

Abstract: Between security, law enforcement and harm reduction: drug policing at commercial music festivals in England. by Verity Smith

In this thesis, I use an ethnographic methodology to explore the implementation of drug policing at commercial music festivals in England. I argue that festival drug policing is primarily concerned with the anticipation and mitigation of drug-related risk, and festivals adopt an array of security, enforcement and harm reduction approaches under the ‘3: Ps’ (*Prevent, Pursue and Protect*) in pursuit of this. With an lens on the in-situ decision making of policing, security and management actors on the ground, I illustrate how drug policies are negotiated between agencies, in order to satisfy their sometimes competing risk-perceptions and interests in their pursuit of drug security.

**BETWEEN SECURITY, LAW ENFORCEMENT
AND HARM REDUCTION: DRUG POLICING
AT COMMERCIAL MUSIC FESTIVALS IN
ENGLAND**

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List of Abbreviations

3Ps	Prevent, Protect, Pursue
ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers (National Police Chiefs Council)
ANPR	Automatic Number Plate Recognition
AVPU	Alert, Voice Pain, Unresponsive
BoH	Back of House (drug checking)
CCTV	Closed-circuit Television
DCMS	Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
DCR	Drug Consumption Room
EDM	Electronic Dance Music
EFS	English Festival Survey
ELT	Events Liaison Team
EMCDDA	European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction
EWS	Early Warning System
FDE	Force Drug Expert
FoH	Front of House (drug checking)
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679
ISA	Information Sharing Agreement
NADSU	National Association of Security Dog Users
NEIU	National Events Intelligence Unit
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NOS	Nitrous Oxide
NPS	Novel Psychoactive Substances
NTE	Night time Economy
OCG	Organised Criminal Gang
PWITS	Possession With Intent to Supply
RJ	Restorative Justice
SAG	Safety Advisory Group
SCP	Situational Crime Prevention
SIA	Security Industry Authority
SLB	Street Level Bureaucrat
SPS	Special Police Services

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Chapter One: Introduction

Introduction

One of my most vivid ‘coming of age’ memories is arriving at *Glastonbury Festival* in 2009 for the first time, walking through the site and experiencing a state of total sensory overload at the magic, beauty and colour of the fantasy-world that surrounded me. Ever since, thinking about music festivals has evoked a nostalgic yearning for the summer months. In my experience, there is nothing quite like the palpable energy or ‘buzz’ of the first day of a festival, as months of collective anticipation coalesce and find expression in unabated laughter, play and silliness. There is nothing like the sense of belonging to a fleeting pocket of space, in which the everyday constraints of productivity, gender, ego, identity, status and social acceptability are transgressed and derided *en masse*. And there is nothing like the post-festival ‘blues’ where, despite understanding that all good things must come to an end, extreme exhaustion couples with an indescribable sense of emptiness at the thought of returning to the mundanity of everyday life.

Indicative of their increasing contemporary social importance, music festivals have become a staple summertime leisure pursuit for millions of people in Britain, with an estimated 26% of British adults having attended one in 2019 (Mintel, 2019). Yet, unlike other dance settings and spheres of licensed leisure, festivals are drastically under-researched in the field of criminology. In this study, I make a significant contribution to the fields of drug policy, policing and licensed leisure through research which critically explores the ‘policing’ of illegal drugs at commercial English music festivals. Drawing on my extensive, multi-sited ethnographic inquiry conducted over two festival seasons in the summers of 2018 and 2019, my findings endeavour to capture the complexities and textures inherent within these contested spaces. My findings are informed by over 250 hours of in-situ observational and interview data, collected alongside

security operatives, police, event management, drug checking and welfare services at eight music festivals, in addition to 11 semi-structured interviews with key industry stakeholders.

My analysis is structured to reflect the primary drug policing approaches adopted, to varying degrees, by the festivals I researched. Referred to in short hand as the ‘3: Ps’, the pillars of *Prevent*, *Pursue* and *Protect* incorporate policing approaches which attempt to mitigate the risks and hazards posed by the use, possession and supply of drugs in festivals. My findings critically unpick and unpack some of the tensions inherent in formulating and negotiating these strategies, how festival agencies work together as partners, and how the commercialised, ad-hoc, chaotic, and often resource stretched festival setting mediates their implementation. The essence of my argument is that festival drug policing is concerned with the reduction of drug-related risk. My findings show that the range of drug-related risks, and the different perceptions of how to manage them between agencies necessitates risk prioritisation and leads to inconsistencies and trade-offs. Drug policing is enacted through people, within the dynamic, unfolding risk context at hand. The purpose of this opening chapter is to outline my rationale for undertaking this research, to introduce the research questions, and to provide an overview of the thesis structure.

