previously conducted in this area

concerned only isolated assessments relative to particular groups. For example, many studies solely researched teaching or retail staff as opposed to exploring a wide range of occupations. Jones *et al* (2011) however disputed this, arguing that even though the BCSVAW explores a range of occupations workplace violence is still constructed as an issue that mainly concerns state employed officials, for instance the protective services or frontline staff employed in accident and emergency departments, workers deemed the most prone to physical violence. Further, this practice is restrictive; it creates a false impression of the breadth of occupational roles commonly affected by violent behaviour (Jones *et al* 2011). Essentially they are arguing workplace violence is portrayed as an issue that concerns state - employed officials, disguising the existence of physical violence in less risky occupations. However, they contend that these harms do exist, that they are widespread and that they occur across a wide range of workplaces, not just in high risk roles (Tombs 2007).

2.2.1. What is workplace violence?

Generally, the consensus amongst researchers and the government suggests workplace violence is both a confusing and complicated concept, making it difficult to reach an agreement on a universally accepted definition (Bowie 2002). Part of this issue is related to the fact that “*Violence’ is notoriously difficult to define*”, but also workplace violence covers an extensive range of behaviour (Waddington 2005:141). Chappell and Di Martino (2006) and Paludi *et al* (2006) contribute to this argument, suggesting the lack of consensus has created grey areas; a reflection of the broad heading ‘workplace violence’. They argue this has

occurred because the workplace is multifaceted thus the violent behaviour that occurs ranges from the mild to the more extreme including murder and sexual violence; however examples of the more commonly experienced forms comprise pushing or shoving. The less dangerous, but by no means insignificant harm includes shouting, glares or stares and that the borderline between what is, and what is not acceptable behaviour is often quite vague.

Waddington (2005:142) suggests that there is “*widespread agreement, if not a consensus in favour of an inclusive definition of [workplace] violence*” recognising that an all-inclusive definition is a valuable methodological tool, whilst still acknowledging there is a danger that such a definition may be overly inclusive, invoking a fear of victimisation. This has the potential to create an insecurity for those previously unaware of what workplace violence implies (Waddington 2005), something particularly relevant to some of the interviewees who participated in this study. In contrast to this, Waddington (2005) also argues that a definition that is not inclusive may exclude many of the commonalities identified within the research process which do not fall under the heading ‘violence’, such as ‘sexual harm’. This again is a point that is relevant to this study, as it restricts a participant’s freedom to express the subjective meaning of their individual experience, thus denying the diversity of this experience (Waddington 2005). An example of this may be drawn by analysing the definition which the BCSVAW applies to workplace violence, which is not all-inclusive:

All assaults or threats which occur while the victim was working and were perpetrated by members of the public.

Budd (1999:2).

The above definition is restrictive because it limits research to that of physical violence experienced from members of the public. By this I refer to perpetrators who are strangers to the victim prior to an incident occurring, and who are not directly employed by the organisation. Therefore, as previously identified, co-worker violence and other forms of violent behaviour, such as psychological violence, frequently remain un-recognised.

Normative/political definitions recognise that some acts of violence may or may not be violent. This type of definition suggests 'workplace violence' is a "*loaded term*" which demands attention (Waddington 2005:157), thus it is an invaluable umbrella term for academics and unions alike due to a wide spectrum of behaviours that fall beneath it, but also as Waddington (2005:157) points out it carries a "*moral imperative to take action*" upon such behaviour. This notion is evidenced via the Department of Health, the European Commission and the Health and Safety Executive (Waddington 2005) who also adopt this term.

Adopting an all-inclusive definition has been an invaluable tool for this study, as it has allowed for the subjective experience of working women to be explored more deeply. At the same time it has highlighted the importance of a normative definition, illustrating a need for action to be taken to protect working women, which I will demonstrate in chapter 5. Thus this thesis argues it is crucial that psychological violence in the workplace is recorded, as its exclusion leaves an undisclosed number of incidents, a 'dark figure' of workplace violence¹.

¹ In 1981 the first BCS estimated that there were 11 million crimes in England and Wales. However, there were less than three million crimes recorded by the police. This gap is referred to as the "dark figure" of crime (Jansson 2013:7).

On the other hand, the BCSVAW has provided a good indication of the level of workplace violence perpetrated by external offenders who are customers, clients and service users (Packham, 2010). Yet in contrast to the previous discussion, an all-inclusive definition that is too broad has the potential to incorporate incidents which employees simply find unpleasant (Waddington 2005). For example, one male patient was banned from a doctor's surgery when a receptionist claimed that the patient shouted at her; in fact he had a loud voice. While interactions like these can be very unpleasant they are not workplace violence, they are misunderstandings (Waddington 2005). However:

The political aim of extending the meaning of 'violence' to become ever more inclusive is to place responsibility on the shoulders of those who all too often escape.

(Waddington 2005:158).

Demonstrating how, without clarity of definition, it is inevitable that mistakes will be made again; this point is particularly relevant to this study as the definition that I have elected to use is quite broad (Waddington, 2005). However, the receptionist may be considered 'blameless' as the incident is the result of an absence of knowledge however, the patient was unnecessarily but also unfairly punished via exclusion from this organisation. Already a pattern is forming, in that some customers, clients, patients and service users violate employees because they are unaware that their actions are abrasive. This however is related to intent which I will

discuss further in chapter 7 of this thesis.

The final problem relating to the adoption of a clear-cut operational definition of workplace violence relates to 'structural' understandings of violence in the workplace, however, this study does not aim to capture this, as it focuses on the inter-personal conceptions of workplace violence. Rather, this study seeks to show how patriarchy is central to women's experiences in the workplace, and whilst on the one hand the definition adopted for this study is quite broad, encompassing physical, psychological and sexual violence in the workplace, it remains restrictive by omitting safety crimes in the workplace. Toombs (2007: 532) for example suggests "*where researchers have set out to explicitly challenge existing 'meanings' of violence*" key safety crimes have been omitted from the research process (2007:535). He further proposes that the sole meeting point within criminology, between the definitions of workplace violence and research into violence, has been the expansion of the literature surrounding this phenomenon.

2.3. Workplace bullying versus workplace violence

One particular difficulty that I encountered when defining workplace violence is the existent overlap between workplace violence and workplace bullying. Chappell and Di Martino (1998) list bullying in a variety of behaviours that fall beneath the heading 'workplace violence'. This is also supported by Naime (2007) although, he refers to bullying as a subcategory of workplace violence; yet it remains difficult to fully understand what exactly it is that distinguishes workplace violence and workplace bullying from each other, as essentially they are the same

thing². Lutgen-Sandvik and Sypher (2009) however did manage this separation. In their study they referred to the repetition of bullying suggesting that perpetrators constantly chipped away at victims. They emphasised the temporal aspect because workplace bullying and the escalation of related events 'build' over time (Bowling 1999). In contrast, 'physical violence' is commonly a single event, and Leyman (1990) suggests that when determining whether an individual has been bullied a minimum duration of time - six-months - should be applied. Despite the similarities Baron (2006) argues against Leyman's proposal, theorising that workplace violence and workplace bullying can be distinguished from one another regardless of the time span. However, he did partially agree with Leyman's theory, maintaining some incidents of workplace violence have a criminal connotation in that they are solitary offences, such as robbery or assault (Baron, 2006); however the existent line between the two is fine.

Other behaviours may not necessarily be viewed as criminal, for instance psychological violence which includes name calling and intimidation in the workplace (Baron 2006). These are behaviours that are not so readily defined or identified but which are considered bullying as opposed to violence (Baron 2006), a point which links with Waddington's previous argument, that some behaviour is unpleasant but not necessarily violence.

The above point brings me back to my initial discussion at the beginning of this chapter; one which relates to the uncertainty of defining workplace violence,

² During discussions with academics some suggest that Naime and the Workplace Bullying Institute is not a credible resource. However, others regard him in the highest esteem.

including how psychological and sexual violence is often neglected. On a positive note, the disparity between workplace violence and workplace bullying has been partially addressed by Fevre *et al* (2011) whose recent report collectively refers to violence and bullying in the workplace as 'ill-treatment'. Within this report three main areas: unreasonable treatment; denigration and disrespect and violence are examined, and I will discuss the relevance of this report in section 2.5 of this chapter.

Internal workplace violence concerns co-worker and colleague violence, the characteristics of which are quite similar to bullying, and it is here that the overlap between workplace bullying and workplace violence principally occurs. Violent behaviour that is considered external to the workplace is, as I briefly discussed earlier, primarily regarded as a 'one-off' incident perpetrated by customers, clients, patients and service users. Workplace violence, in a similar vein to workplace bullying, is characterised by verbal and non-verbal acts, for example intimidatory body language, gestures and threats. Thus Baron (2006) proposes violence is an abuse of power which may be indicative of why the perpetrators of workplace violence are primarily male (Baron 2006, Chappell and Di Martino 2006), thus linking to the existence of a patriarchal society in which women remain subordinate to men. Similarly Lutgen-Sandvik and Sypher (2009) also agree that bullying is marked by a power difference that exists prior to onset of violence and abuse. I will, however, discuss the abuse of power within the workplace in Chapter 3, which explores how working women experience violence via the power differentials located within society.

Finally, Graham (2011) summarises the predicament concerning the lack of consensus surrounding the definition of workplace violence, alleging that irrespective of the label attached workplace violence remains a growing threat to the health of workers including the productivity of organisations. Although there is no consensus as to what constitutes workplace violence, it continues to be a pressing concern threatening the well-being of workers.

2.4. Defining workplace violence for the purpose of this study

After careful deliberation and much consideration of the limitations of defining workplace violence - via the definition employed by the BCSVAW - I have opted to select the definition adopted by the European Commission 1995 (EUC) (Heiskanen 2007), which I have set out below:

Incidents where persons are abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances related to their work, involving an explicit or implicit challenge to their safety, well-being or health.

European Commission (2009:6).

The decision to use this particular definition was made for several reasons. Firstly, it is the definition that the HSE apply to workplace violence and thus organisations, employees and agencies in the UK are familiar with this as a guide. Secondly, and in agreement with both Leather *et al* (1999) and Paludi *et al* (2006), this definition considers both the psychological and physical aspects of workplace violence, positively identifying that physical violence is not an essential component of this phenomenon (Beale *et al* 1999a). Thirdly, it recognises how psychological violence causes significant harm to victims (Beale *et al* 1999a, Leather *et al* 1999, Barling

1996), and in contrast to the BCSVAW this definition recognises violence perpetrated by colleagues, co-workers and management. Furthermore, this definition neither includes nor discounts the nature of the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator; instead this is left open to interpretation, so it does not distinguish between co-worker, customer or stranger violence in the workplace (Barling 1996) thus fully integrating the concept of workplace violence with that of 'bullying'. This chapter will now consider the process of categorising workplace violence into three main behavioural areas and the issues that this presents.

2.5. Categorising workplace violence

Previously in this chapter I demonstrated how workplace violence has been defined in several different ways (Lawoko *et al* 2004). Following this, the definition of workplace violence has been categorised into distinct areas relating to particular types of violence and offenders. Firstly, there is physical violence which includes kicking, punching or slapping. Secondly, there is non-physical violence, also regarded as psychological violence, which includes humiliation, intimidation and verbal abuse (Chappell and Di Martino, 2006a:17). Thirdly, perpetrators are divided by incidents that take place internally or externally to the workplace. Thus incidents are labelled as violence perpetrated by colleagues, co-workers or management or as stranger violence experienced via clients, customers, patients and service users, individuals who do not work for the organisation but who are not necessarily strangers to the victim in that they may frequent the organisation on a regular basis.

2.5.1. Physical violence

All definitions of workplace violence include bodily injury “*inflicted by one person on another*” (Dolan, 2000:1) and historically the focus of this attention has centred on physical violence and its impact (Chappell & Di Martino, 2006a). This incorporates the very traditional image of workplace violence which has focused on crimes such as robbery (Estrada, 2010), crimes that are generally highlighted by the media and which focus on death (Barling, 1996). Infamous examples of this have included missing estate agent Suzy Lamplugh, a 25 year old woman who disappeared after meeting a client (Bentley, 2012). Another high profile case was that of Claire Bernal, a 22 year old retail assistant killed by a former male co-worker and ex-partner who stalked Bernal in the workplace (BBC 2012). A more recent case was that of Atila Ban, jailed for murdering two of his colleagues (Allen and Greenwood, 2012). All of these cases generated a wealth of media attention which elevated physical violence as the primary risk to employees, while highlighting how some incidents of workplace violence may be driven by sexual attraction and the pursuit of an intimate relationship.

In reality, extreme physical violence resulting in death is rare, but because we live in a society that thrives on risk these incidents attracts a wealth of media attention (Young 2012). Consequently attention is drawn away from the more insidious, yet often unreported, incidents of workplace violence that occur often on a daily basis. Subsequently, the image of workplace violence is distorted: risky and dangerous, but for all the wrong reasons. In reality victims are more likely to experience psychological violence or physical violence that is found further down the spectrum of seriousness, for example punching and kicking.

In Addition, when the media portray workplace violence a great deal of attention is focused on physical violence as a result of the terminology used, for example, 'workplace violence', 'occupational violence' or 'the violent workplace' creating a distorted image of this phenomenon (Beech & Leather 2005), once more this misleads the public's perception of what the term 'workplace violence' actually represents. Consequently, physical violence is viewed far more seriously than psychological violence as people's minds focus on these physical acts which detracts attention away from acts of psychological violence. Furthermore, physical violence is regarded as a high priority, as not only it is damaging but the injuries are often evident and visible to the eye (Dickinson and Bevan 2005, Paludi *et al* 2006).

2.5.2. Psychological violence

I previously suggested in this chapter that psychological violence is regularly trivialised as many of the harms experienced are invisible; thus they commonly go unrecognised. Additionally, psychological violence manifests in less visible ways, for example, anxiety, depression or panic attacks therefore it is frequently overshadowed by physical violence detracting from other less obvious forms of psychological violence, including harassment, sexual intimidation or bullying (Paludi *et al* 2006). Psychological violence, in resemblance to physical violence, also involves a conscious decision to harm others, however, not physically but through words and actions. The intention is to damage the physical, emotional and mental wellbeing of victims; akin to physical violence, psychological violence is an abuse of power ultimately destroying the dignity of the victim, including self-confidence and

the victims' ability to defend themselves (Williams 2011).

In 2001 the European Commission's Advisory Committee on Safety, Hygiene and Health Protection at Work, in its 'Opinion of Violence in the Workplace', drew attention to the seriousness of psychological violence as a developing issue. This further acknowledges how incidents of physical violence have unintended consequences of a psychological nature, resulting in immediate or delayed harms (Foundation 2010). Similarly, according to the Community Strategy 2007-12, Health and Safety at Work (COM 2007), psychological violence is recognised as an increasing 'new' risk factor including sexual, racial, and psychological harassment which incorporates gender discrimination (Hearn and Parkin, 2001). This advises that psychological violence has adversely affected the mental health of employees to the extent it constitutes the fourth most common cause of incapacity at work. It further adds that all forms of workplace violence are an attack on the dignity of victims, and likely to pose a risk to the health and safety of employees. It is estimated that by 2020 the leading cause for incapacity in the workplace will be depression (COM, 2007). The following section of this thesis will now discuss the different typologies of workplace violence.

2.6. The typologies of workplace violence

To aid the definition of workplace violence researchers developed typologies of behaviour. These typologies aim to show the type of violence experienced in the workplace, the link between the workplace and the perpetrator, and any subtle nuances that exist between occupations, because as I previously pointed out in this

chapter each workplace has a lifestyle of its own.

The typology model most widely used is that of the Californian Occupational Safety and Health Administration (1995) (CAL/OSHA), who devised three broad types of workplace violence. These types originated in the United States (USA) and have subsequently been adapted by other researchers who applied these categories to their respective countries when researching workplace violence. For example, Bowie (2002) not only contributed to the three broad categories devised by CAL/OSHA, but suggests a category of his own, Type IV, which relates to organisational violence against staff. Mayhew (2003) subsequently built on CAL/OSHA and Bowie's work; however, he renamed these categories and developed three types of his own.

For ease of reference I have compiled a table (Table 1, below) which draws together all of the different types of violence located within the workplace, and which is assembled from the work of CAL/OSHA (1995), Leather *et al* (1999), Bowie (2002) and Mayhew (2003). The table demonstrates the types of workplace violence in relation to the type of perpetrator. They are firstly organised under CAL/OSHA and Bowie's heading, for example Type I, and below this is the label applied by Mayhew (2003), for instance 'External/intrusive violence'. Significantly, none of these types make reference to sexual violence, an issue that is addressed later in this thesis. Furthermore, the table omits behaviours that are extremely rare and irrelevant to this particular study, such as employees who violate consumers, or workplace violence as a result of protest, riot or terrorism.

Table 1 - Categorising workplace violence

Type I	Type II	Type III	Type IV
External/intrusive violence	Consumer/client related violence	Relationship violence	Organisational violence
Criminal intent: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strangers • Robbery 	Violence against staff providing a service.	Staff on staff violence & bullying. Domestic violence.	Organisational violence against staff i.e. victim blaming. The customer is always right.
Suggested perpetrators of workplace violence			
Drug/alcohol related aggression. The homeless. The sick and the ill.	Consumers. Clients. Patients and family members.	Co-workers. Ex-employees. Stalkers. Spouses and partners.	Managers. Supervisors Company directors. Co –workers.

Californian Occupational Safety and Health Administration, 1995, Bowie 2002, Leather *et al* 1999, Mayhew 2003.

Type I violence is related to violent acts perpetrated by strangers, and in particular type I points to the infirm or those who suffer with alcohol and drug related issues as the perpetrators of such violence, and which particularly incorporates the homeless (CAL/OSHA 1995, Bowie 2002, Leather *et al* 1999, Dupre and Barling 2003). It was CAL/OSHA who first developed this category of violence however Mayhew (2003) drew attention to comparable acts of violence and subsequently he named this category ‘External/Intrusive violence’. This type relates to perpetrators who have no legitimate reason to be on the organisation’s premises other than to commit a crime, for instance robbery or shoplifting, and it is believed to account for 85% of all occurrences of workplace violence. One occupation most at risk of this is taxi driving (Dupre and Barling 2004, Le Blanc and Barling 2009). Type II refers to

acts of violence perpetrated by those who are external to the organisation, for example customers, clients, patients or service users and Mayhew further developed this category renaming it consumer/client related violence.

Mayhew then expanded type III, which he renamed relationship/intimate partner violence which, to a point, embraces the domination and the oppression of working women by incorporating employees who experience domestic violence or stalking in the workplace. Domestic violence, which spills into the workplace, is insidious as it throws women into poverty; causing them to lose jobs, and ultimately their economic stability and their security (Rodgers 2002). Type III violence additionally concerns violence perpetrated by co-workers and disgruntled ex-employees, incorporating workplace bullying. The distinction between workplace bullying and workplace violence will be discussed in section 2.3 of this chapter. Within Type III Mayhew (2003) refers to acts of violence arising between employees including trainees, co-workers, supervisors and management (EU/OSHA, 2012). Hence type III is better understood as violence which is internal to the organisation, and whilst not explicitly labelled co-worker violence it is within this category such behaviour resides. Internal workplace violence was not originally specified in CAL/OSHA or Bowie's typologies, but it was incorporated by Mayhew. In contrast to this, Bowie made no provision for interpersonal relationship violence within his typology. However, a criticism of type III violence is that it does not include victims who were stalked or followed by colleagues or co-workers who were internal to the organisation, only those who were external³.

³ Stalking is a subtle form of sexual violence, and involves the fear and knowledge that something may

In addition to CAL/OSHA's three types, Bowie (2002) devised type IV. This type of violence is related to the structure and the management of the workplace involving organisations who have, in response to workplace violence, initiated staff training or implemented target-hardening measures to reduce risk. However, such measures can lead organisations to violate employees as, contrary to looking to the perpetrator, they condemn the victim. For example, women who are victims of sexual violence in the workplace may be condemned for wearing a skirt to work that is deemed too short (Shim 1998). On a positive note, the formation of typologies has been beneficial to researchers in that they assist in drawing distinctions between occupational settings. They demonstrate the variables that exist between the different workplaces and how these variables lend themselves to discrete types of violence; yet despite this, workplace violence remains unclear to the workforce. On a positive note and in spite of the lack of clarity, typologies do assist organisations in taking measures to manage risk and the extent of this phenomenon (Leather *et al* 1999:4), and it is these typologies that have informed my understanding and analysis of workplace violence as: physical and psychological, but also violence that is internal or external to the workplace. The following section of this chapter, 2.7 will now discuss the risk of workplace violence.

2.7. The extent of workplace violence

happen in the future.

There are a range of sources in the United Kingdom that report data to the HSE concerning the extent of workplace violence. The principle sources are the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) and the BCSVAW (Sweeney *et al* 2011). RIDDOR has placed a legal duty on employers, the self-employed, and those who control work premises to report any major injuries in relation to workplace violence, and in turn organisations rely heavily on employees self-reporting these incidents. So, via the collection of incident report forms, RIDDOR have collated information relating to how and why workplace violence occurs and established patterns of violence and abuse. Consequently, the HSE (2010) suggest that incidents of violence and aggression should not be regarded as a normal part of employment recommending that employers and employees work together to create systems that may prevent or reduce aggressive behaviour in the workplace, for example, consulting with female employees to determine what their needs are.

The most consistent overview of official statistics providing both incident rates and the rate of victimisation originates from the BCSVAW (Packham 2010, Webster *et al* 2007). This survey has been conducted annually since its implementation (1999); consequently findings can be compared and contrasted providing patterns of behaviour formulated over a number of years. Through such comparisons the BCSVAW (2010:8) estimate that the risk of becoming a victim of an assault in the workplace or experiencing the threat of workplace violence “*is quite low*”. In contrast, a recent report by Fevre *et al* (2011), providing an insight into ‘ill-treatment’ in the British workplace, disputes this. The data suggests that workplace violence is far from a one-off experience, revealing how 7% of participants experienced physical violence on a weekly basis, further suggesting

that 13 % encounter physical violence daily. Thus they conclude workplace violence is “*a more regular feature of work life than has often been recognised*” (Fevre *et al* 2011:14).

The BCSVAW report that the number of victims who experienced workplace violence has steadily declined (Packham 2010), simultaneously however incident rates have risen. This is a result of recording procedures which has allowed for multiple victimisations, up to a maximum of six, to be taken into account. Farrell (2002) further suggests that 70% of all incidents reported by the BCSVAW are a result of multiple-victimisation equating to 14% of the survey’s population. However, if participants have experienced more than six incidents of violence, in the twelve months prior to the survey taking place, the excess number is not disclosed (Packham 2010, EU-OSHA, 2013). Therefore, reported figures are by no means an accurate representation of the extent of this phenomenon. This disparity is also true of RIDDOR. As I previously suggested the information passed to the HSE relies solely on staff self-reporting violent incidents to the Health and Safety Officer, which is dependent on victims understanding workplace violence, as well as the Health and Safety Officer’s efficiency in submitting these reports to RIDDOR. RIDDOR additionally point out that interpreting the trends of workplace violence is extremely difficult due to the fluctuations in these reporting levels (Denny, 2005, Sweeney *et al* 2011). Chojnacka and Ferns (2005) reinforce this arguing that non-reporting is a significant issue, which, when left unchecked, generates an increased risk of workplace violence. Previous research conducted by myself supports this; this demonstrated how ambulance personnel only report the most serious of incidents, a

result of the additional paperwork that the reporting of incidents generates. In short, proposing staff do not have the time nor the inclination to complete this process (Beckett 2008).

The BCSVAW, until recently, suggest that the incident rate of workplace violence has consistently fallen and that it has done so since its peak in 1995. However, latter years have indicated a slight increase in this, signifying that employees are experiencing increased levels of repeat victimisation (refer to Appendix 2) (Buckley 2012). Despite this trend, the BCSVAW and the Violence at Work: Crime Survey for England and Wales (VAWCSEW) have remained firm in their belief that the risk of workplace violence remains low and stable (1.4%) (Packham 2010, Buckley 2012) suggesting workplace violence has settled into a consistent pattern. There has however been a slight rise in risk levels which may be attributed to an increase in the frequency of assaults in the workplace. This increase is also consistent at international level, as in 2012 the European Commission (EU) suggested that workplace violence had increased from 4% to 6% (Takala 2007, EU/OSHA 2012). Furthermore, the level of workplace violence and the threat of violence in the UK are amongst the highest globally (EWCS 2007).

The previously deliberated inconsistencies relating to the trend and reporting of victimisation, are similarly discussed by Fevre *et al* (2011), who shore up Waddington's (2006) previous argument, that the proposed reality of workplace violence has contradicted the lived reality, as levels far exceed the BCSVAW proposals. This disparity could be attributed to the difference in definition, as the

BCSVAW have excluded psychological and co-worker violence and they thus cap the number of reported incidents to six. This may also be attributed to the previously mentioned levels of reporting and the difficulties self-reporting present to the HSE in terms of fluctuation.

There is a deep rooted system of hierarchy in some professions which has promoted the acceptance of violent behaviours in the workplace (Bradley 1992). For example, trainee nurses are educated by qualified staff, doctors, and physicians to expect violence and abuse from patients, patient's relatives, and service users. Further, it is a practice that is evident amongst trainee paramedics⁴ (Beckett 2008), as a result physical, psychological and sexual violence is normalised in the workplace and consequently incidents of violence and abuse are not recorded nor reported to the Health and Safety Officer, giving rise to discrepancies in victimisation trends. Bradley (1992) suggests this arises because the focus of staff is on tolerance and compassion toward perpetrators, as opposed to zero tolerance and compassion.

2.8. The risk of workplace violence

Previously in this chapter I discussed how the BCSVAW report the overall risk of workplace violence is low (1.4%) and that in contrast to this the European Commission of Occupational Safety and Health (EU/OSHA) report that, compared to other European countries, the UK experiences a higher than average level of

⁴ Previous research into the ambulance service and workplace violence, carried out at undergraduate level, found employees were routinely told to expect violent and abusive behaviours, thus normalising violent, abusive behaviour.

violence and threat of violence (11% and 9% respectively) (Takala 2007). In addition to this the BCSVAW suggest that both men and women face similar risks to one another, 1.6% and 1.4% respectively (Buckley 2011/12). This risk however varies according to the organisation's 'lifestyle': for instance the opening and closing hours, location, or the nature of the organisation including the demographics of personnel. For example, when thinking about men, age and the risk of workplace violence the group most vulnerable is aged 25-34, but when considering women and age, the vulnerability is spread more evenly across all age groups (Packham 2010). When thinking about physical violence older women are of particular concern, as they have an increased risk of workplace violence (Hurley and Riso 2007, Gill *et al* 2006). This occurs because older women are thought of as easy targets, and in comparison to younger women they are deemed far less likely to fight back (Dietz *et al* 2006). However, having said this, a counter-argument exists in that older women may be more skilled in 'talking perpetrators down' as a result of past experience, which has taught some women to remain passive and take violence in their stride.

Young women are increasingly vulnerable in the workplace, the result of inexperience and a lack of confidence as younger women are believed to struggle with physical, psychological, and sexual violence in the workplace, and they are more likely to 'back down' in difficult situations (Chappell and Di Martino 2006). In comparison, Fevre *et al* (2011) report how young women are more likely to take violence and abuse on the chin, highlighting how this increased risk of violence and abuse may occur because many young women remain employed in part-time or

temporary roles, frequently working unsociable hours (Gunnison and Fisher 2000 Chappell and Di Martino 2006)

2.9. Risk factors

The majority of information concerning workplace violence is based on official reports prepared by the Occupational Health and Safety administration; information that concentrates on discrete occupations that are known to be of high risk, for example, the police (Respass and Payne 2008). However, through comparing information experts have established a “*set of risk factors*” that increase the likelihood of workplace violence occurring (Respass and Payne 2008:132), and a summary of these factors is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2 - Summary of Risk Factors

Lifestyle of Organisation:

- Working face-to-face or having contact with the public e.g. on the telephone
- Working with items of value or handling cash
- Working late nights, early mornings, working alone or in small/large numbers
- Having a mobile workplace
- Working with sick, the volatile or the unstable
- Working with alcohol or drugs
- Working in positions of power or enforcement
- The days of the week worked

Geographical area:

- Working in high crime areas, community based setting, public buildings,
- Inner city/rural locations or isolated areas

Employee:

- Age
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Sexuality
- Disability

(Respass and Payne, 2008, Gill *et al* 2002, Firth, 2008, Farrugia, 2002, Chappell & Di Martino, 2006, Fevre *et al* 2011, Leck, 2012).

Table 2 demonstrates how the risk of workplace violence is multifaceted and covers a wide range of variables, but also it shows how risk is not evenly distributed across occupations, and the more variables that exist in the workplace, the higher the level of risk posed to employees (Chappell and Di Martino 2006). Those individuals most at risk of violence and abuse are employed in roles that involve regular face-to-face interactions or contact with the general public (Boyle *et al* 2007).

Using the typology of workplace violence presented in the table above, face-

to-face interactions contribute to Type II violence/consumer and client related violence, which frequently concerns violence against personnel providing a public service. For example, retail staff, public transport workers, taxi drivers, or healthcare employees (Gill *et al* 2002). These are interactions which place perpetrators in close proximity to the victim, but importantly these interactions do not just involve the infirm or the distressed those who are frequently responsabilised for incidents of workplace violence, the perpetrators include the orderly other of society who is angry, frustrated or upset.

2.10. The lifestyle of an organisation

The 'lifestyle' of the organisation significantly impacts on risk (King 1994; Gill *et al* 2002), which I previously suggested in this chapter includes geographical location, clientele, and staff ratio. For instance, Farrugia (2002) reports that inner city workers have an increased risk of experiencing violent behaviour in comparison to rural workers, which agrees with Boyle *et al*'s (2007) study concerning paramedics where it is suggested that employees who work in urban areas experience increased levels of violence, including that of sexual harassment in the workplace.

Additionally, lifestyle changes which incorporate the 24 - hour service economy have led to an increase in night workers. For instance, there is a need to maintain, clean, and restock supermarket shelves, thus employees frequently work long after organisations have closed their doors to the general public. Thus the level of night time working and the number of night-workers has increased, and will

continue to rise as we head toward a 24 - hour society. These are changes that have exposed female workers to an array of risk, particularly as the majority of night-time workers are located within public administration, retail, health and social care; roles that are frequently fulfilled by women (Chappell and Di Martino 2006).

Therefore, women face particular issues in relation to isolation, as this elevates a woman's vulnerability in the workplace, especially when considering sexual violence. Frequently there is a lack of authority present, in the form of management, for staff to call upon in times of trouble and many services are simply not equipped to meet the needs of night-time staff (Norman, 2011). Additionally, traditional security measures, in the form of social control, including doormen to watch over staff and clients, have long gone (Garland 2003). Similarly risk is elevated for employees working in isolated locations or locations that harbour high levels of crime and social disorder (Gill *et al* 2002, Firth 2008).

Social control is a powerful inhibitor of the commission of crime especially "*the avoidance of conflict and non-intervention*" (Foster 2007:565). In the workplace conflict avoidance is often difficult to maintain as frequently employees cannot leave their post. Also, a decline in social cohesion has facilitated non-intervention which accounts for why individuals witness, but commonly fail to respond to incidents of violence and abuse (Foster 2007). Moreover, many workers evaluate their working environment and if they feel their workplace has a high capacity for social control they feel much safer and indeed more secure, which discourages potential perpetrators. For example, staff will alert personnel or call the police in troubled times; therefore employees perceive their workplace as a safe

environment (Drakulich 2013).

Farrugia (2002) maintains public sector employees face higher levels of risk than those in the private sector. Hospitals, for example, operate an open door policy, as do public libraries and other private organisations including pharmacies. However, unlike hospitals, access to the public library or the pharmacy is restricted via opening and closing hours, but in contrast to this libraries and pharmacies lack the appropriate security to adequately protect personnel.

Both the time of day and the day of the week are also significant factors when considering risk. Workers employed in pubs and clubs, for example, work unsociable hours that are commonly outside of the traditional nine-to-five working day, and this risk is further increased depending on which day of the week is worked (Gill *et al* 2002). It is likely that this risk will increase again at weekends due to a significant rise in the number of face-to-face interactions with the general public, including customers who have consumed large quantities of alcohol and who may have participated in illicit drug-taking (Robinson 2009, Gill *et al* 2002). Prime examples of environments with a shifting life - style are 'Chameleon bars' and 'fun pubs' akin to 'Wetherspoons' who, at night, adopt a nightclub atmosphere (Hobbs *et al* 2000). Families are replaced by rowdy youths consuming cheap promotional alcohol therefore the risk posed to evening staff is quite different to that posed to day-time staff. The night time economy similarly affects the safety of employees (Robinson 2009). Historically groups of young people, the homeless, alcoholics, and drug users claim ownership of specific areas during the evening, often congregating on, or 'hanging around', street corners. During the day the same

street corner feels much safer; a result of traditional risk constraints including shoppers and families who utilise the same space (Robinson 2009).

Mobility is similarly problematic for employees, particularly those who leave the relative safety of the workplace and extends to services provided by, for example, health visitors, home helps, paramedics, fire officers, the police and estate agents (Khalef 2003). At times these workers visit locations which they are unfamiliar with, thus they are disempowered. This is particularly relevant to employees who work alone or within small teams (King 1994) including mobile hair - dressers and care providers. So in opposition to Farrugia (2002), who believes public sector employees are at high risk of violence and abuse, the level of risk posed is relevant to both public and private sector employees. Having discussed many of the generic risks located within the workplace, the following section of this chapter will now proceed to specifically discuss how women experience workplace violence.

2.11. How do women experience workplace violence?

Researching women and workplace violence is complicated; firstly, as I previously identified, there are definitional issues; secondly, much of the literature refers to workplace violence in a collective non-gendered manner which is quantitative in nature. A point which Carlen (1996) highlights: she argues that a positivist approach cannot be shaped to fit women, while Garcia and Clifford (2010) suggest it is impossible to squeeze women into male-stream moulds which render women invisible.

Thirdly, many problems faced by working women which include class, gender, and sexuality are ignored because men are the standard by which the majority of research is judged, evidencing how men are more generally regarded as the norm (Smart 1996). Women, however, are repeatedly considered secondary especially when featured in criminological and victimological literature (Brewster and Holley 2010). Likewise women are considered problematic because men are seen to represent the natural social order. This is particularly evident when considering employment and equality laws which inadvertently construct men as the ideal employee while women frequently struggle to make the grade (Kenny 1986). Consequently Smart (1996) identified women as 'intruders' in a world organised by others.

Fourthly, the literature ignores many of the power issues that exist in the workplace; for example, Boland (2005) suggests a woman may earn a lesser wage than the man directly beside her, performing the exact same job. This is similarly illustrated by the metaphorical 'glass ceiling', an invisible and intangible barrier which determines the level of authority women may rise to within the workplace (Dale and Acik 2005). Gender inequality has only recently been highlighted in the media who report female clergy have hit the 'stained glass ceiling' barring women from advancing further up the hierarchy of the church.

Finally, I previously discussed how the majority of the literature concerning workplace violence is generic, drawing attention to high-risk occupations including the police or social work, thus the literature has ignored the wider experiences of working women. Subsequently, the literature itself is gendered, largely excluding the

experiences of women in the broader organisational structure (Dale and Acik, 2005). In light of this, Di Martino *et al* (2003) argue that the vulnerability of the working woman can only really become apparent when gender is examined far more closely. This dilemma is suitably summed up by Jiawani (2004:7) who suggests, when writing about women's experiences of violence and abuse, that *"to understand violence we have to examine both the experience and the terrain of that experience"*. Therefore, the remainder of this literature review will specifically focus on 'what' women experience in relation to physical, psychological and sexual violence in the workplace.

Previously in this chapter I proposed that workplace violence has developed into an occupational health and safety concern, as well as a criminal justice issue. It is an area that has received increasing levels of interest and one which has caught the attention of many who have explored a broad range of issues (Santanna and Fisher 2010). Like men, women experience both internal and external workplace violence however, women's experiences are marked by both hierarchical and patriarchal systems that exist in the workplace and society more generally, while men's experiences are affected only by hierarchy. Thus women are considerably more at risk of violence and abuse from male colleagues, co-workers, and management. Similarly, women are at risk from males and females who are independent to the organisation, and who are deemed external perpetrators. These are customers, clients, patients and service users who attempt to exert their power and control over working women. Additionally, a patriarchal society reduces women to certain roles referred to as the 'female ghetto' (Merllie 2001). These are roles that

not only increase the level of risk posed to working women but present additional risks, particularly of a sexual nature. For instance, in male dominated workplaces a hostile work environment is characterised by a 'macho culture' of toughness where men adopt sexual harassment as a form of domination. Thus the following section of this chapter discusses what these risks are in the workplace.

2.12. Internal and external workplace violence

Internal and external workplace violence refers to a continuum of behaviour (for a full summary refer to Table 1), including physical, psychological and sexual violence in the workplace, and, as I previously identified, the perpetrators of this may be either male or female. However, the perpetrators are predominantly males targeting female workers (David 2003), highlighting how perpetrators can be of equal status to the victim or indeed how victims may be targeted further up, or lower down, the chain of command (Bowie 2002b). In addition to internal workplace violence women experience external violence and abuse. This concerns the contact that female workers have with those regarded as outsiders. In the broadest sense of the term this refers to the general public who are customers, clients, patients and service users (Graham 2011).

The term 'service user' may be extended to incorporate friends and relatives of service users who become aggressive with staff, but also the term refers to perpetrators who visit certain workplaces with the intention of committing a crime, such as theft. High-risk factors concern individuals deemed unstable or volatile, including those in receipt of health care (Respass and Payne 2008) and high-risk

professions include social services, education and retail, roles that it may be argued are primarily dominated by women. For a full summary of these factors refer to Table 1.

Psychological violence is deemed, by some, as one of the cruellest forms of workplace violence, as frequently it damages the confidence of a victim, destroying their ability to defend themselves from repeat persecution (Marsh *et al* 2004). This statement however should be approached with caution, particularly when considering the vast array of behaviours which fall beneath the spectrum of behaviours including sexual violence. Similarly, psychological violence is believed to devalue victims by promoting a sense of defencelessness, whilst simultaneously undermining the victim's sense of dignity which again creates vulnerability (Hawkins 2010, Hinchberger 2009). Other risk includes sexual violence in the workplace, which is closely aligned to the misuse of power which serves to dominate and oppress working women, yet again heightening vulnerability, especially as some women may be deemed as weak or submissive (David 2003). Further, many working women are intimidated, verbally and emotionally via name calling, that again serves to undermine the dignity of a woman; examples include not following specific requests, obstructing a woman's path or hindering her progress in the workplace (Vaez *et al* 2004). Other forms of psychological violence incorporate aggressive body language, stares and glares or in contrast to this, long unpleasant silences that intend to create discomfort and unease (Dale and Acik 2005).

Naime (2012) proposes that women are frequently the victims of workplace

violence, arguing that gender differences do exist and suggesting that 60% of men, in comparison to 40% of women, abuse their colleagues and co-workers. Men however are believed to divide their attention equally between genders, but also they are more inclined to publicly violate their victims, while women prefer to intimidate victims behind closed doors. Further, when women do bully and torment, 70% target other women (Naime 2012). Unison (2009) report similar findings. Their research reveals how 1 in 3 working women, who experience workplace violence, are at risk from older women, including women in senior professional roles. This supports a previous point that I made: perpetrators violate colleagues and co-workers regardless of the hierarchical structure (Churchyard 2009). In addition, superior women, in a manner that is reminiscent of men, abuse power that is afforded by their role, belittling women via dominance and control, frequently employing anger, emotional harassment and physical violence (Durre 2010).

Hinchberger's (2009) study into violence against female nurses validates both Unison (2009) and Naime's (2012) findings, revealing how internal workplace violence between nurses is endemic and highlighting how nurses use organisational alliances to control work teams. For example, nurses employ strategies that include psychological violence to enforce the working rules. This is so ubiquitous trainee nurses they are being deemed particularly vulnerable, and internal workplace violence is considered a compounding factor in the shortage of nursing staff. Moreover, it is believed to be part of the reason for the adage "*nurses eat their young*" (Hinchberger 2009:38). However, The Office for Women's Policy (2005), in Australia, discloses how women do not commonly regard many of the abusive

interactions that they encounter as workplace violence; many behaviours that they encounter are routinely normalised during staff training, in that nurses are told to expect violence and abuse. Thus workplace violence becomes a fundamental part of the daily work routine (Hinchberger 2009, Dale and Acik 2005).

I previously suggested certain female traits are associated with an increased risk of workplace violence (Lutgen-Sandvik and Sypher, 2009). For example, women who appear weak, submissive, or unassertive, including those who have a tendency to avoid conflict, this may provoke unpleasant responses in the behaviour of others. Yet in complete contrast, working women are targeted if they have an aggressive style of communication or leadership, or if they are considered to have over-achieved. This particularly refers to women who have risen above the expected norm in terms of employment: and who have 'broken through' the previously discussed 'glass ceiling'. From this, it is evident that there is neither a right nor a wrong way for working woman to behave, as either a strong-willed or a timid woman may be targeted. Consequently, there are no clear markers that will aid the identification of women who may become a victim of this phenomenon. However, the higher the occupational role, the lower the risk of abuse (Lutgen-Sandvik and Sypher 2009). This finding contrasts with that of Lewis (2011), although Lewis was generalising to both male and female victims at the time.

2.13. The impact of workplace violence

Workplace violence produces a negative effect in victims, creating high levels of anxiety which lead to serious consequences for female workers (Gill 2002, Dale

and Acik 2005). The full impact of workplace violence against women, however, has not yet been fully identified; it is ambiguous and there are many gaps in the research (Dale and Acik 2005). For some victims the effects are immediate remaining visible throughout the violent encounter. For others the symptoms surface after the interaction has occurred, consequently symptoms may last for several days and thus recovery is dependent on the individual, the incident, and the organisational response to workplace violence (Brady 1996, Fevre *et al* 2011). In some instances the victim's recovery may extend to many months, indeed some individuals may never recover, they become over anxious and fear repeat victimisation. This arises because the victims of crime cope in very different ways to one another (Leather *et al* 1996). Thus, as I previously suggested, some victims become overly anxious overestimating the likelihood of repeat victimisation therefore they attempt to avoid risky situations (Brady 1996).

The impact of workplace violence comes in many guises and its effects are detrimental to women on many different levels, for example, it promotes ill-health, financial difficulties, and lost working days (Hunt and Hughey 2010, Dale and Acik 2005). Further, workplace violence lowers an employee's confidence and affects the overall morale of the organisation (Johnson and Indvik 1994). Some individuals may return to work immediately after the incident, possibly as a result of adrenalin, however once the adrenalin has subsided only then does the true impact of the incident becomes apparent (Leather *et al* 1996), and victims may then experience a range of symptoms which include shaking, crying, anger, and physical pain. Brady further advises that some victims become confused, upset and often tearful, revealing how they frequently go into shock, and often shaking, adding that victims

feel embarrassed over such incidents. Both the extent and impact of workplace violence is therefore uncertain and unspecified, thus researchers have a duty to go beyond the questioning and the reporting of statistics, as currently many studies neglect discussions that may relate to women, violence and gender in the workplace (Dale and Acik 2005).

Fevre *et al* (2011) suggests that physical violence does not feature in the top three negative impacts workplace violence has upon its victims. Instead victims cite psychological harms, commonly the result of being shouted at or ignored in the workplace. Further, the impact of workplace violence is far reaching and Gill (2002) proposes that high levels of anxiety are often problematic, as is absenteeism, suggesting a high level of staff turn-over is commonly evident. Gill (2002) adds that female victims are far more likely to be absent from the workplace, especially for prolonged periods of time, creating financial implications which are far reaching for female victims in the long term (Gunnison and Fisher 2000).

Finally, recent research into ill-treatment in the workplace reveals how trade unions are generally supportive to their members (Fevre *et al* 2011). However, they believe some union representatives fail to take a woman's viewpoint into consideration which they believe is a consequence of "*male-dominated gender cliques*" (Fevre *et al* 2011:32) that exist within organisations, suggesting women are prone to secondary victimisation in the workplace.

2.14. Summary

In this chapter I have demonstrated how the workplace has emerged as a site where numerous violent interactions commonly occur, signifying that an increased

number of employees, from a broad range of occupations, routinely experience workplace violence. Violent interactions frequently take place in professions deemed low-risk but often these interactions are overshadowed, as research has focused on occupations that are known to be of high-risk as opposed to concentrating on discrete professions and organisations, which has led to the misrepresentation of the level of incidents that occur, and a distortion of the rate of victimisation.

Moreover, this chapter has established how the BCSVAW only consider physical violence or the threat of violence from perpetrators who are external to the workplace, a reflection of the survey's criminological foundations. Therefore, psychological violence involving co-workers, colleagues and management remains un-recognised and subsequently un-recorded. As a consequence of this, workplace violence is constructed as an issue relating to strangers as opposed to colleagues, co-workers and management; in much the same way the term 'workplace violence' has a tendency to evoke thoughts of physical violence and aggression.

Subsequently a significant amount of the advice disseminated to employers and employees, particularly in relation to women, addresses how to stay safe on the street as opposed to how to keep safe in the workplace (Stanko, 1992). This practice has created a false impression of the extent of workplace violence, as the proposed risk level is possibly far more widespread than was first anticipated.

The BCSVAW gather yearly statistics which are dispersed via annual reports and employed by organisations. From these reports the HSE have established patterns and trends which have aided the development of policy that aimed to

reduce workplace violence in the future. However, because the definition of workplace violence is shrouded in confusion many employer's and indeed employee's do not have a clear understanding of exactly what this phenomenon entails. Further, the BCSVAW has led society to believe that the estimated risk of workplace violence is quite low, and that the risk of victimisation has remained stable. However, academics and unions have disputed this, pointing out how, for many employees, violence is a routine feature of the working day, with few discrepancies in their estimations. One reason behind this is the recording practices adopted by the BCSVAW which has capped incidents, but more importantly internal workplace violence has been ignored and sexual violence excluded from the survey. These are incidents that are particularly pertinent to women, therefore workplace violence is far more prevalent than the BCSVAW have recognised.

The chapter has additionally established how the BCSVAW report directly to the HSE thus inaccuracies in victimisation rates are forwarded to the HSE. That said it is true to say that the BCSVAW, despite its limitations, has provided a consistent overview of external workplace violence from strangers. Therefore it remains of value to policy makers, providing a rough guide to the extent of workplace violence experienced from members of the public (Newburn 2012). RIDDOR has similarly acknowledged the difficulties in estimating levels of workplace violence, identifying that yearly fluctuations in self-reporting are problematic, so once more it may be said that the rate of victimisation and the level of risk posed to employees is not an accurate reflection of the reality of workplace violence.

Moreover, this chapter has demonstrated how definitional concerns have

complicated issues, highlighting how this has originated from the lack of consensus in the terminology used. I have shown, for example, how some definitions exclude psychological violence in the workplace whilst others fully embrace this and the same is true of sexual harassment. However, I conclude that all definitions of workplace violence incorporate physical violence, as the term 'violence' automatically projects images of physical aggression. Further, the lack of consensus in terminology has resulted in a considerable amount of overlap between workplace violence and workplace bullying. Nevertheless, this chapter has recognised that 'violence is violence' whether it is physical, psychological or sexual, thus all types of workplace violence are damaging; it is just the scars that may be invisible to the eye.

For similar reasons to those previously cited I conclude that the barriers between external and internal workplace violence should be raised, and that all incidents of workplace violence should be recorded regardless of whether the perpetrator is a co-worker or a client. A more holistic approach should be taken so that an accurate pattern of the trends in the incident rate are fully established. So in light of the evidence that I have presented in this chapter, it is possible to conclude that the level of workplace violence is, at best, inaccurate, and that there is a dark figure of workplace violence hanging over the workforce. Similarly, this chapter suggests that men and women face similar risks to one another in the workplace; however, I have established that this may not quite be so, in that working women face additional risks, risks that are not necessarily posed to working men, and that many of these experiences have been overlooked.

Finally, this chapter has identified how the majority of perpetrators are male, but additionally I have indicated that women in hierarchical positions, in much the same way as patriarchal men, also violate women in the workplace, particularly young women and women in training. There are however no clear markers that will identify victims; neither is there a right or a wrong way for women to behave in the workplace that will reduce the risk of violence and abuse.

Chapter 3

3.0. Why are women at risk in the workplace?

Chapter 2 explored workplace violence in relation to ‘what’ is happening in the workplace. The focus of attention then shifted to look more specifically at working women, recognising that women are at special risk in that they face additional risk to that posed to men. The chapter proceeded to highlight how this risk, and risk from within the workplace is omitted from victimological surveys, for example, the BCSVAW *“frequently appear to ignore real people who experience real pain”* (DeKeseredy and MacLeod 1997:75)

This chapter considers ‘why’ women experience workplace violence, focusing on this phenomenon in relation to the impact of patriarchy therefore exploring how patriarchy places working women at risk. Thus this chapter has adopted a feminist standpoint, discussing feminist perspectives in terms of how women are treated within a patriarchal society, whilst at the same time theorising the origins of patriarchy and feminism. However, due to the limitations of the word count, this study will only examine patriarchy from four of these perspectives: Liberal, Radical, Marxist and Socialist feminism.

I will argue that patriarchy and risk are intertwined, highlighting how women are placed at a greater risk of violence and abuse in the workplace, as a result of living in a patriarchal society. Feminist thought has sought to bring these risks to the forefront of society, for instance, this paper acknowledges how working women not only face generic risk, relevant to both males and females, they encounter risk

which is supplementary to this.

Further, I will discuss how patriarchal attitudes may filter from the home into mainstream society; particularly into the workplace. As a result women are at special risk of workplace violence: internally - from within the organisation and externally - from the general public. Risky perpetrators include customers, clients, patients, and service users (who visit organisations) as well as colleagues, co-workers, and management. For example, some workplaces are male-dominated which potentially creates a hostile work environment characterised by a culture of masculinity, toughness and male customs. Within such strongholds, some men have adopted sexual harassment as a means of control.

This chapter will then proceed to discuss how women may also encounter workplace violence from females who are often hierarchical within the organisations, proposing that many hierarchical women believe that their status in the workplace is under threat; hence they defend this position, in a similar manner to hierarchical men, through power, domination and control. Subsequently, this may also impact on women's experiences of violence in the workplace, particularly women employed in subordinate roles, including young women, trainees, and newcomers.

The focus of attention then moves to 'risk society', in that a risk society has led to pervasive risk thinking both publically and privately, ultimately this has led to a fear of victimisation. Thus this chapter will explore how feeling 'at risk' is subjective and frequently dependent upon the individual suggesting that the removal of

traditional constraints in the workplace will increase feelings of risk. Further, in this chapter I will consider the advent of risk assessment, a simplification of pre-determined information gathered via the collection of data and generalised to the workforce.

The Health and Safety Executive has placed the responsibility of protecting employees firmly in the lap of organisations. To help meet these responsibilities organisations have installed situational crime prevention measures and engaged staff in personal safety awareness measures. Thus this chapter will contemplate the effectiveness of safety screens, alarms, and closed circuit television (CCTV) as a means of staff protection (refer to Clarke, 1980; 1995; 2009).