Research rationale

Since their post-war conception, music festivals have endured in various guises as an important leisure context for young people to experiment with identity performance, pleasure, dancing, sociality and the consumption of music, fashion and intoxicating substances (Anderton, 2019; Measham, 2004a). In a digression from their historically ‘countercultural’ origins and ethos, contemporary music festivals are heavily commercialised ‘big business’ (Anderton, 2019; Webster & McKay, 2016). They are an established branch of the ‘experience economy’ which caters to consumers who seek out meaningful, memorable and, increasingly, ‘instagrammable’ leisure experiences (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Festivals have been theorised as ‘bounded play

spaces', akin to exotic clubbing destinations such as Ibiza, wherein the commercial appeal lies in their promise of 'other-worldly' experiences and the temporary suspension of rules and norms (Turner, 2018: p.39). Drug use is unequivocally an important feature of nightlife and festival experiences for many people: the Home Office's annual household survey found that people who regularly attend nightclubs are six times more likely to report past year illegal drug use than people who do not (ONS, 2020). Research has found festivals to be settings of 'atypical' drug use, involving elevated consumption, experimentation and initiation (Hesse, Tutenges & Schlieuwe, 2010; Turner and Measham, 2019).

The widespread prevalence of 'party' drug use in nightlife settings in spite of official 'zero-tolerance' venue policies is nothing new, party drug use and how venues manage it has become a renewed issue of concern in the context of an alarming ascension in the annual total of drug-related deaths in Britain (ONS, 2021). This includes a spike in the recorded deaths involving the popular party drug 'ecstasy' (or 'MDMA'), which rose steeply from 8 in 2010 to 57 in 2015 and reached a peak of 92 in 2018 (ONS, 2021). The rise has, in part, been attributed to developments in the illegal drug market. The five-fold increase in ecstasy related deaths between 2010 and 2015 mirrored a five-fold increase in the MDMA content of ecstasy pills in this period (Transform, 2017). The dramatic proliferation in the recorded number of 'new psychoactive substances' (NPS) in the European drug market has been linked to drug-related deaths and harm across Europe (EMCDDA, 2021a).¹

Media attention concerning fatalities of young adults occurring at music festivals featured as a morbid backdrop to the research process. For example, just before my fieldwork period started in May 2018, news broke that two young people, Georgia Jones (aged 18) and Tommy Cowan (aged 20) had tragically died following ecstasy use at *Mutiny Festival* in

¹ The EMCDDA monitors the presence of 'NPS' in the European drug market with an 'Early Warning System' (EWS). In 2010, there were 110 substances notified to the EWS. This rose to 830 substances in 2021 (EMCDDA, 2010; 2021b)

Portsmouth (Busby, 2018). These instances set the tone for my fieldwork, described by one participant as a ‘wake-up call’ for promoters ahead of the summer festival season. Bookending my fieldwork period in 2019, it was reported that two fatalities occurred at *Reading Festival* and *Leeds Festival* over the August bank holiday weekend: Corey Kendall (aged 19) and Anya Buckley (aged 17) both died following ecstasy consumption. As information pertaining to the yearly number of drug-related deaths at festivals is unavailable from official sources, the extent of the problem is presently unclear and may be distorted by media reporting. As Forsyth (2001) observes, ‘atypical’ drug fatalities, often involving ecstasy use by a young, innocent victim, tend to garner disproportionate media attention compared to other drug-related fatalities. Furthermore, drug use in festival contexts may give rise to a host of harms which, short of resulting in a fatality, subvert media attention (Measham & Turnbull, 2021).

The media attention drawn by these fatalities and others like it has prompted enhanced scrutiny concerning how events manage drug use. Some venues have been forced to close following fatalities on the premises for example, in 2016, *Fabric* nightclub in London initially had its licence revoked following the deaths of two young people after they consumed illegal drugs on the premises. It was only after a campaign that the venue was allowed to re-open on the basis that drug policing efforts on the door were intensified (Rawlinson, 2016). Concurrently, there has been a growing mainstream media discourse surrounding the need for wider provision of drug ‘harm reduction’ approaches (Coldwell, 2019). Harm reduction is framed as a pragmatic approach to reduce the harms of drug use, without aiming to reduce drug use *per se* (Ritter & Cameron, 2005). A harm reduction intervention that has become more widespread at British festivals is ‘drug checking’, in which festivalgoers can anonymously submit a sample of a substance for laboratory testing, and receive feedback concerning its contents and a ‘brief intervention’ to discuss their drug use (Measham, 2018).² Zero-tolerance policies may

² In 2016, an NGO called ‘The Loop’ piloted a drug checking service at two British music festivals (Fisher & Measham, 2018).

be a barrier for drug checking given that it implies the presence of drugs within the venue in question, yet as Fisher and Measham (2018) observe, some festivals have moved away from ‘zero-tolerance’ to a ‘3:Ps’ policy at a licensing level in order to facilitate its adoption.

As these developments highlight, the question of how festivals approach drugs is a pertinent, divisive issue, and one that is undergoing a process of adaptation. This question makes my rigorous, in-depth empirical investigation to understand this issue especially important. It is also timely, given that there has been exceptionally scant research attention paid to festivals and drugs, and a paucity of empirical criminological research which considers policing within them, potentially as a result of commercial interests precluding access to researchers (Martinus et al., 2010). Moreover, the available ethnographic research makes the case that drug policing influences the socio-spatial patterns of festival drug consumption and can shape the emergence of drug-related harm (Bhardwa, 2014; Dilkes-Frayne, 2016). These connections are supported by a small but growing body of evidence driven by Australian academics concerning the widespread use of sniffer dogs at festival gates, which finds limited evidence of their deterrent effect on drug use, highlights that they may increase the risks of drug use and considers their use to be a disproportionate source of trauma for festivalgoers (Hughes et al., 2017; Grigg et al., 2018; Malins, 2019). While these studies are crucial in problematising some of the tools of festival drug policing, there is a notable absence of research which critically examines the perspectives, interests and objectives of policing agencies. The exceptions are Bhardwa’s (2014) research which offers insight into the classed and racialised policing priorities of police in the British festival context. In the Netherlands, Nabben (2010) found that zero-tolerance drug policies were considered ‘mission impossible’ by security operatives and identifies a number of working tensions between event organisers and police (p.22). Altogether, the international research picture of festival drug policing is, at best, fragmentary. There has been minimal consideration of how context-specific factors of festivals, or the perspectives,

interests and working practices of festival agencies shape the actualisation of drug policies. The originality of my study derives from being the first piece of empirical research which exclusively focuses on drug policing at English music festivals, by engaging the perspectives of those doing it.

Research aims and objectives

In the absence of much prior scholarship, my research aims to *critically explore the policing approaches used by agencies towards and in response to illegal drugs at English music festivals*. To achieve this aim, I initially devised a series of research questions, as informed by synthesising and identifying themes raised in the research literature. I subsequently refined them in light of themes raised in my empirical investigation. These questions are:

1. What approaches and tools are used by festivals in policing drugs?
2. What rationales and interests shape the drug policing activities of agencies, and what are their implications?
3. How is discretion exercised in relation to drug law infringements and what influences it?
4. How do agencies form work together partnership, and what tensions arise from this?

Structure of the thesis

Following this introduction, Chapter Two synthesises the research literature on drug use within party and festival contexts. In this section, I make the case that festivals are high-risk businesses with strong risk reduction imperatives yet, the sociological literature tells us that the permissibility of drug use and intoxication is central to the functioning and the profitability of these spaces. To demonstrate the novelty of my work, I make the case that festivals are important contemporary sites of drug use, yet they have been substantially under researched in

this capacity. I establish the importance of my study by arguing that the nature of regulation and policing within dance settings shapes the nature of dance spaces, drug use within them, and can be influential in the occurrence of drug-related risk within them. This raises the critical question of *how* festivals are policed.