Finally, I will consider how certain groups of people are labelled 'risky'; they are thus blamed for many of the incidents of workplace violence that occur and commonly marginalised are groups such as alcoholics, drug addicts and the infirm. As a practice this potentially ignores the 'orderly other' as the perpetrators of workplace violence (Holloway and Jefferson 2003); rational individuals who are capable of exercising choice and who understand the consequence of their actions (Bourdieu, 1998).

3.1. Women in the workforce

Before the onset of the industrial revolution women worked in the family home, a practice which led to two main distinctions being drawn concerning the division of labour. Firstly, men and women were allocated to distinct categories of employment and secondly, men were assigned to paid industrial labour. As such, men worked

outside of the family home and were considered the family provider. However women, by remaining in the family home, became housebound, emerging as unpaid domestic labourers (Chesney-Lind 2006, Bourke 2011). This practice established a traditional, although decidedly uninvited role, meaning that for many years women cooked, cleaned, raised children, cared for the sick and the elderly and provided emotional support to family, friends and the community (Padavic and Reskin 2002).

The division of labour ultimately led to segregation in the workplace (Padavic and Reskin 2002; Innes 2011), a custom which mirrored the sexual double-standard of society at this time, and which contrasted masculinity with femininity (Innes 2011). The segregation of labour, coupled with the impact of the First and Second World Wars, led to the collapse of domestic servitude which had provided women with an array of opportunities (Bourke 2011). For example, women were employed in shops, the Civil Service, offices and public transport (Innes 2011, Bourke 2011). Conversely, gender remained segregated in the workplace and labour divided, creating greater inequality between men and women; which remains evident in the workforce today (Padavic and Reskin 2002).

The above imbalance has affected working women in several ways, for example, some women earn less in comparison to men, and many women are consigned to low-status roles, a practice which remains part of the outdated, but persistent, sex-gender hierarchy that exists today (Padavic and Reskin 2002). Chappell and Di Martino (2006) and Faravelli (2011) argue that this has led to a system which has rewarded men over and above women. Undeniably a working woman's position has improved, yet still women struggle to break through the 'glass

ceiling' of promotion. Often their aspirations remain secondary to males at almost every stage of their working life (Snowdon 2011). Even now one-third of working women believe female managers are paid less than male managers, with 47% of female managers believing employers discriminate against women, particularly when considering promotion (Duckworth 2001). Further, 35% feel their career path has been obstructed by the existence of the "*old boy's network*"; evidenced by large numbers of men employed in high-status roles. For example, males are employed in 75% of all managerial roles and 90% of all boardroom posts, so it naturally follows that women are, and will remain oppressed in the work place, upholding the outdated but evident tradition of masculinity and femininity (Chappell and Di Martino 2006, Duckworth 2001), Padavic and Reskin 2002, Sorenson 1984).

3.2. The origins of patriarchy

'Patriarchy' refers to '*the rule of our fathers*'; pointing to a traditional system where power, via lineage, is passed to the eldest family male (Hearn and Parkin 2001:21). In the 1970s this term was formally adopted by academic feminists who modified and extended this meaning through their writing. Consequently, patriarchy now refers to a universal system of bias, which points to structures of power and control which men exert over women (Evans 2003, Bennett 2006, Bryson 2008, Blackburn *et al* 2002). Bryson (2008:311) proposes that the feminist extension of patriarchy has been positive, providing feminists with a "*powerful new way of seeing the world.*" This has enabled women to make sense of their personal experiences, giving them the opportunity to identify the extent of the otherwise invisible male power and thus providing a vital first step for feminist politics. This, Bryson (2008)

believes, empowers women, encouraging them to speak out about their personal experiences, and bringing a greater level of public consciousness to many of the numerous issues women face.

3.3. The development of feminism.

Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) originally paved the way for feminism, highlighting the exclusion of women and powerfully challenging the rights of men (Hudson 2011, Kreiss 2000). Her actions laid the principles of the women's movement including the foundations of the second and third-wave feminist movement that subsequently emerged.

First-wave feminism is closely associated with working class women; arising from industrial society and liberal politics (Krolokke 2006, Scholz 2010) and is connected with women's rights, liberal feminism, and early socialist feminism of the late 19th and early 20th century in both the United States and Europe (Krolokke, 2006). This is perhaps best captured by the movement for universal suffrage, where the principle objective was to extend the social contract thus gaining political citizenship for all women (Gillis *et al* 2007, Hudson 2011).

Liberal feminism is the most widely recognised of all feminist theories suggesting that women are discriminated against on the basis of their sex, and highlighting how women have restricted access to careers, and limited political and financial opportunities (DeKeseredy 1996). Consequently, liberal feminists focus on practical inequalities, concentrating on the equal treatment of both men and women in society. For example, liberal feminism advocates equal pay for both males and

females in the workplace, yet it fails to challenge fundamental male values (Belknap 1996). Subsequently radical feminists regard liberal feminism as overly simplistic, as radical feminists have placed patriarchy at the centre of women's oppression focusing on wide-spread domestic violence and the abuse of women, which they consider omnipresent within western societies (Belknap 1996, Scholtz 2010).

Socialist/ Marxist feminism runs parallel to liberal first wave feminism (Krolokke, 2006), and is a response to masculine bias which believes the oppression of women is determined by class and capitalism. Therefore class divisions, and the gendered division of labour, determine the position of males and females in the hierarchical structure of society (DeKeseredy 1996), which Scholtz (2010) argues has denied and restricted a woman's freedom. So over time, as men became landowners and secured the means of production the social status of women declined. Therefore women evolved as an under-paid/un-paid workforce (Scholz 2010). This, socialist/ Marxist feminists believe, is an outdated practice, one which maintains subordination and sustains the economic dependency of women who remain reliant on male provision. So, to fight patriarchy capitalism has to be overthrown (Blackburn *et al* 2003, Scholz 2010). The key to this theory is that neither class nor patriarchy is dominant as both are deemed important as they are *"inextricably intertwined and inseparable"*, interacting to determine the social order (DeKeseredy 1996:266, Scholz 2010).

Second-wave feminism surfaced in the late 1960s and early 1970s in post war western welfare societies, when *"other 'oppressed' groups, such as blacks and homosexuals, were defined and the new left was on the rise"* (Krolokke 2006:1),

thus second-wave feminism strived to attain full civil rights for women which included economic, intellectual, social and legal rights (Gillis *et al* 2007, Scholz 2010, Krolokke 2006). To meet these objectives feminists explored the oppression and the domination of the female body including violence against women; therefore this wave of feminism was closely associated with radical feminists, the solidarity of women, unity, and sisterhood. Further, it was in alliance with socialist/Marxist feminism located within the first wave of feminism, disapproving of women's dual workload, in that women work within the home and the workplace (Krolokke 2006).

Radical feminists criticised other feminist theories, complaining that Socialist/Marxist feminism overly concentrated on work-related issues (DeKeseredy 1996, Belknap 1996). They emphasised how male power and privilege was not just the "*root cause*" of inequality and crime, but that it has a role in all social relations, for instance, men wish to control women sexually via the power relationship located between genders (DeKeseredy 1996:264). Thus radical feminism focuses on women as victims or as survivors of male violence, suggesting power-based structures are commonly characterised by male solidarity in an organised society, and within individual relationships. Additionally, they contend that male dominance resides in the sexualised comments men use to identify women, further arguing that men fail to treat women as individuals and believing women are portrayed as sexual objects and as such, commonly depicted in pornographic material (Scholz 2010).

Consequently second - wave feminism is closely linked to the radical voices of women's empowerment and the previously mentioned differential rights of the 1980s and 1990s, including the collective shared experiences of women. Thus second - wave feminists formed "*conscious raising groups*" (Bryson 2008: 312)

aiming to enlighten and empower women. This is a crucial differentiation of second-wave feminism initiated by black and third-world women, which revealed patterns of violence relevant to the use and abuse of male power, not just sexually, but politically and otherwise (Scholz 2010, Bryson 2008). Indeed, Millet (2000:72) argues that patriarchal power was;

So ubiquitous and so complete that it appear[ed] 'natural' and until named by feminists, invisible.

However, second-wave feminism failed to recognise the limitations of the shared experience, which is primarily related to social class and race. For example, sexually harassed white-collar women, in well-paid occupations, did not automatically report harassment at work because they may not have had access to lawyers or solicitors (Scholz 2010). The same was also true of women in low-paid unskilled roles because akin to white-collar women, they too did not necessarily have sufficient financial backing to access legal representation. Generally, when a woman reports harassment in the workplace she relies on the good nature of her employer for help and for many women this help is non-existent. Importantly, from July 29th 2013 it is likely that the reporting of workplace violence and taking action will become increasingly more difficult for women in England and Wales, a result of the governments introduction of Tribunal Fees. For instance a judge will reject type B claims, which cover discrimination, if such claims are not accompanied by a fee which currently stands at £1,200.00 (Furber 2013). Further, if the perpetrator is a co-worker, supervisor, or manager the victim may potentially be placed in an extremely difficult situation, and considered a 'whistle blower'. This gives rise to

the possibility of facing future unemployment and potentially difficulties in obtaining future employment (Scholz 2010).

A further limitation of second-wave feminism is that it widely conceded that the inclusion and integration of women into political structures will not put an end to women's struggles (Gillis *et al* 2007). Consequently, feminists became disheartened and disappointed by a lack of change, resulting in second-wave feminism primarily focusing on social affairs such as sexual violence. It was this recognition which dampened the movement's enthusiasm, generating a considerable amount of debate which led to the emergence of third-wave feminism (Gillis *et al* 2007).

Third-wave feminism or 'new feminism' is a specific movement in feminist history, emerging from contested principles and uncertainties (Lotz 2007). Fundamentally it is quite different from previous movements (Teichert and Howie 2007), as it "*embrace[s] ambiguity rather than certainty engaging in multiple positions and exploration*" (Krolokke 2006:16). Third-wave feminism attempts to link the experiences of women via global sisterhood, concentrating on the diversity of women's identities as opposed to self-identity and belief (Lotz, 2007, Scholz 2010, Gillis *et al* 2007). For example, it focused on the trafficking of women, cosmetic surgery and global threats to women's rights (Krolokke, 2006). It is not one theory but many which have used traditional ideology, and proposed different politics which challenge:

Universal womanhood and articulates ways in which groups of women confront complex intersections of gender, sexuality, race, class, and age related concerns.

(Krolokke 2006:16)

Overall then, this study fits within the third wave of feminist thinking by adopting the main strands feminist theory to draw together the different elements of feminist thought, and by concentrating on three of the main feminist theories this study will explore patriarchy in the broader context. This is opposed to taking a narrow perspective and attempting to explore the patriarchal nature and structure of society from a single feminist perspective. This approach enables me to approach the women's experiences of workplace violence more holistically. For example, I previously discussed how Liberal feminism explores the unequal treatment of women, radical feminism the sexual oppression of women including women as victims, whilst Marxist/socialist feminism explores capitalist bias and women as unpaid labourers.

So far this chapter has demonstrated how a women's social standing in the home, and in the workplace, has evolved by discussing the origins of patriarchy, a traditional system of male power (Lown 1983) which has created an imbalance between genders. Likewise I have explored how feminism was adopted and developed and how it has progressed, including how it extended the meaning of patriarchy and enabled women to challenge the rights of men. This has included the oppression and subordination of women, discrimination and violence against women, and how the impact of class and capitalism has denied or restricted a woman's freedom. Moreover, the chapter has established how feminism has fought for greater acceptance of society's women which has included the workplace. The following section of this chapter will now proceed by theorizing patriarchy and how

patriarchy manifests itself, including the impact patriarchy has on working women.

3.4. Theorizing patriarchy

Belknap (1996) suggests patriarchy is a social construction which allows men and all “*what is considered masculine [to be] more highly valued than what is considered feminine*” (Chesney-Lind 2006:101). This is an imbalance which has led to the creation and propagation of gender differences, including the hierarchical interactions that take place between genders where men dominate, oppress and exploit women. Additionally, patriarchy refers to the solidarity of men, and the tight bond that exists between them which facilitates control (Walby 1990, Millet 1990).

There are two perspectives of patriarchy that should be taken into account: public and private (Walby 1990). Private patriarchy relates to women who are oppressed or limited in their personal lives. These are women who fulfil the role of unpaid domestic labourer, who, by doing so, are isolated from mainstream society (Attwell 2002). Public patriarchy applies to women who have access to both the public and private arena. However, this access is generally limited in comparison to that which society affords men, because as I previously suggested, employment, economic conditions and positions of power - despite the advent of feminism - remain under male control (Attwell 2002, Walby 1990). This is evidenced by levels of female poverty, part-time work, low income and the educational differences that exist (Heimer 2000, Attwell 2002).

In section 3.2 of this chapter I suggested that patriarchy is interpreted in various ways depending on which feminist theory is being considered at the time.

Thus it does not solely refer to the exploitation of women in the home but it also concerns the abuse of women in the workplace, which may occur in numerous different ways (Blackburn *et al* 2003). Firstly, working women are excluded from the more attractive roles and as a consequence women are concentrated in poorly paid, low-level occupations (Chappell and Di Martino 2006, Padavic and Reskin 2002). These are roles which force women to remain economically dependent, and subordinate to a man, supporting Middleton's theory of the sex-gender hierarchy (Blackburn *et al* 2003).

Secondly, the segregation of labour has commanded a higher wage for men than it has women, which has led to men's employment needs being prioritised over and above those of women (Padavic and Reskin, 2002). This occurs because in some areas of society tradition has stood still; men are perceived as main breadwinners and chief providers. In addition, numerous women are forced to work part-time or take up menial full-time roles with a less demanding workload. Therefore women gain fewer skills which are of marketable value, which maintains the cycle of segregated labour (Blackburn *et al* 2003).

Similarly, men are employed in the most powerful positions, for example they dominate parliamentary seats and senior government positions, and, with the exception of Margaret Thatcher, men have led all post-war governments. This same hierarchy is evident in the workplace. Primarily men remain in charge, and they generally occupy senior managerial roles or supervisory positions, including directorships, again establishing a sex gender hierarchy which perpetuates a system which favours males over females (Atherton 2012).

Male hierarchy is evident within many organisations. For instance, the Chartered Management Institute reveal how many more female executives are made redundant than males, reinforcing the notion of an 'old boy's network' shored up via patriarchal power structures (Atherton 2012). Despite the fact that 57% of executives are female only 40% achieved departmental head and less than 25% advanced to the role of chief executive. Additionally, females, who work until the age of 60, typically earn £400,000 less during their career than male executives (Atherton 2012). Consequently, women in positions of power are an exception as opposed to the rule, thus it naturally follows that many women remain subordinate in the workplace upholding the outdated custom of masculinity and males as master (Sorensen 1984). Therefore men not only organise the workforce, they discipline it, while females remain in roles analogous to domestic servitude.

3.5. Patriarchy, the workplace and the experience of women

The previous section of this chapter established how women's experiences of violence and abuse are shaped by power differentials located between men and women in the workplace, often fuelled by patriarchy. This affects how women are exposed to workplace violence, as it is men who largely control the work environment (Hearn and Parkin 2001).

Faludi (1992) and McDowell (1999) refer to the different forms of women's employment as the 'female work ghetto' and the 'feminised ghetto', as women are employed in particular roles including public service industries, offices, and receptions; roles traditionally labelled as female and therefore women are largely

discriminated against. So it comes as no surprise that these roles, even though they are densely populated by women, are commonly overseen by men because men retain the most lucrative and prestigious positions. For example, 68% of all office and retail staff are supervised by male managers (Morgan and Taylorson 1983, Paolie and Merllie 2000, Sorenson, 1984). Therefore, the risk of workplace violence posed to working women increases as a result of disproportionate power differentials within the gender hierarchy (Jones *et al* 2010).

Gender segregation and the division of labour have had a significant impact on working women. Historically certain professions are regarded as male only - the navy and the fire service - and often the acceptance of women into such workplaces is reflected by the number of females employed. For example, 3.6% of the total population of fire officers are female and only 10.5% of all new fire recruits are female (Fire and Rescue Service, 2009). Consequently female fire officers are especially at risk of internal workplace violence simply through being employed in a male dominated environment. In light of this, all fire brigades across the UK have witnessed acts of physical, psychological, and sexual violence (David 2003) and behaviours range from male officers:

Urinating on the floor of the women's toilets, to the circulation of pornographic videos.

(David, 2003:8)

All of these acts have a strong link to hostile sexual harassment but also they link closely to the many power relations that exist between men and women (David,

2003)⁵. Additionally, female fire officers are three times more vulnerable to bullying, degradation and sexual harassment than male officers, who are driven by the intention to push women out of the workplace (Hurley and Riso 2007). The same is also true of police women and female military personnel who are employed within a macho culture, characterised by male dominance and control which is exerted over women via male toughness and the glamorisation of violence (Martin and Jurik 1996).

Initially the integration of women into the police force was met with hostility, and this refusal to accept women manifested as sexual harassment and assault (Santos *et al* 2009, Newman 1999). Currently, only 22% of all police officers in the UK are female (36,807 females compared to 130,368 males) therefore few women achieve the rank of sergeant or chief constable (Office for National Statistics 2010, Santos *et al* 2009). The advancement of military women is similarly curtailed. Only 71% of all army and naval roles are currently made available to women, so women are not only undermined but prevented from progressing through the main routes to more senior positions of leadership, as these roles are primarily reserved for men (Ministry of Defence 2012). To illustrate levels of subordination, Newman's (1999) study into co-worker violence against female military personnel, reveals workplace violence is endemic as opposed to incidental, exposing how one sergeant "*was charged [with] 25 counts of rape of inferior-ranking women*",

⁵ Hostile sexual harassment refers to offensive, hostile working conditions. It includes sexual advances, sexualised touching, innuendos and comments. It also includes sexually suggestive material such as magazines, photographs and posters (David, 2003, Boland, 2005).

revealing that the perpetrator “*had near total power over their every move*” (Priest 1997:360). So, it is realistic to suggest that while small steps in equality have been achieved, women remain subordinate and are likely to remain so for the foreseeable future.

3.6. Gender inequality.

Gender equality is defined as an absence of discrimination (Elwer *et al* 2012:2), thus males and females should both have equal access to the same opportunities, advantages and services so they may meet their full potential (House of Commons 2014). Fair-mindedness is at the heart of this debate, particularly the concept that fairness is created via equal opportunities which “*abolish socially constructed differences*” as fairness is only established when men and women are equally valued in society (Elwer *et al* 2012: 2). Therefore the workplace clearly plays a significant role in the shaping of power and status for both men and women and, as I previously discussed in this chapter, it has created inequalities particularly in the distribution of everyday jobs (Sharma 2012).

Gender inequality forms the basis of “*gender injustice*” (Elwer *et al* 2012:2) which in the workplace is noticeable and, as I previously revealed in this chapter, sustained. The increase of employed women means the labour market is almost “*unrecognisable from where it was 50 years ago*” (The Fawcett Society 2013:8) and the circumstances that working women find themselves in is anything but ideal. Indeed, the needs of working women remain unmet and fewer women are either in work or actively seeking employment in comparison to men, but also twice as many

women, than men, remain unemployed (The Fawcett Society 2013). Thus countless women remain unpaid domestic labourers and carers; and three times as many women, than men, are forced into part-time labour.

So, despite 40 years of regulation, including the introduction of the Equal Pay Act 1970, an attempt to equalise pay for men and women who are employed in comparable work is yet to be achieved. Factors that the Home Office (2014:1) deem responsible for this include, the type of job traditionally considered suitable for women and “*the opaqueness of a pay system*” which conceals unequal pay and male dominance of hierarchical positions within the workforce”.

As I previously discussed in this chapter, the workplace is closely linked to male-identity which maintains a man’s “*sense of place*” in the world” (Holmes and Flood 2013:9), and traditionally the workplace is a place where males have “built and maintained dominance over women in most cultures” (Holmes and Flood 2013:9). However, this is not to say that men and women experience similar violence because not all workplace violence is gendered and men and women in similar roles may experience similar types of workplace violence. However, as a result of vertical segregation (in that males dominate the upper ranks) and horizontal segregation (in that women are disproportionately concentrated in some occupations), some workplaces are more dangerous than others, therefore women are disproportionately placed at risk (Evaline and Harwood, 2003).

3.7. Symbolic violence, ‘honorary males’, ‘thinking like men’

Bajema (1980) and Di-Martino *et al* (2003) propose that all forms of physical violence involve the use of power, which they believe is particularly relevant to the sexual harassment of working women. Bourdieu (2006) refers to this as symbolic violence; a mechanism of power and domination. Symbolic violence however does not arise from “*overt physical force or violence on the body*” (Bourdieu 2006:101), as it lacks the intentional quality of “*brute violence*” (Bourdieu 2006:101), therefore it is not inflicted directly to the body, but through the body; it is a form of psychological violence. In the majority of incidents the perpetrator is a male co-worker, colleague or manager thus reflecting the hierarchical and patriarchal practices of men (Bajema 1980) and Di-Martino *et al* 2003). Newman (1999) additionally argues that the sexual harassment of women is generally a manifestation of the on-going power imbalance found between the sexes, proposing it is a form of dominance which takes a sexual approach, and one which spans working sector; in particular it serves to remind women of their insignificance.

In response to this violence and in an attempt to redress the power imbalance many women assume the role of honorary males (Acker 1990: 224). Thus women present themselves as “*neutral bodies*”, by, for example, wearing a suit to work (Acker 1990: 224). Alternatively women act in ways that are socially similar to males essentially they become ‘one of the lads’. This approach minimises the threat of sexual harassment because women appear non-sexual; they do not stand out from the crowd as sexualised beings (Acker 1990, Boland 2005). Similarly, by adopting masculine traits and attitudes specific to the workplace culture, women draw less

attention and blend in, which prevents future marginalisation (Sorenson 1984, Bartram and Shoebrook 1998, Boland 2005). For example, women engaged in corporate banking, legal professions and working as directors conform to the male dominant image by wearing a suit to work. Similarly, they wear dark colours to look natural, stating a jacket is essential (Hunter 2003). Further, by acting as honorary men, women observe how men look at other women, and McDowell and Court (2008) report that many working women prefer to be an 'honorary male' as opposed to being on the 'other side' (Hunter 2003).

To gain acceptance in male orientated workplaces women need to think like men (Gelsthorpe and Morris 1998, and Hunter 2003), an approach adopted by Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s, in what was, and still remains, a heavily dominated male political arena. Additionally, in order to succeed women have to be "*tough and ruthless*" with an "*incredible need to bite everyone's head off*" (Hunter 2003:28). However, a woman may be equally punished for portraying herself as such a strong character (McDowell and Court, 2008). Margaret Thatcher for example was labelled the 'dragon', the 'old boot', and the 'iron lady', labels which reflected her fierce rhetoric and her strong willed no-nonsense political attitude. Yet, if women remain passive in the workplace they are considered too weak to manage (Boland 2005, Dobash and Dobash, 1998, Hunter 2003, McDowell and Court 2008). This demonstrates how women continue to struggle for acceptance and integration in male dominated workplaces, how women are persecuted and mistreated as 'honorary males' as well as 'weak females'.

One of the most noxious stressors for working women is sexual

harassment (Boland 2005). However opposing sexual harassment or harassment more generally equally has a negative consequence (Boggs and Giles 1998). Frequently, out of the fear of reprisal, women adopt a 'put-up and shut-up' attitude to patriarchal control or harassment, as a failure to do so leads to repeat targeting and victimisation. For instance, in 'The Canary and the Coalmine' (Boggs and Giles 1998) demonstrate how opposition toward male dominance and control marginalises women, increasing the risk of workplace violence. The paper highlights how majority-male workforces perpetuate the hierarchical structures of the workplace by ensuring female recruits know their place. Male peers substantiate this position by repeatedly sexually violating victims to force resignation, so that the workplace can revert back to an all-male environment (Boggs and Giles, 1998). Saul (2003) argues practices such as this are habitually employed by many men; it is a means of keeping women out of male dominated workforces. The following section of this chapter will now proceed to discuss how sexual harassment manifests in the workplace.

3.8. Sexual harassment in the workplace.

Sexual harassment in the workplace occurs in two ways. Firstly, 'quid pro quo' that is to say 'have sex with me or you are fired', and secondly it arises via a hostile work environment which I previously discussed in this chapter in relation to women and the military, the police and the fire service. However, both forms may exist in the workplace at the same time (Boland 2005). 'Quid pro quo' concerns perpetrators in positions of power, for instance, supervisors, managers, and

company directors. At times hierarchical men abuse their positions, and link employment decisions to sexual compliance. For example, employment benefits that include a promotion, a wage increase often conditioned on sexual favours; a failure to comply may result in punishment. If the harassment is sufficiently severe; 'sex in return for promotion', then one incident is sufficient to constitute sexual harassment (Boland 2005; Paludi *et al*, 2006).

The hostile work environment was firstly recognised in 1980 and recognised by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's guidelines on sexual harassment (Boland 2005). It refers to individuals who create adverse working conditions and unlike 'quid pro quo', a hostile environment is created by colleagues, and management who sexually harass and violate female co-workers. In comparison to 'quid pro quo' one incident, if severe enough, may constitute an offence (Boland, 2005). An example of this includes pervasive misconduct, which generates both an unfavourable and intimidating work environment and which adversely affects the dignity of workers. For instance the sexualised touching of women (Boland 2005, Sweeney *et al* 2011).

Sexual harassment incorporates a wide range of behaviours in the workplace and, as with the definition of workplace violence, it exists on a continuum including offensive language or comments, looking down a woman's blouse or up her skirt, and encompasses sex acts. At its most extreme sexual harassment includes sexual assault and rape. In addition, it involves gestures including the throwing of kisses, or other forms of sexist behaviour such as cornering women or blocking a woman's path, similarly it includes following women

around the workplace, thus incorporating unnecessary lingering, as well as presenting victims with uninvited personal gifts (Boland 2005).

Sexual harassment additionally involves the displaying of sexist or pornographic material; material which creates dysfunction by placing women under duress and manifesting as a hostile work environment. Also, pornographic material desensitises men and their inhibition to rape (Scott 2007, Boland 2005, Paludi *et al* 2006) thus determining attitudes and behaviours toward sexual violence (Scott 2007), which reinforces and contributes to a proliferation of intimidation, physical violence and rape (Scott 2007). This is a strategy which Boggs and Giles (1999: 228) suggest,

Solidifies] male dominance and female subordination in the workplace, ... by reinforcing organisationally constructed gendered power relations.

Physical and verbal sexual advances comprise a broad array of behaviours, which include questioning women vis-à-vis their sexual experiences or preferences. Additionally, this may include telling lies or the spreading of rumours in relation to a victim's sex life, or making explicit jokes or telling stories, or making sexualised comments and innuendos (Boland, 2005). Further this incorporates sexualised comments re: a victim's clothing, anatomy or personal looks, and incorporates the pursuit of an intimate relationship when the victim has already declined (Boland, 2005).

Pryor (1987) and Schneider (1982) consider internal sexual harassment experienced from colleagues, co-workers, supervisors and management as the most

prevalent form of sexual violence in the workplace. However, this may not entirely be true, as sexual harassment also occurs externally to the workplace (Guiffre and Williams 1994). For instance, male diners commonly subject female waitresses to sexual advances demonstrating how males normalise sexual violence by sexually exploiting women in public areas. Male diners, for example, may request sexual favours as part of the hospitality service provided, an abuse of power often supported by co-workers and management because waitresses are expected to appear friendly, helpful and sexually available. This demonstrates how power based structures are characterised by male solidarity, but also how dominance resides in many sexualised comments, in that women are viewed as sexual objects. Similarly, organisations work on the premise that a happy customer spends money, and the hierarchical status of males creates power which gives male management the authority to hire and fire at will, particularly if a woman fails to comply (Guiffre and Williams 1994, ILO 2011). Consequently, Gabor (2006) proposes that society, and the dominant power structures that exist within it, routinely enforce patriarchal practices and it is a cycle that is repetitious.

Frequently, society fails to challenge the sexual harassment of women and discourages proceedings against the perpetrators, which disempowers women. For instance, women fear reprisal if they 'whistle blow', which supports an earlier point, that women often 'put up and 'shut up' with workplace violence. All too frequently there is a lack of appropriate support for working women which inhibits the reporting of violence and harassment, hence women are habitually mistreated and their struggles go unnoticed, reflecting the routine inequality that is generally afforded to

women, and which promotes women as second class citizens (Belknap 1996, Farrelly 2011).

Women who encounter workplace violence are perceived in a similar manner to women who experience domestic violence and sexual abuse. For example, Dobash and Dobash (1979) wrote that those who know workplace violence are aware that it affects many women, however DeKeseredy and MacLeod, (1997:19) suggest that unless this violence is severe enough to “*warrant major concern*” it goes unnoticed and in general women are believed responsible for their own victimisation (Hans Von Hentig, 1947). The image of the ideal female victim is irrational, frequently “*tak[ing] the form of victim blaming*” a practice deeply embedded in patriarchy, classicism and power (Garcia and Clifford 2010:6). It is a natural social psychology which facilitates the denial of a suffering which may partially explain why the bystanders of workplace violence often fail to intervene (Van Wormer and Bartollas 2000).

So far this chapter has discussed patriarchy, theorising how this has impinged on women’s experiences of workplace violence suggesting that patriarchy has placed women at increased levels of risk in the workplace. In addition, I have argued that women are at special risk of workplace violence and abuse, in that they experience this phenomenon differently to men. In the light of these proposals, the latter half of this chapter will examine risk.

3.9. Risk and the violent workplace

Concern with risk is a contemporary preoccupation of western society, and

contemporary theory on risk society suggests that risk is now applied to an ever-expanding range of circumstances and uncertainties (Hudson 2003). For example, we are far more apt to consider environmental pollution and the distribution of 'harm' than we are the distribution of the 'good' in society (Giddens 1991). As a result, a pervasive preoccupation with risk management is practically routine, often conducted with little aforethought which includes the workplace. For example, there is a desire for risk to be recognised, counted and tackled but ultimately the longing to dispense with risk will never be truly satisfied, because risk is fluid and changeable (Walklate 2010, Hudson 2003). Consequently, risk is regarded as an all-embracing experience; an unmistakable feature of our culture affecting all members of society (Goodey 2005, Hudson 2003). Despite this acknowledgment, the over amplification of risk remains "*part of the common currency of cultural exchange*" (Sparks and Loader 2002: 92), hence threats are anticipated which results in a general deficit of the trust held between citizens resulting in a lack of social cohesion (Hudson 2003).

Individually, we perceive risk publicly, privately, and professionally (Beck 1992, Scott and Williams 1992, Hearn and Parkin 2001), risks that emanate from strangers, family members, close friends and acquaintances. In the workplace however women face additional risk which emanate internally from colleagues, co-workers and management, and externally from customers, clients, patients and service users (Scott and Williams 1992). This risk, whilst pervasive, is less visible given the hidden nature of workplace violence, and, as I previously established in this chapter, there is a tendency to ignore many of the incidents that arise; a practice which not only poses additional risk but increases risk levels already posed

to working women.

In contrast to this particular study, Fevre *et al* (2012:7) have conducted the “*largest, specialist research programme concerning ill-treatment in the workplace*” thus far undertaken. Their study suggests that once a range of occupational characteristics are controlled for, gender is not a significant predictor of workplace violence. In contrast to this study Fevre *et al* (2012) have employed a narrower definition of ill-treatment in the workplace, in that the definition that they utilise is far narrower than the definition that I have selected for this particular study. Fevre *et al*'s (2012) definition asks participants about their experiences of ill-treatment - in other words they explore bullying and harassment in the workplace (Fevre *et al* 2012:7). This, they propose, is due to difficulties experienced in relation to “*people interpreting bullying in widely different ways*”; they found it impossible “*to overcome these problems [when] specifying very detailed definitions*” (Fevre *et al* 2012:7) as the participants failed to fully engage with such definitions, but also, and in comparison to this current study, participants had their own subjective interpretation of what ill-treatment entails. Within this study I use a broad definition of workplace violence; one which is all-inclusive (refer to chapter 2, section 2.1), in this way capturing the lived reality of working women's experiences.

The inflation of risk has been pervasive in society , leading to increasing levels of public fear and anxiety, to the extent that the fear of crime is disproportionate to the actual risk of becoming a victim (Mawby and Walklate 1994, Hudson 2003, Kemshall 2003). Rose (1996:160), for example, maintains that we live in a “*virtually endless spiral*” of amplification; hence the risk of victimisation has

shifted to the fear of victimisation. Consequently, risk is of major concern; therefore it is applied to a wide range of social issues creating an overlap between the fear and the risk of crime, which has led to feelings of insecurity more generally (Mawby and Walklate 2002, Goodey 2005).

In light of the aforementioned points, it is unsurprising that society is confused over risk. Ditton and Innes (2005) suggest that this uncertainty has arisen for several reasons. Firstly, the over-amplification of risk and secondly as a result of the subjective and objective meanings that individuals attach to risky situations, many of which are commonly dependent upon the individual. This occurs because risk involves personal choice and navigation, which either increases or decreases an individual's anxieties (Kemshall 2003), making risk a matter for personal consideration. Therefore, risk cannot necessarily be assessed by another, or assessed on another's behalf as Fevre et al (2012) argue. However, as I previously discussed in Chapter two, the theorising of risk not only affects debates, but informs on, and shapes policy and policy outcomes, resulting in the practical solution of actuarial risk assessment (Walklate and Mythen 2011).

3.9.1 Risk assessment

Risk assessment has become an actuarial tool used for determining the level of risk posed in the workplace. It originates from databases of statistics and probabilities, consisting of information relating to many different aspects of social and economic life, and concerns groups of people and their behaviour (Goodey 2005). Therefore, risk is traditionally determined by variables such as class,

gender, race, location and lifestyle (Walklate and Mythen 2011, Hillyard 2004, Beck 1992, Goodey 2005). There is however a negative side to assessment tools, as risk assessment is not particularly useful for predicting individual risk, despite its traditional origin because, as I previously suggest, the data gathered originates from groups of people and thus it cannot be generalised or indeed tailored to the individual (Walklate and Mythen 2011). Further, Maurutto and Hannah-Moffatt (2005) propose that the relationship between risk and risk assessment, as a tool, is weak; a result of its ever-changing nature, reasoning that for risk models to remain effective they will require constant re-evaluation and updating.

Risk is a product of modernisation (Berry 2000) therefore it should be viewed as ever-changeable in order to keep pace with the endlessly changing nature of society. Further, many of the risks we face remain unknown until they are encountered. In the workplace it is impossible to risk assess a behaviour which has never presented itself, collectively or otherwise, and neither can risk be assessed when presented with an individual who is regarded as 'risky' but only in certain situations, because risk assessment is retrospective. This evidences how, if a risky behaviour has not presented itself in the past, it cannot be calculated for in the future. So, further criticism relates to the 'one shoe fits all' approach which as I previously proposed, that relies heavily on the effectiveness of staff reporting. Efficient reporting facilitates an accurate record of incidents which, when collated, can be calculated for future assessment. However, as I previously suggested in Chapter 2, workplace violence is rarely reported, thus risk levels are difficult to calculate.

“The diverse nature of the workplace defies either an easy explanation or solution”, thus the myriad of behaviours presented make risk assessment complex and difficult (Chappell and Di Martino 2006:112). In this way, it is much easier to understand why risk measures appear so generalised in the workplace, and why risk assessments are so limited in terms of effectiveness (Chappell and Di Martino 2006). However, despite these limitations, risk assessment has minimised many of the risks posed to workers, and in some instances effectively reduced the opportunity of workplace violence occurring via the implementation of barriers. In turn these barriers have aided the creation of prevention policies that seek to minimise levels of risk posed to employees, as well as levels of harm experienced by victims of workplace violence (Young 1999).

The HSE have recommend a five step approach to risk assessment (refer to Table 3 below).

Table 3 - 5 Step approach to risk assessment

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify hazards• Identify who may be harmed• Evaluate risks and the precautions required.• Record findings and implement• Review assessment and update regularly <p>The Health and Safety Executive 2013, hse.gov.uk 2013.</p>

Prevention, however, is only effective if the set policy guidelines have been adhered to (HSE 2013). For example, it is essential that lone worker safety checks are regularly conducted, even more so if the employee is a lone female. Further it is

important, where appropriate, that simple but practical target hardening measures are implemented; for instance, the introduction of safety screens to protect employees from injury, which subsequently reduces anxiety in risky situations (Chappell and Di Martino, 2006). In larger public organisations the level of risk posed to employees is reduced by employing security personnel to restrict access and egress, thus reducing the movement of people through buildings. Moreover, security personnel provide a visible presence which deters incidents of workplace violence, enabling staff to feel safer even if in reality they remain unprotected (HSE, 2012).

There are, however, several weaknesses in the HSE guidelines, in that they do not acknowledge sexual violence in their strategies for risk assessment. Neither do they take into account the risk of internal workplace violence from colleagues, co-workers and management, but rather they focus on risky interactions occurring between customers, clients, patients and service users and refer to the 'usual suspects' – for example those under the influence of alcohol and drugs. The following section of this chapter will turn its attention to an employer's 'duty of care' for employees.

3.10. Risk and the employer's duty of care

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, places a legal duty on organisations, so far as is realistically practical, to ensure the welfare of employees, which includes the risk of reasonably foreseeable violence (HSE 2012). In addition, The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 state that

organisations should decide how significant this risk is, and that employers are obliged to consider its prevention and control (HSE 2012). In doing so, employers are advised to consult with members of staff who are far better placed to understand the exposure to risk that they regularly face (HSE 2012). Furthermore, organisations are expected to educate staff and:

Provide appropriate training in crime awareness, assault, rape prevention, and [the] defusing [of] hostile situations.

(Chappell and Di Martino 2006:112).

Many organisations respond to this expectation via the introduction of self-defence training; for example some employees, depending on their role, are educated in restraint techniques whilst others participate in personal safety awareness courses (Leighton 1999). However, these measures frequently depend on the appropriateness of the technique and the nature of the workplace. Often, such skills are not transferrable between roles or they are considered ineffective, but nevertheless they are techniques which enable organisations to meet health and safety responsibilities in the workplace (Leighton 1999).

I argue, however, that often such measures do not adequately protect nor equip working women, as classroom assimilated violence is quite different to the reality of violence. Further, as my analysis reveals in Chapter 6, the advice disseminated to working women, does not address issues pertaining to internal workplace violence experienced from colleagues, co-workers and management. Despite the fact that these measures are not particularly designed for women, they

are intended to make staff feel safer (Bowie 2002) by creating a feeling of wellbeing through organisational support, even if in reality the risk remains unchanged.

The above actions highlight the use of actuarial justice in that employers calculate risk levels via risk assessment. However, individuals must complete personal training which has resulted in employees retaining responsibility for their own welfare, therefore negating demands on the employer to provide a safe environment. Thus, when given the correct information and guidance employees are considered adequately equipped to manage any risk (Kemshall, 2003).

The preoccupation with the 'risk society' has influenced the perception of risk in the workplace (Hearn and Parkin 2001) and many of the risks are frequently said to be presented by dangerous groups of people. Indeed the literature identifies high-risk individuals as the perpetrators of workplace violence (Chappell and Di Martino (2006). Consequently those who fall under this heading may be denied access to services, for instance, hospitals or pharmacies (Rose 1999)⁶. Hence Holloway and Jefferson (2003:572) suggest that the 'risk society' has produced:

Blameable scapegoats, [who are], the dishonest, inhumane, disorderly criminal 'other' to society's truthful, humane orderly self.

In essence this is an approach which ignores behaviours experienced from known perpetrators, for example, colleagues, co-workers and management (Hearn and Parkin, 2001). Similarly, it omits the patriarchal practices of men by disregarding the

⁶ High risk individuals are those primarily labelled as high-risk members of society, for instance the poor, the sick and the homeless.

conduct of the said 'orderly other'. These are the respectable men of society who choose to violate female workers in one form or another.

Frequently women report more than one type of violence in the workplace, the extent of this is considerable and repeat victimisation is an experience shared by many working women (Carr *et al* 2005). Moreover, women, in comparison to men, have an increased vulnerability in the workplace; supporting Hurley and Riso's (2007) earlier claim that working women are at 'special risk'. In light of this, this chapter will now proceed to determine the level of risk posed to working women, considering whether women are at 'special risk' of workplace violence.

3.11. The risk of internal and external workplace violence

Internal workplace violence and its associated risk was first acknowledged in the 1970s and 1980s and, although not a new phenomenon, there were concerns that incidence rates were rising. It was a recognition that members of staff were frequently the instigators of physical, psychological and sexual violence toward their colleagues and co-workers (Bowie, 2002b). Internal workplace violence is related to a wide range of behaviours, and a full summary of this risk is provided in Chapter 2, Table 1. The perpetrators of internal workplace violence may be either male or female, although David (2003) argues that male perpetrators predominately target females. Further, the perpetrators may be of equal status to the victim, or, as I previously demonstrated, they may 'bully up' or 'bully down' the hierarchical structure (Bowie 2002b).

Marsh *et al* (2004) perceive psychological violence as cruel, arguing that not

only does it damage the confidence of victims but that it destroys a victim's ability to defend themselves from future violence and abuse, creating a feeling of helplessness which undermines a woman's sense of dignity, and producing long term vulnerability (Hawkins 2010, Hinchberger 2009).

A further risk posed to working women is sexual violence which I previously revealed is a serious issue for working women, occurring because sexual violence is closely coupled with patriarchy and a male abuse of power (David 2003). A prime example of this is women who work alone, or alone alongside a male colleague, or women who work in male-dominated environments (David 2003). Sexual violence presents a significant problem for women who work alongside males, particularly in settings located away from the main workplace. This vulnerability is further increased if the perpetrator perceives the victim as enjoying the unwanted sexual attention or they think the victim is "*asking for it*" (David, 2003:7). This may be the result of tradition; a reflection of the patriarchal society within which women dwell.

Working women are additionally at risk of verbal and psychological violence (Vaez *et al* 2004) and, verbal abuse, as we know, concerns shouting and name calling whilst psychological violence concerns actions that undermine victims. For example, acting in a way which could potentially obstruct the progress of another, but also it includes threats, glares and stares, or indeed long unpleasant silences in the workplace, behaviours that intend to distress victims of workplace violence (Dale and Acik 2005).

Namie's on-going (2012) longitudinal study, into internal workplace bullying,

identifies that working women are frequently the target of psychological violence; proposing gender differences are regularly located within patterns of bullying. In particular he identifies how men prefer to openly bully and intimidate their victims, concluding that women would rather bully and intimidate colleagues privately, behind closed doors, and have a tendency to mainly target other women. In contrast to this, he found that men have no preference in relation to either gender.

Unison's findings (2009) support Namie, proposing that one in three working women are bullied by co-workers and colleagues and that this risk specifically applies to younger women who they reveal are predominantly at risk from older women in the workplace, particularly women in senior professional roles (Churchyard 2009). This is often because hierarchical women frequently misuse the power that they hold, and in a similar manner to hierarchical men they humiliate and belittle other women (Durre 2010). This, as I previously discussed, is a means of establishing but also maintaining power and control in the workplace, and a means of women protecting their own position (Hinchberger 2009). Frequently, however, women do not regard psychological violence as violence as it is commonly normalised via staff training (Morgan and Bjoerket 2006). This process of normalisation means that psychological harms are regarded as a fundamental part of the working day, and therefore to be expected (Hinchberger 2009, Dale and Acik 2005). Morgan and Bjoerket (2006) refer to the use of subtle and indirect violence such as this as symbolic violence.

As I previously proposed, external workplace violence relates to interactions occurring between female workers and customers, clients, patients or service

users. The experience of workplace violence also includes violence perpetrated by individuals who were previously unknown to the victim, but who are present at the victim's workplace with the intention of committing a crime (Graham 2011).

High risk factors that relate to external workplace violence are based on official reports gained from sources such as the HSE (2010), in the United Kingdom, or the National Occupational Safety and Health Administration (1996) (OSHA) in the United States of America. These reports aim to identify aspects of risk thus drawing attention to issues that are likely to increase the incident of workplace violence (Respass and Payne 2008). For example, interactions that involve money are risky, as is lone working, and having a mobile workplace is considered particularly risky (Respass and Payne 2008, King 1994, Gill et al 2002, Firth 2008, Farrugia 2002, Beale *et al* 1999; Chappell and Di Martino 2006, Leck 2010). Additionally, high risk factors concern individuals who are unstable and in regular receipt of healthcare, and in light of this certain positions which are traditionally populated by working women, are regarded high risk, including nursing and social work (Respass and Payne 2008, Graham 2011). (For a full summary of these high risk factors please refer to Chapter 2).

3.12. Risky interactions

The risk of workplace violence centres on and around the interactions that take place between perpetrators and their victims (Chappell and Di Martino 2006) which either increase or decrease when coupled with other factors such as location. For example, consider the roles of police officers and court officials in the Criminal Justice System (Respass and Payne 2008). The courtroom has a great deal of

security, which reduces many risks posed to workers; hence violence in the courtroom is rare. In contrast police officers are more exposed to risk because they leave the relative safety of the police station, elevating risk levels, therefore their risk of workplace violence is far higher than that of a court official. Consequently, it is the combination of risk factors that surround interactions in the workplace that are relevant and which directly relate to the incidents of workplace violence (Respass and Payne 2008).

Interactions that involve public contact are regarded as risky, particularly interactions that are client based and which are conducted on a face-to-face basis. This is particularly relevant to gender as again face-to-face interactions are a prominent feature in traditional female-dominated roles, and potentially they have the capacity to generate aggressive behaviour, which cuts across the public, private and the third sector (Jones *et al* 2010, Chappell and Di Martino 2006, ILO 2012). Estrada *et al* (2010) similarly highlight this, proposing there has been an increase in the incident rate of workplace violence for women, yet in comparison the same rise in risk is not evident for male workers, thus they argue this is an unmistakable feature of male and female dominated workplaces. For example, I previously discussed how women who work face-to-face with the public in roles that include retail, health or social care roles have an increased level of public contact. Some members of the public are capable of erratic behaviour whilst others are capable of random acts of violence and abuse (Chappell and Di Martino 2006, Hinchberger 2009, ILO 2012).

The lifestyle of an organisation, including opening hours and location, also

poses a significant risk to women in the workforce. For instance, many public and private buildings operate open door policies (Farrugia 2002), and many entrances to these buildings are primarily unsecured, especially after dark, elevating the level of risk posed to employees (Hinchburger 2009). Likewise, female workers frequently visit areas harbouring high levels of crime and disorder, which again increases vulnerability. For example, inner city workers are at a higher risk of violence than rural workers (Gill *et al* 2002, Firth 2008, King 1994).

3.13. Summary

This chapter has demonstrated how the contemporary workplace promotes change, changes that have led to the segregation of the sexes thus promoting inequality in the workplace, which remains evident today. Over time, the position of working women has undoubtedly improved, however many women remain excluded from the most prestigious roles, and those women who do breach this divide are frequently relegated to the lower ranks, thus they are employed in non-supervisory roles. It is arguable that some women do successfully rise to supervisory or managerial roles, however these numbers are limited as a woman's progression is commonly hindered by a 'glass ceiling' of promotion (Duckworth 2001).

The feminist movement has undoubtedly given women a voice, particularly radical feminists. This has brought many of the hidden issues that were faced by women into the open, thus raising the public's consciousness of women's issues and deepening the debate concerning masculinity as a normative condition. An appreciation of masculinity has led to the discrimination of women, but also to the patriarchal structures that tightly bind men together.

Moreover, in terms of equality women have travelled a long way, however, there is still a long road ahead before full equality is reached and as it stands, men remain in control of the workplace. This has resulted in the formation of a sex-gender hierarchy which favours men over and above women, to the extent that women in power are an exception as opposed to the rule. This not only increases a woman's vulnerability but creates additional risk, for example, sexual and psychological violence in the workplace. Further, this generates hierarchical power structures between women, as women in senior positions fiercely guard these roles, particularly, from younger women who they envisage as a threat.

A woman's advancement in the workplace has regularly been met with hostility. Some women attempt to counteract this by acting as 'honorary males', adopting masculine traits and practices essentially becoming 'one of the lads'. However, these women are also vulnerable to marginalisation and are frequently abused (Dobash and Dobash, 1992). Furthermore, women may be mistreated for appearing weak or indeed for remaining passive, demonstrating how working women exist within a 'no-win situation'. Therefore women frequently 'put up and shut up' vis-à-vis the violent interactions that they encounter.

I have demonstrated in this chapter how working women experience workplace violence both internally and externally to the workplace, and how this violence centres on the daily interactions that occur within it. Often these interactions are compounded by other variables which include location, staff ratio, and face-to-face interaction with the general public, all of which gives rise to violent and abusive encounters.

Further, this chapter reveals that risk is a concern in western societies, highlighting how risk levels are inflated which increases the fear of victimisation. In the workplace such risk is managed by risk assessment. However, the gathered data originates from groups of individuals therefore it is not specific, or necessarily generalisable to individual workers, especially women. Thus risk assessment in the workplace is complex, a result of the diversity located in each individual workplace, therefore limiting the effectiveness of the risk assessment. Despite this, risk assessment minimises many of the risks posed to employees thus reducing the opportunity for workplace violence to occur, often via the implementation of barriers and the introduction of policy guidelines (HSE 2013). However, these guidelines fail to recognise internal workplace violence experienced from colleagues, co-workers and management. Similarly they fail to recognise sexual violence, instead choosing to focus on risky interactions that take place with customers, clients, patients and service users. Employers however, have a duty of care to employees by reducing any reasonably foreseeable risk, and many respond to this by educating personnel in personal safety, a practice which enables employers to meet their health and safety obligations, often however such measures are inadequate.

Finally, this chapter has demonstrated a rise in the level of victimisation rates for women, particularly in female-dominated workplaces. However, this rise has not been recorded in workplaces that employ similar levels of males and females. Further, the same rise has not been reflected in the number of men who are exposed to workplace violence; indeed the level of violence for male workers remains constant. In light of this evidence, the literature suggests that women are at

an increased risk of workplace violence, and that women face additional risks to those that are posed to men.

Chapter 4

4.0. Methodology

This study is an extension of previous research conducted at both undergraduate and postgraduate level which has enabled me to build upon existing knowledge of workplace violence. This thesis adopts a feminist approach to research; though it is difficult to define a distinctive feminist method, as feminist researchers use all of the methods that are made available to “*traditional androcentric researchers*” (Harding 1987:3). It is the manner in which the feminist method is conducted and the gathering of the information that varies. For example, feminist researchers endeavour to listen carefully to female participants’ accounts of their lives incorporating their thoughts on the lives of men, including any views they may hold in relation to contrasting experiences (Harding 1987). Additionally, feminist methods pay attention to how traditional social scientists conceptualise women and their lives, observing behaviours that some male researchers may deem insignificant therefore they seek new patterns and trends within historical literature (Harding 1987). Although it would be naive to assume that all male researchers are unable to pay a similar level of attention to female participants.