In Chapter Three, I analyse research literature on policing and security in licensed leisure, drug markets, and drug policing, in order to introduce analytical tools and to demonstrate the contribution of my study on festivals to these academic fields. In this section, I draw on post-Foucauldian governmentality studies in order to define ‘policing’, and discuss the key themes of raised by the ‘pluralisation’ of policing in private licensed leisure space, such as the prevalence of ‘situational crime prevention’, surveillance, and the exclusion of ‘troublemakers’. The drug policing literature raises themes relating to the use of police discretion, the harms of enforcement, and introduces the analytical framework ‘harm reduction policing’. This chapter draws together the scarce available research concerning festival drug policing, which demonstrates a significant omission in the field concerning the policing perspective in music festivals. I argue that through researching policing in the festival context and diverging from the ‘police-centric’ research on drug policing, my research makes an important and novel contribution to the field of drug control.

In Chapter Four, I draw on the rich history of ethnography in policing and dance settings to justify my adoption of a multi-sited ethnographic methodology to meet my research aim. I outline my fieldwork sites and describe my approach to sampling and access and ethnics. Adopting a reflexive approach, I reflect on and discuss some of the challenges I faced in the field as a young, female ‘outsider’, and the demands of conducting observations across multiple sites and with different agencies. I illustrate the ‘messiness’ of festival fieldwork, which involved taking a ‘situated ethics’ approach and negotiating research relationships in short time frames,

and the limitation of my work considering this. Finally, I reflect on the process of data analysis and constructing an ethnographic story.

Chapter Five is the first of my analysis chapters, which examines *Prevent* policing at festival gates. I compare the array of policing approaches adopted by three different events, which purport to deter and detect drug possession and supply through the use of amnesty areas, targeted searching and sniffer dogs. I identify limitations in how far policing under *Prevent* can achieve these aims and I argue, therefore, that the role of the gate is principally symbolic: *Prevent* efforts are concerned with mitigating risk by satisfying an array of stakeholder interests and risk perspectives. My findings in this chapter make a noteworthy contribution to the drug policy landscape in Britain. I illustrate that a consequence of ‘hard’ gate policing is that it generates an excess of demand for policing resources to sanction offenders, which necessitates the use of ‘depenalisation’ policies for drug possession and some cases of low-level drug supply. My in-situ perspective is instrumental in revealing some tensions that arise between police and security working together at the gate.

In Chapter Six, I examine the *Pursue* pillar and argue that policing approaches during the event prioritise finding and inhibiting profit-motivated, potentially violent, drug suppliers. To achieve this, security operatives conduct both overt and covert surveillance on festivalgoers who look out-of-place, and monitor them for suspicious activity, and reinforce the perimeter to catch fence jumpers at night. A key contribution of this chapter is to demonstrate the specific demands of policing in festival drug markets, how these demands structure the actions and omissions taken by security operatives, and the implications of this for the drug security pursuit. A second key contribution of this chapter is to demonstrate how drug possession is selectively ‘deprioritised’ within the festival, as influenced by contextual and resource concerns. I argue that drug laws are a useful tool for festivals to pursue more general risk reduction security objectives.

Chapter Seven, *Protect*, is concerned with how festivals respond to risks arising from drug use during the event. I argue that the presence of harm reduction services allows the festival to respond to instances of harm in order to prevent further vulnerabilities and serious harm occurring. I emphasise that security operatives are central gatekeepers of festival harm reduction services and consider the implications of this for the ‘risk environment’ and reducing harm in the event. An important contribution of this chapter is to provide a ‘behind the scenes’ view of drug checking services in implementation within the harm reduction network. I argue that drug checking allows festivals to enact harm reduction preventatively as well as responsively, through ‘alerts’ sharing drug market information about substances of concern, yet the parameters of this are constrained by commercial and multi-agency interests.

In Chapter Eight, I conclude by critically analysing the ‘3: Ps’ as a set of approaches, to consider their relationship to one another, and the implications for the bodies of policing, drug policing, and party drugs research outlined in Chapter Two and Three. I make the case that law enforcement, security, and harm reduction approaches are tools in the toolbox of risk reduction, but their operation is subject to differing risk interpretations, interests and perspectives of decision makers on the ground and at a managerial level. Given my findings, I identify directions for future research into festival drug markets and festival security teams.