The feminist researcher is said to value ethnography because it facilitates a close working relationship with the population under investigation and because feminist research aims to improve the lives of those being researched (Gilbert 2008). For this reason, the feminist standpoint not only shapes the discussion of this study it represents the interaction located between public and social knowledge, and

between the private and personal lives of women; in other words this study represents the lived reality of workplace violence in relation to the experiences of the women who participated in this study (Mauthner *et al* 2005). This is a very privileged position as it presents women with an alternative means of explaining how, over time, feminist bias has improved social science. For example at one time women were, and to some extent still remain, the outsiders in society, and this is commonly the result of the limited power afforded to women, in comparison to that which is afforded to men. Consequently, women are overlooked within scientific frameworks. However, feminism has recognised this oversight and subsequently it has developed an interest in uncovering many of the truths which men, as the more powerful members of society, have sought to conceal. In essence, feminist research has granted women access to a unique standpoint which has allowed them to determine societal truths which otherwise would have remained hidden; a practice Lindsey (2006) referred to as male-streaming. Male-stream studies have frequently taken the form of quantitative research which Bryman (2008) suggests is bound up by male values and which feminists believe borders on the exploitation of women (Bryman 2008).

Quantitative research is closely aligned with science therefore this data is considered absolute (Balnaves and Caputi 2001). It explains a phenomena by collecting numerical data, therefore this method is suited to the testing of theories and hypotheses, as opposed to the developing of them (Aliaga and Gunderson 2000). Consequently researchers, including Scholz (2010) and Bryson (2008), believe male-stream research is incompatible with feminist views, the value of

sisterhood, and the non-hierarchical relationships of women because men have repeatedly failed to capture the true essence of a woman's experiences. This is particularly evident in studies that relate to women and workplace violence. However, there is a counter argument to the suggestion that quantitative research misrepresents the reality of women's lives. Letherby (2004:177) for instance suggests that in-depth interviews should be treated with caution, "ethically and substantively" when "finding out about peoples lives" and that perhaps this approach may not always be the most appropriate to use when "challenging stereotypes, oppression and exploitation". Moreover, she argues that choosing the correct research method is far more appropriate, suggesting that the power relationship between the interviewee and interviewer will always be a consideration. In response to this, Oakley (2004:192) proposes that the evident "'paradigm war' provides a fair example of "the gendered social tensions produced within a patriarchal social structure". Nevertheless, Letherby (2004:193) counter argues that Oakley's influence concerns her due to Oakley's "status and reputation" within the field, and that it is the researcher who is ultimately answerable for what we do and produce.

Moving on from this debate, this thesis reveals there is a dearth of literature concerning how women experience workplace violence and how even the most recent studies fail to specifically separate gender. Further, it demonstrates how studies recurrently fail to include psychological and sexual violence that occurs in the workplace; violence that is pertinent to the experiences of working women. Being the archetypal outsiders female researchers have recognised this deficiency and, like myself with this study, attempt to fill any gaps

located within the literature. It is anticipated that by adopting the uniqueness of the feminist standpoint and by opening an intellectual and emotional space for working women to articulate these experiences, that a message pertaining to the empowerment of women will be conveyed more generally to the wider society (Nagy Hesse-Beiber 2012).

My aim therefore was to capture the more fundamental issues relating to women's experiences of violence and abuse, the lived reality and the everyday experience of the workplace, as opposed to the sensationalised media accounts that are so often formed and which all too often focus on dramatised physical violence as an issue (refer to Chapter 3). The most appropriate method of capturing the everyday lived reality of working women was thus to adopt a broad definition. Similarly, much of the literature surrounding women's experiences of workplace violence focuses on domestic violence and how this spills over into the workplace. Although I acknowledge that this is an extremely pressing consideration it is not an area I wish to explore in this study. In essence this study not only identifies the violent interactions that many working women encountered, it attempts to answer why and how this has occurred placing working women at the heart of social enquiry to bring rich new meaning to workplace violence. At the same time, the study seeks to identify the impact of these experiences on working women; therefore it provides a valuable in-depth insight into women and the workplace.

4.1 Methodology

Methodology is a place where epistemology (the theory of knowledge), ontology (the theory of reality), techniques and method all converge thus providing the foundation for investigating women's experiences via the feminist standpoint. This is a political action that shapes the research process, the research questions and the interviewees' responses, and it is an approach which privileges the different ways of knowing as "*knowledge is power*" (Boyd 2012:1). Therefore, the following section of this chapter will discuss how both epistemology and ontology have shaped the approach taken to conduct this study.

4.2. Epistemology and ontology

Epistemology and ontology are the fundamentals of social science and relate to the way the researcher views the world, their knowledge of the real world, and the scope and origin of this knowledge particularly in relation to how this information is obtained and understood. In essence, what we know and how we know it (Marsh and Furlong 2002:19) is revealed in the methodological approach. This shapes the theory behind this study and the method that I employed as a researcher to conduct this study, as epistemology and ontology are commonly grounded in the beliefs of the researcher (Marsh and Furlong 2002).

The theory of ontology relates to what constitutes reality and how, as individuals, we objectively understand this reality, including whether it is really possible to gain knowledge of the real world without the inference of outside influence. Moreover, it questions whether objectivity is indeed possible as although we all observe things in a similar way, inevitably observations are not objective. In

one way or another we are all “*affected by the social constructions of reality*” (Marsh and Furlong 2002:19), which questions the credibility of the ethnographer’s account (Gilbert, 2008).

The methodology then transforms into method and relates to the tools chosen to gather the data for this thesis, it informs the questions that were posed and in turn the responses that were received. There are, however, two contrasting branches of epistemology: that of the positivist scientist and the interpretivist. These branches have little in common with one another and differences are indicated in the research tradition applied to studies (Marsh and Furlong 2002). Positivism, for example, is an empirical tradition which advocates that the social sciences can achieve the same heights as the natural sciences, by means of quantitative research methods. This approach suggests that social systems consist of behaviours that exist independently of the individual; therefore positivists study the cause of this behaviour and not the effects. The results of such studies are regarded as objective, generalisable, replicable and valid, and viewed as providing an explanation for social behaviour (Marsh and Furlong 2002).

Interpretivists believe objectivity is impossible and that objective statements cannot be made in relation to the real world because the real world is non-existent; it is socially and discursively constructed as is any social phenomena that arises. However, as I previously discussed in this chapter, positivist scientists believe objectivity is measurable by means of observation. Interpretivists feel that objectivity is impossible as the social world revolves around three principles: firstly

consciousness, in that we are aware of ourselves therefore we simultaneously observe and interpret each and every observation that we make and it is this which affects what we see. The second principle is action, which is how we choose to behave. The third is unpredictability, which is immeasurable via positivist science (Marsh and Furlong 2002, Gilbert 2008). Moreover, objectivity refers to value free research which is completely impartial and free of particular values, beliefs, opinions and prejudices (Jupp 2006). Consequently interpretivists employ qualitative methods so that they may understand social behaviour by focusing on the meaning of this behaviour (Marsh and Furlong 2002, Gilbert 2008).

This thesis adopts an interpretivist approach, via a feminist standpoint, it is a method which has enabled me to explore the violent exchanges that occur between a victim of workplace violence and the perpetrator of this offence. Further, the use of qualitative research has made it possible for me to draw on the subjective experience of the interviewees, including their personal understanding of human behaviour and indeed human suffering. In so doing, this study has gained an insight into the interpersonal interactions that have led to women experiencing workplace violence, but without the need for statistical procedures and quantification (Fossey *et al* 2002). This is unlike male-stream research methods which are frequently bound by statistics (Fossey *et al* 2002). Furthermore, the adoption of a qualitative approach has facilitated an appreciation of how the interviewees of this study made sense of, and understood the violent interactions and exchanges that they experienced, whilst simultaneously empowering interviewees by providing an opportunity for them to express these experiences to the wider population (Fossey *et*

a/2002). This chapter will now move forward and discuss the approach that I took to achieve this.

4.3. Methodological approach

In the previous section of this thesis I addressed epistemology and ontology, suggesting that the majority of research concerning workplace violence is positivist, concluding that there is a scarcity of literature in relation to this. Further, I discussed how women are commonly incorporated into studies that are designed for males. With this in mind it is anticipated that this thesis will enhance any existing scientific knowledge by providing a credible, accurate and nuanced representation of this field of study (Krefting 1991) in that it contributes to a limited number of investigations conducted within this area. Further, it is hoped that my thesis will encourage forthcoming researchers to similarly ask investigatory questions that will enhance knowledge relating to the victimisation of working women.

4.4. Ethnography

To achieve the aims and objectives of this study this thesis takes an ethnographic approach which combines several methods and techniques, including that of interviewing and observation (Gilbert 2008). Ethnography was developed by the Chicago School of Sociology in the 1920s and 1930s and they promoted methods of researching urban life by studying other people's lives, routines, and experiences (David and Sutton 2004). This brought a critical edge to ethnography and gave sympathy to the powerless who became the principle focus of the Chicago School's studies (Gilbert 2008).

Ethnography was essentially devised as an informal interview and observation technique, contrasting with methods that employ large scale standardised surveys (Sherman Heyl 2002). This method is based on relaxed conversations conducted in a relatively unstructured manner and which involve a small number of interviewees, particularly as the sample size need not necessarily be prescribed, but also because the focus is on context, depth and the intensity of study (David and Sutton 2004, Gilbert 2008). One particular strength of ethnography is the way in which it bears a close resemblance to the routine ways in which people make sense of the world in everyday life (Hamersley and Atkinson, 1997), thus enabling researchers to obtain rich detailed data directly from interviewees (Sherman Heyl 2002). Further, this study employs the use of the semi-structured interview, a qualitative research method which similarly produces vivid, rich in-depth accounts that are recorded verbatim, in that they are conducted face-to-face thus respecting the irreducibility of the human experience, whilst acknowledging the role of theory and that of the researcher (O'Reilly, 2005).

A qualitative approach was deemed to be far better suited to this study as quantitative research translates words, expressions, and experiences into numerical values, frequencies and percentages, a process which ignores the data's content from potentially losing any meaning that is attached to it (Marsh and Furlong 2002). I believed that this study, as a sensitive area of enquiry, particularly lent itself to qualitative research because the experience of workplace violence is an emotive issue that deals with complex issues regarding the abuse of women. Oakley (2004:193) proposes that "emotive issues do not lend themselves well to quants"

and perhaps the answer to this paradigm debate is for sociologists to revise quantitative methods and permit the study of issues and events, giving a sense of the story behind any violent interaction that has occurred in the workplace. In particular, qualitative research pays meticulous attention to detail via explicit quotes recorded directly from the interviewees, and which are thematically organised. Such categories are not predetermined as so often happens with quantitative research, therefore these groupings provide a level of depth and detail that quantitative research, in its present format (refer to previous discussion), finds difficult to attain (Patton 2002).

Additionally, there is an element of the 'bottom up' approach to my study which relates to the previously discussed epistemological and ontological standpoint. I hoped that by engaging interviewees in informal semi-structured interviews that involve free-flowing conversation, that this would generate in-depth data, which may possibly lead to a broad range of concepts and theories (Blaikie 2003). In retrospect I feel I did achieve this aim as my intention was to allow the interviewees the freedom to express their personal experiences of workplace violence, and to explore any feelings that any such violent interactions produced, but in their own words and language and in the manner in which they understood these experiences (Blaikie 2003). This was in the anticipation that this would explain any violent interactions that had occurred with colleagues, co-workers, and managers, but also any violent interactions perpetrated by customers, clients, patients and service users.

To be of any value ethnographic research should not just concern

understanding the world more fully, the findings should be applied to society in order to bring about change (Taylor 2002), therefore one of the aims of feminist research should be to emancipate and empower, and notably this should be free from patriarchal practices (Hammersley and Atkinson 1997, Gilbert 2008). So in this study it is hoped that the interviewees' collaboration, combined with the research process and the empowerment of the victims, will hopefully raise women's awareness of workplace violence, so that positive changes may be achieved in the future.

4.5. The interview process

The designing and scheduling of interviews was a time-consuming and labour intensive process and continually presented challenges. In total 19 in-depth interviews were conducted with working women from a range of occupations and backgrounds (refer to Appendix 4).

As a lone researcher I was reliant on many things including time, which related to both my time and that of the interviewees. I was similarly reliant on the honesty of the interviewees as well as self-reliance and perseverance, especially on days when the scheduling of interviews was challenging. For instance, one weekend I travelled to Bristol to conduct three interviews, a journey which took two and a half hours from my home in Cornwall only to be let down by all three interviewees, all for very different but legitimate reasons. Naturally this was disheartening; however, perseverance was key so I re-arranged the interviews and continued with my research.

From the outset of each interview and in contrast with the approach taken by the BCSVAW, I placed no boundary on the number of incidents that an interviewee could disclose. This was important as this study aimed to capture the full range of violent interactions that the women had endured during their work life and the impact that these experiences had had on them. For example, how did the interviewees react to, and cope with, incidents of violence and had they suffered repeat victimisation in the same, or in a different organisation? In addition, each interviewee had her own unique story to tell, a story which began when she had first entered the workplace. For some of the interviewees this journey involved a number of individual incidents that spanned a range of occupations in several organisations, while for others it concerned a single incident, occupation, or organisation.

The 19 interviewees who contributed to this study were employed either on a full or part-time basis. Initially, I contemplated using structured interviews but after careful consideration concerning the complexities of workplace violence, the uniqueness of each interviewee, coupled with the diversity of each individual workplace I felt that an organised, yet unstructured, approach was far better suited to my needs and those of the interviewees. Indeed, inviting interviewees for a relaxed and informal 'chat' was far more appealing as it was less intrusive, but also less intensive for me as the interviewer (Gillingham 2000). Additionally, this was in keeping with the principles of ethnographic research and allowed for an interpretivist approach to be taken, as I will demonstrate below.

4.6. Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews are more akin to a conversation than they are a standard interview (Gilbert 2008), taking this approach enabled me to build a rapport with the interviewees, which in turn facilitated a more accurate gathering of information (Mayoux 2008, Gilbert 2008). I developed an interview schedule (see appendix 6) to frame discussions. However, during the course of the interviews it became apparent that rapport building meant that I in turn would 'trade' a significant part of myself. This is a methodological tactic that is often employed by feminist researchers, who argue that the research process is not just a means of collecting data; it is a way of sharing information involving the personal involvement of the researcher in the research setting (Hussain and Asad 2012). It is however important to strike balances between getting close enough but not too close, therefore maintaining objectivity throughout the data collection process (Gilbert, 2008). By identifying with the interviewees of this study I demonstrated that they were not alone in their experiences and that I understood how difficult it was to discuss some of the more sensitive issues that the women referred to. Additionally it confirmed that I could empathise with the women's experiences. For instance, on occasion I discussed how Ron, a male cleaner, routinely sexually violated all female members of staff in the shop where I had once worked⁷. I explained that I had never forgotten how I felt after he pinned me backwards over the shop counter, pressed himself against me, whilst thrusting his tongue in my mouth. I can still remember the acrid taste of his cigarettes and how, at the time, I felt helpless as there was nothing I could do to stop him, he was much larger than me and physically stronger.

Ron is a pseudonym given to conceal the identity of the perpetrator and all subsequent names

Furthermore, the incident, or rather incidents (as this was a regular occurrence), frequently took place at 6am in the morning and other members of staff were not due onto the premises until 9am. As women we dreaded these early morning starts and to make matters worse management and younger male staff viewed Ron as 'Jack the lad', just a harmless old man having a bit of fun, and so the abuse continued. Over time I have often reflected on these events and even more so since the advent of this research which has subsequently enabled me to be truly empathetic with the interviewees of this study.

The flexibility of the semi-structured interview gave me the freedom to explore new avenues of enquiry as they arose during the interview process. Gilbert (2008) explains that this is important as insight is gained by comparing and contrasting similarities and differences vis-à-vis reality. For instance, several interviewees referred to experiences of interpersonal violence beyond the workplace both as children and adults. Sally, for example, spoke of domestic violence: Eddie referred to both witnessing and experiencing violence during her childhood, while Ella referred to experiences of sexual abuse. This, it appeared, affected the manner in which some of the women reacted towards perpetrators during these incidents, hence some interviewees fought 'violence with violence' while others remained passive. Therefore, the women's previous experiences of interpersonal violence and abuse influenced their coping strategies.

The use of semi structured interviews gave the women the freedom to express their views in their own terms which was invaluable, especially during sensitive lines of questioning. Had the women not had this freedom, it is more than

likely they would not have divulged the same level of detailed information, particularly in regard to the sexual violence that they had encountered during their working lives. A prime example of this was Sally. Sally explained that she fought violence with violence because as a survivor of domestic violence she was now “very very direct,” further informing me she that she had had:

“ a very physical violent husband and I think that made me what I am now, I will not be dominated by a man, I will not be spoken to like that by a man, and I think that’s what made me so, so angry about the situation, especially when I didn’t do anything to start the bloody thing” [SAL].

4.7. Interview skills

All available research methods have advantages and disadvantages, and the use of qualitative research and the semi-structured interview is no exception to this. To manage these difficulties, skills are required to conduct the interviews in a manner that prevents interviewees drifting off on a tangent, and if they do start to drift the same skills are then required to bring the interviewee back to the focus of the discussion, but without dismissing what they were saying as unimportant. Charlie, a midwife, provided a good example of this, and during her interview Charlie became quite angry because the hospital trust she worked for had run out of money, and she spent a considerable amount of time enlightening me to the complexities of this in relation to not getting paid. Although this was not particularly relevant to my study it was important that I listened. Furthermore, Charlie requested that we meet in the centre of the city of Bath, a location we were both familiar with, and she asked if the interview could be conducted over coffee. Charlie however was distracted by

Bath's newly built city centre, the delights of the new roof top spa and how the old post office, that we had both once frequented, still remained in the middle of all of these modifications. So I gently, but selfishly, steered Charlie back to the main focus of the discussion: it was nevertheless a long interview and, as I previously indicated time is of major concern to the qualitative researcher (Thyers 2010). Fortunately, previous experience of interviewing at undergraduate level had taught me to expect the unexpected and to always allow plenty of time for each interview.

Eddie's interview was similarly relaxed; it was conducted in the garden of her home in Bristol on a warm sunny afternoon, although at one point Eddie left mid-interview. On her return I had to steer her back to the main focus of the interview using prompts but without being overly assertive, as I did not wish to come across as 'pushy'. Similarly, I had limited control over the interviewees responses to the questions that I asked, and this was again managed via prompts and probes, which were supplementary to the main questions that I asked but which reintroduced my line of questioning. Prompts and probes encourage the interviewee to clarify points or discuss them more deeply and are particularly useful if the interviewee is nervous or hesitant. Similarly, as previously demonstrated with Eddie, they steer the direction of the interview in that they encourage interviewees' to elaborate, explain, or elucidate a specific point that is being made. This includes, for example, phrases such as 'how did you cope?' or 'that must have been difficult' or 'what did you do?' (Creswell 2000). Additionally, they allow for reflection, appreciation, and accuracy, and were particularly useful for improving my own personal understanding of what the interviewee is communicating to me at the time. For instance, Wendy, a

pharmacy assistant continuously referred to the 'CD' keys; so I prompted and probed so that Wendy would explain the significance of these keys; it transpired she was referring to the 'controlled drug cabinet keys'. On a more practical level prompts and probes ensures a degree of standardisation throughout the interview process, so that the interviews may be compared with one another during the process of analysis (Gillingham 2000).

4.8. The advantages and disadvantages of qualitative research: validity, objectivity and reliability

One main criticism of qualitative research is the lack objectivity, validity and reliability, and this refers to the degree to which findings may be extrapolated from this study and generalised to the wider population (Myers 2000), and includes sampling bias (Thyer 2010), which I will discuss later in section 4.11 of this chapter.

Validity refers to the accuracy of my findings and reliability is a pre-condition of validity, both of which concern whether the researcher sees what they think they see, I am confident however that the validity of this study is high and that this study is not only authentic but transparent which I have evidenced via witness testimonies. I am aware that whilst this study cannot measure workplace violence or generalise the women's experiences to the wider population, it can convey a sense of the women's experiences. Feminist researchers regard validity and reliability as a "*criteria of empowerment*" as it is related to the truthfulness, replicability and the consistency of the findings of this study (Gilbert 2008:278). In this study truthfulness is demonstrated through a "*chain of evidences*", providing both credible and plausible narratives to the experiences of working women (Thyers 2010:360). In

addition, inferential statements have been supported via the provision of accurate quotes from the interviewees of this study, which provides detailed descriptions of that which is being researched (Thyers 2010). Further, and to avoid bias, all research questions were generically posed to the interviewees allowing their experiences to naturally surface throughout the research process, as opposed to me directly asking questions about their experiences of violence in the workplace in relation to male perpetrators.

4.9. Good practice and ethical approval

Prior to conducting this study I sought authorisation from the Ethics Approval Committee at Plymouth University. Ethical consideration in social research involves the principles of what is right and what is wrong, therefore it concerns the conditions that the interviewees accepted when they agreed to participate in this study. The committee initially denied permission requesting that I amended my proposal to include a scheduled date for the start of analysis and a final date for the interviewees' right to withdraw. In addition, due to the sensitive nature of this study, they requested that the interviewees' explicit permission was sought to digitally record any interviews. So having made all of the recommended amendments the application was re-submitted to the ethics board, and subsequently permission was granted.

The ethics code addresses the interviewees' right to dignity and confidentiality and includes the avoidance of any potential harm to the victim. For example, the interviewees of this study discussed issues that were both upsetting and unsettling,

substantiating how interviews can be an intrusion into the personal life of the individual (Bell 2010). Different types of studies however give rise to different concerns (Bresler 1995), therefore a firm awareness of these considerations are essential throughout the research process (Mauthner 2005). A further consideration was my own personal safety and to address this issue I entered the dates, times, and the location of the interviews into a diary which was kept in the main school office at Plymouth University. If, due to logistics, I was unable to do this, I agreed that I would email my movements to my Director of Studies (DOS), but also I advised my partner where the meeting was taking place and with whom. After each meeting concluded I would then telephone to say I was in the car and on my way home.

As qualitative research involves insightful and meaningful engagement in the field, it has the potential to generate psychological, emotional and social harms. This occurs because researchers are afforded a window into the life of another, “mak[ing] *public what is typically private, causing pain, hurt and harm*” (Bresler 1995:32) and therefore a major consideration is confidentiality. Despite giving each interviewee a coded identity, at first a number and later a name, I realised that I held a similar view to Berg (1989), who identified that coded identities do not readily conceal another’s identity, nor do they wholly protect confidentiality (Boman and Jevene 2000). Thus anonymity in most qualitative studies is practically non-existent because as the researcher, I know the identity of the interviewee, if only by sight or a coded name. It is also plausible that other individuals who know this field, or indeed who read my thesis could recognise certain details. Hence, Bowman’s (2000) argument that anonymity and confidentiality in qualitative research is

perhaps more of a pretence than an absolute reality as it is relatively simple to link interviewees with described events, albeit that this risk is minimal. Nevertheless, this was discussed with interviewees prior to the interview taking place so that they might make an informed choice as to whether to continue with the interview or not.

Each of the 19 interviewees who took part in this study freely gave their informed consent (Noaks and Wincup 2004). Importantly I ensured that all interviewees were aware of their right to withdraw at any stage prior to the 1st September 2011, assuring individuals that if they did choose to withdraw any personal data would be destroyed; including any digitally recorded data and the interview transcript (Roberts 2003) but thankfully none chose to do so. The 1st September 2011 was significant as it was the scheduled commencement date for the analysis of the data. In addition care was taken not to reveal private and sensitive information that could in any way harm, embarrass or endanger the interviewees for example, my thesis does not disclose the location of the organisations that the women worked for, or specific data that would identify any one particular individual. This was important as some women discussed personal information pertaining to colleagues, co-workers, and management, imparting knowledge that could potentially lead to a loss of employment (Bresler 1995; Boman and Jevne 2000; Social Policy Association 2012). Furthermore, the women discussed issues of a sexual nature, something which society often regards as 'no one else's worry' other than the individual concerned, so again anonymity was essential (Gilbert 2008).

4.10. Sampling and access

As I previously discussed the interviews took place during the summer of 2011 and the sample consisted of 19 females aged between twenty-two and fifty-five. In terms of duration the interviews averaged between one and three hours, this was however dependent on how well I engaged with each individual during the interview process. The women originated from a range of social backgrounds and a wide variety of occupations, which spanned both the public and private sector, but also some of the women referred to incidents of violence and abuse which they had encountered in past roles. This proved fruitful as it provided a wide scope of occupations for consideration, but also it enabled me to track the women's experiences of violence over time and as they moved from occupation to occupation. For example, several interviewees told me how they had resigned from their post as a result of workplace violence, while others revealed seeking alternative employment as a result of their poor experiences. This enabled me to make comparisons between those who had remained in the same post for many years despite experiencing workplace violence and those who had been employed in a multitude of roles.

Each workplace was treated as an individual unit within a set, therefore I considered each workplace independently, as opposed to grouping occupations into clusters (refer to Appendix 4). In this way, the experiences of the women were explored on their own individual merits, but at the same time the design of my research facilitated the exploration of these experiences collectively. This allowed for comparisons to be drawn between sector, class, and occupation, making it

possible for me to look at the meaning of workplace violence for all female workers, not just women in the previously discussed high risk roles (Taylor 2002). This was in contrast to other studies that have previously explored one particular sector or occupation in this field, such as women in the armed forces, nursing or the police service.

As I previously noted in this chapter the interviewees of this study came from a variety of backgrounds, occupations, and they varied in age. In addition to this, the sexuality of the interviewees differed: for instance, twelve of the women were heterosexual, seven lesbian and one bisexual although none of the interviewees were approached on the basis of their sexuality or age. The sampling was however purposive in terms of gender in that I only recruited women in order to fulfil my research criteria. Initially, when I engaged with the research process I believed I would need to carefully select interviewees on the basis of their experiences, specifically targeting victims of workplace violence. This threw up many dilemmas in relation to how to approach potential interviewees, although this then proved not to be an issue for several different reasons. For example in 2011, I attended a careers event at Plymouth University during which the focus of my study was discussed. Afterwards I was approached by Sally who described having what she deemed as a “*horrible experience*” [SAL] in the workplace, so I asked Sally if she would like to participate in this study, subsequently entering her name and contact details into my diary and consequently we met several months later for an interview. On another occasion I arranged to interview Paula, however she was running late and she asked her lodger Gina, to look after me. Gina enquired about the nature of my study and out of the blue she asked “*shall I tell you what*

happened to me?" [GIN], so we conducted an impromptu interview. Further, I decided not to recruit women on the basis of their experiences, but rather just ask individual women if they would like to take part in my research. Several of the women suggested they had not experienced workplace violence, which was interesting as each of the women that I interviewed had experienced this phenomenon in some shape or form; this highlights how some women are unaware of what constitutes workplace violence. Similarly, this indicated that I was in fact getting to the core of the 'lived reality' and the 'every day experience' of the working women's lives in relation to the women who participated in this study, which was indeed one of the core aims of this study. From the above, it is evident that there was an element of snowballing involved in the research process in that the participants led me to friends who might like to participate in this study, and discuss their experiences with me.

'Snowball sampling' is a useful technique, as I have discussed above, in that it involves one interviewee putting the researcher in contact with another and it is based on social networking (David and Sutton, 2004), as it relies on social contacts between individuals (Beardsworth and Keil 1992). There are however issues that relate to the use of snowballing in research; for example, Bryman (2004) suggests that the notion of a population may be problematic in some circumstances, in that whilst it is suited to a qualitative research framework, it is unlikely that the sample will be statistically representative of the population and therefore it is not possible to generalise from a such qualitative sample. As a result of which this study is only able to 'generalise theory' in relation to the distinctive nature in which women experience violence in the workplace.

Over time I built up a list of potential interviewees by storing their contact details. These were women whom I came in contact with and who indicated they might like to participate in this study in the future, the number of whom initially totalled thirty. Yet despite this list, this process proved to be far from simple, as I will discuss in the following section of this chapter.

4.11. Practical issues in the field

At an early stage in the research process I realised that by asking potential interviewees if they had experienced workplace violence they would simply reply 'no'. So I changed my approach, instead asking "have you ever had an unpleasant experience in the workplace"? It was at this point that it became evident that I did not need to target specific women, and that the label 'workplace violence' was indeed a hindrance: women do not label their experiences as violence or bullying *per se*, which is a result of definitional issues and the lack of awareness which I previously discussed in chapter 2, section 2.3.

During a meeting with Professor Duncan Lewis, who had recently completed a large scale study into ill-treatment in the British workplace (Fevre *et al* 2012). I learnt that he too had encountered similar problems when he spoke to participants⁸, in that they failed to relate to workplace violence yet readily identified 'ill-treatment,' evidencing how individuals understand workplace bullying or violence in a subjective manner. At the same time this was a little concerning as I did not wish the

⁸ Professor Duncan Lewis is located in the Business School at Plymouth University.

interviewees to suddenly feel vulnerable in the workplace as a result of realising they had been a 'victim' of violence and abuse, when they previously believed that the perpetrator "didn't mean any harm" [SHA]. To resolve this matter I maintained contact with the interviewees who took part in this study: the day after each interview was conducted I telephoned the women to thank them for participating, a practice which enabled me to check on their welfare.

From the original list of 30 potential interviewees I conducted meetings with 19 women. Each of the interviewees who declined did so for specific, but rational, reasons including work commitments and timing. The interview process, as I previously discussed, involved locating interviewees, arranging mutually agreeable venues, and travelling to pre-designated locations. Occasionally however interviewees did not return my calls, texts or emails, or they were unable to commit as they were going on holiday, or too busy, and several suggested that they simply forgot. So this was a process which took far longer than I had originally anticipated. Eventually, and somewhat behind schedule, I completed the remaining interviews, which enabled me to move forward with my study.

The interviews were mainly conducted in private. However, due to logistics two of the interviews were conducted in a public area: one (as I previously discussed) in McDonald's and the other in a pub. The latter situation proved problematic; before the interview took place I situated the dictaphone on the table directly in front of the interviewee but despite doing so the dictaphone recorded an excessive amount of background noise. As a result, I had difficulty in hearing the interviewee's voice for transcription purposes. To rectify this issue I downloaded

software onto my computer that would digitally clean the recording and which enabled me to transcribe the interview in full, however once more this process took far longer than I had anticipated. Looking back this was the correct thing to do, as re-interviewing the women would not have yielded the same level of detail that they had revealed at that very first meeting.

A further interview was held in my home because the interviewee lived with her mother and privacy was an issue as she did not wish her mother to know that she was unhappy in her role and struggling to cope due to her experiences of workplace violence. Another three interviews were conducted in an office at Plymouth University, whilst another was conducted privately in an office at the interviewee's place of work. As a result all interviews were conducted informally and in a relaxed environment and without the worry of colleagues, co-workers or management overhearing (Noaks and Wincup 2004). This was a prime consideration in this study as the overhearing of information might potentially have led to the interviewee being classed as a whistle-blower⁹. Furthermore, by conducting interviews away from the workplace it was anticipated that the interviewees would feel less inhibited in their responses. A further issue, that I previously made reference to in this section, was time particularly in relation to falling behind schedule; because as a lone researcher resources are limited and at times it was difficult to manage, and avoid timetable clashes as I could not be in two places at once which once more eroded my schedule.

⁹ Whistle blowing is regarded as problematic. One reason people commonly cite for not reporting any wrong doing is a fear of retaliation, and the belief that raising any concerns will not make a difference.

4.12. Gate keeping

'Gate keeping', the activity of controlling or limiting access to the interviewees, was not a significant issue during this study because, as I previously discussed, the majority of interviews were conducted away from the workplace. In other words the women's employers were unaware that they were involved with or had participated in this study. Despite this not being a major issue, it was relevant, for example, I was particularly keen to interview two women who I knew had been involved in violent incidents in the workplace. I approached one woman whom I knew quite well for an informal chat, and who worked in a local shop where a robbery had occurred. She explained that she had not been involved in this incident but of the two women who had, one left out of fear of repeat victimisation, while informing me that the other victim was her daughter-in-law. She made it very clear however that I was not to speak to her daughter-in-law about this and it later transpired that this incident was a forbidden topic in the workplace, in that management forbade staff to discuss it. So in effect there were two 'gate keepers'; mother-in-law and management. Although disappointed I fully respected the gatekeeper as I did not wish to upset or disturb the relationship between mother and daughter-in-law, or between employer and employee, in that one would undermine the other (Roberts, 2003).

Similarly to the above incident, another potential interviewee indicated that she too was keen to participate in this study. Before doing so, she decided she would have to seek permission from management as "*they may not like it*". This interview never did take place, and this was a scenario mirrored by another

potential interviewee who was employed by a national rail company. The following section of this chapter will now turn its attention to the process of data analysis.

4.13. Analysis, transcription, themes, categories, and codes

On several occasions, after completing interviews, I returned home feeling somewhat dejected, believing that the interview had generated minimal data, or that the data was not particularly relevant to this study, or that I had forgot to ask an important question. These fears however proved unfounded as, having fully transcribed all of the interviews I found that the data was richly laden with detailed information. Gillingham (2000) believes this occurs because interviewing is an intense process and one which generates a wealth of information which is difficult to absorb or process at the time. Thus it became evident that you cannot fully understand nor study and analyse an interview until the transcription process has been fully completed.

Having transcribed all of the interviews in full I reviewed the data and made notes of recurrent and emergent themes, whilst at the same time highlighting and coding essential groupings of information (Fossey *et al* 2002). These were common themes that, when combined, formed meaningful relationships and which developed a narrative of core elements that were representative of the experiences of the women who participated in this study (Fossey *et al* 2002). For example, how the women reacted when encountering violent incidents at work, or who they had reported these experiences to. Emergent themes such as those

described allowed for the data to be placed into categories of responses, some of which were pre-determined, for instance, the impact of workplace violence. Other categories were established via the women's inferences, for example, patterns or trends located within the interviewees' experiences which needed to be made explicit. One such example of this is how the majority of interviewees revealed that workplace violence had caused them to cry, a process of categorisation described by Richards (2005) as inductive.

The categories which evolved during the process of analysis were varied. Some were descriptive and related to age or occupation whilst others were topical, which I allocated to specific themes. These areas of focused interest included the women's experiences of training and the impact workplace violence had had upon their health. Other categories were analytical which led to the emergence of theory through analysing what the interviewees had said, or by reflecting on the meaning of these narratives. In addition to this, analysis was comparative as it involved organising, evaluating and grouping information together which was later refined. Further, categories were combined with other categories, in this way forming patterns and trends which enabled deeper analysis and which additionally explored the quantity and substance of the human experience (Bryman 1998). These categories gave rise to newly discovered themes, for example, they revealed how a number of women fought violence with violence. Other categories were compared to one another, thus exploring workplace violence from a different perspective which united the information expressed by the interviewees, these were judgements on latent meanings that made visible the invisible (Richards 2005). On other occasions

the interviewees rhetorically articulated the same point but in a different manner to one another (Gillingham 2000) enabling the construction of a list of codes. This, however, became overwhelming, and at an early stage I decided to employ NVivo, a Qualitative Data Analysis computer software programme, specifically designed for qualitative researchers. The use of NVivo simplified the process of coding thus it facilitated a sense of control over the data, as opposed to the data controlling me.

4.13.1. NVivo

NVivo was specifically designed to aid the management of large quantities of unstructured data, which has enabled researchers to make sense of information (Ereaut 2012). As a programme it allows for the efficient coding and categorisation of material and eliminates the need for endless paper shuffling. However, for a more in-depth discussion of the effectiveness of NVivo as a tool, and its capabilities as a computer program, refer to Barry (1998), Dohan and Sanchez-Yankowski (1998), and Fielding and Lee (1997).

Qualitative data analysis programmes are believed to have quietly revolutionised qualitative research (St John and Johnson 2000), and programmes have developed a wide range of capabilities as a response to the specific needs of researchers who seek an effective means of managing and analyzing data. These programs are however, constrained; for instance they cannot develop conceptual categories and themes that give an insight into a particular phenomenon, nor indeed can they develop a theoretical understanding (St John and Johnson 2000). The strength of these programmes lies in their ability to manage copious amounts of

data, store transcripts and journals, and provide flexibility. This reduces the amount of time spent on task handling because once the information is uploaded to the computer programme it is instantaneously at hand. For example, this eliminates the copying, cutting, filing and pasting of data, which ultimately speeds up the information retrieval, leaving more time for researchers to concentrate on the analysis. Furthermore, NVivo has the ability to create and store unlimited codes, which can be re-defined, merged or developed - or indeed deleted - at any stage during the research process, something which I found particularly useful (St John and Johnson, 2000). Thus NVivo facilitated the process of creating my coding frame (refer to appendix 5)

There is a counter argument that software programs such as NVivo has led to a shift of focus within qualitative research, emphasising quantity as opposed to meaning, thus the software is believed to have constrained or indeed distorted analysis (Fossey *et al* 2002). Additionally, it has been suggested that software such as NVivo has caused researchers to “*drown in the number of codes that can be generated*” (Fossey *et al* 2002), although I would argue that I was drowning in ‘colour codes’ long before I employed the use of NVivo. Similarly it has been suggested that due to the use of NVivo researchers cannot see the “*conceptual forest for the trees*” (St John and Johnson, 2000:398), because NVivo undermines analytical procedures and interpretive processes (Refer to Rice and Ezzy (1999) and Wietzman and Miles (1995) for a deeper discussion of these issues). I would again argue that this is not the case, contending that computers cannot ‘replace’ the conceptual process, as it is a process which is solely reliant upon the researcher (Fossey *et al* 2002:719).

In addition to this, qualitative research software is thought to de-contextualize and de-humanize researchers, distancing them from data and objectifying the relationship between the two (St John and Johnson 2000). As a result data is thought to lose its richness, which is the very critique that led to the development of qualitative research programmes in the first instance. I propose, however, that this suggestion may be a step too far for the reasons that I have discussed in the previous paragraph; that computer programs simply aid the management of large quantities of information, ultimately reducing paper shuffling which strengthens the bond between the researcher and the data.

4.15. Summary

This chapter has discussed how research has overlooked working women's experiences in the workplace, including how this study has sought to raise the awareness of the gendered nature of workplace violence. In so doing this study has employed a feminist approach to the research because the majority of research conducted in this field is indeed male-stream, which ignores gender. To improve the understanding of women's experiences of workplace violence nineteen semi-structured interviews were conducted with working women, all of which generated a wealth of new knowledge which has enabled my research to build upon the limited amount of information that was previously available. The interviews have not only explored new avenues of enquiry that arose from the research process, but produced extensive information relating to existing theories.

Despite the fact that this study is not generalisable to wider society, it is

robust. Therefore it contributes to existing knowledge, enabling future researchers to build upon new and emergent themes and trends which have become evident during the research process. Moreover, this chapter has detailed the methods chosen to conduct this study; it has discussed the sample of interviewees including their social backgrounds. It has additionally discussed a variety of workplaces including roles that have stretched between both the public and private sector.

This chapter has additionally debated the use of computerised programmes in qualitative research; programmes that are designed to aid data analysis. It has argued that it is impossible to replace researchers with computer programmes as this is a process which de-humanises qualitative research. Significantly, this chapter demonstrates that it is not possible for such programmes to replace the conceptual process of the researcher. However, such programmes do have their place in that they greatly enhance the experience of qualitative research by reducing paperwork and improving organisation so that more time may be given over to analysis.

Finally, this chapter identifies some of the challenges that qualitative research presents in that it underlines the degree of reliance that the researcher, and the researched, have on one another. For example, I was reliant on the integrity of the interviewees and in turn they were dependent on me to keep them free from potential harm in terms of confidentiality and identity. Further, there was a constant awareness of the responsibility that I had to each of the women who participated in this study. This was the result of the recognition that even when allocating code names, locations, and other such details, it remains difficult to fully protect anonymity

in this type of study.

Chapter 5

5.0. The experience of women in the workplace

This chapter sets out the experiences of the women who took part in this study. However, before doing so it will re-establish the definition of workplace violence, highlighting the difficulties that I faced when categorising workplace violence for the purpose of analysis. Following this, the chapter discusses why I formulated a typology of my own and how this typology has reduced the level of crossover that existed previously between the types of violence commonly experienced in the workplace, and how these experiences were categorised. The typology will introduce a type of violence that is specific to workplace violence, that is in itself gendered - sexual violence - which may be applied to both males and females in the workforce.

The chapter will then summarise the findings of this study in order to contextualise the deeper discussion that will take place in relation to the interviewees' experiences. Again, these discussions will include forms of victimisation that are not necessarily gendered in themselves in that they are relevant to both males and females in the workplace. They are however important and include behaviours such as verbal-psychological violence consisting of name calling, humiliation and vocalised threats. They additionally include non-verbal-psychological violence which incorporates glares and stares, but also intimidatory body language that is frequently used to threaten women in the workplace.

Following this, this chapter will turn its attention to direct and non-direct

physical violence. Non-direct physical violence is aggression aimed at the individual and includes the throwing or the smashing of items. These are acts of violence that intend to frighten the victim, but not necessarily cause physical harm. However, they may psychologically damage the victim. Direct physical violence is more self-explanatory, in that it incorporates, for example, kicking, slapping or the pushing of women in the workplace.

Finally the chapter will address sexual violence in the workplace. These experiences are based on a continuum of behaviours that range from sexualised comments and innuendo, to inappropriate touching, to incidents of sexual assault, which was experienced by the women who participated in this study, and which evidence the gendered nature of some types of workplace violence. This will additionally include how the interviewees tolerated sexual violence, whilst exploring the presence of any warning signs that may have existed as an antecedent to such acts of sexual violence.

5.1. Defining workplace violence

This study defines workplace violence according to the definition used by the European Commission (1995) (refer to section 2.4). This particular definition was selected by myself, as it is the definition utilised as a guide for organisations, agencies and employees. Therefore it is anticipated that the interviewees of this study will competently identify workplace violence and their experiences of this, according to this definition.

The European Commission's (1995) definition is broad, allowing for the consideration of both the psychological and physical aspects of workplace violence, in that it identifies that physical violence is not a specific component of workplace violence. Thus it recognises that psychological violence has a significant impact upon victims (Beale *et al* 1999a, Leather *et al* 1999, Barling 1996). Furthermore, the European Commission's (1995) definition has identified that workplace violence, perpetrated by colleagues, co-workers and management, plays an important role in the victimisation of employees. It does not, as so often with other definitions, include or disregard the relationship between victims and the perpetrators, thus it fails to distinguish internal and external workplace violence. Instead this is left open to interpretation (Barling 1996).

In addition to the above definitional issues, problems exist in relation to the categorisation of workplace violence, as previously it has been characterised in a number of different ways (Lawoko *et al* 2004). The literature review, for example, drew attention to physical violence, revealing how the media focus on workplace violence for the purpose of sensationalism (refer to section 2.5.1). Likewise, the literature highlights the impact of psychological violence in the workplace which aims to harm its victims via words and actions, suggesting that psychological violence is often underestimated in the workplace (refer to section 2.5.2).

Further, I have drawn attention to the classification of workplace violence, in the form of a typology, and how this was designed. The typology (refer to Chapter 2, Table 1) demonstrates the type of workplace violence experienced, and reveals the relationship between the workplace, the perpetrator and the victim. Yet despite

categorisation workplace violence remains unclear, and significantly typologies have neglected working women, and this includes sexual violence toward women. Thus, Chapter 2 concluded that despite many advances in the defining of workplace violence it is a concept that remains unclear. In light of this lack of clarity, this study proposes the need for a universal typology of workplace violence that will simplify analysis. I have, therefore, implemented a new typology that reduces the level of interplay presently located within existent typologies. In addition, my typology positively identifies the need to specifically integrate women's experiences of sexual violence so that sexual violence, and its associated behaviours, is not neglected in future studies. Therefore women's experiences of workplace violence have been analysed according to direct and non-direct violence, verbal and non-verbal-psychological violence and sexual violence in the workplace.

5.2. A summary of the findings

The findings of this study reveal that each of the 19 interviewees who took part in my study experienced workplace violence, and that this occurred either internally from colleagues, co-workers and management or externally from customers, clients, patients or service users. Indeed, over two thirds of the interviewees had experienced incidents of both internal and external workplace violence. As a result of this each of the 19 interviewees who took part in this study was a repeat victim (refer to Appendix 4), with the majority experiencing more than one category of violence and /or abuse during their working life. Indeed, several of the women had experienced 4 or more of the 5 categories of violence contained within my typology. In terms of the type of violence

experienced, the findings suggest that the majority of interviewees experienced violence and abuse that was verbal and non-verbal-psychological violence and direct and non-direct physical violence. Furthermore, over half of the interviewees suggested they encountered non-direct physical violence, whilst just under half of all of the women in this study said they had experienced direct physical violence in the workplace. Further over half of the women [10] in my sample had experienced sexual violence in the workplace.

Although the results of this study are not generalisable to the wider population, this study proposes that workplace violence may be a far more common feature of working women's lives than the literature has previously indicated. The findings additionally reveal that some women frequently report more than one type of violence (Dale & Acik 2005), revealing that this is an experience shared by many working women, highlighting that the extent of this may be considerable. Thus working women have an increased vulnerability in comparison to working men (Dale & Acik 2005) which I will expand upon further in this chapter. Further, the gendered nature of sexual violence in the workplace that women experience heightens their vulnerability. The following section of this chapter, 5.3, will discuss how the interviewees of this study experienced workplace violence according my own typology as set out above and in line with the EU definition of workplace violence.

5.3. The problem of defining workplace violence

The women who took part in this study expressed concern over health and

safety training, believing that their experiences of such training did not enhance their knowledge of workplace violence. This was evidenced by the majority of interviewees in this study, many of whom were unaware of the definition and the types of violence that this phrase refers to. Toward the end of each interview I asked each of the women if they could summarise workplace violence in one sentence. The majority struggled with this task. There were long pauses and silences as they reflected upon what this term meant to them. What was interesting, however, was that not one of the women referred to sexual violence in the workplace, and more than half believed violence in the workplace was chiefly related to physical violence. For instance Leanne, a waitress, said:

“Probably at face value, ordinarily I’d assume, I mean the first thing to come into my head would be a physical manifestation of workplace violence” [LEA].

While Carol suggests:

“Only in the broad sense of the term really. In the sense of physical violence really whilst you are going about doing your job” [CAR].

When I asked Chris this question she related this to feeling ‘at risk’ in the workplace; a reflection of her experience with a stalker:

“Oh gosh, I would say, overstepping the mark and pushing someone to the point where they feel that they are at risk. Whether it generates incidents of being at risk or you just feel at risk, I don’t know” [CHR].

My findings revealed that the terminology used to describe this phenomenon, for example, ‘workplace violence’ confused employees, although Chris did appear to

have a wider view of workplace violence than many of the women that I interviewed (Beech and Leather 2006, and Paludi *et al* 2006). Consequently, my study agrees with Waddington (2005), that employees can only be protected from workplace violence if there is clarity in definition. Furthermore, this signifies that the HSE's message, concerning the reporting of workplace violence fails to reach employees, or that information is not being passed down from management to employees. This has created a significant circular issue because if women cannot define workplace violence, how may they report incidents to the HSE; an argument which is related to the discussion held in Section 5.1, defining workplace violence.

5.4. The women's experiences of verbal-psychological violence

Verbal-psychological violence refers to the more obvious forms of violence that commonly occurred in the workplace, including incidents of shouting, swearing and name calling, but also it incorporates vocalised threats. Of the 19 interviewees who took part in this study the majority [18] had experience of this type of behaviour, indicating that verbal abuse, in this study, was a far more regular feature of a working woman's daily routine than the literature had indicated. Further comparisons have identified that verbal abuse was as pervasive internally to the workplace - from colleagues, co-workers and management, as it was externally - from customers, clients, service users and patients. In addition, in this study this pattern of abuse remained constant regardless of working sector.

Lydia, a registered learning disability nurse described how, when she entered service users' rooms, she was frequently greeted with verbal aggression,

for example, *“What do you want? Now fuck off” [LYD]*, and this was similar to experiences shared by Sarah, a paramedic:

“You get the verbal ones all the time [who say] ‘Oh get off you fucking wanker” [SAR].

Likewise, Charlie a midwife explains, *“You do get verbal abuse, masses and masses of verbal” [CHA]*, this however is not solely from patients as one may initially think:

“You know its partners and family mostly; you know the husbands there, mother and father in law’s there” [CHA].

One particular factor which caused verbal abuse to feel so invasive is the immediacy of the perpetrator to the victim during unpleasant interactions. When male perpetrators shouted they had a tendency to stand in close proximity to working women causing them to feel vulnerable. For example, Lucy, a supply teacher described how one pupil:

“Had given me quite a lot of abuse, quite close, [which was] why I got upset” [LUC].

Other interviewees in this study described how verbal abuse was frequently coupled with other types of violence. For example, Sally, a customer services advisor, portrayed how the Managing Director lost his temper with her as a result of a perceived wrongdoing on her part (perceived wrongdoings will be discussed in depth in Chapter 6, Section 6.2). Firstly Sally was isolated from the rest of the workforce as she was called into the manager’s office. Once inside the manager shut the door and closed the blinds, causing Sally to feel helpless and vulnerable, as she was alone and uncertain of what he might do next. This incident culminated in Sally

being subjected to verbal abuse which was coupled with non-direct physical violence:

“He [the managing director] was shouting ‘I’ve had enough’, and he started to bang his fists the desk” [SAL].

Sally both described and related this behaviour to that of a sobbing child as throughout the incident:

“He was getting more and more wound up and angry...to the point where his voice is screaming at me, and he’s shouting. To the point he’s totally out of breath. You know how a toddler screams and goes huh, huh, huh, he was like that” [SAL].

Verbal abuse is a common practice in the workplace and its existence highlights how women often, and notably, describe more than one type of violence (Carr *et al* 2005).

Some of interviewees described how the perpetrators of such violence continuously walked towards them during abusive episodes, forcing them to retreat. Not only did the women feel this was intimidating but as with Sally above they felt trapped, thus heightening their sense of vulnerability, again due to the uncertainty of what may occur next. To counteract this feeling several of the interviewees attempted to withdraw from the situation. For example, Wendy, a pharmacy assistant, described how one disgruntled customer proceeded to abuse her as he was angry that Wendy would not dispense a prescription to his underage son:

“He stood in the shop and went to town on me, and I mean stepping towards me, and I had nowhere to go, I mean pinned against the counter. He was shouting really loud” [WEN].

Other women described standing behind counters in an attempt to place a barrier between themselves and the perpetrator, hoping this barrier would not be crossed. Thus the victims indicated that they felt safer when they believed they had an element of control during any violent interaction that might occur, even if in reality they did not. Interestingly, the majority of interviewees in this study reported that there are no designated safe areas in their respective workplaces; therefore they had nowhere to retreat to during abusive interactions.

Even though the interviewees of this study indicated that it was men who primarily made use of verbal abuse, this type of behaviour was not exclusive to men. Several interviewees describe how female perpetrators similarly abused them. Eddie, for example, discussed events when entertaining the Queens Guards suggesting:

“The women as well were chanting fuck off, ‘fuck off, fuck off’” [EDD].

This was not the first time that Eddie had experienced workplace violence from military personnel:

“They chant ‘show us your tits’, it’s the normal routine” [EDD].

It may be argued that the female soldiers are acting as honorary men behaving in a certain manner so they may fit into a male dominated environment, thus giving the impression they are ‘one of the lads’ (Acker 1990); in this way they go unnoticed. Similarly, it could be argued that this is a learnt behaviour which female military personnel have adopted from their male colleagues, as ‘fitting in’ places women at a decreased risk of violence and abuse. Similarly, the women were drawing minimal

attention to themselves by 'blending' with male colleagues, making themselves less of a target and preventing future harassment and/or marginalisation in the workplace. In essence they were minimalising risk.

Leanne, a waitress, described one dis-satisfied female customer who:

“Spoke to me like I was actual rubbish... following me around the restaurant, shouting at me” [LEA].

This reinforces how verbal abuse is frequently accompanied by other types of workplace violence (Dale and Acik's 2005). During this incident the perpetrator additionally psychologically abused Leanne by following her around the restaurant as she attempted to flee the area and retreat to a safer location (Workplace safety is discussed fully in Chapter 6, Section 6.9).

5.4.1. Name calling

I previously identified how verbal-psychological violence includes name calling, and Charlie, a midwife, described feeling particularly upset when attempting to reunite a Muslim woman with her sick baby. In this incident the woman shouted at Charlie, labelling her *“a racist”*:

“I think what upset me about being called a racist, is that I wasn't being racist I was just trying to get her to her baby” [CHA].

Likewise, Julie, a benefits officer, described a similar experience in which a female service user branded her *“a liar”* and *“a thief”*, a result of not receiving her expected housing benefit. Both victims were upset as at the time of the incident as they were doing their utmost to be helpful.

Other women also described being called names in the workplace, commonly referring to male perpetrators. When I analysed the data I found that name calling by male perpetrators was far more personal than the name calling of female perpetrators. Ellie, for example, described how one male customer called her a “*four eyed witch*” [ELL] because she wore glasses; other interviewees recounted how they were called ‘*thick*’, ‘*stupid*’, ‘*a liar*’ or ‘*a wanker*’. It was Lou, however, who summed up what the majority of interviewees were expressing in relation to verbal-psychological violence in the workplace, as during her interview, she suggested:

“You name it, honestly ‘useless’, ‘bitch’, ‘whore’, anything you can think of!” [LOU].

Even though it could be argued that name calling in the workplace is relatively low on the spectrum of violence, these incidents clearly identify an overlap between the fear of crime and risk, which was similarly recognised by Mawby and Walklate (2002) (refer to Chapter 3, Section 3.7). This additionally demonstrates how individual victims attached subjective meanings to the situations that they found themselves in, and that these meanings should never be underestimated.

5.4.2 Humiliation in the workplace.

Many of the interviewees described being publically humiliated in the workplace, and that often perpetrators imply they are useless or incompetent. Lydia, for example, a registered learning disability nurse described feeling inadequate during one such incident. During a serious incident in the hospital unit a male police officer, in attendance at the scene, repeatedly implied she was “*rubbish*” [LYD] at her

job. The police officers were called to assist with a patient who Lydia described as “out of control” and who was endangering staff and other service users alike:

“He was really nasty [the police officer], it makes you feel really rubbish as well, like ‘your bloody crap’, this is twice now, oh my God” [LYD].

Likewise, Sharon, a police station enquiry officer [SEO], described how she was frequently referred to as “stupid” by one female officer who was responsible for her training, and she described how this led her to feel incompetent in the workplace, believing that she lacked the ability to fulfil the post. Lucy, a supply teacher, cried as she explained how she was “completely belittled” and “undermined” by a female teacher. This incident had occurred in front of a classroom full of pupils who she was teaching at the time, who then adopted a similar pattern of behaviour¹⁰:

“It was a silly thing to do in front of the kids as the board games went flying across the room, one stormed off out of the school, and they started to kick off” [LUC].

In both of these incidents the victim felt that their authority had been undermined, impairing their self-belief (Marsh *et al* 2004), but also, as in Lucy’s case, it demonstrates how violence breeds violence as Lucy was unable to regain control of the classroom and she left the room in tears, hiding in an empty classroom until she had sufficiently recovered. Thus it remains evident that verbal abuse in the workplace serves to undermine and destabilise victims (Vaez *et al* 2004).

¹⁰ This was a special school educating children with challenging and disruptive behaviour who cannot cope in mainstream education.

5.4.3. Verbalised threats

Over one fifth of the interviewees [5] in this study described being verbally threatened in the workplace, explaining that those responsible were primarily male and external to the organisation - customers, clients, patients and service users. Many of these interactions involved the threat of physical violence. Carol, for example, an emergency care assistant, described how she and her male colleague had ran blindly through gardens, jumping over fences in fear, after one male patient declared that he had just been released from prison, and was complaining that he was struggling to adapt to civilian life. This patient was not seeking medical attention, but had requested an ambulance in desperation, in the belief that ambulance staff could get him back into prison:

“He said it wouldn’t take much for me to get hold of a gun and go around shooting everybody who is not helping me. He put his hand down by the side of the chair and I thought ‘Oh god what’s he got’? Simon sort of tapped me on the shoulder gently. So I stood up, which I was aware was confrontational, and he was like ‘that’s it you F off’ and that was it for us we were sort of out the door. We didn’t even turn around to see if he had a gun or a knife we were just out of there” [CAR].

The above incident brings the question of intent into the arena, in that the perpetrator may have intended to harm the ambulance crew in the knowledge that he would be arrested and possibly imprisoned once more. This is very much a means to an end, in that the violence would put a stop to his anguish. Wendy, a pharmacy assistant, discussed a similar interaction. However, on this occasion the perpetrator was a drug addict in desperate need of methadone:

“We had a customer last year who threatened to set me on fire, he

was particularly nasty... He said I've just come out of prison, I haven't had my diazepam for the day, and I want it now. So I asked him to calm down and again you walk back behind the counter, and he said, 'I've just come out of prison because I set a bloke on fire, he said 'I'm going to do the same to you' if you don't get my prescription" [WEN].

On both occasions the above incidents fall beneath the BCSVAW's definition of workplace violence which include threats perpetrated by members of the public who are external to the organisation (Budd, 1999). However, the BCSVAW have routinely maintained that incidents such as this are low, yet within this small sample of women the threat of physical violence had occurred twice. In addition, the above quote reiterates the importance of victims of workplace violence being able to withdraw to a safe location, something which I previously drew attention to in Section 5.3. For example, I previously identified that in one of Wendy's experiences of violence the shop counter acted as a barrier between herself and the perpetrator, thus generating an improved sense of safety.

5.5 Women's experiences of non-verbal psychological violence

Non-verbal-psychological violence covers a wide range of behaviours including glares, stares, and aggressive body language. Of the 19 interviewees who took part in this study the majority [17] described experiencing non-verbal-psychological violence in the workplace. When I compared the level of this experienced internally-from colleagues, co-workers and management, with that which was experienced externally - from customers, clients, patients and service users, the latter occurred less frequently, thus indicating a link between the

interviewees, non-verbal-psychological violence, and internal workplace violence. A further comparison between sectors revealed how, in this study, both the public and private sector workers experienced similar levels of violence and abuse to each other, although as this is a small scale study this is not generalisable to the wider population.

5.5.1. 'It's my turn'

Several interviewees who experienced non-verbal-psychological violence proposed that this is common practice in their workplace, describing incidents as "*their turn*" [JUL] and although this type of violence was employed by both male and female perpetrators, it was a method primarily adopted by females. This echoes the findings of Durre (2010) and Hinchberger (2009), who reveal that women make use of emotional harassment to maintain power and control in the workplace. This is a practice most prominent amongst nurses, but also it is deemed partially responsible for the shortage of nursing staff (Hinchberger, 2009). However, when comparisons were made, female perpetrators use of non-verbal-psychological violence was quite different to male perpetrators', in that males appeared far more overt.

5.4.2. 'Getting in my face'

I previously suggested that male perpetrators of workplace violence were overt in their use of non-verbal-psychological violence. Similarly to verbal-psychological violence, males employed more than one category of violence to intimidate the women in their workplace. For instance, displays of male power were

commonly accompanied by verbal abuse, as conveyed by Wendy who described how one male customer had shouted at her, whilst simultaneously *“pacing and strutting around the shop like a peacock”* [WEN]. Moreover, Leanne, a waitress, described how one male chef had frightened her, openly intimidating her with non-verbalised threats:

“He picked up the knife. He just kept looking back at me. You know, he wanted me to be watching that he was waving it [the knife] around” [LEA].

It is questionable whether a non-verbalised threat such as the one above can be considered workplace violence, as according to the BCSVAWs definition, even though the body language of the perpetrator is of a threatening nature he remains silent. Subsequently, this perpetrator’s behaviour escalated and the knife was thrown across the kitchen in the direction of Leanne, embedding itself into the work surface in front of her. Importantly, this demonstrates how, both verbal and non-verbal threats that take place should not be ignored, as they carry a risk of escalation and the potential to cause serious injury to victims.

The interviewees’ additionally referred to how male perpetrators *“got in [their] face[s]”* [CHA], and, in a similar manner to verbal abuse, male perpetrators invaded the victim’s personal space during such violent interactions, again in a threatening but non-verbal manner. Furthermore, one third of the women described how male perpetrators waved and pointed their fingers in their faces once more intruding on the women’s personal space:

“He really got quite aggressive, he went like this right in my face [Sally points her finger very close to my face] he tried to intimidate me” [SAL].

This, as I previously suggested (refer to Section 5.3), intimidated many of the women who took part in this study, creating a threatening environment.

5.5.3. 'The silent treatment'

My findings identify how just under one third of the interviewees [6] referred to psychological violence in the form of silence. This is an unpleasant interaction which causes its victims to feel inconsequential in the workplace, damaging the victim's personal welfare. These interactions mainly concerned internal perpetrators – colleagues, co-workers and management, particularly, but not exclusive to, female colleagues. So, whereas men may, at times, be overtly psychologically violent, which I discussed above, women may at times be covert, using the 'silent treatment' to bully their colleagues and co-workers. This is damaging on many levels, and victims reported feeling upset, stressed and uncomfortable, and referred to feeling 'small' in the workplace. For example, Kathy was presented with an opportunity for promotion, but due to prolonged ill-health she had turned this position down:

"I had only been back a few days [from sick leave]... but I just wanted to leave the place and cry, but I held out and how sad. I felt like well you know 6 months prior you were singing my praises, I was one of the leading 'NMR's' in the city and I turned the role down for what I considered extremely responsible and valid reasons, and now you are blanking me, and have done so ever since." [KAT]

Other interviewees discussed how the 'silent treatment' had produced negative feelings such as loneliness and isolation, in that it promoted a feeling which the women described as 'non-existent'. For example, Sharon, whilst training as a Station Enquiry Officer in the Devon and Cornwall Police Constabulary explained

how, but also why she was isolated by one female officer who was responsible for her training, and she described the impact of this:

“I would go to lunch ... and when I came back everything of mine would be packed away in a drawer, as if I didn't exist... It was like you worked with someone and yet it was like you worked alone” [SHA].

Initially the reason for this behaviour was unclear, however, Sharon later learnt that the perpetrator's husband had also applied for the post of station enquiry officer but was unsuccessful. Her colleague's resentment of this thus manifested as workplace violence which ultimately resulted in Sharon leaving what she described as “*her dream job*” [SHA]. Likewise Charlie also discussed the impact of such silences:

“People can just look at you, not acknowledge or talk to you at all that's horrible” [CHA].

Some of the interviewees believed their experiences were the result of a perceived wrong doing at work. For example, the ‘silent treatment’ commonly followed a minor dispute between the victim and a colleague, therefore workplace violence manifested as passive aggression. However, the silent treatment may also be accompanied by ‘huffing’, ‘puffing’ and ‘tutting’ including ‘sighs’ of dissatisfaction. Therefore, the ‘silent treatment’ and its accompanying behaviours unsettled the women in this study, and this was a feeling that remained for the duration of the working day.

Leanne, for example, explained:

“I probably would have preferred it if he had just had a go at me all the time” [LEA].

The perpetrators of passive aggression, such as those demonstrated above,

were commonly colleagues, co-workers and management, but also the findings established that the aim of long and uncomfortable silences was to create unpleasantness, highlighting how the intention of the perpetrator was to create a hostile work environment for the victim (Dale and Acik 2005).

5.4. The following [stalking] of women

A salient finding of this study was the stalking [following] of women in the workplace. This finding is an example of gendered violence that the working women were exposed to. It is a form of non-verbal-psychological violence and within this small study two of the interviewees, Ellie and Chris, were followed either inside or outside of the workplace. Ellie was stalked by a male colleague, who was employed in the same organisation and Chris by a male co-worker, who worked within the same organisation, but who was not directly employed by them. Ellie was employed in a small car dealership in what she describes as predominately a male environment, whereas Chris was employed as a senior administrator in a far larger organisation; and both were private sector organisations. The perpetrators of these incidents were motivated by sexual attraction which had steadily built over a time, and culminated in the stalking of the women. However, neither of the women believed they had interacted with the perpetrators in anything other than a professional manner. Ellie described her experience of this:

“At night Ray sat in his car outside my flat ... he said he felt close to me... that’s weird isn’t it... you think ohh this isn’t right...I realised I hadn’t ever told him where I lived, so he must have followed me home from work ... He just used to look and watch me all the time; he was everywhere that I was. He would talk about love a lot and dying, saying that’s how he measured if he loved someone. He said

if I died he would cry so he knew he loved me. It is a form of stalking really” [ELL].

Whereas Chris explained that her experience with a co-worker became:

“More noticeable when I moved out of the office into a small office... He would just come and sit with me, it was just friendly at first and then it started to go a little bit too far. I was quizzed about my marital status... he started to stare through the glass... he would go out of the staff room and then he would be on the other side of the door just looking at me. ... He would be staring at me through the glass and that’s when it started to get a little bit uncomfortable” [CHR].

Interestingly, both females questioned their role in these incidents, mirroring the ideology of Hans Von Hentig (1947), in that women are responsabilised for their own victimisation or, as in this case, they themselves feel responsible. The two women naturally took the blame for this victimisation because this is an approach that is “*deeply embedded*” in society (Garcia and Clifford 2010:6). Further, and in comparison with Arbor (2009) my research reveals how initially the behaviour of the stalker was seemingly harmless and at times coincidental. However, their conduct escalated in both frequency and intensity, the intimidation rapidly became an unwanted intrusion into the victim’s life. If left unchecked this behaviour has the potential to quickly escalate to a level which includes physical and sexual violence in the workplace (Garcia and Clifford 2010), it is therefore imperative that this type of behaviour is both reported and dealt with.

Tjaden and Theonnes (2001) maintain that the stalking of working women is uncommon, a theme mirrored by the scarcity of literature that relates to this as an issue. However existent literature suggests that the perpetrator of workplace

stalking is more likely to be an intimate than a stranger, as reflected in the general population (Santanna and Fisher, 2010). Moreover, the majority of the literature that relates to this as an issue concerns domestic violence and the stalking of an intimate, as opposed to exploring the relationship between colleagues and co-workers who naturally do not fall beneath the heading of 'domestic violence'. This chapter will now continue to explore the interviewees' experiences of both non-direct and direct physical violence in the workplace.

5.6. Non-direct physical violence

Non-direct physical violence relates to physical actions that are clearly directed at the victim, as opposed to physical violence against the person. This type of violence relates to the banging of furniture or the throwing of items, these are public displays of aggression which are intended to create fear and anxiety in the workplace, and which have the capacity to potentially harm the victim.

Of the 19 women who participated in this study over half [11] referred to experiences of this kind, and analysis reveals how these experiences were equally divided between both the public and the private sector. A consensus of victims [8] identified the perpetrators as customers, clients, service users or patients - those external to the workplace. Further the majority of perpetrators were male, supporting Bajema (1998) and Di-Martino *et al* (2003) who argue that physical violence, in all its guises, is a manifestation of power; in this instance it is an abuse of male power; in the workplace. Several [3] interviewees revealed how they had experienced this from senior colleagues. Again, all of them were male, and collectively there were twice as many incidents of non-direct physical violence as

there were victims, illuminating the high rate of repeat victimisation within this study, but at the same time identifying the diversity of the individual workplace.

5.6.1 The throwing of objects and the smashing of windows

Leanne, a waitress, talked about her experience of non-direct physical violence from two male chefs that she worked alongside one of which, as I previously discussed in Section 5.4.2 of this chapter, threw a knife across the kitchen which embedded into the work surface in front of her. The other chef regularly intimidated all female waitresses in this organisation by smashing plates on the kitchen floor which not only frightened the waitresses, but caused them to cry. Collectively, however the interviewees' of this study referred to a wide range of incidents which included the pounding of fists on desks. Lynda, for example, spoke of several different experiences:

“I used to work in the estate agents, my boss, when he used to get angry, would throw the phone across the room, or swipe everything off of his desk on to the floor... I used to sit down quiet and not do anything, because I used to think that he was quite a scary man... He used to lose his temper quite quickly. I mean the phone you know used to just go across the room. Well I think it was like a power thing with him” [LYN].

Further, Lynda referred to subsequent incidents that occurred at the doctor's surgery where she worked as a receptionist, and she recalled how one patient was *“just thumping the counters in temper” [LYN]*. Sarah, a paramedic similarly described how one service user, a regular, frequently damaged the ambulance:

“He'll kick and thump the back of the vehicle” [SAR].

In contrast Lucy, a supply teacher, described having a multitude of different items thrown at her, across the classroom:

“I’ve had things thrown at me... pens, books, usually objects that are on their tables” [LUC].

Lucy revealed that the evasion of missiles was a regular feature of her working day, and Ellie, a shop assistant, similarly described how large 5 litre containers of engine oil were thrown at her, whilst she was apprehending a shoplifter:

“I caught him stealing cans of oil... I challenged him to put them back... which was a mistake and he threw all the cans at me. He came towards the counter shouting and screaming” [ELL].

Eddie, an entertainer, recollected how, when performing at a wedding reception, a fight erupted between families and she described how equipment that was essential to her job was damaged:

“My God it kicked off ... they were fighting on the dance floor... they knocked over a couple of the speakers there were people outside, there was blood everywhere. There were people getting cardio arrests and ‘fucking hell’ it was really bad news, really bad news. I didn’t know what to do it was bloody awful, really awful. We pulled as much of the stuff as we could onto the stage and tried to keep out the way of everything” [EDD].

Lydia, a learning disabilities nurse, recalled how one detained patient became very angry and frustrated with the hospital service, smashing a window to escape the hospital unit:

“She whacked the window and the whole window fell out in one piece as its reinforced glass. She fell on the floor then legged it...It got worse after that as obviously she had gone. As it was illegal we had to call

the police... She grabbed a piece of glass or something, under the cycle pass bit. So they [the police] tear gassed her” [LYD].

In comparison Leanne explained how, when working as a Lifeguard, events escalated after she asked a young male to leave the swimming pool. This was a result of his poor behaviour which was endangering the safety of customers and staff alike:

“He was like smashing things up in the changing rooms and stuff. It was difficult because you were in a dangerous setting” [LEA].

Lucy, a teacher, referred to a pupil who she suggested “cannot cope in a mainstream school” and who would “flip over seemingly nothing”, and during one such incident the pupil threw a rock, smashing the classroom window:

“He said I don’t want to fucking talk to anyone; he picked a rock up and threw it through the window” [LUC].

Lynda further recalled how a patient, whilst demanding medication, picked up a computer monitor and threw it through the receptionist’s window:

“He picked up the monitor... and actually held it up and threw it at Sue... because she wouldn’t get his prescription...that really scared us. He wanted his drugs there and then, he wanted his prescription” [LYN].

One could argue that many of the roles highlighted above are traditionally female, in that they relate to retail, health care and education; occupations that Chappell and Di Martino (2006) and Jones *et al* (2011) contend generate the potential risk of workplace violence, in that they afford a high level of face-face-interactions with the general public, many of whom are capable of random acts of violence. Furthermore, several of the roles that I have discussed in this chapter have dealt with specific

groups of people, capable of erratic behaviour, for example individuals with learning disabilities or particular educational requirements. However, some roles are not and I will discuss the women's feelings in relation to this in Chapter 8, Section 8.7. The majority of perpetrators described in this chapter fall beneath the heading the 'orderly other', these are rational beings who violate working women with the intention to harm victims (Williams 2011). Interestingly, my study contrasts with some of the literature as many of the interviewees fail to understand that non-direct physical violence falls beneath the spectrum of workplace violence, despite the fact that the harms are visible to the eye and quite evident (Dickinson and Bevan 2005, and Paludi *et al* 2005). Therefore, much of this type of violence goes unrecognised in the workplace.

5.7. Direct-physical violence

Direct-physical violence is related to violent acts that intend to physically harm victims, and include, for example, punching, kicking, shoving, and spitting. Just under half of the interviewees who participated in this study [8] referred to incidents of direct physical violence, and deeper analysis revealed how, in this study, these incidents were divided equally between both the public and the private sector. Indeed, much of the literature that surrounds workplace violence has a tendency to concentrate on 'blue light' or 'frontline' occupations, occupations that are frequently exposed to direct physical violence (Barling 1996).

Focusing the analytical lens on 'high risk roles' has led to a neglect of women in supposedly 'low risk' occupations including, for example, receptionists or

waitresses; these are working women who experience physical violence but who remain invisible. In this study both public and private sector women were exposed to similar levels of violence and abuse in the workplace, however there are 'pockets' of similarity in terms of incident rate between the two which included public and private healthcare workers. Nonetheless, as this study is small scale my findings are not generalisable to the wider population.

Of the 8 interviewees who experienced direct physical violence only Sharon, a Police Station Enquiry Officer, experienced this internally from a female colleague who had kicked her on the leg. The majority of physical interactions encountered by the interviewees involved male perpetrators, thus reinforcing Bajema (1980) and Di-Martino *et al* (2003) in that all forms of physical violence involve the use of, or rather the abuse of, power by men either in society more generally or by men occupying powerful or more senior positions than that of their victim (refer to discussion in Section 5.5). Commonly in this study, those who experienced direct physical violence [5] worked in the caring professions, thus supporting Fevre *et al's* (2011) recent study, which suggested that a high percentage of health care staff encounter direct physical violence in the workplace.

Both Sarah and Carol described experiences of strangulation in the workplace; however the reactions to these occurrences were both quite different, which highlights the subjectivity of individual victimisation. Sarah, who is a paramedic, had responded to an emergency call; however she was delayed in heavy traffic for 20 minutes:

“When we got out of the vehicle the husband grabbed me by the throat and put me up against the wall and said ‘where the hell have you been’ and when we went up there she was dead. So I guess that was just his emotion coming out” [SAR].

Sarah added that there were probably many more incidents like this but for the most part she let things “wash over her” [SAR]. Sarah’s reaction provides evidence of how healthcare personnel are educated to expect violent behaviour in the workplace, therefore many of the violent interactions that they encounter are commonly expected, and readily normalised (Hinchberger 2009 and Dale and Acik (2005).

In contrast to the process of normalisation Carol, an emergency care assistant, reacted quite differently to Sarah. She was unable to let her experience of strangulation “wash over her” [SAR], again highlighting the role of subjectivity in relation to victimisation, but additionally signifying how workplace violence affects each victim quite differently. Carol was called to an incident in a local shop, explaining that the patient she attended had “*behavioural problems*” [adding] “*sometimes we would get called to her 3-4 times a day*” [CAR]. After getting the patient into the rear of the ambulance Carol turned to collect some paperwork:

“In that split second she had her hands around my throat and was trying to strangle me. My crew mate was in the driving seat and ready to pull away, he saw what was happening and managed to come through, and we basically just held her on the trolley until the police got there” [CAR].

The attack severely traumatised Carol for a considerable length of time, a year, resulting in an inability to attend psychiatric patients. This was the direct result of the

fear that this incident had instilled in Carol, and during this period of time she relied heavily on her colleague for support.

Sarah described the dread of transporting one regular service user to hospital and she discussed how he spat at staff and recalled how:

“He sort of bites his tongue and he’s Hepatitis B and HIV. What he does is sort of present himself at you spitting and chucking up everything towards you. Whilst that’s not classed as violence it’s still not an acceptable standard of behaviour” [SAR].

Sarah it appears is unaware that ‘spitting’ is classed as physical violence, making evident the confusion surrounding the defining of workplace violence. As I previously expressed in the literature review workplace violence is especially difficult to define, and the borderline between acceptable and non-acceptable behaviour remains quite vague (Waddington 2005). Further whilst some types of behaviour appear less harmful to the victim than others they are by no means insignificant (Chappell and Di Martino 2006, Paludi *et al* 2006).

Lou was employed in a private residential care home for the elderly, and she recalled how, on several occasions, she was physically assaulted by service users. Again, like Sarah above, Lou felt that if she was to sit and think carefully there were probably many more incidents to report, however, despite this Lou recalled incidents in which she was bitten, punched and slapped, and she described how one particular patient kneed her in the groin and kicked in the stomach:

“He would squeeze your fingers or go to kick you in the stomach when he was lying down, he was a massive bloke. He was huge he towered over all of us. Sometimes he was lovely, other times would

go to swing for you, or he would just squeeze. Obviously he couldn't squeeze that hard but it was enough to really hurt your fingers, there were a couple of chaps like that actually" [LOU].

Leanne, who I previously referred to, described an experience of physical violence when working as a lifeguard at the local swimming baths. Leanne had reprimanded the teenager as his behaviour was anti-social and he was endangering the safety of both staff as well as other service users, however this behaviour then escalated:

"He was running around knocking into us, running into things, smashing things up in the toilets and stuff" [LEA].

Not all of the above incidents of non-direct and direct-physical violence were perpetrated with the intention of harming the victim; some are evidently a result of illness, grief and despair but they have illuminated some of the many pressures faced by public service employees. Indeed many of the women, particularly health care personnel, regarded such incidents as 'part of the job' thus demonstrating how violence has become a fundamental part of the daily fabric, and therefore to be expected (Hinchberger 2009). However, the HSE (2008), advocate that incidents of violence and aggression should not be regarded in this way, highlighting the importance of establishing systems that will reduce and possibly prevent workplace violence.

Having discussed the women's experiences of verbal and non-verbal-psychological violence, direct and non-direct physical violence, this chapter will move forward to explore the womens experiences of sexual violence in the workplace.

5.8. The failure to define sexual violence as workplace violence.

In the above section I briefly discussed how the women failed to define sexual violence as workplace violence, and collectively over half of the women in this study [11] failed to recognise how some types of violence and abuse, particularly sexual violence, falls under this heading. For example Ella, who was sexually violated by a colleague said:

“At the time I wouldn’t have classed it as violence, it never occurred to me” [ELL].

This sentiment was similarly echoed by both Kathy and Chris who had also been abused by colleagues and co-workers:

“To be honest I didn’t think of it as sexual harassment. That’s just the way it was, it was a job and I got on with it. But now looking back it was” [KAT].

“You always get, in all walks of life, flirtatious characters who mean it and those who are unaware of it, some are flirtatious and some just odd” [CHR].

The findings have demonstrated how some interviewees simply accept sexual violence as part of their work life. They failed to identify it as workplace violence or indeed identify that they were being violated. This highlights how the BCSVAW commitment to exclude internal workplace violence from their survey has a negative impact on working women because, as I have already identified in this study, the majority of these incidents took place between colleagues, co-workers and management. Undoubtedly, this has reinforced the difficulties faced by the HSE, in relation to the effectiveness of reporting, as they rely on workers to self-report so

that they may implement policy to protect workers, but if women fail to identify sexual violence as workplace violence this remains a hidden crime in the workplace.

5.9. Sexual violence

Sexual violence in the workplace is a broad term, and one which covers an array of behaviours including sexual harassment, sexual advances, the inappropriate touching of women, and sexual acts. Many of these behaviours overlap with each another but also other types of behaviour which leads to much confusion. Previously, for example, sexual harassment was classified as psychological violence as opposed to being labelled as the sexual violence that it is, and this evidences how a patriarchal society may conceal wrongs such as those demonstrated above. Nevertheless, psychological violence in the workplace is frequently disregarded, as is sexual violence (Webster *et al* 2007). Hence, the many experiences of women, who are more likely to be at risk of, and experience, sexual violence in the workplace than men, appear inconsequential.

Furthermore, sexual violence does not necessarily involve the interactions that occur between a stranger and a victim because, as the literature and the police both suggest, women are at high risk of sexual violence in the workplace from acquaintances, friends, colleagues, management and co-workers (Stanko 1992). In addition, sexual violence is omitted from the BCSVAW, which I consider a disservice to working women, and in light of this I propose that this omission only leads to the under-reporting of many of the experiences of women in the workplace, thus painting a less than accurate picture of the extent of sexual violence committed

in the workplace.

In addition, sexual violence in all its forms, much like verbal violence, has been normalised in some workplaces and therefore its presence is frequently ignored. To correct this imbalance I have created a 'type' of violence within my typology which is specific to sexual violence in the workplace. My 'type' encompasses all forms of sexual violence and one of the advantages of this 'type' is that it is not gender specific. It should be noted here however that the sexual violence described in this study was a gendered experience. Thus future studies may apply the typology used in this study to both males and females in the workplace so that a more accurate representation of the experiences of women, in relation to sexual violence, may be obtained in the future. Further, it will eliminate some of the overlap that occurs between the different types of violence, for example, previously I suggested that sexual violence could be ascribed to any one type of violence within a typology making analysis unnecessarily complicated.

Over half of the interviewees who contributed to this study [10] disclosed how they had been a victim of sexual violence in the workplace, but also they intimated they were repeat victims of sexual violence. The women disclosed how they experienced sexual violence as they moved from workplace to workplace, and as a result of this movement they experienced sexual violence from different perpetrators. Furthermore, this study has evidenced how victims of sexual harassment were more likely to be a victim of other sexual crimes, due to the escalation of the crimes committed. As a result, my analysis reveals how over half of all of the interviewees who had encountered sexual violence in the workplace had also encountered more

than one type of sexual violence. For example, interviewees who were subjected to sexual innuendo within the workplace had also been the victim of a sex act.

As I previously discussed, the majority of the women in this study had experienced sexual violence more than once during their working lives and analysis shows how over one quarter of these 10 interviewees had experienced more than one type of violence and therefore the incident rate is twice the number of victims. Further analysis revealed that the interviewees were at far greater risk of sexual violence from colleagues, co-workers, and management [7] than they were from clients, customers, patients and service users [4], and that in this study sexual violence was twice as prevalent in the private sector, than it was in the public. This finding has reinforced my argument that the BCSVAW should recognise and record all incidents of colleague and co-worker violence, as well as that of sexual violence in the workplace. This practice would facilitate a more accurate picture of the extent of sexual violence in the workplace for the future. Once more, however, the findings of this study cannot be generalised.

5.9.1. Precursors to sexual violence

Previously in this chapter I discussed sexual harassment in relation to males who 'watched' female workers or 'stared' at them, and I believe that this is a forerunner or indeed a warning to more extreme forms of sexual violence that may occur in the future. For example, Ellie was watched and stared at by her colleague Mike, whose behaviour rapidly progressed from this to following Ellie around the workplace. This behaviour escalated, culminating in Mike following Ellie from the

workplace to her home and at night he would sit in his car outside of her house, so *“he felt close to her”* [ELL]. This type of experience was shared by other interviewees, for instance, Chris previously explained how one co-worker repeatedly asked intrusive questions about her private life; *“he was asking more and more personal things”* and this again progressed to him following Chris around the workplace. In a previous section of this chapter (refer to 5.7.2) Gina similarly described, how she endured sexual comments from her male manager adding:

“He had been asking me about relationships... He was always asking questions about me and my girlfriend...I don't tell anyone about that and I'm certainly not going to tell my boss” [GIN].

Other warnings included the giving of unwelcome and unwanted personal gifts, something which Ellie and Chris had both experienced. Ellie was presented with a gold bracelet by a male supervisor which she refused to accept, in contrast Chris was presented with bread and dates from a male co-worker. Chris reluctantly accepted these gifts so as not to offend the man as she felt if she had refused this may have made matters worse. She later threw the items away. It was evident however that the giving of unwelcome gifts, like watching and staring at women in the workplace, is a precursor to more insidious acts of workplace violence, and that this is something which builds over a period of time. Thus I contend that the unnecessary lingering, and presenting of gifts can be a form of sexual violence in the workplace, which exists on a continuum of behaviour (Boland 2005). I argue that like sexualised comments and innuendos, gifts from males are an early warning sign that such behaviour has the potential to escalate into something far more sinister in the future, which I will demonstrate in the following section.

5.9.2. Tolerating sexual violence

A number of the women's experiences appeared to go unrecognised as sexual violence in the workplace. For example, Chris described one perpetrator, an architect, as a *"flirtatious character"*, who *"thought he would just try it on"* adding that she just *"ignored him"*. It later transpired in this interview that this particular male colleague was a repeat offender and that Chris had been ill-advised but also encouraged by other female members of staff to ignore him: *"if you ignore him he will get fed up"*. Further, in a subsequent role, Chris conveyed how one co-worker similarly paid her too much attention, in that he quizzed Chris about her personal life and she described him as *"just odd"*; adding that she ignored his behaviour until it become unbearable. I subsequently learnt that over time this particular perpetrator's behaviour escalated which led to the more sinister act of the following [stalking] of Chris throughout the workplace.

Likewise, Louise described the sexual harassment that she experienced from two male chefs' as a *"bit of fun"*, and like Chris above she too ignored his behaviour, stating *"sexual harassment just does not bother me"*. Yet later Louise contradicted herself describing how, when the chef referred to her as *"Fanny"* she thought *"who you talking to, I don't think so mate"* [LOU], clearly indicating she was unhappy with this.

Other interviewees indicated that they too tolerated sexual violence in the workplace but again they said nothing, for example Kathy was sexually assaulted

by her manager yet failed to report this incident, because he would “*be retired soon*”. The same was true of Sally. The Managing Director had grabbed her bottom yet she decided that there was no point in reporting this incident because of his position within the company:

“You can’t say anything you can’t go and see anyone; you can’t say complain to him that he’s touched my arse” [SAL].

These findings support those of Fevre *et al* (2011), in that some women are prepared to accept sexual violence so as not to affect working relationships but also this highlights the fact that senior management, which the research informs us is predominantly male, abuse their position of power in the organisation and indeed trust. In addition, this raises a point made by The Equal Opportunities Commission (2006) that management have a duty to protect employees from sexual harassment, yet in both Kathy and Sally’s incidents management were the perpetrator of these crimes. Additionally, The Equal Opportunities Commission (2006) suggest that when deciding what ‘sexual harassment’ is, it is the effect the perpetrator’s behaviour has on victims that is important, not how this behaviour appears to others in the workplace. This point is particularly pertinent when considering the following evidence that is presented, particularly in relation to Eddie who discussed how some professional female strippers allow men to touch them inappropriately.

Two of the interviewees, Angela and Lydia, were both adamant that they did not and would not tolerate sexual violence of any description in the workplace, believing that many women did because they were unsure of how to cope when this

occurred:

“It’s not that they don’t think it’s wrong, it’s just that they don’t totally know how to deal with it in a lot of cases” [LYD].

Angela stressed how she believed sexual violence in the workplace should be stopped in its initial stages, explaining how she once stopped a male colleague by slapping his hand after he had touched her inappropriately:

“Once he put his hand on my knee ... that’s the only time I can ever remember that, yes it was because he had no right to put his hand on my knee and he got it [a hard slap], and he never did it again” [ANG].

Angela continued to describe how the same male colleague then proceeded to sexually harass two other females in the workplace, signalling that when challenged sexual predators seek alternative victims in the workplace, but also that this male was indeed a serial offender:

“He went on to harass my friend, who was also [a] qualified [nurse], and another. They brought a disciplinary case about him but I don’t know the ‘ins’ and ‘outs’ of it” [ANG].

Likewise, Eddie held a similar view to Angela, believing that the victim should take action at the time of the incident, believing that if such episodes are not reported, or dealt with immediately, the victim unintentionally gives legitimacy to the perpetrator to sexually violate others women in the workplace. In turn, this makes it increasingly difficult for other working women to defend themselves. Yet as we have already seen with Angela above, sexual predators seek out alternative victims, Eddie reasoned:

“I’ve seen strippers who do their job and never let anyone get near them, but you get two levels... Now the thing is there was two strippers one who used the job as a job who was very naughty, very seductive, and the other one was stripping and let the men abuse her... she let them touch her. Leaning into the guys and one of them, she actually opened her legs and he was fingering her. She crossed the boundary and made it difficult for the other strippers and entertainers” [EDD].

It could be argued that the permissive stripper enjoyed the sexual freedom that her role afforded her, thus misleading some men into believing that she was “asking for it” [sexual violence] (David 2003:7). Radical feminists may well argue that this stripper is oppressed and merely regarded as a sexual object, as radical feminists suppose the oppression of women manifests itself via pornography and gratuitous sex (Scholtz 2010). In complete contrast to this Frederick suggests, in Baumeister and Twenge (2002), that radical feminism is both puritanical and sexually repressive, in that sexual morality condemns certain sexual practices for women. Yet sexual morality permits identical actions for men, which has hindered the sexual liberation of women affecting their advancement and equality. However, my thesis sits midway between these two contrasting ideologies (refer to Chapter 3 Section 3.4).

5.9.3. Sexualised comments

Several of the interviewees [4] made reference to the sexualised comments and innuendos spoken by high status males in their place of work, which as I previously mentioned above, makes it difficult for victims to approach those responsible. Lou, as I earlier discussed, recalled how male chefs renamed her “Fanny”, reducing her to a sexual object. In contrast, Sally was labelled as ‘frigid’ by

the Managing Director when she failed to embrace his acts of sexual harassment:

“The other day I was bent over doing something and Rodger [Managing Director] comes by and pinches my arse... he just went hello and did it, and I’m like don’t touch me! He touched my arse and was like ‘what’s the matter Sally is there something wrong with you? Are you frigid?’” [SAL].

This similarly provides a firm example of how violence breeds violence in the workplace, in that there was no one to discipline Rodger and this poor behaviour may encourage other male employees to adopt his lead, indeed Sally makes reference to this. For example, one young male worker, in the same organisation, labelled Sally a ‘cougar’ a derogative term for a mature woman who hunts younger men for sex. Further, other male colleagues mistreated Sally by making comments about her breasts, and she explained how:

“If I’m wearing a top like this they will look at me! I say ‘stop looking at my tits!’” [SAL].

This demonstrates how patriarchy is facilitated by the solidarity of men, as it is the solidarity of males which makes the domination of women possible (Beasley 1999); however I will discuss this in depth in Chapter 7, Section 7.3. Lou, had similarly worked in a predominantly male environment and she too described how male co-workers would frequently stand and stare at her breasts, and she recalled how they would pass comments, for example, *“your boobs are looking good today Lou”* [LOU]. Likewise, Gina, a senior negotiator in a small firm of estate agents, was subjected to sexual violence. Often on a daily basis by her manager who frequently commented on her physique and her clothing:

“If I wore a skirt or dress he would always say ‘oh that’s really turning me on...I would cross my legs if we were at a meeting in the morning, again he would say to me, ‘oh that’s really turning me on’” [GIL].

Once more these findings support the literature, as Dekeseredy (1995) and Scholtz (2010) believe that both class and patriarchy are intertwined with one another, and it is this interconnection which determines the social order of society, but also this evidences how males misuse positions of power and authority to exploit working women.

5.9.4. The molestation of women

Over half of the 10 interviewees who experienced sexual violence in this study referred to male colleagues who physically touched them, which as I previously identified ranged from placing a hand on the knee to inappropriately ‘making a grab’ for the victim. Chris, for instance, explained how in a previous role one particular male colleague would regularly:

“Creep up behind me, touch me on the neck to see if I would jump, he would run his finger down my back” [CHR].

Likewise, Gina recalled how, in a previous role, she worked in the warehouse of a large retail store, and she explained how the warehouse manager once took advantage of an awkward situation. Gina had partially climbed a stepladder to reach a heavy item on a shelf:

“I had gone like that and put my hands up...somebody came around and grabbed my breasts, it was the warehouse manager. I couldn’t do anything because I had this telly in my hands at the time, and I am up a ladder” [GIN].

Behaviour such as this enforces the subordination of females in the workplace (Boggs and Giles 1999), whilst Bourdieu (2006) describes the molestation of women as symbolic violence, believing this is a mechanism of power, domination and control. Symbolic violence, however, lacks the intentional quality of brute violence as it is not inflicted directly at the victim's body. Neither is it intended to physically harm the victim as it is inflicted through the body and it is therefore closely related to, if not a form of, psychological violence (Bourdieu 2006). Additionally, almost half of the 10 interviewees [4] who encountered sexual violence in the workplace described their experiences of unwanted sexual advances, exposing how this was primarily linked to male colleagues who had requested sexual intercourse. The perpetrators of this were generally more senior in the hierarchy of the organisation than the victim. Kathy, for example, described how her manager "*went to grab me*" and she continued to explain how "*he made a pass at me*".

Ellie described how, on two separate occasions, she was approached by an uninvited male colleague; the first incident concerned her supervisor and occurred early in her career. The second occurred many years later and involved the area manager of the organisation. Each incident had developed over a period of time, but as time progressed the two males involved became increasingly difficult to manage. Previously I discussed how one male supervisor [John] presented Ellie with a gold bracelet, which she had refused to accept. Not long after this Ellie attended a training course with John. On returning to the workplace John drove the car into secluded lay-by and asked Ellie if she had "*ever done it [had sex] in a car*" [ELL], to which Ellie replied she had not and that she did not intend to either. In the second

incident, many years later Ellie described how the area manager, Nigel:

“Declared he was in love with me... he asked me to marry him but I was gay, and he knew that I was living with someone!” [ELL].

My findings agree with Pryor (1987), and Schneider (1982), who argue that women are most at risk of sexual propositions from male colleagues, co-workers and management. Further, they demonstrate how the occurrence of sexual violence has created a hostile work environment for some women, adversely affecting the dignity of female workers (Boland 2005 and Paludi *et al* 2006), something which David (2003) believes is closely linked to the existent power relations between men and women.

Further analysis reveals that the majority of interviewees who experienced this were employed in the private sector at the time the incident took place, which may indicate a lack of regulation in private sector establishments. When I considered this from a different perspective, two of the interviewees (Sharon and Eddie), were both self-employed; they worked alone, thus agreeing with King (1994), and Gill (2006), who suggest lone working increases an employee’s vulnerability in the workplace.

5.9.5. Sex acts

Within this small sample two of the women, Sharon and Gina were both victims of a sex act. Gina’s manager had requested that she accompany him on a door to door leaflet drop, which was not an uncommon request. However, this particular morning they digressed from the street to his home, and Gina wrongly

assumed that his wife and baby would be present, so she had agreed to accompany him:

“We were supposed to do a leaflet drop. He says could we go to his house because the television repair man was there and it was on the way. Anyway the telly was fixed, and he said I want to just make sure that the telly is working. So he put a video in, it was a porn video with two lesbians in it! I am now thinking ‘oh my God’ ...Then he said ‘oh I am getting really turned on I think I need to relieve myself’ and I stupidly said well go upstairs and do what you need to do. Thinking that he would do that and come back and we could go. Anyway he got his willy out and he did it there in the room” [GIN].

Gina recounted feeling petrified, suggesting she was “rooted to the floor” (GIN) with fear, believing she was going to be raped, but also she was conscious that no-one knew where she was, as she frequently worked away from the main office.

Likewise, Sharon described a sex act that she had experienced early one morning in the hairdressing salon where she worked. The salon was situated in a busy high street:

“I was cutting his hair and I could see he was playing with himself under the gown, so I said to him ‘what are you doing?’ He said what he was doing, so I said look go to the toilet and sort yourself out, and he went into the toilet and then come out and said ‘can I have some toilet roll, there isn’t any in there’. I knew there was some in there as I had only then done it that morning so I went out the back, like a stupid idiot, and there he was stood there with a massive hard on and he said ‘will you just relieve me’. I said ‘look if you want me to carry on doing your hair put it away and let’s get a move on’, he said ‘yes but I need to be relieved’, I said ‘do what you need to do then put it away and I will carry on doing your hair’. So I left it a little while, he did what he had to do then he came back and sat in the chair... Then I think he was playing with himself” [SHA].

Sharon appeared somewhat blasé about the incident normalising its occurrence, and there is a very good reason for this, in that Sharon was previously educated at

the same school as the perpetrator:

“I’ve known him for quite a while from school... he always used to be like that outside of school. He always used to try and throw me down on the floor, hold me down and put his you know what in my face. It’s just what he was like. I think I knew there was no harm with it do you know what I mean?”[SHA].

Yet this was a serious incident. The significance of these interactions is that both women were alone in their respective workplaces at the time of the incident. Thus, my findings support Khalef (2003), who highlights how employees are particularly vulnerable when they work alone in the workplace. In addition this agrees with King (1993) who proposes lone workers are powerless in difficult situations, and certainly in the above incidents both Sharon and Gina were disempowered as there was no one else in the workplace at the time for them to seek help from. Further, as the literature has demonstrated, normalisation is fundamental to the working day, and men normalise both sexual violence and sexual exploitation in public areas (Morgan and Bjoerket 2006, and Guiffree and Williams 1994)

5.10. Summary

This chapter has re-identified the definition of workplace violence, reminding us that the definition includes both psychological and physical violence in the workplace. By allowing for the experiences of both internal and external workplace violence my analysis has revealed how all of the women who participated in this study had experienced workplace violence in some shape or form. I have additionally established that women experienced violence which was both gendered and non-gendered and because of this some women face an increased risk of

violence and abuse in the workplace.

Additionally, this chapter has discussed the typologies of workplace violence reminding us of how I considered the existing typologies to be over-complicated and unclear, but also I have revealed how existing typologies of workplace violence have neglected the needs of women, which ultimately presented me with difficulties in terms of data analysis. This chapter has introduced a new typology of workplace violence which I have used to analyse my data. This typology is applicable to both males and females in the workplace, enabling the needs of both men and women to be addressed and fully integrated into future studies of workplace violence, so that studies may become uniform.

Further, the chapter has revealed how the majority of interviewees experienced workplace violence that was both internal and external both to the workplace which indicated that all of the interviewees in this study, were repeat victims of violence and abuse, in that they had experienced two or more types of violence. Moreover, the majority of interviewees had witnessed other women being violated in a similar manner to themselves. The most common forms of workplace violence were non-gendered, which included verbal psychological abuse and which incorporated name calling and public humiliation, and this study has revealed how the majority of women who took part [18] in the research had experienced this whilst at work. As a result of repeat victimisation, many of the women who participated in this study had experienced non-verbal-psychological violence and the perpetrators of this were primarily internal to the workplace. Victims of this type of violence frequently reported that it was 'their turn', proposing that the perpetrators of internal workplace violence target multiple victims

in the workplace and are serial offenders.

Non-direct physical violence identifies women who have experienced physical acts of violence in the workplace, and over half of the interviewees of this study referred to this [11]. Behaviours included the throwing of objects and the banging of furniture, these are acts of violence that 'have the potential to physically harm' victims. In contrast to this, direct physical violence 'intends to harm' victims, and strikingly over one third of the interviewees [8] had endured violence of this kind, primarily from perpetrators who were external to their place of work.

Finally, but most importantly, this chapter has revealed how women experience workplace violence that is gendered and of a sexual nature. The majority of men in the workforce are unlikely to experience this, and violence such as this covers a wide array of sexual misdemeanours including sexualised comments and sexual acts. An important finding of this study is that sadly much of this sexual violence is often normalised in the workplace, revealing how many of the interviewees tolerated sexual violence and endured sexual assaults. Moreover, many of the women had encountered more than one type of sexual violence in the workplace. Frequently the sexual acts experienced appeared low on the spectrum of sexual violence, however, acts of this nature should not be underestimated nor indeed taken lightly, as many of these acts proved to be an antecedent to the more serious crimes of sexual violence that occurred within the workplace, and should by no means be underestimated. Importantly, the findings of this chapter provide an invaluable insight into the gendered nature of workplace violence that some women

experience. This is in addition to that which is commonly experienced by both males and females, making evident the plight of working women and the added burden that they face, often, on a daily basis.

Chapter 6

6.0. Explaining workplace violence

Academics, such as Chappell and Di Martino (2006), Firth (2008), and Respass and Payne (2008) have established a number of risk factors that are linked to the incidence of workplace violence, and which impact on the likelihood of workplace violence occurring. For instance, lone working is risky, as is working with items of value including money or pharmaceutical drugs. In addition, the interactions that take place between employees and the public are also risky, which I will refer to as external workplace violence. Further, as we have seen thus far, the interactions that occur between colleagues, co-workers and management are also risky which I refer to as internal workplace violence.

In this chapter I will address risk factors that impact on the women's experiences, including training, sexuality and lone working. Therefore this chapter identifies 'risky traits' that are pertinent to the experiences of working women, and in doing so it will discuss who is responsible for the minimisation of this risk and thus will examine the suitability of health and safety training for women. Further, it will revisit the issue of defining workplace violence, discussing how the failure to define sexual violence as workplace violence can affect reporting levels. Finally this chapter will deliberate safety measures in the workplace and the effectiveness of such measures.

6.1. Junior roles

Over one third [7] of the interviewees cited induction into the workplace and subsequent training as a causal factor of violence and abuse. Indeed several interviewees revealed how they were most at risk of this from those who were in charge of their training, but also those who were senior to them in the hierarchy of the organisation. Charlie, for example, explained how, when training as a midwife, she encountered negative attitudes from qualified members of staff. Identifying that verbal-psychological violence was a routine feature of the working day for all trainees; indicating this is a 'rite of passage' for midwives:

“Everybody gets aggravation of one sort or another. There was one particular group [of women] who used to pick on degree students, one used to say to you sarcastically like what the hell do you know? You’ve got no common sense! They were like you are alright on the academic stuff but you have no common sense...there was a lot of that going on with the older midwives” [CHA].

Since qualifying Charlie has come to realise that it is unlikely that this will change which may be an indication of the level of pressure afforded by healthcare roles:

“It’s a bit difficult because you have doctors who are quite arsey and they snap at you all the time, they just shout at you all the time, they are shouting at students if they don’t answer questions properly, ... you don’t want this ... But you have to have it”[CHA].

Ellie similarly recalled how she encountered psychological violence when training as a laboratory assistant. It was her first job, and she trained alongside a senior female analyst, Maureen, who was in charge of the lower laboratory:

“She made my life hell; she didn’t want to train me that was very apparent” [ELL].

Similarly, Lucy described how, when training to become a teacher, her work life was made utterly miserable by her mentor, indicating that it was “*her turn*” (a point previously identified by interviewees in Chapter 5, Section 5.4.1) for the violence that she experienced:

“She didn’t like me around because I was new, fresh in and willing to do anything” [LUC].

Lucy had witnessed other trainees being treated in the exact same manner, some of whom left as a result of their experiences of ill- treatment:

“This woman was on and on and on at her all the time, saying you’re not going to pass this so you might as well quit now, so she did she quit her PGCE about a month before finishing it. A math trainee; the same happened, told you are not going to pass this so you might as well go now” [LUC].

Kathy’s experience of training in the Civil Service proved similar to that of both Charlie and Lucy:

“I was ridiculed, I was left out of meetings, I was given work way above than what I had been trained to do, and when I asked for my line manager to train me she refused, belittled me. So I was constantly making mistakes and errors, because I was nervous I was making more mistakes and errors. It was horrible!” [KAT].