Chapter Two: Contextualising festivals and drug use

Introduction

This chapter excavates the available research literature from the fields of tourism studies, criminology, public health, sociology and anthropology in order to theoretically understand the relationship between music festivals, drug use, and enforcement. Firstly, acknowledging that the term ‘music festival’ has been used and applied to a variety of events with different formats, I refine the scope of this research to commercial, ticketed outdoor music events. I make the case that they are high-risk enterprises, and drug use is a risk to be managed by the event. Secondly, I position commercial festivals as a recent incarnation of intoxication fuelled dance spaces, on a trajectory of youth leisure time in the post-war era, which has been shaped and re-shaped by regulatory forces. I then turn to the empirical evidence on festival drug use, its spatial and social dimensions, and drug-related risk within dance settings, in order to emphasise the importance of drug use settings and enforcement in shaping this. This chapter illustrates the host of contradictions inherent within festivals as highly organised, licensed and professionalised events, concerned with risk management, which profiteer from the promise of semi-sanctioned transgressive opportunities. Through the synthetisation of this literature, I demonstrate the originality of my research, and the relevance of my study in contributing to debates in the academic study of drug use within party contexts.

Understanding the commercial festival

Defining ‘music festival’

Since the millennium, the music festival industry has been marked by sustained growth to become a staple summertime British leisure activity. Anderton (2019) found that the outdoor

events sector doubled in size between 2005 and 2011, from 261 to 521 events. In 2021, the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport select committee issued a report on the ‘Future of UK Music Festivals’, following mass cancellations within the sector as a consequence of COVID-19. The report found that 975 music festivals take place across the UK in a typical year, with a gross value added of £1.76 billion, and estimated that 5.2 million people attended a festival in 2019 (House of Commons, 2021). These figures reflect that the ‘festival’ label is applied to a whole host of outdoor events with vast differences in size and commerciality, with the commercial market accounting for only 20% of UK festivals (Ibid.). There are a significant number of non-commercial major street parties and carnivals throughout the country, such as *Notting Hill Carnival* in West London and *St Paul’s Carnival* in Bristol, drawing 1 million and 100,000 attendees respectively, as well as many community-led micro-events run on a voluntary basis.

In the commercial market, growth has spurred market variation and innovation. Robinson (2015) identifies a *presentational* and *participative* dichotomy in the festival market: *Presentational* events reflect mega-festival formats of the 1970s with a separation between audience and performer (a ‘spectator’ dynamic), have large audience capacities, and invest in ‘big name’ performers to sell as many tickets as possible. *Participative* programming, which centres an immersive and interactive audience experience and a range of opportunities for creativity and arts, has become crucial for events seeking to ‘add a different kind of value’ eschewing the soaring fees of booking big-name headline artists (Ibid. p.3). These events have shirked their unsanitary associations of the past, to offer curated, immersive and photogenic experiences at ‘boutique’ events for the middle-class millennial consumer, adopting a ‘festival’ label in order to capitalise on the social kudos, marketing opportunities, and financial incentives from self-identification.³

³ For example, Arts Council England allows festivals and carnival projects with creative and participative programming to apply for funding.

There has been diversification in terms of event format, location and timing within the festival 'season'. Anderton (2019) notes that the summer festival season has been elongated, with more events taking place in May and September. Festivals such as *Snowbombing* take advantage of the late Austrian ski season in April. Urban festivals in city centre venues can take place much later and earlier in the year, such as Sheffield's *No Bounds* in October. A number of festivals operate abroad for (mostly) British audiences, such as *Dimensions* and *Outlook* in Croatia, offering the combination of an exotic holiday experience, the hedonism and sociality of a festival experience, and a better chance of pleasant weather. Some *presentational* events have drastically expanded their audience capacity to become global brands, booking internationally renowned pop artists and 'superstar DJ' headline acts. Notably, the past decade has witnessed a surge in popularity of high capacity 'Electronic Dance Music' (EDM) festivals, such as *Tomorrowland* in Belgium, which grew in capacity from 50,000 in 2008 to 400,000 in 2014. Examples from the U.S. include *Electronic Daisy Carnival* in Las Vegas, which hosts 134,000 people over 3 days, and *Ultra Miami Music Festival*, which grew from 100,000 attendees in 2010 to 330,000 in 2017 (Little, Burger, & Croucher, 2017).