My findings indicate that training is problematic in the workplace which supports Baron (2006), and Lutgen-Sandvik and Syphers (2009), who established similar patterns and trends within their research, and who suggest internal workplace violence gives prominence to risk factors such as training and age indicating that individuals in junior roles are vulnerable in the workplace. In addition, this study has revealed how many of the interviewees were at risk from colleagues, co-workers and management, which includes those who are senior to

the workplace in terms of age and length of service. This finding supports the work of Bowie (2002b), Unison (2009) and Naime (2012) who believe internal perpetrators violate colleagues who are subordinate to themselves, specifically highlighting young women as 'at risk'. Consequently this study proposes that many of the perpetrators of internal workplace violence were mature women in senior positions. This agrees with the findings of Hinchberger (2009) and Durre (2010), who demonstrated how women in senior professional roles, including managerial or supervisory positions, abuse their privileged position, and in a similar manner to hierarchical men they too may violate working women. This is a means of maintaining control over other women in the workforce, as the perpetrator of such violence feel threatened by new-members of staff. It is therefore feasible to propose that in this study the difficulties faced by women in positions of power was a result of women having to prove to male colleagues, co-workers and management, that they can adequately manage and control the workforce, resulting in women becoming overly protective of said privileged roles. It is this, Lopez *et al* (2009) suggest, that results in the abuse of trainees in the workforce.

Furthermore my research indicates that violent interactions are commonly normalised during training, revealing how this process creates a breeding ground for the acceptance of violence and abuse in the workplace. Similarly to Lutgen-Sandvik and Sypher's (2009) findings, my study suggests that there are no clear markers that will identify who the victims of workplace violence may be.

6.2. 'Perceived' wrongdoings and risky 'traits'

Over half of the interviewees [10] who participated in this study suggest that

an alleged wrongdoing on their part was the root cause of the victimisation they experienced. Lou, for example, in a private conversation with her deputy manager suggested that the training course she attended was boring:

“I went to a training thing that I didn’t really want to go to, it was incredibly boring because it was just repeating everything we had done... I was doing a nightshift and the Deputy Manager at the time said how did it go, I said it was alright a bit boring but it was ok we got around it eventually. I didn’t say anything more than that” [LOU].

This conversation was then relayed back to Lou’s manager, who called her into his office, reprimanded her and subsequently he prevented Lou from progressing further within the organisation:

“I said you are judging me. You have heard something second hand and you have taken it completely out of context. She said well we are not going to put you forward for any more training, so I will stop the training now. Well that wasn’t very helpful at all as I was doing my NVQ 2 at the time. So that was all stopped, they said we are going to postpone that until you have a more positive attitude” [LOU].

This incident was the beginning of a sustained period of abuse which led to Lou seeking help from the Union:

“She got sacked for it, I was just another victim, and she didn’t like it because I wouldn’t jump when she said how high. She didn’t like it, and I was like no I am going to stick up for my rights, I am not going to be one of your walk over door mats, I wasn’t going to sit there and say ‘yes miss no miss 3 bags full miss” [LOU].

Alleged wrongdoings may occur in many different guises and are often shrouded in subjectivity. As with Lou above, the interviewee’s experience may often be traced back to a solitary interaction which has upset the perpetrator – a trigger. Lucy, a newly qualified teacher, for example, explains how she made a mistake by

suggesting changes to an established paperwork system:

“The administration that was done on a Friday afternoon took ages. ... I didn’t like to push my way in and say ‘this doesn’t really work’ but I did kind of hint at it; that it could be more efficient. But she [the perpetrator] had designed it, well that triggered an instant dislike!” [LUC].

Alternatively, Kathy’s refusal of a promotion, for what she had considered extremely valid health reasons, led to her victimisation in the workplace. The decision made by Kathy had upset her manager, triggering a succession of incidents and I refer to a quote that I previously cited in chapter 5 of this study:

“When I said no his whole attitude changed ... he couldn’t wait to get out the office ... the next time he saw me he completely blanked me” [KAT].

Kathy subsequently fell victim to the silent treatment, which I previously referred to in Chapter 5 Section 5.4.3.

The antecedent to Sally’s experience of workplace violence was a misjudged comment that she posted on Facebook which read *“I work for ***** **** it’s an expensive service”*. This comment had upset the Managing Director, and when coupled with organisational pressures, it triggered a period of sustained violence in the workplace which was both verbal and physical, and which added to the sexual violence that Sally was already experiencing at this time. These were events that ultimately culminated in Sally’s resignation.

My research has established that certain personality traits attract workplace violence. For instance, Lucy described herself as *“sensitive”* and suggested that her colleague *“picked up on this”*; while both Kathy and Julie indicated they were

vulnerable due to poor health. Julie had undergone brain surgery and she described how she was treated, by the manager, on her return to work:

“Well she would just be following me, even if it was the tiniest, tiniest little fault even if it was a spelling mistake she would be their following me around...she would call me over to her desk and it wasn't private...It makes you look small doesn't it, you do get embarrassed...I had my brain surgery ...I was seeing my psychologist... she said don't go into work. I said I'm not letting her scare me away, you know. I'm not going to let her do it” [JUL].

Kathy, who previously explained how she upset her manager by refusing promotion, was additionally ill-treated after a prolonged bout of ill-health;

I had an accident and was off work for 3 months, he knew about it, when I went back I went to my first family forum event, and he looked at me, walked straight past, didn't even say to me welcome back or how you feeling, how you been, he completely blanked me... I just wanted to leave the place and cry, but I held out and how sad and how upset I felt, like well you know 6 months prior you were singing my praises” [KAT].

Lydia suggested that patients also looked for signs of weakness in staff, proposing one patient “would wait for a weak team” [LYD] to come on shift:

“If somebody said something that he didn't like he wouldn't let that person know, he would just wait for a weak team to be on, on a particular shift. He would wait around a corner where it was a bit dark; quiet ...He would wait for that staff member and beat the living daylights out of them” [LYD].

Some of these traits are linked to Section 6.1 of this chapter, as personality traits, such as a lack of assertiveness, was initially identified when women joined an organisation for the first time. A further risky personality trait is the tendency to avoid conflict. In contrast to this, risky traits incorporate ‘strong willed women’ who are

also at risk in the workplace. This quality is demonstrated by Lou who suggested that she will not “*be a door mat*”. A similar trait was identified in Sally, who proposed “*I will not be intimidated by a man*”, likewise Eddie suggested:

“Because I am a really strong woman men are threatened by me. So instead of them coming around to trying and chat me up, they would rather come around and punch me. They find me very verbal” [EDD].

My findings support those of Lutgen-Sandvik and Sypher (2009) who argue that certain traits in women are associated with workplace violence including appearing weak, timid, or submissive; and that these traits affect how women are treated, for example, Kathy and Julie were victimised as a result of poor health. However, as I previously concluded, essentially there is no clear marker that can predict who will, or will not, become a victim of workplace violence. I believe however that ‘perceived’ wrongdoings and ‘risky traits’ collectively lay the foundations for sustained episodes of workplace violence, as does perceived poor service which I discuss next in this chapter.

6.3. ‘Perceived’ poor service-‘getting what you want’

Analysis suggests that in this study a common cause of external workplace violence, experienced from customers, clients, service users or patients was frequently the result of ‘perceived’ poor service. Almost half [9] of the interviewees referred to this, the majority of which [8] believed workplace violence is a method employed to ‘get what you want’. For example, Wendy, a pharmacy assistant, described how, despite giving legitimate reasons for not dispensing medication to a child, she was verbally abused by the boy’s father:

“I can’t [dispense the medication] if the pharmacist has said no. I can’t do anything about it, his decision is final... that’s the law, there’s nothing I can do. He just stood there and went on and on and on” [WEN].

Lynda recalled a similar incident that arose in the doctor’s surgery after she was unable to locate a patient’s prescription, it later transpired that the patient had failed to submit this prescription:

“He said ‘where the fuck is my prescription, I’ve put it in, I’ve brought it down and I’ve been over to the co-op and it isn’t there and they said they have given it to you” [LYD].

Lynda referred to an incident in which a patient was kept waiting, because the doctor was attending to an unscheduled emergency:

“This chap came to me and said ‘I have been sitting upstairs waiting with my wife, for my appointment for nearly half an hour’... ‘I said ‘you are on the screen’, I said ‘he [the doctor] definitely knows you have arrived’... Anyway when this bloke came down; he was shouting and swearing at me... Anyway he was really horrible. He wouldn’t speak to me for months after.” [LYD].

Likewise, other interviewees also commented on being mistreated, Charlie, a midwife explained:

“We don’t have enough people to give the service we would like to give to them and it does fail... They get frustrated because we are not living up to their expectation... they are still arguing because they just want to complain and sue the hospital for some money” [CHA].

Once more this reflects how the pressures located within public service industries affect women in the workplace. Trudy, who works for ***** identified how

customers often become abusive if their daily post was not delivered on time:

“We are sent down to customers who are really irate, really angry and irate, really loud mouthed, and they want answers” [TRU].

Frequently, the women who took part in this study could not facilitate perpetrators request because their hands were bound by company policy. Julie, for example, who, at one time worked as a housing benefits officer, explained the difficulties of this:

“I had this one guy, I really felt for him to be honest because he was just over the threshold, by this tiny little bit, to receive benefits and to him that’s his entire life. So he was then swearing at me, it’s my fault that he’s not entitled to it and I said its nothing to do with me it’s the government” [JUL].

Further Sharon, a station enquiry officer, discussed how she was abused in the reception of the police station because she refused to allow a member of the public to visit his friend who was detained in a cell:

“His friend had been arrested! He wanted to see him, and he couldn’t see him. So he lost his rag with me!”[SHA].

Baron (2006) suggests violence of this nature is an abuse of power (refer to Chapter 7 Section 7.1), and as the above interactions have demonstrated perpetrators utilise violence and abuse in an attempt to manipulate their victims, and indeed the situation, to obtain what they want from the organisation. Thus, violence and abuse is a means of forcing the women to comply with their requests, but frequently the women cannot comply as a result of company policy, thus this is a vicious circle. Further as analysis reveals these women are not without feeling, in that they empathise with the perpetrator but, as I previously indicated, they are duty bound. In light of this, it is

unsurprising that the majority of these roles are located within service industries; roles which involve regular face-to-face interactions with the public (Boyle *et al* 2007). Further, these are the types of roles that Faludi (1992) and McDowell (1999) both referred to as the 'feminised or the female ghetto,' roles which are traditionally labelled female, and which primarily employ women, consequently women commonly experience workplace violence.

6.4. An unpredictable environment

Both King (1994) and Gill *et al* (2002) propose that the lifestyle of an organisation impacts on risk, and several [4] of the interviewees referred to this in the form of an unpredictable environment. Angela, who is employed in a medium secure mental health unit housing violent criminals suggested:

"I feel very comfortable for the most part, but very aware that you can never not be aware of the risk. But everybody knows that and that's the environment" [ANG].

This was similarly reiterated by Lydia, a learning disabilities nurse, who discussed working alongside adults with severe challenging behaviour, and who described her thoughts and feelings on this, having been 'head-butted' by a service user who concussed her:

"When you get something unpredictable like that, you sort of back off. You really are aware and become more aware, because you do not know what you are dealing with" [LYD].

Sarah, a first responder and paramedic, additionally described her place of work as unpredictable and proposed it is:

“Not a hostile environment but an unpredictable environment... [adding]... that’s just part and parcel of life really isn’t it” [SAR].

Eddie, an entertainer, additionally referred to her work environment as hostile:

“You never know what you were going to have in; it’s a different audience every time. It could be really good one week and then you think I’d never be there again as all of a sudden a bunch of arse holes had moved in, and caused a bit of a scene” [EDD].

My findings reveal that some risks are frequently presented by dangerous groups of people (Hearn and Parkin 2001), and the commonality between Angela, Lydia, and Sarah is that they all attend to members of the public who are sick or volatile, and therefore unpredictable (refer to page 25, table 2). Boyle *et al* (2007) describe these roles as having a high level of public contact, whilst Chappell and Di Martino (2006) define them as high-risk, particularly as many are located in hospitals. In addition, these roles are public sector which Farrugia (2002) maintains are more risky. Eddie also encountered those who are both volatile and unpredictable; this however is often a result of alcohol and drugs. However, drugs and alcohol will be discussed in depth in section 6.4.2.

6.4.1. Lone working

Previously in Chapter 5, I revealed how lone working is not solely related to working on one’s own. Employees indicate that often they work alone but within an organisation, in an office, a storeroom or a warehouse. Furthermore, employees may be enticed into another worker’s office where they may be alone with another worker. These are solitary spaces and locations which many of the interviewees

referred to in relation to sexual violence; however, I will discuss this in relation to sexual violence in Chapter 8 of this thesis. Further, the interviewees referred to lone working in relation to entering and leaving the workplace which I will consider later within this chapter.

6.4.2. Alcohol and drugs

Over one third of the interviewees [7] of this study referred to alcohol and drug addiction as an antecedent for unpredictable behaviour. For example, Carol, an emergency care worker said:

“I think a lot of the time it’s down to drugs and alcohol...reiterating... quite often its alcohol and drugs” [CAR].

The interviewees, however, did not judge nor condemn the perpetrators; instead they appeared accepting of these acts of violence. Eddie described one offender who repeatedly violated her as:

“A bit of a piss head... [adding]...but he’s always been like that, he always oversteps the mark, never knows where the level is” [EDD].

Meanwhile Leanne, a waitress, claimed *“you would get comments from men when they were drunk and stuff”*, whereas Sarah, a paramedic, suggested:

“If you go to drunk patients and you are doing something they don’t particularly like you get ‘Oh get off you fucking wanker’ and all that mallarky ... I think as well you programme yourself, because if you know the patient you are going to is drunk, then the potential for that [violence] is greater and you’re more vulnerable” [SAR].

Interestingly Sarah added:

“I’ve been pushed with drunken patients in the past but not specific violent attacks directly with me” [SAR].

This suggests that Sarah is unaware that physically pushing an individual amounts to physical violence and is in fact workplace violence. The commonality between these different experiences, other than alcohol and drugs, is that these roles all have a high level of public interaction. This implies that drugs and alcohol may not necessarily be the cause of workplace violence, but they may well contribute to what is already an unpredictable environment. Gill *et al* (2002) refer to drug addicts and alcoholics as the ‘usual suspects’, it is clear however that the ‘orderly other’ also become irrational when drinking to excess or when participating in recreational drug taking, which was evidenced above with Eddie. Thus the findings agree with Holloway and Jefferson (2003:572), that this is a label which detracts from “*society’s humane orderly self*” placing culpability on the shoulders of “*blameable scapegoats*”. These are particular groups of people labelled as ‘risky’ who are commonly held responsible for much of the violence that occurs in the workplace.

6.5. Feeling at risk in the workplace

During each interview I asked the women whether they had ever felt at risk in the workplace. The majority initially responded ‘no’, for example Charlie said:

*“I never feel at risk anyway, anywhere. I will walk around ***** any time at night, in the park, in the dark. I don’t feel at risk where somebody else would”.*

Lydia, a learning disabilities nurse, similarly agreed that she never felt at risk whilst

at work, however, at a later stage during the interview Lydia described how she asked security to escort her to her vehicle which was parked in the staff car park. This occurred after she had responded to an emergency alarm in the hospital unit, during which she sustained an injury:

“It was dark and the hand incident had unsettled me” [LYD].

Sarah, a paramedic, similarly responded that she too never felt vulnerable in the workplace, despite the fact that she was a lone worker:

“No! Purely because I think for myself, in that I am in a slightly different role to the others. I’m a lone worker, I work alone, we have a lone worker policy so they don’t routinely send me to drunks or mental health patients, so my risk is decreased because I am not part of a dual crew so I don’t get sent to them” [SAR].

However much like Lydia and Charlie above, Sarah later revealed her apprehension. During her interview she suggested that there were certain areas in *****, which caused her to feel apprehensive when entering them, and she further suggested:

“If I go to a job and its dark, I just hope that control has triaged it [the emergency call] right and I am not goanna walk into something inappropriate” [SAR].

During the interviews it was evident that the women were confused in relation to feeling at risk in the workplace, supporting Ditton and Innes’s (2005) theory, that risk involves both subjective and objective meanings. These meanings are frequently reliant on the individual because as Kemshall (2003) argues, feeling at risk involves personal choice and navigation which either increases or decreases individual

anxieties. Therefore, a situation that one person considers 'too risky', another simply will not.

In light of this, it was unsurprising that the women who did not feel at risk could not understand why their colleagues or co-workers would. Lynda for example, a doctor's receptionist, described her feelings after a colleague was abused by a male service user who had threatened to set her on fire:

"I said 'Jane he wouldn't set you on fire', but that actually ended with Jane not leaving the surgery without a doctor with her in the evening, because she was so scared that he was going to come back and get her. But I don't think he would have done!" [LYN].

Charlie, the midwife, reiterated this, similarly stating:

"I don't feel at risk where somebody else would, whereas somebody else does, and has to have security take her to walk her to the car park which is only over the road to get their car at the end of the shift, and things like that. I just think what! Well how weird! It wouldn't even occur to me!" [CHA].

Sarah followed a similar pattern during her interview; she too suggested that she never felt at risk in the workplace. However, she then contradicted this and described feeling "a certain amount of fear" when dealing with one routine patient. This patient is schizophrenic; so she can never quite predict "what's going to happen" [SAR] when interacting with him. Likewise Angela, in similarity to Charlie above, previously stated that she too never feels at risk but then indicated that she too only "fe[els] very comfortable for the most part", and that she is extremely aware that she could "never not be aware of the risk", and she added:

"These guys have a long history of assaultive behaviours or criminal

offences so you have to keep your wits about you. If you feel uncomfortable you have to leave the environment, and pull your pin [personal alarm]" [ANG]."

Despite Lynda having originally suggested that she could not understand Jane's need to be escorted in to and out of the workplace; she too revealed that at times she felt vulnerable at work:

"I don't think they [management] realise how vulnerable we, the receptionists, feel" [LYN].

Thus patterns within my analysis reveal how the interviewees' initial reaction to the question 'feeling at risk in the workplace', disagreed with a later response.

Despite directly answering that they did not feel at risk, collectively the majority of interviewees went on to suggest that in some shape or form that they did, and that those they felt most at risk from were in fact male.

Thus the uncertainty of feeling at risk arises for several different reasons (Ditton and Innes 2005). Firstly, over amplification: certainly when I first asked this question [had the women ever felt at risk in the workplace] the women seemed taken aback that I would suggest this. However, they were judging their experiences as a whole, objectively. As the women progressed with the interview they spoke of individual incidents that they recalled, and it was at this point that Kemshall's (2003) ideology came to fruition as the women spoke subjectively of these experiences. Thus it is not possible to generalise risk between individuals as 'feeling at risk' is a personal consideration, therefore 'feeling at risk' is not something which can be readily assessed on another's behalf, which partially explains why some of the interviewees cannot understand the level of fear that a colleague may attach to a

particular incident.

6.5.1. Sexuality.

One third of the women that I interviewed were lesbian, however these women were not victimised on the basis of their sexuality, but rather as a result of male fixation, and possibly male sexual fantasy. For example, Gina's manager frequently enquired after her sex life and she described how she was questioned regarding her sexual preferences, and I refer to a quote previously cited in chapter 5:

"I think what made it worse was that he was so obsessed with me being a lesbian, he was always asking questions about me and my girlfriend, and I just wouldn't tell him, I don't tell anyone about that and I'm certainly not going to tell my boss!"[GIN].

Gina additionally explained how the manager made sexual comments about the women who walked past the shop window:

"If anyone walked past in a short skirt, he would look at me and say oh a lady there in a short skirt, and I would say you know you are treating women like they are an object not a woman, ... I don't look at women like that, ... I love them but I don't look at their skirt and think, well its short, you know blokes are very different to women. I think because he thought I was a lesbian I would be more like, oh a woman, like him. But of course that's not how it works" [GIN].

Furthermore, before exposing himself and masturbating beside Gina, he put on a pornographic video of two women having sex, indicating that this crime may have been premeditated, and once more I refer to a quote that was cited in Chapter 5 in relation to sexual violence:

"If somebody walked past he would go oh she looks nice and things like

that, but if I wore a skirt or dress he would always say oh that's really turning me on, I can't believe you wore a skirt to work. I would cross my legs if we were at a meeting in the morning, and he would say to me, 'oh that's really turning me on'.

Similarly Ella suggested:

"We had this young chap at work he was quite nice... but he developed a 'thing for me' ... I rather stupidly went out with him for the day, not as a date, but as mates, he knew I was living with someone, a woman, and I didn't realise that he had this thing for me. I got on with him like I did all the blokes.... I got in the car and what I didn't know was that he had put 'just married' on the back of it ... these people were talking to us in this pub, congratulating us. I didn't know what to do...I was 3 hours away from home by then...He knew my partner but he still persisted" [ELL].

Eddie discussed how she was abused in her place of work by another woman, and she described one particular woman who followed her from venue to venue; sexually harassing her:

"Cos I'm gay she thinks to be sexually harassing me is ok, she knows that I am gay and thinks that I won't find it abusive. She'll be grabbing hold of my leg and rubbing herself up and down it, putting her hands around my waist and I'm like whoahhhh, she like thrusting herself against me" [EDD].

Ella described how her area manager:

"Declared he was in love with me... he asked me to marry him but I was gay, and he knew that I was living with someone!" [ELL].

6.5.2. Sexual attraction

A further risky trait identified in Chapter 5, Section 5.7.5 and one that several of the women referred to, was unwanted sexual attraction and the pursuit of a relationship, and Kathy explained how her manager had tried:

“To grab me and ma[k]e a pass at me, and when I declined he was livid. He said did I not know who he was and surely I would have picked up all the little nuances, in our relationship over the last few years”[KAT].

This was similarly referred to by Ella in Section 5.7.6 in that she described a work colleague who was infatuated with her.

These are incidents that vaguely resemble those discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.5.1, in that the ‘following’ of the women led to more insidious crimes which are generally of interest to the media (Barling 1996). For example, Claire Bernal was murdered by a former male co-worker who had pursued her as a result of the sexual attraction theory (BBC 2012). The media sensationalised these crimes rather than concentrating on the vulnerability of working women, particularly women who work alongside males. In essence, they place the emphasis on the perpetrator not the victim. However, the findings of this study highlight the level of risk that is attached to sexual attraction, which, as I previously referred to in Section 5.4.4, has the potential to escalate to more serious occurrences of workplace violence.

6.6. The non-reporting of workplace violence

Issues associated with the non-reporting of workplace violence were expressed by over a third of the interviewees [7], for many different reasons. For example, Leanne discussed how she considered making a complaint to management, a result of the high level of violence she experienced from one particular male chef, but she was put off from doing so believing that *“no-one would tak[e] any notice”*. Sharon, a station enquiry officer, said she too had failed to report incidents of internal workplace violence to her superior. However, the reason behind

this was fear as she was new to the workforce:

“No I didn’t, I was too scared to, because I had never worked in that situation before. So I didn’t know how it all worked and I always thought oh yeah, they will blame it on me” [SHA].

Sally, a customer service advisor, explained that she too had no-one to turn to or indeed to complain to within the organisation, especially as the Managing Director was the perpetrator:

“At the end of the day there is no-one in that whole business for anyone to go to. If any woman has a problem there is nowhere she can go, and it is horrible, really, really horrible!” [SAL].

Interviewees who were courageous enough to report incidents of violence and abuse to supervisors and management suggested that they were then pressured not to take further action. Gina, for example, a victim of a serious sex act said:

“My ex wanted to get the police involved. But my bosses did not want me to go down that route” [GIN].

This reinforces the difficulties faced by the HSE in relation to the efficiency of reporting, in that the HSE rely heavily on employees to self-report incidents to senior members of staff, as well as the competence of these staff to record incidents of workplace violence and forward this information to the relevant parties. This is a serious issue as when this process is hindered the risk of workplace violence generates an increased risk of violence and abuse in the workplace (Chojnacka and Ferns 2005). The non-reporting of workplace violence is additionally addressed in Chapter 7 in relation to patriarchy, and how some males influence females not to report incidents of violence and abuse.

6.7. The impact of workplace factors

Some factors relating to the workplace can have a detrimental effect on women's experiences of violence and abuse. Analysis has identified that in this study non-gendered violence, which included verbal and non-verbal psychological violence, and direct and non-direct workplace violence, was evenly spread across the many different roles referred to by the interviewees. However, some workplaces elicited certain types of violence which were conducive to workplace influences. A prime example of this is women in caring professions, who in this study experienced greater levels of direct and non-direct physical violence which could be attributed to several factors, including a high rate of public interaction. Additionally, as I have previously discussed, it was associated with roles where members of staff were required to adhere to strict policy guidelines, in that there is no leeway for discretion. Good examples of this are provided by Julie a housing benefits officer, Leanne a life guard, Wendy, a pharmacy assistant, and Lucy a school teacher. Julie explained the significance of this:

*"I had this one guy ... he was just over the threshold by this tiny little bit to receive benefits and to him that's his entire life. So he was then swearing at me, it's my fault that he's not entitled to it and I said its nothing to do with me it's the government. Then he said he was going to commit suicide. He was going to jump off the ***** bridge ... I called the police but I don't know what the outcome was" [JUL].*

This was similarly reiterated by Wendy in the pharmacy, in that she is not permitted to dispense medication to a child under the age of sixteen and yet the perpetrator

continued to attack her verbally and psychologically despite the fact that the outcome could not have been changed:

I said I can't, the pharmacists said no; I can't do anything about it. His decision is final, there's nothing I can do, he's in charge, that's the law and there's nothing I can do ... He just stood there and he went on and on [WEN].

6.7.1. Working environment

A number of the women discussed difficulties relating to their working environment, which included a pressurised work environment and staff shortages that attributed to violence and abuse, but which additionally included unreasonable management. Lydia, for example, discussed how staff numbers were reduced in what was already a beleaguered environment, which impacted upon staff morale:

They reduced from 6 staff down to 5, then increased the workload ... 9 times out of 10 you are so stressed you don't get anything to eat, you don't get anything to drink to the point that if you don't go to the toilet now you really are going to wet yourself and you got pains in your stomach. That's the point to which we are all working at. This is every single shift, not every so many weeks ...the staff feel at risk and you cannot support your colleagues because you haven't got time to do everything you need to be doing ... You are just working flat out at the speed of the Titanic from the minute you get there to the minute you go home" [LYD].

Sally similarly identifies that the pressures faced by her manager was responsible for the way he treated her:

"He was under so much pressure and he had no one to take it out on and because he thought I was going to change my timetable, and I wouldn't - He was under immense pressure and he didn't have anyone to take it out on" [SAL].

Similarly, the women identified that they faced specific issues with female management, or those who were above them in the hierarchy. Julie for example, when working in an administrative post for local government proposed:

“I mean you were not allowed to use the telephone or anything like that, only for emergencies, but she used it. You weren’t allowed to eat but she would, it was her kingdom and you had to do what she said” ...adding ... “when she was away or off, everybody had a really good day. Everyone would get on; we would work and have a laugh. she always caused the hassle [JUL].

An issue surrounding austere management was similarly flagged up by Lydia, a qualified learning disability nurse:

My manager is a woman, but sometimes I question that because she is a dragon. I get on alright with doctors. You get the student doctors coming in. if they are white female probably 2 out of 5 white male they are vile. They think they are something above and beyond the call of duty, they are. They talk to you like that – whatever!

Several of the interviewees felt they built better working relationships with men than they did women, and they referred to cohorts of women, which were reminiscent of covens:

“I get on better working with men than I do women, because there is no bitchiness, women are bitchy and horrible... I don’t like that very much. I mix with everybody, because I don’t want to belong to any one clique, I hate that, I just want to get on with everybody; ‘Hi, how you doing’ sort of thing rather than sticking in a tiny little group” [LOU].

Others discussed the difficulties of attempting to keep their distance from such cliques of women, acknowledging that they had, in the past, been drawn into to such an environment, yet knowing this was wrong;

“It’s ever so difficult not to be part of it, you have to try and not be drawn into it because I think as human beings we very much like to feel part of something rather than just on the outside, and if we are not in that culture we are on the outside. So it’s easier sometimes. I worked in a really big open plan office and it was really easy to do that and you would find yourself joining in and then you would go home and think do I actually really think that. I wonder how many others actually did think about what we said” [KAT].

Clearly such cliques give rise to a culture which promotes adverse and unreasonable working conditions for women, and yet if women fail to comply they may well be marginalised. Additionally this demonstrates how workplace violence, in some workplaces, may be viral, spreading from one employee to another.

6.7.2. The legacy of professionalism

A further factor which has an impact upon working women is one which relates remaining professional in the workplace, as these women would like to fight back against their ill-treatment, but feel that they are constrained by their role. For example, Charlie a midwife suggested that professionalism impacted on the normalisation process of workplace violence: “I have to be professional about it; obviously I have to be” [CHA], further she proposed:

[I] find it difficult really not to say anything back to them because you have to be a professional don’t you, you can’t answer them back at all, all you can do is explain why you are doing what you are doing, and that you are doing it as quickly as you can possibly do it, and it’s

not easy in a hospital as the NHS are very slow with a lot of things [CHA].

Eddie, an entertainer, similarly discussed the difficulties that she faced when encountering violence and abuse from an audience, and the constraints of her role:

“If I stop, and said I just can’t do this and walked off [stage] the audience wouldn’t understand, they wouldn’t understand! They are not exactly seeing what is going on, they don’t think, they think it’s all part of the fun!” [EDD]

Finally, I have included a quote from Lydia which I believe sums up how the women that I interviewed felt in relation to their role in the labour force and the treatment that they received. Lydia simply said:

“Why the fuck do I do this job, because I really hate it, I’m sick of people, and sick of meeting their needs, and sick of being spoken to like I am rubbish, and sick of being sworn at, and I am sick of all of it because it’s not acceptable, I don’t find it acceptable at all. But I tolerate it in the professional manner; because that is the nature or the risk of this job [LYD].

Unison's findings (2009) support Namie's findings, proposing that one in three working women are bullied by co-workers and colleagues and that this is a risk that specifically applies to younger women in the workforce, who they reveal are predominantly at risk from more mature working women, particularly women in senior professional roles (Churchyard, 2009). Hierarchical women frequently misuse the power that they hold, and, in a similar manner to hierarchical men, they humiliate and belittle subordinate women (Durre 2010). This, as I previously discussed, is a means of establishing but also maintaining power and control in the workplace, and

a means of women protecting their own position in the workforce (Hinchberger 2009).

6.8. Summary.

This chapter has revealed how certain risk factors may raise the likelihood of women experiencing workplace violence, for example training and age. Additionally, this has incorporated personality traits such as appearing weak in the workplace or, in contrast to this, being a woman of strong character both of which may be detrimental to the safety of working women. The chapter has evidenced, however, that there is not one clear marker that will identify who will, or who will not, become a victim of workplace violence, but rather it has shed a light on a collection of risky traits. Thus this chapter evidences that the more traits and contributory factors that exist in the workplace, the higher the level of risk posed to women

This chapter has made evident how many perpetrators of this phenomenon attempt to manipulate working women via violence and abuse, in an attempt to obtain what they require from the organisation itself and that often working women are merely pawns, and the abuse of them a means to an end. Most importantly I have revealed how readily society blames the infirm or the sick, alcoholics or drug addicts for the incident of workplace violence. These are individuals who are labelled 'risky', as they are unpredictable and frequently volatile but importantly they are marginalised and unable to defend this position. The findings have revealed however, that on many occasions it is the rational thinking 'orderly other' of society that equally pose a threat to working women, and the interviewees have repeatedly

indicated that the majority of these perpetrators are male, and that is especially relevant to gendered violence in the workplace. These individuals are similarly unpredictable, and most capable of violence and abuse.

In response to workplace violence the HSE responsabilise employers to ensure the safety of their employees as far as is reasonably practical. In turn, employers forward this accountability to the individual worker via the implementation of safety training and through the introduction of safety measures in the workplace. Outstandingly the findings of this study have identified that frequently the training does not meet the needs of women, in particular it fails to address the issue of gendered violence in the workplace, in the form of co-worker violence. This violence incorporates sexual violence including sex acts which facilitated a fear of rape, and at no point during the interviews did the women refer to measures implemented specifically to protect them from internal perpetrators of this. This evidences that there is a serious neglect of the needs of women in risk assessment which needs to be rectified promptly

This chapter has similarly identified how the women's knowledge of workplace violence is inadequate, as many believe the term only relates to physical violence in the workplace, indeed many of the women in this study were unaware that it incorporates sexual violence in the workplace. This indicates that collectively working women may have a deficit of knowledge, signifying that the HSE's message does not reach employees, and this highlights why numerous women may fail to report incidents of violence and abuse. If incidents of violence and abuse against women are not reported, measures cannot be implemented to reduce many of its

occurrences, in that no-one is aware of the scale of the problem that exists in the workplace.

Despite the fact that many of the interviewees initially suggested they did not feel at risk in the workplace, it transpired, and was quite evident in this study that many women did. The women in this study have highlighted a failure by organisations to adequately protect them often on a daily basis. Organisations fail to adequately train women in respect of personal safety and it has become apparent, through this study, that much of the training that women do experience is a 'tick box' exercise. Collectively the interviewees have illuminated a lack of support in the workplace, especially during difficult times, and many have recounted how they have no one to go to, nor a designated safe area to retreat to in times of trouble.

Chapter 7

7.0. Safety measures in the work place

The HSE attempt to protect employees from workplace violence via the initiation of guidance and support, and the implementation of policy and procedure which set out how organisations will “prevent manage and respond to work-related violence” (HSE 2014). The HSE believe that evidence of good policy procedure validates an organisation’s commitment to tackling workplace violence which will ensure staff safety (HSE 2014). This not only aids the identification of incidents of workplace violence, it prevents and manages problems relating to harassment and violence in the workplace (Sweeney *et al* 2011:5). To facilitate this, the HSE determine appropriate measures which endeavour to establish whose responsibility it is to prevent and manage workplace violence, ultimately proposing that this responsibility lies solely with the employer. At the same time this approach acknowledges that workers play an important role in the identification of workplace violence via the reporting of incidents (Sweeney *et al* 2011). In light of this, this chapter will discuss safety measures in the workplace, it will consider the effectiveness of such measures or indeed a lack of appropriate safety measures which may either increase or decrease risks levels and heighten feelings of insecurity. For example staff should be made aware, through the implementation of policy, how to support members of staff who experience workplace violence and abuse, incorporating measures to aid the prevention and control of workplace violence, and the education of staff to make use of reporting and recording systems

(HSE 2014).

7.1. Who is responsible for minimising risk?

As I previously identified above in this chapter, the HSE, in response to increasing levels of violence and abuse in the workplace, have made employers responsible for its prevention. To address this, many employers have passed this accountability down to employees via the introduction of self-defence techniques, personal safety training or safety awareness training courses that intend to educate staff. These methods are reliant on the taught techniques of the individual organisation.

For example, Lydia, a learning disabilities nurse was, at the time of her interview, feeling particularly vulnerable in her workplace due to an increased use of agency and bank nursing staff. Lydia described how nursing staff were frequently transferred in from other hospital units due to the lack of qualified staff on duty, but also the availability of qualified staff and the problems that this created when on duty in the unit.

Lydia's work environment is dangerous, challenging and unpredictable due to the nature of the service users, and she explained how agency and bank nursing staff are not sufficiently trained in the correct restraint techniques to adequately care for learning disability patients. Learning disability staff practice a restraint technique called Positive Behaviour Management [PBM]; it is the only technique permitted in this hospital unit due to issues surrounding the safeguarding of vulnerable adults. It is a technique which avoids the use of physical force such as the 'twisting of arms or

the pulling of thumbs'. Therefore, when violent situations arise on the unit bank, agency and transferred nursing staff are frequently unable to assist, as a result qualified members of staff are elevated to an even higher level of risk in relation to physical violence and sustaining an injury:

"If it kicked off none of these staff would be able to support you with it. They are not trained to do it [PBM] as they use control and restraint [C&R]. So they would just have to do what they could, it's what the police use, we don't use that. We use martial arts so there is no injury attained [by the patient]. With the others [C&R] because of the pre-meditated nature of the public they will sort of pull on thumbs, put thumbs down, causing pain. We don't do that with learning disability patients. There's no touching of drunks or anything. No, so they [agency/transferred staff] are unable to deal with it, and you wouldn't be able to deal with it [alone], and you could possibly be restraining somebody up to about five minutes to four hours" [LYD].

This is a repetitive cycle, as the more agency staff that are employed on the unit, the higher the daily risk level to qualified staff which ultimately increases the stress level of permanent staff, and Lydia suggested:

"At the moment, what is in that unit [service users] is identified as challenging behaviour. So they are very challenging, severely challenging, and severely dangerous with intent" [LYD].

Carol and Sarah who are similarly employed in health care related roles also reiterated this, explaining how members of staff in their particular organisation are no longer trained in self-defence techniques. Sarah, who is also a lone worker, explained:

"We don't have any [training]. They stopped doing break away techniques [an alternative name for PMB] because what they say now is that you should be promoting your own awareness of

situations-not to get to that point, and control should be appropriately triaging the calls so you're not in that situation" [SAR].

This suggests that Sarah's personal safety may, at any time, be compromised by employees housed in control rooms that are many miles away, and whose role it is to assess emergency calls but who may not necessarily be familiar with her location. Further, if triage fails to appropriately assess emergency calls Sarah's level of risk significantly increases. Additionally, the above quote supports my earlier discussion, that workers are deemed responsible for their own health and safety requirements in the workplace. As in this case the ambulance service has suggested that staff "*should be promoting [their] own awareness of situations*" [SAR]. The point I am making here is that the NHS, *often* on a daily basis, knowingly place Lydia, Sarah and other members of staff at risk, and yet they have a duty of care to these employees. However, they circumvent this duty by ensuring personnel are equipped with personal alarms and mobile phones. This chapter will now move forward and discuss the women's experiences of safety training in the workplace, and the relevance of this training.

7.2. Health and safety training

Over one third of the interviewees [7] in this study believed health and safety training classes were a negative event, ascertaining that these classes were not particularly relevant to the needs of women. For example, the women expressed how health and safety training only concerns violence that is external to the workplace – customers, clients, patients and service users, suggesting that it fails to address

issues of internal workplace violence experienced from colleagues, co-workers and management. For example, training frequently educates women on how to keep safe when walking home alone, when walking in the park or in the dark. This was something that the interviewees felt they were already more than aware of. What it failed to inform the women was how to keep safe within the workplace, how to manage violent and abusive customers, clients, service, patients and indeed violent and abusive colleagues and co-workers. Neither did it inform the women of safe reporting procedures, or where or who, in the workplace, they could seek help.

Charlie, a midwife, discussed her feelings in relation to this:

“Once a year we have this personal safety awareness day, every year you have to go to some rubbish, as if personal safety awareness is really related to the job. You think you are not telling us anything that none of us would do anyway, like don’t walk in shaded areas at night, and I wouldn’t do that you know. Yes, I walk about in the park at dark but it’s got lamps. But you know you are aware always of where you are going, and when you are at work you get told to call security” [CHA].

Charlie was not only irritated because the training did not offer her the correct advice, but also the hiring of unsuitable security staff, and I will discuss Charlie’s thoughts on the relevance of this a little later in this chapter. Angela, a mental health officer, similarly expressed her disappointment and frustration over the quality of staff training in relation to health and safety:

“It teaches you to be politically correct, it’s absolute tosh. It [the training] was 9-4; by the end of it I so wanted to get home. The focus was racism, the black card you know. You mustn’t be racist, but actually you can be homophobic, sexist, anything else. You can be anything else ‘ist’ all the time. I was going to tell them a few things before I left, but at the end I thought there is no point, it’s a joke, just a joke, other than focusing on racism really, but it is all we’ve got, it’s

all we've got" [ANG].

In contrast Carol, who in Chapter 5, Section 5.6 described how she was strangled by one patient, holds the opinion that health and safety training is a good idea, which is perhaps a reflection of her experience:

"I think it [the training] would actually be quite a good idea. Even if it was just how to knock someone down if they were coming at you, not to pile in just to give you time to get away, just to give you a chance" [CAR].

In part this is because the last time Carol received any health and safety training was 14 years ago:

"When I trained I remember doing a session on confrontation and it was about somebody going into an office, and somebody saying no. I remember that to this day, but that was 14 years ago" [CAR].

All of the above personnel work for the NHS, and in this study they highlight the failure of the NHS to address the health and safety needs of staff. The above time lapse indicated by Carol may also be an indication of why her opinion of health and safety is slightly nuanced to that of other NHS staff, as her concern is with a lack of training and not the quality. Regardless of this, in this study there are weaknesses in the NHS's obligation to tackle workplace violence and a failure by them to ensure the safety of female staff and to protect females from violence and abuse. In addition although some of the training appears to address the needs of women the emphasis of this training does not meet their requirements, leaving women ill-equipped to deal with violence and abuse (Leighton 1999, Bowie 2002). The evidence presented in this study has suggested health and safety training is simply a

technique that enables the organisation to meet their health and safety requirements (HSE 2014). Further, the training only addresses the conventional view of workplace violence which is evidenced by its failure to address internal violence and abuse, once more demonstrating the complexities of defining workplace violence and the level of ambiguity that the failure to do this creates.

Additionally, the value of taught health and safety techniques is reliant on the individual workplace in question, and it is apparent that many of these techniques are not transferable between occupational roles (Leighton 1999). However, the NHS has failed to consider this via the employment of inappropriately trained staff. Rather than decrease risk levels in some workplaces, as I have evidenced with Lydia above, particularly those that harbour high levels of risk, they have increased it.

7.3. Safety measures and the minimisation of risk

To meet health and safety requirements some organisations, for example, The Transport Workers Union-The National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport (RMT), have a charter of protection which advocates a zero tolerance policy in respect to workplace violence. Furthermore, they have implemented conflict training for staff and provided security equipment such as CCTV or panic alarms and eliminated lone working. In response to these measures, and in line with the expectations of the HSE, employees are expected to report all incidents of workplace violence, particularly as they work closely with the British Transport Police (BTP) (RMT 2014, HSE 2014), who are now a familiar sight in railway stations. This evidences the

level of commitment and the serious approach that the RMT take in terms of staff safety and violence and abuse. Similarly, effective health and safety measures in the workplace such as the BTP are an official recognition that there is a need to protect staff from harm in order to meet health and safety requirements recognising that members of staff have an increased risk in these workplaces.

During the interviews I asked the women about the security measures implemented in their respective workplaces. This question not only referred to steps taken by the organisation, but the measures implemented by the women themselves in order to protect themselves. Several of the women, mainly public sector employees, referred to lone working policy and practice, while others discussed situational crime prevention measures installed by the organisation, or measures which the organisation had considered installing or indeed measures that the women themselves had requested, for example, security screens. However, in this study some of these measures appear to be a contradiction in terms.

7.4. The contradiction of security measures

Angela and Lydia are both employed in secure hospital units run by the NHS. During their interviews both women referred to the emergency response alarms that are issued to all staff upon entry into these units, and which are kept on their person at all times. Angela's unit is medium secure, and many patients housed there are involved with the Criminal Justice System for various crimes including murder, rape and sexual offences against women and children. Angela

discussed this role and the efficiency of the emergency response team:

“In every shift they [the staff] identify at least one member of staff [on each ward] and they are the emergency response team. Its nursing staff, managers, so if you have eight wards you have eight people who will instantly respond to the pin [personal alarm]..So everybody comes down because it is taken very seriously” [ANG].

Lydia similarly works in a medium secure hospital unit however, the individuals housed in this unit have severe learning disabilities. Although safety procedures are similar to those above they do differ slightly in that they rely on all members of staff on duty at the time to respond to any such emergency:

“So when the pins pulled [alarm] the staff on shift are the ones that respond” [LYD].

However, previously in this chapter I discussed staff shortages in Lydia’s unit, and the implications of hiring inappropriately trained bank and agency nursing staff. As a result of this practice, many of the staff on this unit are unable to respond in times of crisis because they are not trained in the correct personal restraint technique. This is a practice which subsequently places qualified nursing staff but also the service users in danger:

“We were really, really, short staffed. There were six patients on a one to one and only six staff in total!” [LYD].

Placing staff on one-to-one duties with a designated service user means that the staff are unable to leave this patient under any circumstances, so if the alarm sounds staff are unable to respond. This is a practice which increases the vulnerability of staff in what is already an extremely volatile environment as a result

of this, when Lydia responded to the alarm “no one else came out of the six, just me”. In this particular incident that Lydia is referring to a patient had:

“Grabbed [a male nurse’s] jumper and was twisting it around to strangulation point, so I had to get him off him and try to settle him down” [LYD].

Responding to the above incident led to the ‘gouging’ of Lydia’s hand which she described as the final straw in a series of risky situations. The lack of appropriately trained staff had, not for the first time, placed Lydia and other members of staff in danger and as a direct result of this incident Lydia was placed on long term sick leave for a period of 6 months. The diagnosis given by her doctor was acute stress and anxiety. It was not so much the injury that had caused this ailment, but the compounding knowledge, and the stress associated with this knowledge, that not only was she employed in a high risk environment, but that the organisation was cutting corners. By doing so they had failed to meet the prescribed safety requirements, thus Lydia was unnecessarily being placed in danger. Lydia described her feelings of this:

“I was absolutely, really, really pissed off. I can’t even think of a better word to explain that. Absolutely pissed off because as the qualified [nurse] I was trying to cover the unit, trying to oversee everything, ensure the staff were safe, the service users were safe, their needs were being met, the medication was being done, the notes, the ward rounds for the next day were being sorted, absolutely a mammoth amount of work. I just thought that I am now sick to death that this service is not meeting any of their needs [service users], staff needs, and now people are getting injured unnecessarily, and I really have just about had enough” [LYD].

In a similar vein Lynda, a receptionist, revealed that despite the fact that the doctor’s

surgery was equipped with Closed Circuit Television (CCTV), the system is inefficient, because as with Lydia and Angela above, its efficiency is dependent on the vigilance of other members of staff. In this particular workplace the main purpose of having CCTV is not to protect staff, but to prevent drug addicts injecting in the public toilet, and interfering with the doctors:

“Darren he’s got an alcohol problem as well, he knows he’s dying too and he will just go and knock on the doctor’s door... He shouts ‘I want to see the doctor now’ sometimes he will go off, just walk out the door, or he would wander around the surgery, and I would have to keep an eye on him with the cameras” [LYN].

During the evening, for example, reception staff work alone and they feel especially vulnerable as there is no-one to monitor the CCTV, which like an alarm, is dependent on observation and intervention. If members of staff are not available to oversee CCTV this measure rapidly becomes ineffective in the workplace. Thus this study illuminates how the prevention and minimisation of risk may only be effective if the set policy guidelines are adhered to (HSE 2013). In the above incidents, despite some of the interviewees of this study being supplied with personal alarms and CCTV monitors, and being adequately trained in restraint techniques, the women’s safety was compromised; as a result of the lack of qualified staff or through lone working. This highlights how some organisations may neglect the safety of workers, including women, and it further reinforces how complying with safety policies initiated by the HSE are merely box ticking exercises.

7.5. Security screens

Just over one quarter of the women in this study [5] referred to physical

safety measures that were implemented in the workplace. Julie, who was once a benefits officer, described how *“they [the benefits office] actually put glass partitions up” [JUL]* to protect staff. The advantage of this security measure is that it places a barrier between the victim and the perpetrator and it is not dependent on other members of staff in terms of effectiveness, but also the women believe this screen will keep them safe, which reduces many of their anxieties relating to violence and abuse. At times, these screens work hand in hand with other security methods. For instance, Julie suggested that in addition to safety screens they had a coded filing system which flagged up abusive service users, and which worked in conjunction with security staff:

“If you had a red file you would know they were potentially violent... I would just discreetly go out and say [to the security men] so and so’s here can you keep an eye out, when they called the name out obviously the security man would come” [JUL].

In contrast to this Sharon reflected on her time spent working for the police as a station enquiry officer, and went as far as to suggest:

“I would never ever have done that job without a screen, no way!” [SHA].

The reason Sharon gave for this:

“When the screen was there, no one could get through anyway so no, I didn’t ever feel at risk there, but without the screen I would have” [SHA].

Sharon has clearly identified the effectiveness of this measure in reducing her anxiety levels and any perceived risk. Initially Sharon alleged that she never felt at

risk in the workplace however as we will see presently this sense of security is contingent on the presence of a security screen:

“No, we had a screen, he couldn’t get to me and I felt absolutely fine. It didn’t bother me at all. No, not once did I actually get scared there, not once, because you knew you were protected”... I mean it’s not very nice; it’s not very pleasant” [SHA].

Towards the end of her interview Sharon confessed that during one incident, in which a perpetrator threatened to stab her in the throat with a pen, she did feel frightened despite having a security screen to protect her, and she described seeking help from the police officers stationed upstairs:

“Actually, I did go upstairs that day about it, and they [police officers] just said, well what do you want us to do when we are eating fish and chips, because the chief there was a bit of a shit they wouldn’t come down and help. So I had to go back down and steel myself” [SHA].

So despite security measures, Sharon believed she was in imminent danger which is perhaps related to the seriousness of the threat. Yet in contrast with Julie, and in comparison with Lydia above, help was not forthcoming. This once more demonstrates the subjectivity of feeling at risk and the women in this study have not only evidenced how this cannot readily be measured or assessed by another on their behalf, but also when they do seek help from others often this help is not forthcoming for the exact same reasons concerned. For example, in the above incident male police officers failed to understand Sharon’s fear (Kemshall 2003), and she was further responsabilised for the management of her own personal safety (Goodey 2005).

Lynda, a doctor's receptionist, described how, after a series of violent interactions with patients, the receptionists felt particularly vulnerable and requested that a security screen was installed. Lynda's co-worker Jane was especially keen for this to happen, as she was terrified after one male patient had previously threatened to set her alight. The shock of this experience was so acute that to this day Jane is escorted in to and out of the workplace, relying on her colleagues and family for support:

"I mean it would be better if we had a screen in front of the reception, you would feel safer. But they won't do it so I don't think they realise how vulnerable receptionists feel, because they are men they don't fear so much" [LYN].

The above quote by Lynda, a doctors receptionist, reinforces Sharon's previous point about the importance of security screens, but additionally it reinforces how individuals fear differently to one another, in that male police officers failed to understand the level of anxiety that she felt. The point that "*men don't fear so much*" is important. It illuminates how the health and safety needs of the women who took part in this study, are different to those of men and that male workers fail to understand this point (Ditton and Innes 2005). This possibly occurs because men have different fears to women or because they may experience fear differently to women.

7.6. Lone working policy - welfare checks

Several public sector interviewees referred to security measures that included the implementation of welfare checks for lone workers. These measures again, as previously discussed in relation to Lydia, Lynda and Angela, rely on the

support of colleagues, co-workers and management. Ambulance staff and paramedics referred to Control, detailing how they relied on Control to not place them in dangerous situations. For example, earlier in Chapter 6, Section 6.6, Sarah, a paramedic and first responder explained *“I’m a lone worker, I work alone, and we have a lone worker policy so they don’t routinely send me to drunks.”* However, as a result of working in a pressured environment and because the ambulance service is performance managed, when they are busy Control weigh up the risk involved in sending her. Rather than failing to meet a performance target by correctly triaging an emergency call they push the boundaries. This is an extremely important point, as Control has a duty of care to employees yet as Sarah suggested:

“They will just push the boundaries and send me because they are going to miss that ‘CAT A’ performance if they have to send a dual crew... I might not be aware of all the facts, but they are, they hold a little bit back and sort of weigh it up whether it’s worth that risk or not” [SAR].

This evidences how performance targets may at times take precedence over health and safety but additionally it illustrates the level of pressure these organisations are under to meet performance targets. In addition to this, Sarah explained that as a lone worker Control has a duty of care to her which involves welfare checks, yet again this policy is frequently neglected:

“They are meant to give us welfare checks, but often I can be on duty for over an hour and them not... a lone worker going into a stranger’s house and not knowing anything about that person... and they don’t ever give me a welfare check... I could be bound up or raped and pillaged and they not know” [SAR].

This supports Khalef (2003) who similarly highlights the level of risk attached to lone working, and who proposes that mobile workers commonly visit locations they are unfamiliar with, rendering them extremely vulnerable in difficult situations.

Additionally, this evidences how some measures are implemented to appease health and safety regulations in the workplace, but also revealing how these systems may be abused as in this study there appears to be a lack of custodians to ensure regulations are followed. Further, and in similarity to Lynda, Angela and Lydia the efficiency of these measures are dependent on the competence of other members of staff to respond appropriately.

7.7. The presence of security staff

Previously in this chapter Charlie, a midwife, made reference to security staff who were stationed at the Accident and Emergency Unit, which she explained was quite some distance away from the Maternity Unit. In addition to this Charlie questioned the ability of security staff, whilst simultaneously acknowledging their presence as a deterrent:

“They are based in A & E and they are a bit old really, they can take their time to get here, it’s their presence. They don’t always come straight away” [CHA].

She additionally reflected on the distance and the time that it takes security to reach her when an issue arises:

“I mean, you call security but what happens in the bit in between, in the time it takes security to get here. We’ve got a couple of old men and they are a bit tardy about getting across to us. They live over in A & E generally, and they have to come across several car parks to get

to us” [CHA].

Charlie believed that the hospital employs older security men because *“they are cheap”*, indicating that this is problematic as often they are too old:

“They take however long, and then you might get the really ancient one, he’s about sixty” [CHA].

Lydia similarly discussed the effectiveness of security staff:

“There is security in the hospital grounds so they will come if there is an incident. But they can’t get involved in any restraints. They can just be the observer if extra reinforcement, from a distance, if required” [LYD].

This was reminiscent of a previous discussion that related to the use of inadequately trained bank and nursing agency staff, in that security staff members are trained in the wrong restraint techniques, C&R and not PBM, for the safe confinement of learning disability patients. So security staff may observe an incident, but not intervene which may effectively render them useless in some emergency situations. Similarly this identifies with Sarah, a paramedic, who referred to target achievement and the length some employers are prepared to go to in order to reach these targets. In essence, the women in this study experienced a range of problems in terms of risk; many are vulnerable because more often than not there is not a suitable authority present for them to call upon in an emergency situation. Further as I have identified throughout this section, many organisations in this study are ill-equipped to meet the needs of staff, placing cost and expenditure before employees which is consistent with the findings of Norman (2011).

7.8 Working sector - security measures

In this study I have identified that there is a notable difference between public and private sector interviewees in terms of safety awareness training. Public sector interviewees attended personal safety training courses, although as I uncovered earlier in this research the women found this unsuitable for their needs. However, in stark contrast to this the majority of private sector interviewees were given no formal training at all.

Wendy, a pharmacy assistant, discussed this in relation to a personal safety training video that was provided for all staff to view within her organisation, and which aims to give staff *“some sort of back up and security”* [WEN]. In addition, interviewees who were employed in the private sector had very little in the way of situational crime prevention measures such as the aforementioned security screens or security officers. However, Ella a retail assistant and Wendy did refer to the panic buttons that were installed in their establishments. Wendy described this in relation to one particular disgruntled male customer:

“I turned around to my colleague and said can you hit the panic button please, because the way he was coming at the counter you would think he was coming over” [WEN].

Indeed in this study the majority of private sector interviewees reported that they received no formal training in the workplace concerning how to prevent or even minimise incident of workplace violence. Although, the women who felt the safest worked in the private sector because any advice that was disseminated was

practical, but also it promoted solidarity between workers, particularly women who are the main employees within this industry. Wendy explained:

*“We have the keys [to the pharmacy]... if you’re an addict you either want the money or you want the drugs, or the money to get the drugs ... So if they can corner one of us we’ve got keys to the shop, safe keys and they can get in and get the methadone....
When we get to our cars, it’s usually me and Anna, I wouldn’t drive off in my car until she’s got her lights on and the engine started. We follow each other out of the car park. I wouldn’t leave her in case her car wouldn’t start or something because you are isolated, on your own, so we do that as well” [WEN].*

Interestingly, even though many of the interviewees in this study discussed having mixed feelings about feeling at risk in the workplace, almost half [8], suggested they took advantage of the security measures provided. For example, they have called security and requested that they remove perpetrators from the premises, or they have asked security to escort them to their vehicles. Those interviewees with limited security measures relied on their colleagues, co-workers, and management to both escort them from the premises and to help protect them from perpetrators. Notably in this study the incidents that the women mainly referred to concerned perpetrators who were external to the workplace.

7.9. Not tolerating workplace violence

Lynda, a doctor’s receptionist, and Wendy, a pharmacy assistant, both described how problematic patients, as a result violent and abusive behaviour, are sometimes banned from their place of work. Lynda, for example, explained how the patient, who threatened to set Jane alight, was *“removed (banned) from the surgery” [LYN]*. However, banning violent and abusive patients is dependent on the Practice

Manager or a doctor, not the receptionists, and the same was true of pharmacies, only the Superintendent Pharmacy Manager may do this. Wendy illustrated how she had telephoned one doctor's surgery to say:

“We can't have this patient back! Here are the patient details'. They phoned the supers [superintendents] office and the super then phoned us, and then they phoned the surgery back to let us know they were sending a note out officially saying that this gentleman cannot come back into the pharmacy because we will not tolerate the sort of behaviour that he was giving us” [WEN].

However, even though a ban is requested, like the women employed in public sector health care, private health care interviewees referred to the duty of care that they have to patients and service users, Wendy explained:

“You cannot refuse [a patient] until you have spoken to the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and the PCT has said OK. But what they actually say is we will advise them they need to go to another pharmacy. So they don't actually ban them... but that's usually enough for them to go to a different pharmacy, but even then you cannot stop them from coming in so you are stuffed” [WEN].

In essence, this is a problem that is passed on as opposed to being dealt with and an issue which was similarly expressed by Sarah, a paramedic, who suggested:

*“We do have a persistent offender, he was just horrible ... he was red flagged from *Darwin. We were not allowed to take him there because they refused to treat him, even A and E. But we, as an emergency service, still had a duty of care despite the fact that every other health provider refused to take him through the door. If he rang treble 9, we as an emergency service had a duty to treat him” [SAR].*

Furthermore, analysis reveals that it is those in positions of power that make these decisions, not the women themselves and as I have already identified in this thesis (refer to Chapter 3), it is men who predominately fulfil this role in the workplace and

not women. Interestingly, the women who participated in this study indicated that they were rarely, if ever, consulted about their needs in relation to security but I strongly argue that if feeling at risk is subjective, how may it be possible for another to assess this on behalf of women, particularly, as I have already suggested in this chapter, men experience fear quite differently to women. Furthermore, as I discussed beforehand, many services are inadequately equipped to meet the needs of staff (Norman 2011). This was demonstrated by Ella, when working as a petrol assistant. Ella explained how the manager provided staff with a baseball bat which was stored under the shop counter in case it was required for protection. Further, she was ill advised to lock perpetrators inside of the shop and wait for the police to arrive, particularly when apprehending shoplifters. As a practice, not only is this dangerous for employees but it leaves employees open to accusations as the instigator of violence and abuse in the workplace (Bowie 2002b) which may prove detrimental to them.

7.10. Summary.

The findings of this study suggest that frequently feeling at risk is revealed by a participant's request for safety measures and protective equipment such as security screens, security personnel or personal alarms. In addition to this, the interviewees flagged up issues concerning the use of personal restraint techniques in the workplace, highlighting how some employees were not sufficiently trained to do the job at hand, and this had placed some of the women in a vulnerable position. This is an important finding, as it makes evident lapses in an organisations duty of care to an employee, in that individual organisations are held responsible for the

safety of workers. In similarity it was also evident in this study that many of the safety techniques implemented in the workplace were reliant on the help and understanding of other staff members. I have also revealed how often staff fail to support one another, a practice which renders many of the safety techniques made available in the workplace ineffective. For example, I have demonstrated how the NHS neglect to perform welfare checks on lone female workers, but also how performance targets are prioritised over lone females in the workplace. I have therefore established that the implementation of some of these techniques appear linked to budget and performance targets and may commonly be dependent on cost. Within this study there were noticeable differences between public and the private sector participants in relation to security measures. In that the public sector interviewees spoke of security staff, and other safety equipment, which included alarms and welfare checks. Meanwhile, private sector workers did refer to safety measures, but these were limited and included for instance the inappropriate use of a baseball bat, but also this involved the watching of a training video that was specifically geared to the needs of women and proved to be quite an effective measure, as it encouraged the staff to look after each other in the workplace. Overall, private sector staff appeared far more supportive of each other, which was perhaps a reflection of the limited safety measures that were made available to them in the workplace, and the responsibility they held for themselves and each other.

Chapter 8

8.0. Women and the impact of workplace violence

Previously I identified how feeling at risk in the workplace is a subjective experience, drawing attention to Kemshall (2003) who proposes that as individuals we do not all experience danger or feel at risk in the same manner to one another. Hence the level of fear and anxiety that is experienced by individuals varies, so it is fair to say this variation exists between gender (refer to Chapter 6). Di Martino *et al* (2003) support this, arguing that the only way to reveal the diversity of the individual experience, in particular the vulnerability of working women, would be to examine gender more closely.

Further, in Chapter 2, I discussed how Waddington (2005) advocates that research interviewees require freedom of expression so that the subjective meaning of their experiences may be articulated. This is similarly voiced by Jiawani (2004) who refers to this as the examination of women's territory. In light of this, this chapter will discuss the impact that workplace violence has had upon the women who participated in this study, for example, feeling afraid as a result of unpredictability and 'shock', induced by acts of violence and abuse. This has ultimately led to the women feeling fearful of colleagues, co-workers and management, to the extent they no longer wish to return to the workplace, a reflection of their poor experiences.

Following this, this chapter will proceed to discuss how the women coped in the violent workplace and the strategies that they implemented, for example, 'avoidance', 'resolution' or 'fighting violence with violence'. In addition it will explore

the effect workplace violence has had upon the participants including ill- health which has ultimately led to absenteeism.

8.1. How workplace violence impacts upon women

Dale and Acik (2005) suggest that women who experience violence in their lives feel particularly vulnerable in the future, and the women in this study were no exception to this. Indeed all of the women who took part in this study identified that they were repeat victims of violence and abuse in the workplace, but also it transpired that a proportion of these women had experienced violence in their personal lives in one form or another.

During the interviews the women used a range of emotive words such as 'fearful', 'frightened' and 'scared' when describing how workplace violence had impacted upon their lives. However, this was not solely related to physical violence as during the interviews the women clearly identified feeling anxious in the workplace which, as I ascertained, stemmed from a broad range of violent behaviours that they had encountered. In light of this, this chapter is going to consider the women's responses in relation to feeling fearful in the workplace.

8.1.1. Feeling afraid - the unpredictability of the workplace

Despite the fact that workplace violence damages the physical, emotional and mental wellbeing of its victims, it remains a fundamental part of working women's lives, and therefore it is expected (Hinchberger 2009, Dale and Acik 2005). Two thirds of the women [12] in this study demonstrated how they felt fearful in the

workplace and they equated this vulnerability to feeling frightened, afraid or scared. Charlie, a midwife, contemplated feeling afraid during one violent incident in which she had to alert security. Security was called to the maternity unit to remove an angry father whose baby was being taken into care by social services. The role of security during this incident was to protect staff and the social workers from harm;

“I have been a bit frightened and scared but not physically hurt... when that bloke was brawling with security guys on the ward... he was like a Whirling Dervish... and you didn't know where he was going to go and who he was going to take his anger out on. To me that was the most scary” [CHA].

Charlie adds:

“It scares me people getting violent on the ward and you don't quite know what to do ...I have been a bit frightened, scared, but not physically hurt” [CHA].

Deeper analysis revealed that one commonality between the women who felt fearful was an increased level of face-to-face public interaction. Interviewees engaged in healthcare suggested they felt fearful if this violence was unexpected, or if they felt the situation was getting out of control. For example, Lydia's role was high risk. At the time of the interview Lydia worked alongside adults with learning disabilities which at its very best she described as *“severely challenging” [LYD]*. Despite the fact that she had been physically harmed on numerous occasions, Lydia indicated that only twice had she felt fear, and that both of these incidents involved unforeseen incidents. The first occurred early in Lydia's career, when she was unexpectedly 'head-butted' by a service user as she knelt to tie his shoelaces:

“It was really scary because it was not in his nature. It was

completely out of the blue. It just wasn't expected at all" [LYD]."

The second incident occurred during a volatile situation that the hospital unit struggled to contain, and which placed both staff and service users at risk:

"She [the service user] was just upping the ante! She smashed everything up in her room. She smashed the windows and was smashing the doors. She was really trying to smash everyone and everything...it was becoming potentially very dangerous" [LYD].

Sarah, a paramedic, proposed that she too *"felt a certain amount of fear"* especially with one particular routine transfer patient, and she too linked this to the unpredictability of the interaction. The patient was schizophrenic and Sarah always felt anxious when attending to him because she was unable to predict how she would present herself on any given day. Thus she was unable to pre-empt events when arriving:

"You can't always predict what going to happen... if I go into the bedroom I always make sure she's in front of me so I can get out... and I always leave the front door open" [SAR].

Women in contrasting roles additionally referred to fear and unpredictability in the workplace. Eddie describes feeling afraid when re-encountering a gang of males who had previously violated her and other staff:

"Everybody [the staff] was frightened, everybody was really scared, worried because they were just like waiting outside" [EDD].

Lucy, a teacher, talked of the unpredictability of non-verbal-psychological violence, highlighting how she believes this to be more frightening than her experience of non-direct physical violence, whilst making a point that feeling

fearful is part of her daily routine:

“You can just see it in their eyes [the students] and you are waiting for it to happen...they can smell the fear on you” [LUC].

My findings reveal how the women in this study felt afraid and apprehensive in the workplace (Boggs and Giles 1998), and much of this fear exists because the women are working in hostile environments, which serves to force women out of the workplace, but as well it is a means of keeping them out (Boggs and Giles 1998) and this is supported by the fact that the majority of the women in this study left many such posts:

“I came out of there one Sunday I didn’t know what I was doing but I knew I had had left my job” [LYD]

“I had to leave in the end; I couldn’t cope with it any longer” [ELL].

“The reason that I left in general, was that I had had enough. I didn’t like the atmosphere the people, you know. The scale 1& 2’s were having a really rough time” [JUL].

Additionally, the majority of incidents uncovered in this study were perpetrated by males, which it may be said is characteristic of men who wish to dominate and control women ensuring that they remain compliant in the workplace (Mauthner Saul 2003), which was successfully achieved by instilling a sense of fear into some working women. This was particularly relevant to incidents of workplace violence experienced internally to the workplace which I will now discuss in the following section of this chapter.

8.1.2. Fearing colleagues, co-workers and management

Many of the women in this study [5] associated fear with colleagues, co-workers and management and they described feeling fearful in a different manner to the above women - who associated fear with external perpetrators. Sally, for instance, felt that being made to feel fearful was “*a massive betrayal*” because up until this point she had trusted the managing director, but he then proved to be disloyal by abusing her. Additionally some of the women feared rape, whilst others the prospect of losing their job if they complained about the ill-treatment they were experiencing in the workplace. Further, some of the women discussed feeling concerned, fearing that they may be injured by the irrational behaviour of their colleagues, a point which mirrored the fear held by the above women who had experienced external workplace violence, and who referred to the unpredictability of male perpetrators.

Leanne is a prime example of this, revealing that she was unable to give a specific reason why she felt so scared of one particular male chef, but she just knew that she was very frightened of him. These fears were not unfounded, as after a disagreement with this chef he threw a knife at Leanne, which embedded itself in the kitchen work surface in front of her (refer to Chapter 5, Section 5.4.2).

Gina described the fear she suffered, as the office manager masturbated beside her, her anxiety was so intent that it “*root[ed] [her] to the spot*”, Gina’s terror was linked to the unpredictability of this situation as she believed that her manager intended to rape her, and she recalled feeling utterly powerless:

“All I could think of in my head is that there is nothing I can do about it” [GIN].

My findings highlight the importance of appropriately risk assessing women in the workplace, particularly in relation to external workplace violence. However, many of the experiences of working women are excluded from risk assessment, because risk assessment is a generalisation of data constructed through the recording of risky incidents experienced from certain populations of people. However, as many women do not report such incidents in the workplace this is a tautological debate. Also, as I previously suggested in this thesis, it is not always ‘routine’ risky populations who pose a threat to working women (Walklate and Mythen 2011) as the orderly other are also responsible for many incidents of violence and abuse that occur.

Additionally, risk assessment in the workplace may not take into account sexual violence which is problematic, and neither does it consider women who work alone with a male, for instance, in an office or a shop. Nor does it consider women who work in densely populated male environments, who are rendered unsafe as previously identified at Bill Blogs Landover¹¹ or the previously discussed delivery company thus placing women at an increased risk in the workplace. Risk assessment only considers lone workers who leave the relative safety of their working environment to carry out their duties. Therefore the HSE, as a hierarchical institution, also oppress working women via the marginalisation of women’s experiences of workplace violence, which further illuminates the power differentials

¹¹ A pseudonym, Bill Blogs Landover, has been inserted to protect the identity of the organisation.

that exist in many workplaces (Jones *et al* 2011). Such differentials are a result of the diversity that is located within the workplace and the complications that are generated by its existence (Chappell and Di Martino 2006), although I do feel that this fails to adequately satisfy the question, why do the HSE fail to risk assess women differently to men? This additionally includes the likelihood of sexual violence in the workplace. If the HSE continue to neglect the needs of working women and persist in their failure to implement strategies to prevent sexual violence, countless working women will remain unsafe and at risk. Thus this thesis has identified how class and patriarchy are intertwined and therefore remain inseparable in the workplace, and how this is determined by social order which has been constructed by men in hierarchical and indeed privileged positions (DeKeseredy 1996, Scholtz 2011).

In this study public interaction has placed women at an increased risk of workplace violence (Firth 2008, Respass and Payne 2008, Chappell and Di Martino 2006), moreover the roles commonly affected are traditionally female which have included teaching, healthcare and retail (Chappell and Di Martino 2006). Eddie, however, is the anomaly. Her role, as an entertainer, is not characteristically female, but it does facilitate a high level of public interaction, especially with individuals who are under the influence of alcohol and drugs. However, it is important to emphasise that not all of the perpetrators who frightened the women of this study were 'drunk', 'high', or 'erratic' as a result of illness. Many were rational males who were exploiting their status and the position of power that society has afforded them, not only because many males remain in charge, but because many are aware that due

to their physical build, they are far stronger than women, and it is this which enables them to coerce and intimidate women.

8.1.3. Dread - its association with fear and the shock of experiencing workplace violence

Dread is an emotion commonly associated with fear and is coupled with reluctance and apprehension. When the women in this study referred to dread this was associated with not wishing to return to their place of work, a reflection of their experiences of violence and abuse. For instance one third of the interviewees [8] revealed that workplace violence had created anxiety and despair, and they described how they 'dreaded' entering the workplace and some indicated that they did not wish to return. Ella, for example, after a prolonged bout of psychological abuse, revealed how she:

*"Dread[ed] getting up in the morning and having to go to work."
[ELL].*

Leanne, who previously discussed having the kitchen knife thrown at her, said:

"I really didn't want to go back to work with him. I was just really upset by it" [LEA].

Sally described feeling distraught and withdrawing into herself after her managing director had shouted, screamed, and pounded his desk, with his fists, in temper:

"I went completely into a shell, it was awful; it was really horri[ble]...I completely retracted into myself, to such a degree that I didn't want to be there" [SAL].

Once more the findings of this study evidence how a hostile work environment drives

women out of the workplace, often through fear, in that women find it difficult to function efficiently in such an environment (Boland 2005). However, because women are forced to work under such conditions it is unsurprising that the majority of women in this study experienced more than one type of violence. Moreover, hostile circumstances are illustrated by acts of physical, psychological and sexual violence, which in this study appeared pervasive (David 2003, Hurley and Riso's 2007), evidencing how many working women are still not fully accepted into the workplace (Hunt and Hughey 2010). As this study has unfolded it has revealed the many gaps in the literature and so in order to continue to bridge some of these breaches I will continue by discussing the shock of experiencing workplace violence and the dissatisfaction that this creates in the workplace.

Workplace violence had impacted upon the women in numerous ways, and the participants used a range of emotive words to describe this, for example, they referred to feeling 'unpleasant', 'dreadful', 'intimidated', 'fearful' and 'shocked'. Just over one quarter [5] of the interviewees described feeling alarmed both during and after violent interactions had taken place, Lydia for instance explained how she felt "*totally shocked*" after being head butted by a service user, whilst Carol recalled feeling traumatised having been strangled in the back of an ambulance, stating "*it was quite a shock...it was a real shock*". Gina described this quite differently to the other women in that she believed that she was "*in shock*" [GIN] after her experience of sexual violence during which she recalled physiological responses - such as being unable to move or speak, "*I was rooted to the spot*" and "*I was like a zombie*". This demonstrates just how alarming the women found these episodes of violence and abuse but also how 'feeling shocked' is one outcome of psychological and sexual

violence in the workplace (Brady 1996); strengthening my argument that such behaviour should neither be tolerated nor ignored. Thus this study highlights the importance of recognising women's issues in relation to workplace violence so that past mistakes are not carried forward into the future.

8.1.4. The anger and the frustration

Patriarchy propagates gender differences which, as I previously suggested, facilitates the oppression, domination and exploitation of working women. A number of the women [4] who participated in this study expressed how the manner in which they were treated led to feelings of anger and frustration. For some this was short lived, but for others it lingered, and Sally described her feeling both during and after her staff appraisal in which the managing director suggested:

"I'm not interested in anything you women have got to say ... I'm just not interested...I was simmering all day Saturday and all day Sunday about the way he spoke to me...Ohhh I was so angry, so so angry" [SAL].

Similarly Louise also described feeling "*frustrated and so angry*" after one particular patient in the care home where she worked said he wanted to break her neck, a comment that made her feel "*awful, absolutely awful*" [LOU]. As I referred to in relation to Sally above, these feelings accompanied the women home, demonstrating the depth of the pain and the anxiety that the exploitation and oppression of working women creates, and illustrating just how far reaching these experiences may be (Hawkins 2010, Hinchberger 2009, Leather *et al* 1996). Further, women are unable to vent these feelings in the workplace in that they have no-one to turn to

in times of crisis, thus it seems natural that these frustrations are vented in a safe environment - the home. This chapter will now move forward and contemplate how the women coped with these experiences.

8.2. Coping in a violent workplace – the avoidance of perpetrators

To survive in a violent workplace many of the interviewees adopted a variety of coping mechanisms which, as I will demonstrate in the following section, varied according to the nature of the interaction that was taking place, and this included whether the perpetrator was internal or external to the workplace. For example, coping strategies incorporated avoidance, resolution and fighting violence with violence and this study has revealed that many of the strategies and methods utilised by the women may be relevant to their life experiences.

Over half of the women [11] in this study suggested they attempted to disregard the perpetrators of workplace violence either with avoidance tactics or by ignoring the perpetrators behaviour. For instance, Lucy, a supply teacher, was so alarmed by one pupil's behaviour that she refused to teach him:

“He would purposely sit next to me... purposely brush against me and move his elbow to touch me and then blame me and shout ‘what are you touching me for, don’t touch me, get off me [LUC].’

and she discussed several strategies that she employed to get through the working day:

“[I] thought God just keep going, get through the day, it will be alright. I just pretended I was fine and I wasn’t, I just got on with it...he would say to me when I was literally just sitting at the table ‘don’t look at me like that... what do you think u are doing’ ...carry on with silly snide remarks, he was only 14”...“He was the only kid that actually made

me cry. I had to actually take myself away from him, his lessons and go somewhere on my own for a minute. He was the only person I actually swapped around so I didn't have to see him... I said look I'm not going to work with him in his lessons" [LUC].

Ellie described hiding in the “*potting shed*” - a small room in the laboratory used for the planting of seeds – in this way, she could avoid one particular female colleague who was routinely unpleasant to her, whilst Leanne, a waitress, attempted to keep her distance from disagreeable customers, particularly after being touched inappropriately, “*I tried to not stand near him again, but it was difficult*”. She further explained how she would avoid using a large black pepper grinder when serving groups of male only diners, as a result of the sexual innuendos that she would encounter:

“I always used to hate serving groups of men... they were making comments to each other and stuff. You would walk away and they would all be laughing... The black pepper thing I actually stopped if it was a group of men, I would just not offer it... They would be ‘oh your good at that aren't you’, but it makes you feel like shit” [LUC].

Therefore women do not only avoid risky situations, they have developed coping mechanisms built upon their previous encounters of unpleasant treatment in the workplace (Brady 1996). However avoidance was difficult for some women as it is dependent on their role in the workplace, as demonstrated by Leanne above (Foster 2007). The following section will discuss how the women attempted to resolve risky situations via resolution.

8.2.1. Resolution, passivity and life experience

Over half of the participants [10] attempted to resolve incidents of violence

and abuse by being helpful. Trudy, who is employed by a delivery company, reveals how she endeavoured to divert irate customers by agreeing with them:

“I’ll go down and go ‘I totally agree with you, we are absolutely shit’, that shouldn’t have happened and I can only apologise’. As long as you show some empathy and that you have taken it on board you will always get an answer and find a way forward... If they say ‘your fucking shit you didn’t deliver the mail’, I say ‘yep, I can’t disagree with you’, and what can they argue, I’m telling them yep I am agreeing with you, we are really shit! We’ve done this wrong! It shouldn’t have happened!” [TRU]

Those employed in healthcare described attempting to divert perpetrators. Carol, an emergency care assistant would for example:

“Try and talk them down [the patient] but some of them you just know that’s not going to happen, if it does work you can treat them” [CAR].

Lydia, a learning disabilities nurse, proposed:

“I identify that there is an issue, what the problem is, and try to sort it out, and it’s actually dispersed itself and hasn’t gone anywhere” [LYD].

However, the ability to divert perpetrators is an acquired skill, learnt through experience and Trudy, Carol and Lydia are all mature women, each with over twenty years’ experience in their respective roles. This particular point is interesting in the respect that older women are considered easy targets for violence and abuse yet my findings do not support this, suggesting that mature women in this study are confident when they attempt to pacify perpetrators (Dietz *et al* 2006). In contrast to this younger women faced an increased vulnerability in the workplace which may be equated to a lack of experience and confidence (refer to Chapter 6, 6.1) (Chappell

and Di Martino 2006) thus it has revealed that younger women, some in junior positions, struggle to cope with physical, psychological, or sexual violence. Life experience will feature once more in this study however this will be in relation to passivity and fighting violence with violence.

8.2.2. Passivity and life experience

I previously discussed in the above section, that one of the commonalities between the interviewees who remained passive in response to workplace violence was maturity and life experience. Maturity brings wisdom, and the mature women in this study appeared far better equipped to interact with members of the public who were awkward and challenging. Interestingly, almost two thirds of the interviewees [13] in this study reported remaining passive during violent interactions, although it could be considered that these women acted in a submissive manner. For instance Sarah, a paramedic, explained how, when attending unpredictable individuals *“you’ve just got to remain quiet”* further suggesting *“it’s not pleasant but it is part of the job”* [SAR]. Chris, an emergency care assistant explained that by failing to react she hoped the perpetrator would eventually *“get bored and fed up”*. Sally, a customer service advisor, on the other hand, described *“turn[ing] on the waterworks”* to diffuse a difficult situation which she felt was escalating out of control, showing him she was submissive, although it could also be argued that she gave in to his authority and allowed him to remain in control. So far this study has shown that some working women are at extreme risk of violence and abuse, with many offering little resistance and taking workplace violence in their stride, however by doing so

this sends out a message that women are easy targets and this may account for why Sally's perpetrator continued to violate her (Santanna and Fisher 2010, Kraus *et al* 1995), as the message conveyed is that she accepts being subservient in the hierarchy of the workplace. In complete contrast to this, my findings also revealed that certain women will fight workplace violence with violence.

8.2.4. Fighting violence with violence

An unexpected, but emergent theme within this study is that a significant number of interviewees [8] physically or verbally fought back against the perpetrator. There is however a limited amount of literature, if indeed any, in relation to this. Several women [5] described physically striking their perpetrator and whilst some admitted this was intentional others indicated that this was an automatic reaction to the violence they were experiencing. Interestingly, Eddie implied that she would only physically fight with a male perpetrator believing it was unacceptable to strike another woman. Further, Ellie described defending herself whilst apprehending a shoplifter, at the same time making evident how the shop counter acted as a protective barrier between herself and the perpetrator:

"He came towards the counter shouting. We had a pick axe handle, the boss gave it to us...So I said to him[the perpetrator] if you come any closer I will split your nose in two, I held it out towards him... when you were behind the counter it was higher than the shop floor, it made you look really tall. It probably looked quite intimidating and he ran off" [ELL].

Eddie similarly described taking an aggressive stance:

"I was at the side trying to get in the car, and as he came towards me

he had a bottle in his hand, he was going to bottle me. He didn't know I had the torque wrench in my coat, and as I turned I literally took him off his feet, hit him in the side of the neck, knocked him to the floor and he just scrambled back and the other three stood back a bit"[EDD].

This was not the first time Eddie had responded aggressively as previously she identified punching a member of the public who had assaulted her:

"I put my hand up, ... he had hit me really hard and could feel the blood running from my mouth and with that I said 'that was really clever wasn't it you know', 'how about you come towards me' and as he did I hit him full on and split his lip right open and said now you know how it feels. I got back on the stage and as I turned around there was about three women trying to hold his wife back." [EDD].

I will however return to this in the following Section 8.4.5. Several interviewees believed that a violent response to violence was a 'knee jerk reaction'. Lydia for instance recalled how she physically and verbally retaliated after a colleague had punched her on the arm following a painful injection, Lydia explained:

"I retaliated in aggression once, Henry and I were talking, and I said 'God my arm's so painful'. He went let me see and he punched it, bang! A really hard punch, in response I went oww! That really fucking hurt ... my arm caught him in the chest because it was painful... but he actually made a complaint about me being aggressive" [LYD].

Similarly, Angela described slapping the hand of one male colleague who touched her inappropriately, again this was involuntary:

"He put his hand on my knee and without thinking, it was just a slap like that, he never did it again!" [ANG].

Lou's response when punched by an elderly service user again was to strike back:

“Your immediate reaction is to slap back but of course you can’t. The first time was absolutely awful. The first time someone went to hit me, I think she actually caught me, I raised my hand and went stop. I stopped myself [from slapping back] and thought no I can’t do that!” [LOU].

Previously in Section 8.2.3 Sally described responding meekly to divert the managing director of the company, in that she cried to pacify him, as she felt he was out of control, however, on a later occasion she reported reacting to him quite differently:

“I was evil... I slammed the door ... I went back into my office and I slammed the door... I was like you fucking, the ‘C’ word came out quite a lot, I had really had enough” [SAL]. .

Sally demonstrates a range of different coping strategies; therefore a woman’s reaction to workplace violence may be dependent on the interaction that is taking place at the time. A small number of the interviewees, like Sally above, similarly suggested they had retaliated, particularly after they were repeatedly victimised by the same individual. Julie, for example, said she finally snapped after enduring months of abuse from one particular manager and eventually she made a complaint to senior management. In return, the perpetrator made a counter claim and accused Julie of bullying her, behaviour which Lydia similarly referred to earlier:

“I was like ‘how fucking dare you make this up’, that was it I was off on one...I had lost it...there was myself, Gloria and Malcolm, and the boss was called ... the three of us were in the office. Gloria and I were just shouting at each other and everybody was like ‘God what is going on in there’” [JUL].

Furthermore, this was an experience shared by Lou who, after months of repeat victimisation, also made a stance against her perpetrator:

“She didn’t like it, ... she was like it with people who wouldn’t do what she wanted...I was like no I am going to stick up for my rights, I am not going to be one of your walk over door mats, ... She would just make your life really difficult, make your life really bad. She would swap your shifts around and stuff like that and make your life really bad... actually it was a nightmare” [JUL].

In Leanne’s experience retaliation resulted in the perpetrator escalating to even more extreme behaviours:

“I sort of blew and started shouting at him. It was then that he picked up the knife, he just kept looking back at me, you know he wanted me to be watching that he was waving it around and he just kind of threw it” [LEA].

Several of the findings of this study contradict those of previous researchers, for example, Hurley and Riso (2007) and Dietz *et al* (2006) propose that because women are easy targets in the workplace that they are less likely to retaliate. Additionally, this study has challenged Kraus *et al* (1995) who felt women offered no resistance and are unlikely to interfere during a crime, and although this may be the case this study has revealed that sometimes women do clearly fight back. Further it reinforced how women believe taking action against workplace violence is difficult, as this study has demonstrated how some perpetrators make counter claims against their victims. However, as a small scale study these findings are not generalisable to the wider population, but they are nonetheless quite important as the findings show that women remain compromised by the lack of available, but also reliable, help in the workplace.

8.2.5. Is fighting back a result of women’s experiences of

interpersonal violence?

With the exception of two of the women, Leanne and Julie, one commonality between the interviewees who fought against workplace violence with violence was that they had all been victims of physical or sexual violence at some point during their lives. When I asked the women if they believed this had influenced how they coped with these experiences I received a mixed response. Lou, for example, reflected on her experience of domestic abuse:

"I don't know ... I did fight back a few times I didn't come out very well in the end. There were times when I just used to crap myself, but you know what you don't own me anymore and I think since that I have always been a strong person. But I was beaten down a bit. If things get me down now I generally come back fighting. I don't let things get me down and I won't be a doormat" [LOU].

Eddie similarly reflected on her childhood experiences of violence and abuse:

"I had a lot of abuse as a child, not sex but physical. I heard all that verbal aggro of my mum and dad fighting I used to sit on the top of the stairs and listen to them fighting. I could hear my mum screaming Eddie, and it never left me. Trouble is Helen says I take a sledgehammer to put a tack in, so I can be totally verbally aggressive compared to normal ...I'm not frightened of a bloke coming up to me. I don't have the fear factor if someone comes up to me, or tries to hit me" [EDD].

Sally similarly contemplated her experience of domestic violence:

"I'm very, very direct, I had a very physical violent husband and I think that made me what I am now, I will not be dominated by a man, I will not be spoken to like that by a man, and I think that's what made me so, so angry about the situation, especially when I didn't do anything to start the bloody thing ... To be honest I could take a chair and wrap it around his head" [SAL].

This again is an area in need of future research as once more there is limited

literature relating to this issue. Much of the literature that does exist concerns domestic violence which follows women from the home into the workplace, as opposed to the effects of interpersonal violence in relation to women's coping strategies when they experience workplace violence. Having discussed the impact of workplace violence, and the coping strategies implemented by the women, I will discuss the effects workplace violence had upon the women in this study.

8.3. The tears

Just over half of the interviewees [11] of this study expressed how workplace violence had reduced them to tears, and some [3] confided that this occurred when they first took up their post, although they believed that over time they became hardened to workplace violence and that the tears became far less frequent. Lynda, for example, explained how she: *"cried a couple of times"* suggesting:

"As time goes on you get more used to it...I was in tears at least twice by people being rude to me on the phone, and then again over the counter. I think it does get to you. It does get to everybody...all the receptionists there have cried at one point or another over a patient being really horrible" [LYN].

Charlie a midwife recalled feeling particularly upset after one service user referred to her as 'a racist':

"That racist one that got me, it was horrible but then I was inexperienced then. It was an experience that shocked me but now I would probably handle that better than I did at that point, I don't think that now I would have run and gone behind the door and gone like a jelly, hid, and cried. I couldn't speak to anyone else for about half an hour or so because it had upset me so much" [CHA].

The above quote evidences how Charlie has grown accustomed to the violence and abuse that she experiences in her workplace, in that she has normalised and absorbed it into her working day. Others, in similarity to Charlie, (refer to Section 8.1.1) ran, hid and cried. For the most part this was to prevent the perpetrator gaining any satisfaction from knowing just how upset the women really were. In essence they put on a 'brave face'. Some of the interviewees referred to this as *'holding out'*[LOU] or *'holding it together'* [CHA], whilst Sharon described crying privately in the staff room: *"I did cry, but not in front of her. I sort of tried to hold it together"*. Wendy, a pharmacy assistant suggested; *"you take it, but then you go out the back and you really cry"* and the same was true of Carol, who described fleeing to the safety of the ambulance, believing that a perpetrator was in possession of a gun:

"We got in the ambulance, got on the phone to control and I just started crying, I couldn't speak" [CAR].

The findings of this study not only reveal that the interviewees cried out of fear, anger and humiliation; it suggests that the women felt uncomfortable and ashamed of this outcome and by crying in private they redeemed themselves, as they were clearly embarrassed (Brady 1996), Sally however, as I previously discussed, cried in self-defence, to put an end to a situation that she felt was out of control:

"I cried on purpose, I could not diffuse the situation there was so much aggression he was getting worse and worse... I turned on the waterworks saying 'oh don't shout at me'... he sort of calmed down and he went 'go back to work'" [SAL].

For Lydia crying was the final straw and she recalled crying, not only for herself, but

for the service user concerned as Lydia believed her colleague had behaved unprofessionally and that he had neglected this patient's needs, which had then led to a violent outcome. The side effect of the patient's medication was extreme thirst, and despite repeated requests for a drink this basic need had been overlooked by the male nurse on duty which then culminated in a violent outcome:

*“He started hanging on to my hand really tight because he now can't trust anybody ... he [her colleague] hasn't got him a drink. I said to ***** can you go get him a drink please it is an emergency...the hand was him [the patient] not wanting to let me go because he knew and trusted that I would get him that drink, but he knew I would leave him [with my colleague] ... who wasn't meeting his needs” [LYD].*

Carol, Lynda, and Charlie asserted that in addition to crying at the time of the incident they were far too upset to speak to anyone for quite some time afterwards, and this was an experience similarly shared by other women. For example, Lucy was unable to teach her class, whilst Wendy explained:

“You know when you can't talk anymore and your adrenalines pumping... your words don't come out do they” [WEN].

In essence the women felt too distressed to carry out their duties and therefore they took time out to recover. This suggests that the high level of anxiety generated by workplace violence is problematic, and although the women do not necessarily take 'time off', they do take 'time out' to recover from the trauma of these experiences (Gill 2002). As the full impact of workplace violence against women has not yet been fully established (Dale and Acik 2005) it is hoped that this study will aid the identification of this by illuminating the effects of this

phenomenon and by doing so this will promote an awareness of the suffering of working women.

8.4. Ill-health: panic attacks, stress and absenteeism

The harms of workplace violence cannot be trivialised or underestimated, as the injuries, even those invisible to the eye, manifest in less obvious ways such as stress, anxiety and depression, thus workplace violence induces ill-health, and over one third of the interviewees explained how workplace violence had significantly impacted upon their health and wellbeing, initiating symptoms of ill-health either during the incident or over a period of time. For example, Lydia explained how she felt, both in work and at home, after she was 'head-butted' when kneeling to tie the shoe laces of one particular service user:

"I couldn't stop being sick and the next day I didn't feel very well at all, I spoke to the doctor...she said I was concussed... thank goodness I didn't go to sleep after work ... had I gone to A&E they would have kept me in overnight" [LYD].

Other women explained how their experiences of violence and abuse induced stress which again generated symptoms of ill-health. Wendy, Lucy and Sally for example all suffered panic attacks both during and after violent incidents had occurred in the workplace, and Wendy suggested how, during one violent interaction that involved a customer, she suffered a panic attack:

"My hands shook so much that I held on to the piece of wood behind me, I went bright red in the face, my heart was racing ...when you get shortness of breath you are on the edge of a panic attack aren't you...I go all red and blotchy" [WEN].

Sally similarly described having a panic attack during one violent interaction with a managing director who shouted, screamed and banged the office furniture:

“If I had gone to the doctor that afternoon and said I can’t cope I would have been signed off that day... I had a massive panic attack... I just went really quiet after that” [SAL].

Wendy’s symptoms were so severe that she left her place of work to recover, something which was previously identified by both Charlie and Lucy in this chapter, and she estimated that it was at least an hour before she could resume her duties. Thus workplace violence is not only costly to the individual but to the organisation in terms of lost working hours. Gina described how her experience of sexual violence similarly induced a panic attack, explaining *“I did panic”* and *“I felt panicked”*. The ‘panic’ was so acute that Gina described herself as feeling like *“a Zombie”*, a feeling which remained for the duration of the day:

“We went to someone’s house ... I was like a zombie, Kim [a colleague] kept saying is she alright, and he [the perpetrator] said yes she is fine...I was so in shock I think probably because I thought I am actually going to get raped. I was so relieved that I wasn’t, but obviously it’s going to have an effect” [GIN].

Additionally, Gina’s manager, who was also the perpetrator, attempted to contain the situation as well as control Gina in that he responded to questions on her behalf. Lucy similarly described feeling distraught after one colleague abused her in front of a classroom full of school children, which resulted in a panic attack and like Sally above she too was unable to return to work and teach for the remainder of that day:

“My heart was pounding so fast... I was a bit poorly. Towards the

end of the day I panicked... It reached the point that day of I didn't know how to regain control... They didn't know I had panic attacks and I hadn't had one for a very long time. I have to be pushed to the limit for it to be that bad" [LUC].

Likewise Julie, a Housing Benefits Officer, who was frequently exposed to external workplace violence perpetrated by service users, expressed how the effects of the stress she endured impacted upon her health, eventually this culminated in her inability to “*handle it*”. Therefore Julie requested re-deployment to another department, as she explained:

“[My boss] told me just to go home and on my way out ... I had convulsions so that was what my work was doing to me... I had six convulsions one after the other. So he said to me [the manager] ‘you are certainly not coming back’ ... It was all stress related yeah, it was horrific!”[JUL].

Ellie divulged how the stress that she endured in the workplace triggered a prolonged bout of migraine, incapacitating her for two weeks.

Subsequently the doctor prescribed Ellie medication and signed her off from work.

Similarly, and as a direct result of the stress and anxiety that was induced by the physical violence that Lydia previously described as “*the last straw*”, Lydia was signed off work for a period of 6 months. This, coupled with staff shortages, a lack of qualified staff and an ever increasing workload, had increased her vulnerability in what was already a high risk environment, and the pressure of this proved unbearable and resulted in ill-health.

The findings of this study demonstrate how workplace violence may damage the physical, emotional and mental wellbeing of women, revealing how these harms may be immediate or indeed delayed (Williams 2011). Although

some women appear to cope very well at the time of an incident the full impact of any impairment may not become visible until sometime after the event has occurred. Additionally, these findings are consistent with the Community Strategy, Health and Safety at Work 2007-12 evidencing how workplace violence is a common cause of incapacity in the workplace (COM, 2007), and yet it still remains a fundamental component of the working day and all too frequently it is to be expected (Hinchberger, 2009, Dale and Acik 2005).

Previously in Section 8.1.3, I discussed how many of the victims of workplace violence 'dreaded' returning to the workplace, fearing repeat episodes of victimisation, furthermore in the current section I have highlighted how workplace violence has led to lost days. The women who participated in this study referred to absenteeism in a slightly different way, as a result of which one third of the interviewees recalled how incidents of workplace violence had led them to feign physical illness and call in sick. This strengthens an earlier notion, that working women adopt strategies which enable them to cope with the violence and abuse that they encounter. For example, Leanne a waitress became so traumatised by her experience that she failed to return to the workplace the following day:

"I phoned in sick for the next shift because I knew that he was on [the perpetrator] ... and I could not face him [LEA].

Ellie described taking a similar approach:

"I used to go sick a lot, any excuse not to go in... I couldn't stand the pressure of going there" [ELL].

Gina however, explained how her employers had asked her to take a few days off

following a serious sexual assault that had taken place:

“They let me have some time off.... only 3 days, they thought it best I wasn't around whilst they were dealing with it” [GIN].

In other words the organisation wanted Gina out of the way, once more evidencing the impact that workplace violence has upon women's lives. Thus the findings of this study remain consistent with Gill (2002) who proposes absenteeism is problematic in the workplace and subsequently so is ill-health, as both are a consequence of workplace violence and has promoted health related issues (RIDDOR 1995, Santanna and Fisher 2010, Graham 2011 Fevre *et al* 2011).

Ill-health and forced absenteeism has led to a deficit of income for many working women, and it has ensured that many women remain reliant on males to provide an income. Therefore this study evidences the need for patriarchy and capitalism to be overthrown in society so that change may occur, as currently the two are inseparable in that class and patriarchy remain dominant in today's society they are *“inextricably intertwined and inseparable”*, but together they determine the social order (DeKeseredy 1996:266, Blackburn *et al* 2003, Scholz, 2010). This is particularly evident within this study as the perpetrators of such violence were frequently male, and lost work days ultimately produce financial hardship placing a burden upon women which in the long term will considerably limit the financial opportunities made available (DeKeseredy 1996).

8.5. Summary

Many of the women who participated in this study revealed that they feared

physical, psychological and sexual violence and abuse in the workplace, and it was evident that violence of this nature had become a fundamental part of their work life. Several were troubled by the fact that they had failed to pre-empt the violence and abuse that they experienced, and this was particularly evident when the perpetrator was internal to their workplace. This occurred because the women believed they had misjudged the individual responsible for their victimisation, but also because they believed the perpetrator had betrayed their trust. Thus they appeared more deeply affected if the violence and abuse that they endured was a result of a colleague's irrational behaviour.

The findings have highlighted the need for the HSE to implement risk assessment that considers the needs of women in the workplace. For example, by giving consideration to women who not only work alone, but who work alone alongside a male colleague, as this has proved to be particularly problematic for some of the women who participated in this study. Further. It provided perpetrators with a window of opportunity in which they could violate colleagues co-workers and management.

In addition, this study reveals how workplace violence shocks and alarms women to such an extent that many victims became apprehensive and consider not returning to their place of work. This has demonstrated that the creation of a hostile work environment remains a successful means of driving women out of the workplace, in this way males may retain their status in the hierarchical structure. The women however are forced to move from workplace to workplace which, in the long-term, is not only detrimental to their wellbeing but the type of employment that they engage with.

It became quite evident in this study that the more mature women whom I interviewed had, over time, learnt how to cope with and manage workplace violence, and they had adopted a broad range of approaches which included both avoidance and resolution. However, some of the women elected to fight violence with violence, an approach that was closely associated with the victim's history of domestic violence, parental violence or the witnessing of parental violence and sexual abuse. Several of these women did indicate that responding to violence with violence was an involuntary response and it was evident that such a response brought difficulties to the table, in that the perpetrator of the initial act of violence complained of the women's conduct. Other women, especially younger women, responded by keeping their distance from their perpetrator, but also this was a method that had been learnt over time as a result of the countless incidents of repeat victimisation that some of the women had experienced. The vast majority of women suggested that they remained passive throughout their ordeal, appearing submissive in the hope that the perpetrators behaviour would not escalate much further, this was an attempt to quell the perpetrators anger and put an end to the trauma they were experiencing at the time. Furthermore, many of the women indicated that they frequently 'gave in' to the power that was being wielded over and above them at the time, commonly by males in positions of authority, but who regularly abused staff and who exerted their will over women to exact/demand respect and remain in control via the use of fear.

In this particular study I have shown that women frequently cry as a consequence of workplace violence, many do so when they first enter the workplace and more often than not victims are new to the job. This has evidenced how this is

a particularly vulnerable time for working women and sadly, over time, many of the women that I interviewed had become hardened to the violence and abuse that they routinely experienced. Many suggested that they simply put on a brave face which was a reflection of how workplace violence is generally normalised and therefore it is to be expected.

A negative outcome of workplace violence was ill-health, which many of the women associated with physical and psychological illness, for example, depression. Ill-health also manifested as a physical illness presenting symptoms which included panic attacks, headaches and other stress related ailments, but additionally the women reported going into 'shock' which affected their ability to function in the workplace and at times at home. However, given the severity of some of the experiences disclosed by the women this was unsurprising.

As a result of the complications of physical and psychological ill-health that the women had reported, many were incapacitated which compromised their lives in one shape or form. For example, to recover from their experiences of workplace violence, many of the women went absent from the workplace which ultimately promoted financial hardship. Furthermore, the women's poor experiences forced them to feign ill-health, a coping strategy that was closely associated with the fear of returning to work and the possibility of experiencing repeat episodes of violence and abuse.

Chapter 9

9.0. Patriarchy and risk: understanding workplace violence

It was anticipated that an interpretivist methodology would facilitate an understanding of why some women in this study had experienced workplace violence. The pervasiveness of the risk society has brought feminist thought to the forefront in that feminist literature has raised the awareness of the oppression of women who reside within such a society (Shim Young-Hee 1998). This chapter will consider how the risk of workplace violence has emerged as a consequence of the domination, exploitation and oppression of working women, identifying how, in the workplace, the majority of power is assumed by males. Men, for example, are predominantly employed as supervisors, managers and directors, while women are frequently employed in far more mundane roles customarily described as female.

The chapter will analyse the risk of workplace violence through the lens of patriarchy. In doing so it will draw upon feminist theory which divides patriarchy into distinct areas that relate to male dominance and control, female oppression, the exclusion of women via male solidarity, as well as the exploitation of working women both sexually and economically. In doing so this chapter will reveal how women are, often without realising it, abused as a result of the power differential that resides within the workplace and how, due to male solidarity, this cycle of violence and abuse has become repetitious.

A great deal of the literature that relates to women's experiences of

workplace violence focuses on domestic violence, as have previous typologies of violence and abuse, which has led to the omission of the everyday experience of working women. However, none of the interviewees in this study experienced workplace violence in the context of domestic violence; therefore this chapter sets out how women's experiences of workplace violence are more fundamental than this, detailing how this occurs as a result of misplaced power and control.

9.1. Men who abuse their position of power and trust

This study has shown how the majority of women who participated in this study were exploited, oppressed, and preyed upon by dominant males who were both internal and external to the workplace. This risk was evidenced by the number of women [16] who referred to male perpetrators, as superiors, these were males who worked over and above them in the hierarchical structure of the workplace, reinforcing the view of radical feminists who suggest inequality leads to the oppression of working women (DeKeseredy 1995, Scholtz 2010). Many of the perpetrators of workplace violence are males who work alongside their victims, or who visit the victim's place of work, or whom the interviewees visited in relation to their work, for example, the interviewee had a mobile workplace and working outside of their main workplace.

So far in this thesis I have evidenced how working women are placed at risk, due to the existence of patriarchy, in that men take charge of the workforce; this is mirrored in patterns of victimisation, particularly as it is predominantly males who are responsible for the majority of the women's experience in this study. It was

notable that the women rarely mentioned 'she' but repeatedly referred to 'he' when describing the risky interactions that encountered, for example, *"he was shouting"* [SAL], and *"he was really nasty"* [LYD] and *"he said 'I'm going to do the same to you'"* [WEN]. The majority of interviewees explained that the abusive behaviour began when they first entered the workforce, suggesting that women may be most at risk in junior roles and whilst training because they are unlikely to complain as they are new to the workforce and they may be considered a trouble maker (refer to Section 6.1). Further, the women indicated that during the course of their career, and regardless of the workplace, this remained unchanged:

"In my experience it has been men who have been in a position of power rather than those lower down or on an equal par to you. Then the perception is that they have power over you. In my own experience, in all cases it was men who were in charge" [KAT].

This was similarly reiterated by other interviewees who indicated that within their organisations pharmacy assistants, administrative staff, nurses and shop floor assistants were largely female, whilst the pharmacists, consultants, doctors, shop or practice managers were predominantly male:

"In the dispensaries there are mainly women working in them, and there are less female managers than there are male" [WEN].

The men in charge of the interviewees fulfilled a variety of positions, they were directors, business owners, managers, and, as I previously mentioned, doctors and pharmacists and my findings agree with the literature which proposes women, in

comparison to men, generally occupy roles that are inferior. For example, Morgan and Taylor (1983), Paoli and Merllie (2000), theorise that men retain the most lucrative and prestigious positions in the workforce. This signals that the outdated tradition of 'males as master' in many workplaces still exist in that men not only organise the workforce but discipline it, while women remain in roles akin to domestic servitude which includes care work (Sorensen 1984, Atherton 2012).

Several interviewees made reference to male colleagues and co-workers on an equal par with them in the workplace, but whom the interviewees believed placed them at risk through exploitation. For instance, Angela, a mental health nurse, referred to one male colleague who placed his hand on her knee and proceeded to touch the top of her inner thigh, while Trudy, a manager for a delivery company recalled how ,as part of an all-male managerial team, they frequently failed to support her in the workplace[refer to Section 7.3].

Further, interviewees employed in supervisory or managerial roles [3] remained under the control of authoritative males. Kathy, a mature interviewee suggested *"in my own experience, in all cases, they were men who were in charge"* [KAT]. As a result of this, the perception of the interviewees is that for the most part men retain the most lucrative and the more privileged positions, and that these roles are frequently more powerful. This was even evident in the most traditional of female roles which included for example, nursing and midwifery, in that the women were overseen by male doctors and consultants who placed them at risk because they held limited respect for their female colleagues and co-workers, but also this included female patients:

“It’s a bit difficult because you have doctors who are quite arsey and they snap at you all the time. You try to explain things to them from the beginning and they just look at you! ... They just walk in, they don’t knock you know this woman has her legs akimbo and you are doing an examination, and the doctors are walking in... They just walk in and they don’t, even look at the women, they look at what I am examining, they don’t talk to them or introduce themselves sometimes they just look; they look at the chart, the BP monitor, and walk back out again without saying anything. .I say afterwards ‘do you have to be like that’ and they say ‘well I just wanted to have a look’...I say don’t you think you should have knocked or something so that I could have covered the lady up’ ... to me that’s an unpleasant experience they don’t respect you or your dignity that sort of thing. Even though they are told they have too” [CHA].

Wendy believed that male pharmacists in her place of work treated her quite differently to female pharmacists, asserting that she is not regarded as an equal and that in comparison to the doctor/midwife relationship discussed above, it is the male pharmacists who are in control . Consequently, Wendy prefers to work with female pharmacists:

“I am training to be a technician I can hold the keys to the controlled drug (CD) cabinet so when I am doing the DOSIT boxes (weekly medication boxes) Anna chucks me the keys. I put them in my pocket because I am in and out of there every five minutes...If it’s an arrogant pharmacist who thinks he’s got the power he will make you ask for those keys. Please can I have the CD keys, I need to go into the cabinet then you have to return them, then it’s please can I have the keys; I need to go to the CD cabinet. Whereas Anna’s just there you are you have the keys you are a technician and you know what you are doing [WEN].

This point upholds the principle of second wave feminism which promotes sisterhood and unity amongst women, a movement which believes women should work together as opposed to trying to control one another, as is evident in the above male and female relationships (Krolokke 2006). Similarly, this identifies with third wave

feminism, a specific movement that seeks to unite women's experiences via global sisterhood, and which concentrates on universal womanhood and global threats to women (Lotz 2007, Scholtz 2010, Giles *et al* 2007), suggesting workplace violence represents a global risk to women that also impinges on women's rights (Respass and Payne 2008, Heiskanen 2007, Lutgen-Sandvik 2009, Lawoko *et al* 2004, Chappell and Di Martino 1998).

9.1.1. Fighting against the system

Some of the women [4] expressed that they felt they had to prove themselves to male superiors in the workplace. For example, Ella described working in a car dealership a predominantly male environment, and she described working incredibly hard to earn the same level of respect that was afforded to her male colleagues. This suggested that respect was not automatically afforded to her in the workplace and that was quite apparent when she first entered the organisation:

"I had to earn that respect, it wasn't automatically given. If you're a male in that environment you get it automatically because you are a man. Once I had overcome it all, we became really good friends and he [the manager] would do anything for me, but then he knew he could rely on me too, but then later I realised he also had another agenda" [ELL].

This same lack of respect was previously evidenced by Charlie, a midwife, reinforcing the belief that the undermining and demoralising of women renders them vulnerable to violence and abuse in the long term (Hawkins 2010, Hinchberger 2009).

The majority of the women who participated in this study [18] worked beneath

males who were in control of the workplace; this was evident even when the woman held supervisory or managerial roles (refer to Section 8.1.1). Rarely did the women refer to females in positions of power or responsibility in their respective workplaces; they spoke primarily of men, indicating that the aspirations of women were rarely met due to the 'glass ceiling' effect that still exists in many places of work, thus the women remain secondary to males (Snowdon 2011). This was intriguing as when I initially interviewed the women about their experiences of workplace violence I did not enquire in relation to the gender of the perpetrator, except when referring to the risk of sexual violence. In light of this, this study reinforces previous research and proposes that social relationships are based on the hierarchical interactions that occur between men and women (Walby 1990, Millet1990).

9.2. Women in positions of power

A number of the women held or had held managerial or supervisory roles in the workplace [3] although numbers were limited. This was a reflection of how women remain in mundane low level roles, further demonstrating how a woman's development in the workplace remains curtailed via the previously discussed 'glass ceiling'. Women who are in such positions implied that this privilege does not come without difficulties as it gave rise to adverse working conditions. This was largely evidenced by those interviewees who encountered male solidarity in the workplace, and this extended from senior management to the more inferior male roles.

In this study it was evident that male workers forge close bonds to one another, and this includes male workers that the interviewees were in charge of, resulting in the undermining of female management; further those women

particularly at risk were employed in male-dominated workplaces. The analysis revealed that men dislike taking orders from superior women; it elevates risk levels and facilitates incidents of violence and abuse in the form of false allegation and accusations. For instance, female supervisors were accused of bullying and harassing male colleagues. Trudy, who worked for a delivery company and who is in charge of an all-male sorting office explained:

“I would go up to this bloke who used to stand in the middle of everybody on the packet frames giving it all the gob, sorting, winding everybody up, loading the gun for everyone else to fire, and I’d be there and say David, come on you can sort [the mail] and talk and whatever he used to do. I’d do it a couple of days running and then he went into my office manager and said ‘she’s harassing me. Every time I am sorting she comes up to me and has a go at me’. That’s like my job! I take him in the office, and said look I am not being horrible to you, I am not harassing you all I am asking you to do is work to the required standard!” [TRU].

This makes it clear that not only do those women who enforce working conditions face an increased risk of workplace violence but also how some males resent female authority in the workplace (Respass & Payne 2008, Gill *et al* 2002, Firth 2008, Chappell and Di Martino 2006).

9.3. Solidarity in the workplace

Patriarchy is a social construction and its existence is only made possible via male solidarity (Beasley 1999) which enables men to maintain a certain level of control in the workplace (Millet 1990). This was particularly evident within this study in that male solidarity facilitated control and several women [4] described

how patriarchal practices, which favour men over and above women, were frequently encouraged through this. Trudy, a floor manager for a delivery company explained how the team she managed was “*very militant...97% male*” [TRU] consisting of:

“Union reps and ex-dockers! All the ex-dockers, you can imagine what it’s like and it’s like very very male dominated”
[TRU].

Trudy stated that her immediate manager is male, indicating that within the entire South West of England there are only four female floor managers, evidencing how the advancement of women in this organisation has been curtailed. Recently one male colleague informed Trudy that a derogative text that referred to her as a “*poisonous little dwarf*” was circulating amongst the males within the workforce and that this text had been forwarded to senior management. Trudy approached senior management about this matter, however, they brushed the incident aside. Why - they did not wish to upset the perpetrator who happened to be male. Trudy felt it important that management intervened because as the only female manager on the sorting office floor she was extremely vulnerable, identifying that any weakness (refer to Chapter 6, 6.2) could potentially lead to the loss of control over her team:

“There are women who go up through who are a bit weaker and they [male workers] pounce on them like” [TRU].

Women who are deemed passive are considered too weak to manage (Boland 2005 and Dobash and Dobash 1998), yet in contrast women perceived as too tough risk punishment (Gelsthorpe and Morris 1998). In Trudy’s case above, it took pressure from another male manager to force senior management to “*give up the text*” [TRU].

Eventually management succumbed, and the perpetrator was reprimanded. However, this experience has evidenced how male solidarity prevails in many workplaces, and it additionally highlights the risk posed to women particularly as they are deemed less important. Additionally, this signals how males close ranks to protect one another during times of trouble, in that the males seem unprepared to offend a male colleague, yet they are quite willing to insult a female colleague, evidencing the repetitious cycle of patriarchy and male solidarity which accelerates and reinforces the control that is wielded over the female workforce (Millet 1990, Scholtz 2010). Also this reveals how the feelings of male perpetrators are prioritised over female victims, once more demonstrating that masculinity is far more highly prized than femininity, which again enables men to remain all powerful in the workplace (Chesney-Lind 2006).

9.3.1. Female solidarity as a negative

Many of the interviewees in this study felt at risk due to disempowerment, and this attitude was saturated with the idea that nothing should or even could be done about this. Further, the majority believed that nothing could be done to alter the social structure which had placed them at a disadvantage or on unequal territory with their male peers (Beasley 1999). For instance, Kathy explained how her manager made a sexual advance toward her when they were alone in his office. She discussed how she complained about this, reporting the incident to senior management, but also she revealed how female close family and friends discouraged her from doing so:

“I was advised at the time, by my mum, who was a very strong influence then, but not anymore, to do nothing because he was due to retire in the next year, and I had just got a promotion, and it would be very damaging to me. That was really hard for a few years” [KAT].

“I felt that I should have done something about this.... this girl [a colleague] said it’s your word against his, you’ve got promotion, you never need to see him again, he will be retired soon, and I found out later that he had done it to a lot of women” [KAT].

This identifies that solidarity does exist amongst women in the workplace, but at the same time it suggests that this solidarity is not necessarily positive, as female solidarity normalises the abusive interactions that occur between males and females which placing females at greater risk in the future. Further, as evidenced by Kathy’s family and her colleague, tradition is pivotal in keeping women subservient, and the outdated practice of women keeping quiet in the workplace may have been passed down through the generations, in this instance from mother to daughter. This reflects the old-fashioned but traditional system of patriarchy in that power is passed, via lineage, to the eldest family male or from father to son (Hearn and Parkin, 2001). On this occasion this tradition is evident between colleagues and co-workers; hence female solidarity is recognisable via the traditional values of women. This suggests that despite the passing of time much remains unchanged in the workplace thus the risk of workplace violence is normalised and remains un-reported. Further, it is a practice which facilitates workplace violence, as the risk posed to women is far greater as a result of the lack of constraint. The repercussion of non-reporting is discussed in Chapter 6, Section 6.7.

So, the wider implication of this study is that patriarchy and its associated threat, and the position held by women more generally in society impacts on risk and how women perceive themselves in the workplace. This was emphasised by Jones *et al* (2011) who suggested that the hierarchical structure of the workplace placed women at a greater risk of internal workplace violence - that is violence from colleagues, co-workers, management and supervisors - especially as women believe they will be condemned and/or disbelieved when they speak out about these risky experiences (Shim, 1998). In addition, this evidences that there is no one in the workplace who is prepared to listen to women (Boggs and Giles 1998), but this may also be extended to other organisations, including the BCSVAW and the HSE who also neglect working women.

9.3.2. How internal and external workplace violence influences Solidarity

My study reveals how many of the interviewees were more likely to support colleagues and co-workers who experienced external workplace violence than they were internal workplace violence. This occurs because those who witness acts of internal of violence risk, but also fear, losing their job if they speak out, but additionally they are frightened they will become the next victim. When witnessing external workplace violence the women felt less afraid for their jobs, and through female solidarity they attempt to protect each other. For example, Wendy explained how, when berated by an irate male customer, who threatened to set her alight, her colleague, Louise, who at this time was heavily pregnant:

“Had gone and got the fire extinguisher. I said ‘what were you going to do with it’ she said ‘I don’t know, first of all if he set you on fire I was thinking drop and roll, and secondly I thought I could just hit him with it!” [WEN].

Wendy disclosed that during another incident which involved an enraged male customer, who she referred to as “frightening,” the area manager was both inappropriate and un-supportive, standing back to observe the incident but failing to intervene:

“Yvonne was there, she’s our area manager, although she didn’t intervene because she wanted to see how I dealt with it” [WEN].

Wendy explained:

“She did say to me afterwards the only thing you did wrong was go red. If you hadn’t had gone red you would have been OK and stood your ground! But how do you stop yourself from going bright red in the face?”[WEN].

So rather than assist Wendy during this incident, she judged her capability to deal with the incident. As a result, Wendy was shouted at externally by an incensed customer, and then reprimanded internally by the manager. Sally similarly reiterated how staff failed to intervene, out of fear, after the managing director invited her into his office; but who then closed the door, shut the blinds, screamed, shouted and banged the furniture in rage:

“No, no, everyone is as scared they are all scared of him [the manager]. No one wants to know, they are afraid of losing their job, no one’s interested. Its thin walls, everybody heard” [SAL].

Wendy’s experience with her area manager above relates to Van Wormer and Bartollas (2000) who argue victim blaming is an innate mental process, and one

which they believe denies the suffering of victims, and this may offer an explanation as to why her area manager failed to intervene. Furthermore, these incidents reinforce the subjectiveness of risk (Ditton and Innes 2005), because Wendy's anxiety increased during the incident triggering a panic attack, whereas the area manager remained calm watching the incident unfold from a distance. This further reinforces how it is not possible to assess 'feeling at risk' on another's behalf because again, feeling at risk is a subjective process as previously discussed in Section 6.8 of this thesis.

9.4. The demoralisation of working women

The demoralisation of women in the workplace places women at an increased risk of verbal and psychological violence in the workplace, and once more the interviewees largely referred to this in relation to male colleagues, co-workers and management. Demoralisation is a reflection of the master-servant relationship and is frequently located in the workplace and which additionally links to a Marxist feminist perspective (Lown 1983, and Middleton 1983). Leanne, for example, expressed how the chef referred to her as "*girl*", recounting how he never once called her by her given name. Likewise Lou, whilst working as a waitress, was referred to as "*Fanny*", a taboo British slang word for female genitalia. The chef found this particularly amusing yet the term is derogative, and labelling women in this way again points to male dominance and control which is said to reside in the sexualised comments made by men to women (Scholz 2010) (A full discussion of the women's experiences of verbal-psychological violence can be located in Chapter 5, Section 5.3).

Radical feminism suggests that verbal-psychological violence is risky, in that it reduces women to sexual objects and desensitises men to sexual violence. This practice identifies that males objectify women via the sexualisation of their bodies, as opposed to seeing women as the individuals that they are. Ella, described how the manager, when working in a car dealership, referred to her as “*Bitch*”, again an extremely offensive term for a woman, and she further described how the manager proclaimed that he “*didn’t want some bitch working for him*” [ELL]. This was offensive on several levels. Firstly, the manager implied that Ella is the cause of anxiety and discomfort for others in the workplace, secondly, ‘bitch’ is a slang word which inferred Ella is an animal, ‘a dog’, and thirdly, the use of ‘bitch’ implies subservience.

Almost two thirds of the interviewees [12] believe that male peers regard them as subservient, and this belief featured across a wide range of professions in this study. Sally, for instance, a customer service advisor, explained how the organisation that she worked for predominantly employed males, and during her staff appraisal the managing director suggested “*you are just a service advisor; you are not my equal*”... which he reinforced by adding... “*I’m not interested in anything you women have got to say, I’m just not interested*” [SAL].

Sally implied that the managing director treated all females appallingly believing that all women were beneath him. This attitude created a high risk environment for female employees as other males in this organisation emulated this behaviour. A lack of traditional risk constraints such as an appropriate individual to

challenge this behaviour evidences how, in male dominated organisations, inappropriate behaviour breeds violence and abuse, ultimately placing women at an increased levels of risk (Fevre *et al* 2011). Sally felt very strongly about the way she was treated stating *“he’s just a bastard”* but despite this she reluctantly accepted this position adding, *“I know my place and I don’t need [him] to treat me like a piece of shit” [SAL]*.

In comparison Leanne, a waitress, described how male chefs considered waitresses inadequate:

“[The chefs] thought that we [the waitresses] were useless and that we never get anything right” [LEA].

Leanne, continued in this vein and discussed how this notion of inadequacy only applied to female waitresses as it was a label that was not applied to male waiters, as the chefs saw these as an equal. Once more this reinforces male power structures within the workplace and encourages solidarity amongst men to the detriment of females who remain excluded. This further indicates how patriarchy remains unchanged and that women are subordinated by existent power structures in society, as employment, economic conditions thus positions of power remain under male control (Walby 1990, Lowen 1983). Ultimately it is reasonable to acknowledge that working women will continue to be collectively subdued by these social constructions (Heimer 2000, Attwell 2002).

9.5. Exploitation through fear

I have already demonstrated in this chapter how many of the women in this study felt they were exploited by male colleagues and co-workers who had even the smallest amount of authority over and above them, for example, a chef or a supervisor. Several of the interviewees insinuated, but also as was demonstrated by Sally above, suggested that males in powerful positions commonly demanded respect from them, via ill-treatment, knowing they were behaving inappropriately. Sally, for example, previously described how the managing director, shouted *“he is the manager and he wants respect”*. She additionally explained:

“He’s almost screaming at me and he’s shouting. To the point he’s totally out of breath, to the point, you know how a toddler screams and go huh, huh, huh? He was like that” [SAL].

During her work life Lynda had once worked as an estate agent and she too, in comparison with Sally, described how the working relationship she held with her manager was based on fear, which was the result of his violent outbursts. In essence, she was referring to him *“losing his temper”* shouting at staff and throwing objects across his office:

“My boss, when he used to get angry, he used to throw the phone across the room, or swipe everything off of his desk on to the floor. His office used to be behind mine, and I used to sit down quiet and not do anything because I used to think that he was quite a scary man” [LYN].

She later expands on this abuse demonstrating the effect of these violent outbursts:

“You had respect for him...You held respect for him and I would never have ended up saying anything wrong to him...He was very ‘I am the man in the office, I am the boss, I am the manager’” [LYN].

The women in this study highlight that power and control is maintained by the instilling of fear. Fear, as we saw in Chapter 5, is accomplished in many different ways: some are overt displays of verbal and non-verbal-psychological violence, direct and non-direct physical violence, and sexual violence in the workplace. For example, I previously discussed how the male chef waved a knife at Leanne before throwing it across the kitchen at her; similarly I discussed above how one managing director lost his temper and beat his fists on his desk. In Chapter 5 I also established how fear promotes exploitation; for instance, Gina, a sales negotiator in a firm of estate agents, was sexually exploited via fear by the manager who had lured her into his home under false pretences. He then committed an obscene sex act when he masturbated beside her. This fear was so great it paralysed Gina with fear as she believed she would be raped, to reiterate:

“I just kept thinking he is going to rape me, that’s all I could think in my head, and there is nothing I can do about it” [GIN].

At the time of this incident the managing director of the estate agents responsabilised Gina for her own victimisation, this left a scar that remains evident today and which is further impacted because Gina blames herself for the incident. Victim blaming stems from the cultural ideologies of gender relations, which as suggested by Garcia and Clifford (2010) remain firmly rooted in patriarchy and power. Additionally, as I established with Gina above, victim blaming amounts to secondary victimisation, in that Gina was sexually assaulted by her manager and then rebuked by directors for not having done something at the time to have prevented this assault from taking place, or indeed putting a stop to it. Gina explained:

“The big bosses were basically saying why didn’t you say no? Why didn’t you get up? Why didn’t you walk away? I was rooted to the spot. I didn’t get that they couldn’t understand why I didn’t say ‘hang on a minute’” [GIN].

Other interviewees also spoke of fear and a deficit of help and support during these difficult times, and they referred to a fear of reprisal if they reported incidents of violence and abuse to management. Both Kathy’s colleague and her mother summed up this predicament in a short sentence: *“My mother and this girl said ‘it’s your word against his’” [KAT].* Sharon similarly reported feeling fearful after she was repeatedly victimised by her mentor in the workplace, which began as soon as she started in her new job:

“I was too scared to [report it] because I had never worked in that situation before. So I didn’t know how it all worked and I always thought oh yeah, they will blame it on me...I thought it will all get turned around and that it will all get made to me” [SHA].

This was similarly reiterated by Ella; after her supervisor drove the car they were travelling into a lay-by and asked if she had ever had sex in a car:

“I don’t think no-one would have taken any notice of me” [ELL].

Similarly, Lydia suggested that in her workplace *“nobody is prepared to help” [LYD]*, suggesting that the fear of punishment and reprisal directly impacts on the reporting habits of victims (Boggs and Giles 1998). Women fear that they will be judged by others, which was made evident by Gina above in that she felt she was blamed for the sexual violence that she had encountered and experienced. In this study it is evident that support for abused working women may be limited, subsequently this has led to the under reporting of workplace violence (Belknap 1996, Farrelly, 2011) something I previously identified in Chapter 6, Section 6.7.

9.6. The disempowerment of women

The disempowerment of working women was attained in a variety of ways; for instance, Wendy described feeling undermined, the result of a male pharmacist's refusal to allow her to retain the keys to the controlled drugs cabinet. Lydia on the other hand was told in the hospital unit [by a police officer who was attending the incident] that she was "*rubbish*" at her job. Further, Trudy, Gina, Leanne and Sally all described feeling utterly powerless, suggesting that it was the lack of control over violent situations in the workplace that had led them to feel this way-vulnerable and helpless. The women felt particularly vulnerable when as victims of violence and abuse they were interviewed about incidents alone in an office and in the presence of several males:

"I went in, there was, two men and me, the door was shut and the blinds down, and they are on tilt so he can see out but no one can see in. That was quite intimidating" [SAL].

Gina, after reporting a serious sex act, was also interviewed alone in an office by three senior males with a fourth male present for support. This occurred despite the fact there was other females in the building who could have sat in on this providing Gina with the level of support that she required - and indeed should have been afforded due to the sensitive nature of this incident:

"Three blokes all bosses, yeah all three partners were there... also I had Mike who I work with, who I know personally as well, and he's lovely. He was there to make sure I didn't feel worse really" [GIN].

Gina felt she was coerced and pressurised into making decisions that she did not necessarily want to make or feel she was able to make at this time. She had attended this meeting with the intention of involving the police. However this meeting was nothing short of secondary victimisation but also she was pressurised to make decisions at a time when she was extremely vulnerable:

“It was actually my ex that wanted to get the police involved, but my bosses did not want me to go down that route. They said no if we get rid of him that will be the end of it, so I said OK that’s fine”
[GIN].

So, irrespective of the fact that a serious sexual assault had occurred and that management were aware that this particular perpetrator was a repeat offender, the incident remained unreported to the authorities. This suggests that the prime motive for this meeting was not the sexual violence that Gina had endured; it was about keeping Gina quiet. When I asked her why she felt the organisation did not want to involve the police, she replied:

“I don’t know what it was. Perhaps because he had a family, because we wanted to call them, they just talked me out of it”
[GIN].

Furthermore, as previously noted, Gina was manipulated and made to feel that she was to blame for her own victimisation even though, as I previously identified above, management were quite aware that this man was a repeat offender:

“My bosses, the big bosses, were basically saying why didn’t you say no!” [GIN].

This study has therefore reinforced Garcia and Clifford (2011), that sadly it still

remains in society that the ideal female victim is regarded irrational, which in this incident took the form of victim blaming. This stems from a cultural ideology in which patriarchy denies the suffering of women, demonstrating that there is a total lack of understanding in relation to the victimisation of working women, but also the victimisation of women more generally. Further, this study identifies how female workers are at a considerably high risk of internal sexual violence, purely as a result of being overseen by males in the workplace (Morgan and Taylor 1983, Paoli and Merllie 2000, Sorenson 1984). This renders women, an already marginalised and excluded population, powerless in the workplace (Fevre *et al* 2012), as was previously evidenced by Gina above. Similarly, the findings strengthen Fevre *et al's* (2011) research into ill-treatment in the workplace, in that internal workplace violence - experienced from colleagues, co-workers and management places women at an increased risk of sexual violence and harassment.

In this study there was frequently a lack of appropriate support for working women, resulting in a heightened risk of maltreatment in that women's needs are habitually neglected (Belknap 1996, Farrelly 2011). This theme continuously runs throughout my research, as the interviewees have repeatedly demonstrated that they are at risk because they have no-where or no-one to turn to during difficult and troubled times. Again this was particularly evident with Gina, Sally and Trudy who worked in male dominated organisations and who discussed how they struggled to gain support from their peers:

“At the end of the day there is no one in that whole business for anyone to go, if any woman has a problem, has got a problem, there is nowhere she can go and it horrible really really horrible...[she

added]...“*When I think about that I get angry*”
[SAL].

This was previously proposed by Lynda who suggested “*Nobody is prepared to help*” [LYD]. However, it was Wendy’s account of this that was most intriguing, during one violent incident she suffered a panic attack, as the area manager stood and watched the incident (refer to Section 8.3.2), but failed to come to her assistance. This study has clearly demonstrated that women are commonly mistreated in the workplace, yet these struggles often remain overlooked (Belknap 1996, and Farrelly, 2011). Further, this study reflects the unchanging, but predictable, inequality that society generally affords women which aids the promotion of women as second class citizens. However, this chapter will now refocus and explore the prevention of risky behaviour in the workplace by high risk individuals.

9.7. Risky behaviour and its prevention

This study evidences that workplace violence is clearly an unpleasant experience, and some of the more obnoxious behaviours in this thesis undoubtedly have a criminal connotation. For example, Ella was physically assaulted after apprehending a shoplifter, while both Gina and Sharon experienced serious sexual acts in the workplace.

Angela, a mental health nurse, and Lydia, a learning disabilities nurse both made reference to risky groups of men and sexual banter, questioning the intent behind such incidents. Both women described their roles as high risk, a reflection of the volatility of the service users that they regularly interacted with. Angela, for

example, interacts daily with dangerous criminals who are convicted rapists, murderers or paedophiles, sectioned under the Mental Health Act 1983, whereas Lydia refers to service users who have learning disabilities and severely challenging behaviour, again many of whom are also sectioned under the above Act. Both women suggested that male colleagues and service users frequently, but independently of one another, entered into discussions of a sexual nature comparing and contrasting sexual practices and preferences. This generally involved being sexually derogative toward women, which made both Lydia and Angela feel uncomfortable:

“They [colleagues and service users] are flipping horrible to work with if you are the only female on” ...when they start chattering and talking amongst themselves they are vile in my experience” [LYD].

To prevent these conversations taking place both Lydia and Angela halted sexual banter in its early stages, a reflection of the tight margins they work within. Sexual banter cannot be tolerated in this environment, but neither should it be tolerated in any workplace. It is not tolerated due to the risk of escalation and many feminists believe, particularly radical feminists, that sexual discussions of this nature objectify women as sexual objects which creates a hostile and intimidating environment (Scholtz 2010) which ultimately affects the dignity of working women (Boland 2005). Similarly, sexual banter desensitises men and their inhibition to sexually assault women (Scott 2007, Paludi 2006, and Boland 2005). Angela and Lydia are already in such a high risk environment - one where sexual predators are housed - it is understandable that they naturally adhere to strict boundaries. Furthermore Chappell and Di Martino (2006) suggest rigorously adhering to policy guidelines is

effective in a high risk environment. In this particular scenario this study demonstrates how the responsabilisation, in terms of risk management, may for some women be an effective safety measure (Kemshall 2003, Goodey 2002), and whilst this contradicts the previous suggestion, that leaving individuals to manage their own personal safety, it does demonstrate that in the right environment some women are highly competent in the management of their own personal safety. Having said that, each of these women had over 20 years' experience but also as I previously identified, when attempting to manage a crisis situation these women were commonly let down by the organisations use of untrained personnel. A further point to consider here is that at the time when the sexual banter was taking place there was no direct interaction between the perpetrator and the participant. Although this abuse was not specifically directed at the women, they were within hearing distance, which again relates to an earlier point that I put forward. In that some employees find certain types of behaviour unpleasant as on face value it is offensive; however there is no intention to harm another by the perpetrator (Waddington 2005) and there is a place within this field for the exercising of common sense. Then again, and certainly when considering the risky environment that both Angela and Lydia work within, prevention is, as suggested by Young (1999), far better than any cure. A final point that I previously demonstrated [refer to Chapter 5, Section 5.4] is that inconsequential behaviour is important because as I have demonstrated in this study minor incidents act as precursors to the occurrence of more serious crimes. They have a habit of escalating to more serious types of violence as I previously have discussed in this study. However, I will now move forward and discuss the candour of male violence.

9.8. The candour of male violence

Chapter five suggested that violence directed towards working women may be an over-spill of the domination and oppression that women frequently identify as occurring in the home. However, this study found no evidence that the women's partners or husbands had at any time attempted to victimise them in the workplace, or when the women travelled to and from the workplace. Despite this, it is possible that other dominant males who perpetrate domestic violence/abuse against women in their homes may be responsible for the victimisation of other women in society more generally, in that this overflows from the home into the workplace, becoming another woman's problem.

One practice I found particularly intriguing was the number of men who were openly aggressive toward working women, and who did not attempt to conceal this violence from their wives, partners, or families, who at times appeared complicit, standing meekly beside the perpetrator. For example, Wendy a pharmacy assistant explained how one disgruntled male customer:

“Went to town on me, and I mean stepping towards me, and I had nowhere to go, I mean pinned against the counter! Shouting really loud, his wife was there. Every time a customer came in he raised his voice even louder and louder and looked at them!”
[WEN].

Lynda, in a similar situation to Wendy above, described how one angry patient took his frustrations out on her, and in similarity to the previous incident the patient's wife failed to challenge her husband's behaviour:

“He was just thumping the counter; his wife was with him, he was shouting, ‘I am never coming to this surgery again! I have been waiting over half an hour, this is poor service!’ She was quite placid; she was more understanding than he was” [LYN].

Eddie indicated how, during one episode of violence, the perpetrator threatened to punch her, however whilst his wife failed to intervene she did empathise with Eddie:

“He just stood up and went like that (she draws back a fist to punch me in the face), right in front of me, in front of his family and the whole audience...The wife came up with a babe in arms and said meekly ‘ God I am really sorry, really sorry” [EDD].

This lack of intervention could relate to several theories. Firstly, women who experience workplace violence are accountable for their own victimisation in the workplace, in much the same way as women who experience domestic abuse or mainstream criminality (Dobash and Dobash 1979). Secondly, those who understand workplace violence are aware that this issue affects many women in the workplace (DeKeseredy and MacLeod 1999). Commonly, however, it is not a problem that is considered “*severe enough to warrant major concern*” because as Dekeseredy and MacLeod (1999:14) put forward the abuse of women is a means of controlling difficult women. Further this reinforces victim blaming which facilitates the denial of a victim’s suffering, perhaps offering an explanation of why others fail to intervene during incidents of violence and abuse in the workplace (Van Wormer and Bartollas 2000). The following section of this chapter will move away from the candour of male violence and explore patriarchy in relation to inclusionary or exclusionary practices in the workplace.

9.9. The risk of inclusive or exclusive patriarchy

Patriarchy is an interesting concept, in that males employ sexual violence to exclude female workers in the workplace and to transform women into sexualised objects, thus creating an unpleasant and hostile work environment, or sexual violence is employed to include women for the purpose of self-gratification. Some males elect to incorporate women in the workplace so they can look at, or touch the women inappropriately, but also this is an attempt to engage the women in sexual banter. This suggests that different types of sexual violence are employed to suit the perpetrator's needs or requirements at the time. An example of this was provided by Ella, who was once employed in a heavily male dominated environment and who previously, in Chapter 5, described how her manager proclaimed he "*didn't want some bitch working for him*" and who made Ella's work life quite difficult. At a later stage, the same manager hinted toward a relationship, asking Ella out on trips and he began to spend increasing amounts of time at the site where she was located when normally he would only visit once a week. It later became apparent that Ella had become an object of his desire:

"He never touched me but he did ask me to marry him, and he was always there" [ELL].

This was similarly demonstrated by other interviewees [4] who depict how they struggled with certain groups of men in the workplace, particularly customers and clients who attempted to engage the women in sexual banter. Leanne, a waitress described how male customers frequently tried to include her in their conversations:

“They [male customers] liked it when it was just the women... They kind of expected this sexual banter; it was like an expectation that you have a bit of banter with them” [LEA].

Radical feminists contend that male dominance resides in the sexualised comments males commonly make when they identify women. I previously recognised this in Chapter 5, when I identified how Lou, a waitress, was referred to as ‘Fanny’ by a male chef. This reinforces the failure of some men to treat women as individual people, as opposed to regarding them as sexualised beings, but at the same time such behaviour underpins male power structures (Scholtz, 2010).

The interviewees who participated in this study not only indicated that they had been sexually violated by colleagues, co-workers and management they proposed that they had experienced this from customers, clients, and service users. Eddie, an entertainer, with over twenty years’ experience in her chosen profession implied that sexual violence was an expectation, describing how, but also why she dresses down when performing:

“I didn’t wear anything too revealing, I wore trousers ...they grab you anywhere in any private part! It’s not nice! Some blokes think because you are a singer, I don’t know what it is, they think they can abuse you” [EDD].

Gina similarly described dressing down in the workplace, again a result of a sexual assault that she had experienced. Since Gina’s experience of this sex act, nine years ago, she has stopped wearing dresses or skirts to the workplace - she can no longer bring herself to do it, so in this way she remains androgynous. Gina, as Acker (1990:224) suggests remains inconspicuous by presenting herself as a

“neutral bod[y]” in the workplace, but additionally, as Sorenson (1984), Bartram and Shoebrook (1998), Bowland (2005) proposed, she is drawing limited attention to herself. These actions are also an indication of the depth of Gina’s experience and the feelings that this encounter evoked, because, as I previously identified in this chapter, Gina was blamed for her own victimisation which has had a profound long term effect on her wellbeing:

“I stopped wearing skirts to work. I used to always wear skirts and dresses but when I was working he would always say to me’ ...if we were at a meeting at the morning, he would say to me ‘oh that’s really turning me on’. I actually stopped; I have not worn a skirt or a dress to work for the last 9 years, because I just can’t! It’s still a nightmare even though I’m not there anymore now! It’s like blokes will always think ‘oh you know’” [GIN].

In addition to the above, Leanne further suggested that if the waitresses fail to comply with the sexual banter that occurs in the restaurant, the behaviour of male customers rapidly shifts from trying to include waitresses in the conversation, via sexualised comments and innuendo, to one of exclusion by means of punishment, in that perturbed male diners complain to management. Leanne explained:

“If they think you are stuck up the men will give you a real shit ride. We had a couple of waitresses who were quite prim and stuff. They wouldn’t take any of it, where as I would go along with it and think God you are dicks. If they thought you were a stuck up waitress they were more likely to complain” [LEA].

This demonstrates how there is not a correct way for a woman to behave in the workplace, especially one which will minimise the risk of violence and abuse, but also it reveals how external perpetrators complain when women fail to accept sexual violence as the norm. This mirrors the behaviour of some of the women’s

colleagues, co-workers and managers who believed that there may be something wrong with a woman if she failed to accept their sexual advances. For example, this chapter previously discussed how Sally's managing director referred to her as '*frigid*', when she chastised him for inappropriately touching her, evidencing how perpetrators neutralise acts of violence (Van Wormer and Bartollas 2000). Further, it has supported an earlier point that I previously made, that female victims are deemed irrational. This is a form of victim blaming that is deeply embedded in patriarchy, and its resultant power (Garcia and Clifford 2010).

9.10. Summary

In this study, it is evident that the traditional structure of the workplace has facilitated violence and abuse and placed working women at an increased risk. The majority of women who participated in this study revealed that ultimately they were answerable to men who were employed in well-paid roles and the women suggested that this had remained unchanged for the duration of their working lives. This was particularly evident when the women discussed the perpetrators of their victimisation in that they infrequently mentioned 'she', yet predominantly they referred to 'he'. The majority of the women in this study expressed how they believed they were preyed upon by males who were either internal to the workplace - colleagues, co-workers and management or external - customers, clients, patients or service users. Furthermore this study has highlighted how some males demand respect from their victims during these violent interactions despite the fact that they are being

extremely disrespectful to their victims.

Many males are employed in powerful roles in the workplace, as such they manage and discipline the workforce which places women at an increased risk of violent and abusive behaviours. Throughout this study I have demonstrated how working women have been demoralised which has promoted feelings of inadequacy, and which has led many women to believe that they are second class citizens. Further, I have identified how some women who achieve managerial positions described having to prove themselves worthy of managing the workforce, in that they have to earn the respect of their male peers, as such approval is not a rite of passage. Additionally, this study has recognised how some women who are engaged in managerial roles are exposed to workplace violence in a slightly different manner to other women. For example, this study has illuminated how women in managerial roles may face false accusations of violence and abuse when reprimanding male members of staff. Consequently those women who are in charge often feel that they are unsupported and neglected in the workplace which is a cause for concern.

Many of the interviewees who took part in this study referred to male solidarity in the workplace, and it was most evident that in some workplaces men presented a united workforce. Female solidarity, however, was often detrimental to the women in that they had been educated, by other women, to 'put up and shut up' when encountering acts of violence in the workplace. This has collectively led some women to believe that there is very little they can do in regard to the, physical, psychological and sexual violence that they encounter, often on a daily

basis in the workplace, and it is this which gives rise to risk. For instance, at times female solidarity in the workplace, and society more generally, has reinforced the idea that women are not to be believed if they complain about the violence and abuse that they suffer. That it is detrimental to women if they speak out. This is a reflection of the traditional notion of patriarchy, where males are regarded as the enforcers. There is some light however in that women are more likely to support one another if a perpetrator is external to the workplace - a customer, a client, a patient or a service user because involvement is unlikely to result in the loss of employment.

Interestingly, patriarchy has placed women at risk in two very distinct ways. Firstly, this study has illustrated how patriarchal beliefs are engaged to include women in the workplace, especially if male colleagues, co-workers or management find a female worker sexually attractive. Secondly, male workers excluded working women by creating a hostile work environment. This was achieved via the use of sexual violence which made clear how far males are prepared to go in order to remain in control of female workers, and women more generally. Finally, the women who participated in this study revealed how they were exploited through fear. Often it was evident that fear was a method of exacting compliance from women and the perpetrators of this were both internal and external to the workplace. In addition to this, many of the women in this study feared occurrences of repeat victimisation, but also they referred to the risk of reprisal if they were to complain about episodes of violence and abuse. Finally, but importantly I have evidenced not only how women experience violence in the workplace, but how these events are neglected in that

many working women have no one or nowhere to go to seek help in times of trouble.

Chapter 10

10.0. Conclusion

This thesis has explored women's experiences of workplace violence which is an under-researched area in this field. In doing so it has purposely sought to ascertain the different types of violence that women have commonly experienced in the workplace, including why working women are subjected to violence and abuse in the manner that they are. More specifically, this study highlights violence and abuse in the workplace that is distinctively gendered and through the gathering and evidencing of witness testimonies, it provides a striking account of these experiences. I have attempted to convey a sense of the effects that such violent encounters have upon working women so that we may understand the full impact of this, whilst also highlighting how these atrocities blight the lives of many of the women who have experienced violence and abuse in such a manner.

I have met the aims of this study via the adoption of a feminist standpoint and by analysing qualitative semi-structured interviews which have examined a range of working environments that are habituated by women (Jiawani 2004). This study is particularly important as there are a limited number of studies that specifically explore women's experiences in this field. Women's experiences of workplace violence is a relatively unknown territory; therefore the findings of this study make an invaluable contribution to a limited, but existing, body of knowledge. This, when coupled with a profound understanding of workplace violence more generally, makes this study particularly important. Although it may be argued that this study has its limitations in that it cannot be generalised to the wider population, it makes a

valuable contribution to the field. The findings are striking and provide an authentic and detailed account of women's experiences in the workplace violence, and importantly they are replicable and valid. Moreover, when combined with existent as well as future studies, the contribution of this research will greatly enhance the building of theory in this field.

In this study I have firmly established how, but also why, some women are at an increased risk of workplace violence and abuse. The study has suggested that for some women such violence and abuse is a consequence of living within a patriarchal society, whereby women are commonly overshadowed, demoralised, browbeaten and frequently marginalised by males who are more powerful in the workplace. Additionally, working women are maltreated by males who are external to the workplace, yet who equally attempt to mistreat and exploit them through violence and ill-treatment. It is fair to say that for many women this is the result of the existent power structures that underpin the workplace; they are ingrained and have remained so for many years. Undeniably over time the social, living and working conditions of women has improved, although a residue of male-controlled domains still exist. Additionally in some scenarios the chauvinistic attitudes of certain men still run rife and it is these males which are detrimental to the personal wellbeing of some female workers. When coupled with male-stream research, these chauvinistic attitudes have led to many of the violent interactions that have been exposed by this study. These are exchanges that are commonly overlooked by society, again as a result of the previously mentioned power structures that underpin the workplace, and the social order more generally, and which facilitate

increasing levels of under-reporting. Subsequently, this study has exposed how the reported level of workplace violence for women may not be entirely representative, thus the true nature of this phenomenon remains unknown because, as I have identified in this study, it is possible that for women the level of recorded violence and abuse is considerably under-estimated.

The above findings are also true when considering the level of risk that is posed to working women, in that the proposed level of risk posed may be far higher than that which has been estimated more generally across the board. In light of this, this final chapter will draw together the different strands of this study which have contributed to the interviewees' experience of workplace violence and abuse that have been identified during the research process. The following sections of this chapter therefore begin with the ambiguity of workplace violence, including issues that relate to the nebulousness of its definition.

10.1. Defining workplace violence

In this study I have demonstrated how many issues that relate to the definition of workplace violence have arisen because workplace violence as a subject matter remains at its evolutionary juncture. Broadly speaking it is an area of research which has attracted a great deal of attention, yet despite this consideration, a consensual definition that will standardise workplace violence has not been forthcoming. Further to this, female workers, as I have evidenced in this study, are hesitant and uncertain as to what exactly constitutes this phenomenon and it is highly probable that this lack of clarity will remain unchanged in the near future: it is

quite dependant on the identification of a solitary definition, and most importantly the positive dissemination of this definition to the workforce. Thus this study has deduced that it is paramount that a single all-inclusive definition which is transparent in its meaning is readily identified and distributed throughout the workplace more generally. Further, this study has revealed that there is urgency for the definitional issues to be resolved, so that the vague understanding that many individuals hold of workplace violence may be improved upon in the very near future, in essence rectifying this deficit of knowledge (Waddington 2006).

At best, and on a more general level workplace violence is an extremely complex concept to comprehend and indeed classify and this became apparent and increasingly challenging throughout this study, especially during the categorisation of many of the violent behaviours that individual female workers expressed. This was a task that became increasingly arduous to me as a researcher, particularly when I attempted to apply the existing categories of violence and abuse to the findings of this study. Additionally, it was a task which further highlighted how women had been pigeon-holed into categories of violence and abuse that were not necessarily constructed with them in mind. This is a point which begets the question: how can workplace violence be fully understood in relation to a marginalised population, which in this instance concerns women?

To a certain degree The Health and Safety Executive has failed many workers, in that it has been unsuccessful in communicating important information concerning workplace violence to the general workforce. Indeed, this study has exposed how many of the working women that I interviewed for this study did not

have a clear understanding of workplace violence nor in fact what the term 'workplace violence' actually referred to. The women struggled to identify its existence, which was an indicator of how workplace violence had been normalised. This was evidenced by the majority of the interviewees who participated in this study, many of whom believed that workplace violence comprised solely of acts of physical violence. This is perhaps one reason why many of the incidents of violence and abuse that occur are not reported, and I will discuss this point in more detail at a later stage in this chapter.

Within this study it has become evident that much of the violence and abuse experienced by female workers was facilitated by the evident level of male governance that thrives in the workplace, and in particular many of the women referred to male colleagues and co-workers who were in charge. For instance, Sally referred to the managing director while Trudy and Gina spoke of male management as the perpetrators of violence and abuse, and it became apparent that in this study the offenders had often attempted to 'play down' or 'smooth over' many of the acts of violence and aggression that had occurred whilst interacting with female workers, which has demonstrated just how far reaching the extent of male ascendancy is. Simultaneously, this study has discovered, and lays bare, how many of the women in this study discounted numerous hostile interactions that they had routinely encountered. Subsequently, many of these violent interactions were simply regarded as unpleasant episodes, as opposed to the incidents of violence and abuse that they actually were.

Importantly this study has demonstrated how many of the incidents of ill-

treatment that occur in the workplace are routinely absorbed into the fabric of the daily schedule. It is this which has created a culture of violence and abuse in the workplace that has ultimately, as the analysis has revealed, led to a culture of denial in that many of the violent episodes are ignored. This is a practice that has, in due course, bred further occurrences of violence and abuse, and gives rise to the incident rate. Also in this study, I have demonstrated how the term 'workplace violence' has misled many women into thinking in ways that relate purely to the physical connotation of violence and abuse. As a result of this, numerous women in this study disregarded many of the occurrences of symbolic violence that they had frequently encountered, and the same was similarly true of incidents of sexual violence that the women experienced, flagging up issues in terms of naivety. This was particularly evident when the term 'workplace violence' was interchanged with that of 'unpleasant experiences' as the women readily identified with the latter phrase, and by doing so they willingly furnished this study with richly laden data that otherwise would have remained undisclosed throughout the interview process.

A further pertinent issue was framed by the level of ambiguity that existed in the classification of behaviours and which concerned the types of violence located within the workplace. In a similar manner to the difficulties experienced in defining workplace violence, the classification of behaviours was equally unclear and overly complicated which only served to compound on-going issues. In part this was due to the overlap that existed between workplace violence and workplace bullying. Thus I felt the need to clarify that workplace bullying is a sub-category of workplace violence and identified how workplace bullying is commonly a label assigned to

psychological violence. As a result this study has overwhelmingly identified a need for researchers to improve the clarity and classification of workplace violence and I have taken steps toward this process via the creation of a universal typology of violence and abuse, which is not only clear-cut but uncomplicated. The advantage of this typology is that it incorporates violence that is commonly experienced by women yet frequently ignored within other typologies, thus its implementation will facilitate the streamlining of future studies, which I will now discuss further in the following section of this conclusion.

10.2. The creation of a universal typology of workplace violence

I have evidenced in this study how existing typologies of workplace violence are confusing, and as with the definition of this phenomenon, there is a clear need for transparency and standardisation. Additionally, I have established how existing categories of workplace violence have overlapped, which has created unnecessary difficulties when attempting to assign many of the behaviours experienced by the women to any one prescribed category of violence. A good example of this is sexual harassment. Prior to creating a universal typology of my own, it was possible to assign sexual violence to three separate categories of behaviour that existed on the spectrum of workplace violence, that of verbal, physical and psychological violence. This not only added to the uncertainty and confusion that was already evident, but threatened to distort the findings of this study. Also, in some instances, it watered down the severity of the act that had taken place. For instance, verbal abuse resides on the lower end of the spectrum of workplace violence therefore the harms

of sexual harassment, in the form of verbalised comments, were, in many respects, neutralised under previous typologies. This led one to think that the harm caused via sexual harassment in the workplace was not quite as important as some other forms of violence and abuse that had taken place, and which were located much higher on this same spectrum of violence and abuse.

This new typology of workplace violence is important as not only is it clearly laid out and simple to apply when classifying acts of violence and abuse, it is relevant to both males and females in the workplace, and thus it positively takes into account women's experiences of gendered violence and mistreatment. Further, if this typology was adopted by subsequent researchers, the consistency of findings would be maintained for future research which would enable a more holistic approach to be taken, leading to a greater understanding of this phenomenon.

The new typology of workplace violence consists of three different types of violence and ill-treatment that routinely occur in the workplace, that of direct and non-direct physical violence, verbal and non-verbal-psychological violence and sexual violence. The category that is identified as sexual violence may then be sub-categorised into the different types of sexual violence that makes itself evident in the research finding. In this particular study sexual violence and sexual abuse was prominently related to sexual advances, sex acts, sexual assault and the pursuit of an intimate relationship.

A main advantage of redefining the typology of workplace violence is that workplace bullying and workplace violence have been amalgamated, an action that

has stripped away many of the grey areas that once existed in this field. Indeed, in this thesis I have demonstrated how workplace violence and workplace bullying were frequently, yet unnecessarily, separated by variables such as intensity, duration of time and the type of perpetrator. This approach was a result of the differing opinions that have been embraced by psychologists and criminologists and a prime example of this was 'time'. Psychologists have recommended that for behaviours to qualify as workplace bullying incidents must occur for a period of 6 months prior to reporting (Leyman 1989). Yet importantly, as I have identified in this thesis, workplace violence, in the form of psychological violence, is the equivalent of workplace bullying - a practice which manifests in numerous different ways. For example, it presents itself as a single or multiple interactions, or as a series of interactions that can occur over a short or indeed an extended period of time. In essence, there is the need for an interdisciplinary collaboration which will encourage both psychologists and criminologists to work together more closely in the future so that collectively we may learn from one another when attempting to fully understand workplace violence and the devastating effect it can have on individuals' lives. At the same time this would make future identification and the reporting of workplace violence far more accessible to workers than it currently is.

Importantly, this thesis has established how the many types of workplace violence, for example, psychological violence and sexual harassment act as precursors to other far more insidious episodes or patterns of violent and abusive behaviour that may arise. These are behaviours that have steadily built over time; in light of this, this study highlights the importance of taking women seriously when

they report any incident of maltreatment in the workplace. Acting upon such reports may not only prevent future incidents from occurring but impede the escalation of future behaviours. Additionally, this study has established that workplace violence does not require a criminal undertone *per se* and that favouring any one type of violence over another simply adds to the existent confusion that already shrouds this phenomenon. As such, my research has ascertained how workplace violence has been obscured by uncertainty, mis-perception and doubt, revealing, and illuminating how the experiences of working women are frequently obscured from view. Yet despite all of this uncertainty, this study has determined that workplace violence has become a common feature of many of the workplace interactions that occur daily, and therefore I propose that a more holistic approach should be taken if we are to reduce or prevent incidents of this nature from occurring in the future.

One of the main objectives of this study was to understand and explain both how and why women experienced workplace violence, and to identify patterns and trends that existed within these experiences, in this way making evident the obscured. Through enlightenment and by understanding the how and the why, it has been possible to identify changes that need to be implemented in the near future. These alterations will not only afford working women an enhanced level of protection they may reduce the level of risk posed in the long term. In addition to this, this study has examined the subjective meaning of workplace violence which in turn has facilitated an improved understanding in terms of how women experience this phenomenon. Furthermore, it has laid bare the coping mechanisms utilised by many of its

victims during any such occurrences, whilst simultaneously detailing the impact of these violent interactions.

In light of this, this chapter will now move onward to summarise the main outcomes of this study, at the same time drawing out the implications of these findings whilst opening up a discursive space for working women. Firstly, this chapter will address direct and non-direct physical violence before proceeding to discuss verbal and non-verbal-psychological violence in the workplace.

10.3. Direct and non-direct physical violence, verbal and non-verbal-psychological violence

By not focusing on discreet occupations this study has brought into question the existence of 'high and low level risk' roles for working women, a point that was frequently referred to in the literature, for example, the BCSVAW suggest the risk of workplace violence for women, in comparison to men, is low. Further, this study has demonstrated how women experience multiple types of violence and abuse in the workplace and that this was often a result of repeat victimisation either by the same or a different perpetrator. In fact, many of the women who participated in this study had not only experienced physical violence but had been exposed to verbal and non-verbal-psychological violence, including incidents of sexual violence and sexual assault.

When I considered the women's exposure to violence and abuse in this study in relation to working sector, the women's experiences were very similar to each other, particularly when taking into account the level of risk that was posed.

Thus it became quite apparent that it was the type of risk that is different and not the level of risk posed. Admittedly public sector employees are presented with an increased risk of direct-physical violence which is a result of working with, or in close proximity to, members of the public. Yet in comparison private sector employees experienced a considerably higher level of risk in terms of sexual violence in the workplace. Commonly sexual violence appeared to be a consequence of women working alone within the organisation for differing periods of time, perhaps in a warehouse, or indeed arbitrarily working alone alongside a male colleague or co-worker, or it was a result of engaging with male management whilst alone, for example, in an office or a corridor. Additionally, sexual violence was frequently a result of lone working on a permanent basis, possibly because the perpetrator was aware of his victim's working habits.

Many of the incidents of physical violence that the women described were not necessarily construed as workplace violence at the time of the incident, and this study suggests that subconsciously the women appeared to subjectively measure the intent behind each incident of violence and abuse. If the incident was a result of illness or bereavement then this was not considered to be a deliberate act of violence, but an outcome of distress due to, for example, ill-health, desperation or the death of a loved one, and this was specifically evident in healthcare roles. However, when I considered non-direct physical violence which was further down the spectrum of violence and abuse, which included the throwing of objects or incidents of verbal and non-verbal-psychological violence, the women had experienced similar levels to each other, regardless of their working sector. In light

of the findings, this study calls into question the practice of separating internal and external workplace violence. Rather than detaching these two variables from one another they should be combined which would enable future predictions, in relation to the level of risk posed, to become far more accurate than they currently are. Subsequently these predictions would filter back into the workforce via the HSE whose role it is to advise organisations on workplace safety, but also via the introduction of more stringent policies. As it stands at this present time the BCSVAW ignore incidents of internal workplace violence perpetrated by colleagues, co-workers and management. They believe that the nature of this type of violence and abuse is quite dissimilar to that experienced from external perpetrators. As a practice, this harbours serious consequences for many working women, serving only to underestimate the level of risk posed, not just solely to women but the workforce more generally, as they fail to take into account the vast number of incidents that routinely occur in the workplace. Furthermore, the type of violence encountered internally from colleagues, co-workers and management is not dissimilar to that which is encountered externally from customers, client's, patients and service users.

When considering internal workplace violence the findings of this study contrast with those of Tjaden and Theonnes (2001), who propose that the stalking of female workers is rare, however, I have revealed how women were stalked/ followed in the workplace by male colleagues. These acts were chillingly reminiscent to the murder of Clare Bernal and the unresolved disappearance of Suzy Lamplugh, whilst at the same time making clear that one of the driving forces behind the stalking/ following of working women is infatuation or the pursuit of an intimate

relationship. However, as of yet, there are no national studies that specifically focus on violence of this type as an issue in the workplace. Therefore making any comparison is particularly difficult. Given that women spend long periods of time working alongside males it is possible that the stalking or following of women is a more common feature of the daily working life of women than the literature has previously given credit. In light of this finding, I recommend that the occurrence of stalking/following of working women is in need of future research so that the extent and nature of this may be firmly established for the future.

10.4. Sexual violence in the workplace

Despite the enactment of the 1976 Sex Discrimination Act, and as I previously demonstrated in this study, many working women frequently experience extensive discrimination and harassment in the workplace. This is regardless of the fact that the workplace has been mandated to prevent sex discrimination and promote gender equality. What I am suggesting here, is that the 1976 Sex Discrimination Act has failed to significantly improve the working environment for many women, as numerous women continue to be sexually abused by males who, as demonstrated above, are driven by sexual desire, infatuation and at times obsession. Behaviours such as this cannot be ignored as subsequently they may progress to stalking, and notably, as I have demonstrated in this study, the most prolific perpetrators appeared to be colleagues, co-workers and management. Once more this determines how a male will not only abuse a position of power but also their position of trust, in that women enter the workplace with an expectation that they are safe

and protected. Yet as we have repeatedly seen in this study, it is the keepers of this trust who are frequently a threat. Therefore it remains evident that working women remain vulnerable to sexual exploitation, which supports the ideology of radical feminists who commonly refer to systems and structures of male dominated power (Scholz 2010). Often such systems are communicated and upheld via the sexualised comments and innuendo that women are exposed to. Contrary to this belief I have additionally revealed that these comments not only remain central to the maintaining of power and control in the workplace, but they are frequently characterised via male solidarity (Scholz 2010). In this way, men empower one another by further sanctioning the use of sexualised violence and abuse against women in the workplace.

Additionally, I have unearthed patterns within this study that confirm that working women remain susceptible to sexual violence and mis-treatment in the workplace, further I have established how women not only routinely experience this but repeatedly, often from multiple perpetrators. Over half of the women who participated in this study revealed that they had been sexually assaulted, and akin to other categories of violence such as verbal and non-verbal, direct and non-direct physical violence many of the women in this study had encountered more than one type of sexual violence, for example, sexualised comments or sexualised touching either in the same workplace, or as they travelled from job to job. In light of this, this study suggests working women are at risk of sexual violence within the workplace, in that they are exploited via sexual harassment, sexual advancement and encounter sexual assault. The findings confirm that sexual violence - the most

evident cause of gendered violence in the workplace - is not just an additional risk but it presents a 'special risk' to working women, evidencing how some workplace violence is of a gendered nature and a risk that is not necessarily presented to working men (Gunnison and Fisher 2000, Hurley and Riso 2007, and Duhart 2001). Similarly, this has supported the theory of radical feminists, in that women remain objects of sexual desire; indeed the existence of a patriarchal society which embraces males as leaders, remains central to many of the social relations that not only occur but underpin the workplace (Boland 2005). Further, this study has illustrated how women experience sexual violence from both male and female perpetrators, including perpetrators who are external to the workplace. However, with the exception of one woman, who is a lesbian, female perpetrators were accompanied by male companions who, it appeared, were in control of the events that unfolded. Nevertheless, this is again an area that is in need of further exploration.

Patterns within this study suggest that some types of sexual harassment are precursors to more serious acts of sexual misconduct, and this included the inappropriate touching of women, indecent exposure and public masturbation. As a result, this study has placed an emphasis on the need for sexual violence, no matter how minor or seemingly insignificant, to be taken more seriously in the workplace; violence of this nature needs to be acted upon immediately, particularly in its early stages. This is in the hope that intervention will prevent this type of behaviour from escalating, in essence it means taking control of the situation which in turn may disempower male perpetrators. This point reinforces an earlier proposal, that it is

important to include internal workplace violence in future studies so that the 'special risks' posed to working women do not remain hidden, they will be brought into the public arena, to the attention of others, and ultimately to the forefront of the workplace. This is particularly important, as many of the women who took part in this study were at high risk of internal sexual violence from colleagues, co-workers, and management. When I drew comparisons with similar interactions that occurred with external perpetrators my research revealed how, in this sample, the women were considerably more at risk of sexual violence from internal perpetrators than they were those who were external to the workplace.

Interestingly, this thesis uncovers how interviewees from the public sector assigned very different meanings to the occurrence of sexual violence. Public sector interviewees, particularly those employed in healthcare, believed that their work environment was far too busy and fast paced for this to occur, judging that the opportunity for a male to commit sexual violence was indeed limited. Although this may be a contributory factor, it is more likely that this was a result of the more traditional constraints located within the workplace which has limited the opportunity for crimes to occur. In public sector workplaces for example there is a higher volume of staff on duty which frequently includes security personnel who may act as a deterrent to potential perpetrators. Thus women in certain public sector roles, which includes healthcare, rarely work alone, but also they are infrequently left alone with a male colleagues or a male co-workers for prolonged periods of time. However, these employees appeared to be more at risk of sexual violence from external perpetrators, but again there is a need to conduct further research to fully

establish this. Also, and in contrast to the above, I have revealed how in this study, women who worked in all-male public sector environments were commonly undermined and humiliated in the workplace, and at risk of psychological violence in the workplace. It therefore appears that there are advantages and disadvantages to either working sector in terms of the type of risk that working women may be exposed to.

The pervasiveness of sexual violence in the workplace has overwhelmingly supported my decision to incorporate sexual violence into this study, because often, as with psychological violence, sexual violence is overlooked and dis-regarded, which has resulted in the failure to provide the full extent of this phenomenon. As a result, this study has substantiated that previous estimates relating to the vulnerability of working women are, at their very best, inaccurate, in that they underestimate the susceptibility of working women to violence and abuse. Moreover, this study has revealed how the omission of sexual violence from future studies could well be a step backwards when considering the victimisation of women in the workplace *per se*.

10.5. The British Crime Survey Violence at Work, and the Health and Safety Executive.

It cannot be denied that the BCSVAW is a large scale study which provides the most consistent overview of external workplace violence that is experienced from customers, clients, service users and patients. A drawback of this study, however, is that it fails to focus on violence experienced from perpetrators who are not strangers to the workplace, in that it fails to identify internal perpetrators who are

colleagues, co-workers and management. Within this study I have demonstrated how this exclusionary practice has created a discrepancy in the number of violent interactions experienced by working women. It is a process which skews the level of risk posed and adds to the confusion that already exists in this field.

Generally the BCSVAW, as a large scale quantitative study, leads us to believe that the estimated risk of workplace violence, as was previously discussed above, is quite low and although my research is quite different, in that it is a small scale qualitative study, the findings indicate that the BCSVAW paints an inaccurate account, and the risk of workplace violence for women may be far more prevalent than they propose. Further, many of the risks are under-estimated due to the limitations of the survey method which masks the fact that working women are at a high risk of violence and abuse particularly, as I have ascertained, gendered violence. Moreover, the BCSVAW suggest that women in the workplace encounter the same level of risk as working men. However women, as I previously explained, are at high risk of internal workplace violence and in particular women are susceptible to sexual violence, behaviours that remain excluded by the BCSVAW, and this has distorted the findings that they present.

In addition to the above inconsistencies, this study has revealed that there are discrepancies in the level of self-reporting, demonstrating how it is possible for the annual reported rate of victimisation to fluctuate (Health and Safety Executive 2013). As a result of this variability, estimating the risk of workplace violence is extremely difficult in the long term, so in addition to the BCSVAW regular variations in the level of workplace violence, these differences are similarly added to via inaccurate

predictions presented by the HSE. Estimates such as this mis-diagnose the difficulties presented to women and, as this study has revealed, they fail to accurately represent the lived reality of workplace violence. This highlights why it is vital that consideration is afforded to incidents of internal workplace violence, ensuring that these incidents are recorded in future victimological surveys. Currently, the BCSVAW fail to do this, reasoning that these type of violent interactions are of a different nature to those that occur between workers and perpetrators who are strangers to one another (BCSVAW 2009/10). As a result this thesis again evidences how the BCSVAW has only provided a partial picture of the extent of this phenomenon, reinforcing how the true extent and nature of this remains unclear (Jones *et al* 2011, Estrada *et al* 2010). In addition, this study has added weight to Estrada *et al's* (2010) finding, that there has been an increase in the rate of the victimisation of working women and the level of risk posed. Indeed, this thesis strengthens the argument that the level of risk experienced by working women is underestimated, and that this risk may be significantly higher than that which is reported. In turn this has reinforced the notion that there is a dark unknown figure of violent and abusive interactions that overshadow the workplace more generally, which detract from the experiences of working women.

The majority of studies construct workplace violence as a problem that revolves around strangers, characteristically these individuals are habitually deemed the 'usual suspects,' which include the infirm, alcoholics and drug addicts, some of whom routinely habituate the accident and emergency department. Often these groups become common scapegoats and thus the harms inflicted by the

'orderly other' members of society are frequently ignored. In this study, I have revealed how similar patterns and trends of workplace violence are located amongst both internal and external workplace violence. By drawing attention to this point I am proposing that society needs to take a closer look at those deemed responsible, because as this study has revealed it is not always the 'usual suspects' who are blameworthy. The following section of this chapter will now discuss the perpetrators of such violence.

10.6. The Perpetrators of Workplace Violence

In Chapter 5, I discussed how the risk of a violent interaction occurring in the workplace was compounded by many different factors, and I suggested that each interaction was unique in its own right and when considering these factors, the greater the number that exist the greater the level of risk posed. For example, I have demonstrated how many of the women that I interviewed were at an increased risk of external workplace violence, and that in this particular study this was often the result of women fulfilling traditional female roles in the workplace. These are roles which have rendered women accessible to the general public, some of whom are hostile (Graham 2011).

Overwhelmingly, the interviewees who took part in this study suggested that males were the chief perpetrators of workplace violence, but additionally I referred to factors which had added to this vulnerability: these included lone working, the volatility of the perpetrator and a lack of security in the workplace. The women who

were engaged in healthcare and care related roles regularly drew distinctions between the perpetrators of workplace violence. In particular they referred to the relationship that existed between violence and the cognitive ability of the offender. Significantly, if the women were assaulted and mistreated by perpetrators who were infirm, confused, or frightened, or who the women believed were not choosing to act in this manner but who were compelled to do so, they did not necessarily perceive this as workplace violence. However, if they considered that the perpetrator had the mental capacity to make a rational decision to harm them; then they judged this to be workplace violence. As a result of this, this study reveals that it is wrong to assume that the infirm, the elderly, or those addicted to alcohol and drugs are the main perpetrators of workplace violence and abuse (Chappell and di Martino, 2006). The 'rational other' should also be treated with caution as they too may not necessarily be trusted.

Alcohol and drug abuse has played a significant role in this study, particularly when considering workplace violence perpetrated by customers, clients, patients and service users. It did not, however, account for all of the violent interactions that the women experienced at work, in particular those acts committed by 'rational beings' who were strangers to the victim. It was evident that the 'orderly other', who also commit the crime of workplace violence, could be a co-worker or a manager, and one commonality between perpetrators in this study, is that they were predominantly males who held authoritative positions in the workplace or they were males attempting to manipulate women, and assert their will and control over them. Some were driven by the authority they held, others by a desire to control women,

which included the pursuit of an intimate relationship. These perpetrators had made a conscious decision to violate and exploit women; it was a means of exerting authority and they were, in some instances, acting out sexual desires and fantasies. Male perpetrators did this in two ways, either individually or collectively. Those who did so collectively laid bare the existence of male solidarity in the workplace, which in this study was evident both externally and internally to the workplace.

10.7. Feminism and the workplace

Undoubtedly the advancement of working women may be credited to feminism, a powerful movement, but one which is often criticised. Feminist researchers are repeatedly marginalised for attempting to raise the consciousness of the difficulties faced by women, and frequently they are met with hostility for uncovering the concealment of patriarchal society and the hierarchical structure that exist within this. It is a society in which men have governed, manipulated and attempted to influence and control women. Despite the many criticisms feminists have brought issues that women face to the forefront of society, and by re-focusing the patriarchal lens feminists have revealed that all that is womanly is commonly shunned.

When taking into account equality and working women, a great deal of progress has been made. As a result, the status of the working women has been elevated, yet at the same time they remain marginalised, and their progress frequently inhibited as is evidenced by the existence of the 'glass ceiling'. Those who do break through this elusive barrier still remain under the authority of males, many of whom, but not all,

have retained the most financially rewarding roles. This includes roles such as chief executive, executive, manager, and other supervisory positions, and this was something which was quite apparent within this study. Indeed, all but one of the interviewees' was overseen by a male, and this included women who had attained supervisory or managerial roles. This supported the Marxist feminist literature, in that the oppression of women is determined by class, and demonstrates how the existing gender divisions have preserved men in the hierarchy of the workplace, which has ultimately restricted the freedom of women in society.

Furthermore, I have established in this study that women in charge breed resentment amongst male colleagues and co-workers. It is a practice which places women at risk of belittlement and ridicule; hence some women adopt a tough stance so as not to appear weak or incapable as this would only add to their vulnerability. Despite taking this stance, working women still remain vulnerable to violence and abuse particularly from subordinate males who, through the existence of male solidarity, attempt to compromise the effectiveness of a woman to manage the workforce. Interestingly, in this study women in charge, to a limited degree, were afforded a slightly improved level of protection against sexual violence and abuse due to their enhanced status in the workplace.

It is possible to surmise that women have learnt much from their experiences of workplace violence, including the recognition that it may be beneficial for them to dominate and oppress other working women. I am suggesting that some women, but not all, who hold authoritative positions may possibly violate other working women who threaten their status, and in this way they too may also benefit from a

patriarchal mind-set. For instance, the pay may be far more lucrative for women in positions of authority, as is the possibility of future advancement to more powerful roles. This can occur at the expense of other women, and those women most at risk are found in subordinate or junior roles. In particular they are newcomers to the workforce including, but not confined to, women in training or women of a young age - demonstrating a clear link between ill-treatment and vulnerability. This possibly occurs because newcomers pose a threat to the existing hierarchical structure, in that they present a risk to women who are already in charge. Consequently, subordinate women are exposed to enhanced levels of violence, for example, this study has demonstrated how not all women embrace the ideology of feminists, including the notion of sisterhood and unity, and this may well lead to the victimisation of other women.

In addition, this study has attempted to establish how women's experiences of workplace violence have been neglected, which I suggest may occur as a result of women living within a patriarchal society, a powerful mechanism which maintains the subservience of women so that the majority of women remain compliant. Control of this nature drives working women's experiences of violence and abuse into the background, and this was something that was emphasised in many former research studies, and which has forced women's experiences of workplace violence into categories of violence that were not designed or intended for women, in that they were created for males by males. Again this has evidenced how simple it is to underestimate the risk of workplace violence for women, which has aided the building of an undercurrent, a culture of non-reporting.

Sadly, despite the best efforts of feminists, this study has ascertained that working women have become accustomed to episodes of violence; further many have accepted this lack of equality, and in doing so they are discriminated against on the basis of their gender. Indeed, as I previously concluded, many of the interviewees' in this study said they were immune to workplace violence, initially denying its existence and rarely complaining of their ill-treatment. On a more positive note the feminist literature has elevated the consciousness of the existence of the oppression of women via a patriarchal society (Shim Young-Hee, 1998). Thus, the following section of this chapter will discuss the social organisation of the workplace, which is marked by males as figures of authority and the risk that this poses to working women.

10.8. Men, power and the promotion of risk

This study has reaffirmed Hearn and Parkin's (2001) theory that women's experiences of workplace violence are shaped by patriarchal values, which bestows men with authority in the workplace and indeed more generally in society. The impact of these values further endorses patriarchal beliefs. For instance, this study has uncovered how women educate one another to not report incidents of violence and abuse often as a result of fear, because over time women have learnt that the reporting of such crimes may have repercussions. So in order to cope in the workplace many women ignore, deny or simply avoid the existence of such violence and abuse, but also at times as we have seen in this study some may participate;

rarely do they confront the perpetrator.

The existence of out dated customs in the workplace have been pivotal in the shaping the violation of working women because the division of labour, even though it is now not quite so evident, still facilitates the allocation of powerful roles to working men, and because tradition still overshadows the workplace, the human rights of women are impinged upon in a variety of ways. These infringements include the victimisation of women, a method that instils fear and ensures that many working will remain vulnerable to violence and abuse in the long term. This research has enhanced that of Jones *et* (2011), whose study suggests women face an increased risk of workplace violence, a direct result of the patriarchal attitudes of some males. However, it is important to recognise that not all women experience patriarchy in the same way.

The emergence of the industrial society has led to the adjustment of family values (Beck 1998), however, despite many changes men have indirectly retained the role of provider, which is evidenced by feudal characteristics and beliefs that are ever present in the workplace today. For instance, previously in this chapter I concluded that men retained the majority of the most powerful positions in the workplace, in that they dominate managerial and supervisory roles, which are not only more rewarding, but more powerful, giving way to authority and control as a means of dividing labour, and many of those in charge habitually abuse working women. Similarly, males who are external to the workplace - customers and clients, service users or patients exploit their position as the paying customer by mistreating

working women to maintain the order of things; they command respect from women yet fail to return the same level of reverence. Society, it appears, remains insensitive to this, often immune to many of the conflicts that exist and, as I have shown in this study, women have regularly ignored many incidents of workplace violence that commonly occur (Beck 1998). It is therefore evident that many of the social norms that have been ingrained within working women, and which relate to violence in the workplace, need to be altered.

Furthermore, this thesis has evidenced how sexual violence has been used to exploit women in the workplace, and it has revealed how exploitation of this nature is a personal attack on both the mind and the body of women (Boland, 2005). It is a formidable mechanism charged with the capacity to instil fear, and in the workplace this has been accomplished in two ways. Firstly, via inclusion, in that self-gain and sexual gratification is the expected outcome and this was particularly evident in this study, but not exclusive to, many of the interactions that involved external perpetrators. Importantly, this study has both revealed and demonstrated how, if victims endure sexual violence, these behaviours are unlikely to escalate to more serious crimes. However, if women fail to submit to male authority and tolerate violence of a sexual nature, then the interactions that proceed are increasingly likely to involve additional types of violence, including verbal or psychological violence, as male perpetrators continue to exert their will.

Secondly, sexual violence and violence more generally may be employed to marginalise women in the workplace, and this thesis has evidenced how males have created an unpleasant and hostile work environment which they know women will

find disagreeable, which is a subtle means of excluding women from the workplace. Therefore, this study has established how sexual violence in the workplace is not solely driven by sexual attraction or desire, but it may be employed as a weapon that is used in the pursuit of power and control over the female workforce, and it is a means of getting one's own way. This has reinforced Bowland (2005) and Paludi *et al* (2006) who describe how men have created intimidating and hostile work environments often via the use of overt displays of power and aggression. When pondering this point my thoughts wander back to Wendy, a pharmacy assistant, who described how one particular male perpetrator was 'strutting like a peacock' which conjures up images of a magnificent bird, with tail feathers spread aloft, swaggering pretentiously. Over-stated behaviour such as this was frequently mirrored by external perpetrators who publicly, yet fearlessly, intimidate working women and create an aggressive work environment.

Aggressive work environments serve to generate feelings of uncertainty for many of the women who took part in this study, in that they felt the need to tread quite carefully throughout the working day, and in some cases this occurred because they were unsure what the perpetrators next course of action may be. For instance, I have highlighted how vocalised threats and intimidatory behaviours have the capacity to rapidly accelerate to physical violence. Further, I have revealed how sexual innuendo may quickly progress to sexualised touching and how sexual abuse and acts of sexual violence have led some women in this study to fear rape in the workplace. Uncertainty of this kind is a powerful tool in the male armoury, as it facilitates male dominance and control which, as I previously concluded, consumes

many women with fear and anxiety over events that may or may not follow.

10.9. Women in power

I previously concluded in this chapter that some hierarchical women may adopt some of the less favourable male attributes that depict the level of authority that they hold in the workplace. However, I highlighted those female perpetrators who behaved in this way appeared much more subtle during these violent interactions in that they were more restrained. As a result of this restraint other employees were frequently unaware that a violent interaction may have occurred. This is in opposition to males who made overt displays of direct and non-direct physical violence that were reminiscent of the previously described 'strutting peacock'. Many women instead chose to adopt verbal and non-verbal-psychological violence as a weapon. Behaviours such as this could be a reflection of the more passive nature of women, although it would be foolhardy to underestimate the damage that such violence may cause. I have shown in this study that female perpetrators seek to isolate their victim by simply not including colleagues or co-workers in daily routine workplace interactions. Instead they steadily 'chip away' at their victim's self-esteem, which for some is as equally insidious as physical violence. Similarly to abusive males, hierarchical women seek to marginalise their victims, not through sexual violence but via the creation of psychological pain and distress.

10.10. Risk and the Health and Safety Executive/British Crime

Survey: Violence at Work

Broadly speaking workplace violence has attracted the attention of many, and together these actors have sought policies that attempt to reduce the incident rate of violence in the workplace. For instance, the HSE promotes good working and safer working practices, and whilst this is a positive move, much of the information used to formulate these practices is gleaned from the BCSVAW.

The BCSVAW convey their knowledge of workplace violence to the HSE, who in turn publish this information in an attempt to raise the awareness of the level of risk posed to workers, in relation to violence and abuse, and to encourage the reporting of incidents. This study has evidenced that there are advantages to using a systematic approach such as this, in that it provides a general insight into the violent workplace. Equally, however, this study has revealed disadvantages to this method, revealing how the BCSVAW fail to take the victimisation of women into account, further the data collection method that they use for this dismisses many of the experiences of women, in that it common behaviours that are pertinent to the suffering of working women are routinely ignored. As a result, working women are presented in a manner which suggests they are of 'low risk' of violence in the workplace. By taking this stance, a significant number of violent incidents remain un-recorded and thus un-reported, a practice which has created a dark figure of workplace violence that is not dissimilar to the 'dark figure of crime' commonly referred to when discussing crime more generally.

The above omissions have reinforced the aims of this thesis, particularly the strengths of qualitative research. For instance, quantitative research generates

statistical data which, unless combined with case studies and focus groups, fails to capture the essence of workplace violence or explore the deeper understanding of many of the issues posed, including subtle nuances that may emanate from such problems. This lack of understanding has created a cycle of omission and subsequently the HSE cannot fully disseminate the level of risk posed to working women more generally to employers, as many of the problems that relate specifically to women in the workplace may not have been recorded. Further, the HSE have failed to encourage the reporting of incidents that are relative to a woman's suffering as the existence of a patriarchal society, in which women are subordinate, has educated women to subconsciously dismiss many of the violent and abusive behaviours perpetrated against them. Consequently, these behaviours are less likely to be risk assessed in the future because they have not been identified as risky in the first instance. This is an important finding as it reveals how risk assessment has failed to keep abreast with the needs of women, but also this identifies how management, which is predominately male, has repeatedly failed to record many incidents of such violence and abuse. This has led to the failure to collate information, again leading to a failure to communicate violence and abusive incidences back to the HSE or the Office for National Statistics. Consequently these cannot be not included in forthcoming risk assessments, evidencing how this is very much a circular issue.

10.11. Feeling at risk

Importantly, I have revealed in this study how women remain confused in

relation to feeling at risk. At face value the interviewees believed that they were not at risk in the workplace despite the fact they had been a victim of, or they had witnessed violent interactions taking place. Periodically the women expressed that they could not understand why a colleague could possibly feel at risk, which demonstrated the subjectivity of feeling at risk, but also highlights how it is not possible to readily assess feeling at risk on behalf of another. This has again emphasised the deficiencies of risk assessment which has included its failure to record 'special risks' for women. These are gendered risks generated by the women's experiences of gendered violence in the workplace such as the sexual violence that the women were routinely exposed to, often on a daily basis.

10.12. Risk assessment

In much the same way as the BCSVAW it has become evident during the research process that risk assessment is male-stream, and much like the BCSVAW, it specifically fails to cater for the needs of working women. I have consistently demonstrated in this study how many of the women who participated were confused when considering 'feeling at risk'. This uncertainty became quite apparent when I directly asked the women 'if or when' they sensed they were at risk in the workplace. Commonly, the initial response to the 'if' question was 'no' never yet it was a response that failed to correlate with the interviewees' accounts. In fact many of the women contradicted themselves during the interviews, even those who were most adamant that they had never felt at risk in the workplace. During the interviews it frequently it transpired that they had, at some point, felt vulnerable in the workplace, and subsequently the women referred to feeling frightened or scared, but also they

described feeling anxious when working alongside perpetrators and this was relevant to both male and female perpetrators in the workplace.

10.13. Health and Safety needs of women: training

It became evident throughout the research process that many of the safety measures that had been implemented in the women's respective workplaces, including health and safety training, did not cater for their needs. Thus this study supports Bowie's (2002) research which suggests that health and safety measures were not explicitly designed with women in mind, and that safety measures in the workplace are far too generalised. Yet despite the passing of time, since Bowie made these proposals, little appears to have changed in regards to this. In essence, it appears in this study that health and safety measures remain little more than a 'box ticking' exercises which is routinely performed in the workplace to meet the health and safety obligations of the organisation. This is opposed to keeping working women safe from harm, and perhaps this may, in some way, be accountable for why many of the women in this study reported that the reality of workplace violence was quite different to that of the classroom experience.

Moreover, in this study differences became evident between working sector and the level of protection that the women were afforded in the workplace. At times public sector women appeared to benefit from superior measures, in that they were provided with an enhanced level of protection: for instance, they had access to security personnel and many were allocated staff training days that focused on

health and safety issues, and also they benefitted from the presence of colleagues and co-workers. However, the capabilities of these measures were challenged within this study. Much of the training provided was described as inappropriate focusing on how to keep safe 'on the street' and not 'in the workplace'. Additionally, the majority of training was related to diversity, race and ethnicity and whilst it cannot be denied that this is an important issue, many of the women felt that this was not specific to their needs *per se*, so once more the genuine necessities of working women have been neglected, in that they have become lost in the myriad of diversity that now exists in the workplace.

In contrast to this, women who were employed in high risk occupations and who were competent in control and restraint techniques, felt that their health and safety was regularly compromised by their respective organisation, believing that inadequately trained staff, employed by the organisation, placed them at risk. Further, they thought that this had counteracted the value of any safety training that they had received and that this included many of the skills implemented to protect them whilst in the workplace. Often, as in the case of restraint techniques, certain skills and techniques were not transferrable between roles, and in the wrong setting this undermined many of the security measures put in place to protect them, placing staff in danger of serious injury. In addition, a lack of support from team members in the workforce was brought to the forefront of this study, a point which was similarly underlined by Leighton (1999), in that members of staff fail to help each other during a crisis situation and that often the reasoning behind this was the employment of inadequately trained staff. The same was true of security staff, and again this study

exposes how the women believed organisations compromised their personal safety by employing security personnel who were unsuitable for the post, and yet hired possibly as a result of restricted budgets. Further, I have illuminated how health and safety policies, for example the lone working policy, was frequently relaxed to meet organisational targets, so yet again the safety of lone female workers was been forfeited to keep within their budget.

Private sector organisations appeared to manage their health and safety regimes quite differently to the public sector, and this study has suggested that women in the private sector are potentially at an increased level of risk, particularly in smaller organisations. This, it transpired, was a direct result of the limited range of preventative measures made available to staff that protect them against violence and abuse. In part, this primarily occurred because those in charge of the workplace were predominantly male, and it was males who decided on the suitability of the safety measures made available, yet, as I previously discussed in this chapter, feeling at risk is subjective. It is not possible for men to assess how women perceive danger or indeed when women feel at risk particularly as men do not fear nor understand violence in the same manner as women.

It became apparent in this study that some private sector organisations made use of staff training videos which were regularly updated by the organisation. One particular organisation did appear gender conscious, in that they acknowledged that their shop floor staff were primarily female; and they shone in terms of staff safety. The effectiveness of the training video was striking, as it promoted safety awareness amongst staff and enforced the importance of unity and team building.

This was significant as the mind-set, in terms of staff safety, had shifted from promoting inappropriate street safety in the workplace, to one which advocated the protection of female staff via unity. This approach encouraged support between all members of staff and appeared to promote a collective conscience which in turn promoted preventative measures that the women instigated between themselves, for example, escorting each other to their cars at the end of the working day. From this I have concluded that the most effective safety measure for working women, and the workforce more generally, is 'Complete staff buy in' that spans from the shop floor to senior management. In particular, the promotion of safe reporting schemes and support networks for women would be advantageous, especially in relation to sexual violence.

Given that men hold the majority of executive, managerial, and supervisory roles and that workplace violence frequently manifests in the violation of subordinates, it seems logical when promoting staff safety to start at the very top of an organisation. This would ensure that internal workplace violence and abuse is not rewarded and that it becomes a punishable offence sending a clear message that the implementation of violence and abuse for the purpose of getting ahead in the workplace is a fruitless task. In addition, I recommend that staff training should stress the importance of re-educating males in appropriate behaviour towards women in the workplace. A firm starting point for this would be to educate staff in the definition of 'workplace violence' thus eliminating the difficulty of preventing behaviours which many employees may not necessarily recognise nor understand as inappropriate. This is particularly important, because as I have demonstrated in

this study, workplace violence is all too frequently normalised and has become commonplace.

Furthermore, the HSE needs to ensure that the above information is adequately disseminated in the workplace so that it filters down to all employees. Subsequently, incidents of workplace violence, and not just those relating to physical violence, may be significantly reduced in the future. Likewise, this would extend to how we, as customers, clients and service users - as visitors to other people's workplaces, but also as colleagues and co-workers treat other people in their place of work.

10.14. The impact workplace violence has upon women

Di Martino *et al* (2003) proposed that the only way to reveal the diversity of the individual experience, and indeed the vulnerability of working women, was to examine gender far more closely. Through taking this approach I have demonstrated how both internal and external workplace violence adversely affected working women in numerous different ways. Firstly, many women reported how they felt vulnerable, frightened and scared in the workplace. However, as I have revealed in this study, this was not solely related to physical violence as one may initially think. In light of this, this study supports Beech and Leather (2006) in that it has similarly identified that women are anxious in their place of work. It has highlighted that this anxiety stems from the women's workplace experiences that consist of direct and non-direct physical violence, verbal and non-verbal-psychological violence, and sexual violence.

Additionally, I have illuminated how, in this study, working women were afraid of physical violence, particularly if this violence was unexpected, but also if they believed they had limited control over any given situation, or if they felt unable to predict the outcome of a violent interaction. The fear generated was far more deeply rooted than just that experienced during violent communications as workplace violence lingers, it significantly scars women and further it impacts on the health and well-being of women. Moreover, feeling anxious, fearful and apprehensive in the workplace embeds itself in the very psyche of women, which has an impact upon their health and happiness and often affects a woman's ability to adequately function during such incidents, but also long after this violence has subsided. Violence under any circumstances is stressful, let alone violence perpetrated in what is commonly regarded as a safe environment. Similarly, I have demonstrated how workplace violence has produced stress and anxiety, highlighting how a violent workplace is a stressful environment, which is again detrimental to the health and well-being of women and which in the long term promotes ill-health. Indeed, this study has revealed how numerous health related issues manifest as the result of workplace violence, many of which produce long term health effects for individual victims. For example, panic attacks take time to subside which has the potential to prevent victims from working efficiently, as does shock or 'being in shock' which, akin to panic attacks, is a direct result of trauma. Once more this compromises the ability of women to function effectively both inside and outside of the workplace, ultimately placing women's roles in jeopardy. What is more, I have evidenced how workplace violence follows women from occupation to occupation as well as from the

workplace to the home. Subsequently, this has again impinged on a woman's quality of life both inside and outside of the workplace, to the extent that many women dread returning the following day. It was evident in this study that a violent workplace created nervous tension which, as I previously established, is detrimental to the health and wellbeing of women. Frequently, this was displayed as anxiety or other stress related illnesses including depression. These are illnesses that require medical intervention and that may well result in prolonged sick leave in the future. Likewise, this study has revealed that many women feign illness, in that they feign ill-health to avoid attending the workplace and this, in the long term, results in financial hardship. This response was motivated through fear, anxiety and dread and therefore this study has exposed how workplace violence drains women to the point that they are unable to motivate themselves to return to the workplace. At its most extreme the women left their place of work, often without future employment (Boland 2005), which created financial hardship, but also it has fostered reliance on males as the chief provider. In contrast to this, some women never sufficiently recovered to resume their original duties within the organisation, often fearing a relapse in their health and wellbeing and consequently they sought re-deployment. However, I have strongly evidenced within this thesis that workplace violence follows women throughout their working lives, and from occupation to occupation because, as the women in this study so bravely demonstrated, workplace violence is pervasive.

I have additionally ascertained in this study how workplace violence mirrors many of the attributes of domestic violence, exposing it is a powerful form of domination which both controls and oppresses women. Much like domestic violence

society's perception of workplace violence tends to suggest that it only warrants major concern at its most extreme, because akin to domestic violence workplace violence represents the social order of things (DeKeseredy and Macleod 1995). Inadvertently, however, female victims of this phenomenon uphold the hierarchical structure of society, which unintentionally reinforces this repetitious cycle of violence and abuse, as 'putting up and shutting up' results in a lack of support which in turn leads to habitual mistreatment. As a result of this, violence against female workers often goes unnoticed and once more, and in a similar manner to domestic violence, this serves to reinforce the patriarchal practices that have featured in this study and in the workplace more generally.

Importantly, this study has uncovered how some survivors of domestic violence, childhood violence and sexual abuse fought back against their perpetrators and met incidents of workplace violence with violence. Fighting back appeared to be embedded in these women's souls and ingrained into their reactions. It was evident in this study that many of the survivors of domestic violence found their experience of workplace violence more shocking, and the reason suggested behind this was that they had trusted their colleagues, co-workers and managers, as they did customers, clients, patients and service users and their reckoning behind this was that they believed that they had been betrayed.

10.15. Summary

This study has demonstrated how, but also why, women experienced more than one type of workplace violence, and has evidenced that violence of this nature

occurs regardless of whether women are employed in the public or the private sector, or indeed whether they were engaged in roles deemed either 'high' or 'low' risk. In the light of this, I have concluded that all of the working women who participated in this study were as equally vulnerable as each other. I have additionally highlighted in this study how violent and abusive interactions that occur in the workplace vary in relation to the type of violence, and not the incident rate. Importantly, this study has revealed that the inflicted harms are rarely just physical and neither are they obvious or indeed visible to the eye. The harms run far deeper than just a scratch or a bruise and injuries such as this are merely surface wounds.

Overwhelmingly, the women who participated in this study revealed how the majority of perpetrators were male, which was a consequence of residing within a patriarchal society. I have additionally emphasised how some hierarchical women might have adopted the patriarchal attitudes and values of some men, thus they too may also violate other women in the workplace. This is a strategy that working women have adopted in order to protect themselves so that they can retain their position of power. Furthermore, workplace violence has been constructed as a public sector issue which has potentially created a false impression of the range of roles commonly affected by workplace violence. In particular, this includes roles that have been deemed as 'low risk', roles which frequently employ women.

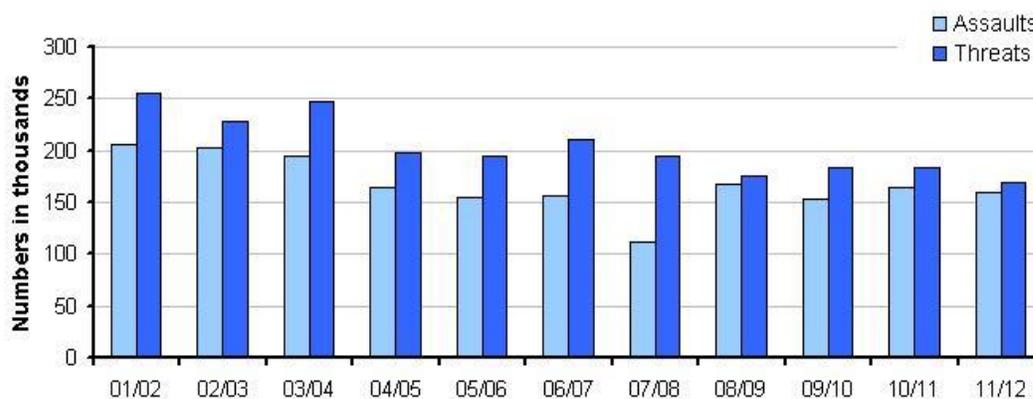
Interestingly, whilst this study is not generalisable to the wider population it has produced evidence of how research constructs the perpetrators of this phenomenon as the infirm, drug addicts and alcoholics. Although this is a

contributory factor it is a belief that frequently masks the behaviour of many rational perpetrators, which, as I have evidenced in this study, are commonly males who may be attempting to exert their authority via the domination and abuse of working women. These, I believe, are behaviours that mirror domestic violence that is often located within the home. Therefore it is possible that workplace violence could well be an extension of the violence and abuse that stretches out from male-dominated or male controlled homes, and which manifests as violence in the workplace but is committed against other women in society, in this instance a female worker. This, when coupled with male-stream research, has led to the marginalisation of women, in that the violent interactions that they frequently encounter are brushed aside often distorting research. In effect this has rendered women vulnerable as the issues that they face occur daily, yet they are infrequently brought to the forefront of society.

Appendices

Appendix 1

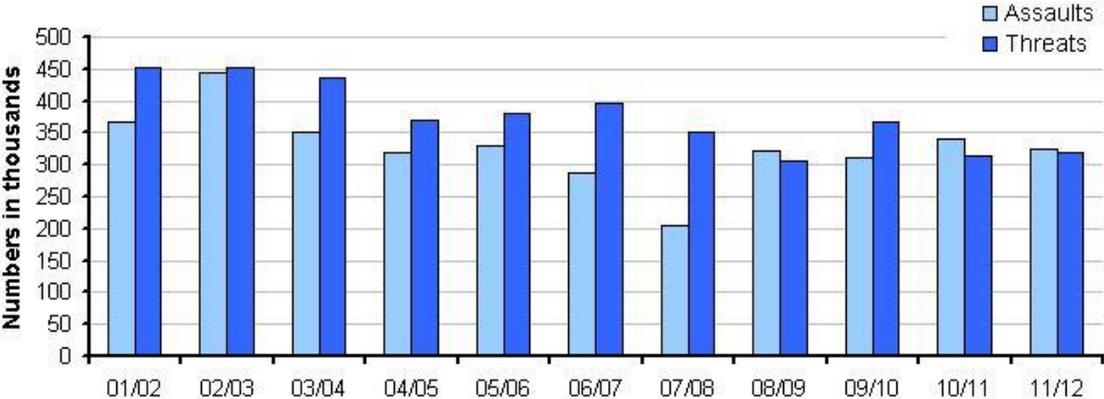
The number of victims of violence at work for adults of working age employment 2001/02 to 2011/12 CSEW.



Buckley (2011/2012) estimates that 312 000 workers experienced at least one incident of work place violence, 169 000 were threatened in the workplace, and 159 000 were assaulted. The overall risk of victimisation does not equal the sum of the risks of assaults and threats as some workers will have experienced both assaults and threats in the workplace.

Appendix 2.

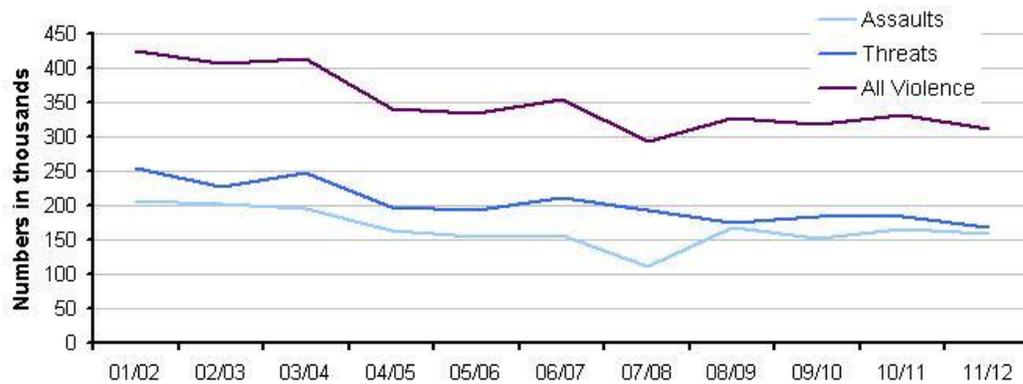
The number of incidents of violence at work for adults who were of working age and in employment 2001/02 to 2011/12 CSEW.



Buckley (2011/2012:6) further estimates that *“there were 643 000 incidents of violence at work in England and Wales, of which 324 000 were assaults and 319000 were threats”*. As victims may experience more than one assault or threat in a given year the number of incidents is greater than that of victims (Buckley, 2011/2012).

Appendix 3

The trend in the number of victims of workplace violence since 2001/02.



Between 2001/02 and 2011/12 workplace violence reduced by 36%, assaults reduced by 23% and threats reduced by 34%. The total number of victims does not equal the number of victims of assaults and threats, as many workers experienced both offences in a given year (Buckley, 2011/12).

Appendix 4: Summary of occupations

Participant	Occupation	Internal perpetrator	External perpetrator	Repeat Victimisation	Witnessed WPV	Physical		Psychological		Sexual
						D	ND	V	NV	
Gina	Estate Agents-Senior Negotiator Retail Assistant	Manager Supervisor		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Kathy	Ministry of Defence Parent Support Worker	Manager Manager		✓				✓	✓	✓
Sharon	Station Enquiry Officer Qualified Hairdresser	Colleagues	Clients	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lydia	Qualified Learning Disabilities Nurse	Colleagues Consultant	Service users Co-worker	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Trudy	Post Office Worker	Manager Colleagues	Customers	✓	✓			✓	✓	
Leanne	Life Guard Waitress	Head chef	Service user Customers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ellie	Laboratory Assistant Shop Worker Car Cleaner	Supervisor/colleague Colleague Manager	Customer	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Angela	Qualified Mental Health Nurse	Colleague	Service user	✓				✓		✓

	Occupation	Internal Perpetrator	External Perpetrator	Repeat victimisation	Witnessed WPV	Physical		Psychological		Sexual
						D	ND	V	NV	
Eddie	Entertainer		Customers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wendy	Pharmacy Assistant	Pharmacist Area manager	Customers	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Sarah	First Responder and Paramedic		Patient Patient's relative	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Lucy	Qualified Teacher	Colleague	Pupils	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Carol	Ambulance Assistant		Patient	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Chris	Administrator Admin Assistant	Colleague	Service user	✓	✓				✓	✓
Sally	Customer Service Advisor	Manager Colleagues		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Julie	Administration Housing benefit Officer	Supervisor	Service user	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Louise	Care Worker Delivery Driver Kitchen worker	Colleague Head Chef	Service user	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Charlie	Qualified Midwife	Colleagues Consultants	Patient Patient's relative	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Lynda	Estate Agent-Lettings Assistant Doctors Receptionist	Manager	Patients	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	

Appendix 5: Coding Frame

Nodes compared by number of items coded

TYPE OF WPV	Typologies new	PATRIARCHAL PRACTICES	WITNESSING WPV	PERPETRATOR	REPORTING	WHAT DID AT THE
SEXUAL S.H, touch, intern, sexual, sexual, intimidat, exterm, not rea, watch, put	psychological violen, non direct physik, sexual viol, psycholog, violen	male superior, power, hierarchia, wife, group	stepped in, did nothi, their reacte, no effe, empla	patient, male ma, clien, relative, strand, female, know, male c	not report, organisat, super, family, police	divert, call, left area, call for, igno, told c, time ou, asked to le
verbal, damaged p, threats, throwing of, ignored, sil, staring, glist slar, kicked, int, other phy, stak, shouting, sc, other psy, unwa, grab, wea, called name, bullied IN, spittin, aggressin	HOW FELT AT TIME frightened, sc, shocked, uncom, unsup, hurt, upset, felt trapped, up, shod, angry, intimid, thou	AFFECT AT TIME obstructed w, induced, run awa, cried, panic, pa, went q, got in trou, coul, tra	EFFECT ON YOU dread going, left job, changed v, financial, changed t, cha, chang, sacke	CAUSES OF INTE new, train, perciev, sexual a, jeal, cult, short sta, betra	VULNERABILITY SUM UP W, AAA, FEM, PA, domi, pol, m, exploga	ORGANISATIO ignore, repor, do, go, keep c
HOW COPE stand up fo, remain calm, take it in, resolve, thum, violence with, avoidanc, didnt, one of th, hardene	CAUSES OF EXTERNAL WPV percieved pool, inexperience, getting what, med, part of the jd, enforcein, unprec, cultur, drink and drug	SECURITY equipment, police, banned, safety trainin, secur, put, sib, being, zero, tremor	RISK feeling at risk, mobile, leaving, lone, wrist a	REPEAT VICTIMIS same pe, different, WOMENS IN, TAKING	NOT EXP, XYZ, LIFE EXPE, SECOND, STRO, OUTS, FRIEND, SELF, REST, RECOVER, DU, An, f, gd, You, a, c	

Appendix 6: Interview schedule

Defining workplace violence

- Could you tell me what you think workplace violence is?
- Have you ever been made aware of a definition by your employer? If so how did they define this?
- Do you consider that you have ever been a victim of violence in the workplace, or behaviour that you feel could be considered as such?
- Could you explain to me what happened and how this made you feel?
 - At the time/afterwards
- Have you ever witnessed a colleague being treated in this way?
- If I told you that WPV is would this change the answer that you have given me already?
- If I told you that in terms of perpetrators this includes people you know such as colleagues, friends partners, ex partners but also family members, ...would this change your answer
 - If so why is that?

Experience of WPV

- Would you tell me what, in your opinion, triggered the event?
- Would you tell me where you were when you experienced WPV :
 - company premises, the car park for example
 - clients home

Reaction

- How did you react to these experiences
 - cry/ angry/upset
 - ignore it/ take it in your stride
 - stand up for yourself e.g. argue back
- How did the incident make you feel at the time e.g.?
 - frightened/ worried / upset/ vulnerable
 - play experience down to family/ friends/ colleagues
 - concerned that they may come back i.e. repeat victimisation
- At the time of the incident did colleagues/ members of the public come forward to help / if so what did they do?
 - How did that make you feel
- After the incident, did you report/ complain about this e.g. a supervisor or manager
 - did they help/offer support
- Could you tell me whether your boss/ manager/ supervisor is male or female.
- Did this affected their response to the incident
 - did this make it more/less able for you to report the incident, re reporting to a male/female
- Do you feel that the incident was taken seriously at the time and whether you feel it was dealt with in the correct manner?
- What about after the incident, when you had time to reflect on events,

- how did it make you feel?/what did you do – e.g. talk to family/friends
- victim support

Reporting

- What process was followed?/who was involved in this process

Risk

- Do you feel at risk/vulnerable in the workplace
- Risk assessment
- Security measures/Safe place to go to
- Do you worry about risk of wpv/Work alone/Valuables, cash
- Security measures/target hardening in place

Patriarchy

- Have you ever felt like resigning/resigned as a consequence of WPV
- Made to feel uncomfortable e.g. sexual innuendo/ become one of the lads
- Male/female manager/supervisor etc.

General information

- Age/Full or part-time - hours i.e. unsociable/ shifts/ nights/
- Work alone or with colleagues - Gender ratio

Now you are more aware of the definition would you say that you may have ever committed WPV yourself either intentionally or otherwise?

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