Clearly, the concept of 'music festival' encompasses a wide variety of event formats. Defining the concept is an important starting point to delimit the scope of this research. Webster and McKay (2016: p.4) propose a music festival typology with three overlapping categories: greenfield events which predominantly program music, often involving camping, open-air consumption and amplification; venue-based series of live music events linked by theme or genre, usually urban; and street-based urban carnivals. Aligning to the first of these categories, this thesis is concerned with *ticketed, greenfield events where music is programmed for open-air consumption*. This definition is inclusive of urban day festivals without a camping component, and festivals which heavily programme other performing arts in addition to music. Importantly, it narrows the research lens to *commercial* events which take place within a particular greenfield space (the

‘festivalspace’), to which access is restricted and controlled.⁴ Although a number of differences between policing approaches at *Notting Hill Carnival* and the music festival *Secret Garden Party* in relation to drugs have been observed by Chowdhury (2019), this definition excludes publicly accessible major street parties, carnivals and galas, which have been empirically explored elsewhere (see Horlick-Jones, 2005; Kilgallon, 2019). As Thomas (2008) observes, it is vitally important for commercial events to delimit access to festivalspace, and the ‘containment’ of festival activities within it, through ticketing and fencing. The private, ‘restricted’ characteristics of festivalspace has important implications for policing in terms of who is responsible for its provision, the remit of policing agencies, and their respective powers, which will be discussed further in Chapter Three (Reiner, 2010; Wakefield, 2003).

Risky business: the commercial festival market

With the focus of this research on commercial music festivals, it is important to give some context to the contemporary festival industry which underpins the concern with security and risk mitigation throughout this thesis. A lens on the recent history of commercial festivals in Britain reveals how notable outdoor ‘mega-festivals’ of the late 1960s and 1970s were short lived due to financial losses from poor weather and corrupt, inefficient security (Anderton, 2011). Post-millennium market growth was facilitated by industry professionalisation which embraced commercialisation, but it still remains as an extremely precarious business within a volatile market. With insight into the promoter perspective, Robinson (2015) posits that festival profit margins can be extremely thin, with a couple of hundred ticket sales sometimes being the difference between profit and loss. Anderton (2019: p.39) notes how after a summer of bad weather, the Olympic Games and the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee in 2012, only a third of events returned in 2013. Adding to this risk is that festivals require a significant investment of capital

⁴ It includes festivals which take place on otherwise public space (in urban parks, for example), where access to festivalspace is restricted throughout the event and during the build and break. The term ‘festivalspace’ is used in this thesis to describe the physical event space.

upfront to facilitate their production in advance of the event, which can only be recuperated if the event goes ahead. The combination of high risk and high costs means that festival production and promotion companies with broad events portfolios are often better placed to absorb market ‘shocks’ and losses from year-to-year, compared to those with a single event to generate revenue. Although there is a great deal of competition in the market, ownership in the industry is dominated by a few multi-national corporations who have reported multi-million pound annual profits.⁵

Maximising profits and minimising losses

Although, as Anderton (2019) emphasises, some independent festivals are explicitly non-commercial in their ethos, there are clearly powerful commercial interests in the festival market. Regardless of how explicitly profit-driven they are, all festivals which are private enterprises aim to generate enough revenue to pay suppliers and return the following year. As a precarious and risky business, ensuring this is the case through ticket sales alone can be challenging. Festivals which attempt to increase their profit margins by finding new revenue streams, minimising costs, and minimising losses have a better chance at remaining commercially viable. Revenue can be enhanced by increasing audience capacity, merchandising, and securing brand sponsorship and broadcasting deals. Some events attract alcohol industry sponsorship in return for ‘pouring rights’ at bars, with some sponsors having their own designated bars, complete with their own dance space enclaves (Morey et al., 2014). Bar sales are a really important revenue source yet, even with a captive audience, there can be obstacles to generating them at camping festivals where the audience may expect to bring an alcohol supply with them; at events where a large proportion of the audience is under-18; and at events which attract higher

⁵ According to a survey conducted by the Association of Independent Festivals of UK festivals with 5000+ audience capacity, 29.03% of the 2019 festival market was controlled by two transnational companies; *Live Nation* and *AEG presents* (AIF, 2019). *Live Nation’s* UK subsidiary, *Festival Republic*, which produces high capacity events such as *Reading*, *Leeds*, *Creamfields*, *Latitude* and *Download*, reported profits of £7.3 million in 2018, up from £4.1m in 2017 (Hanley, 2019).

levels of drug use. Festival organisers have found novel ways to monetise their events by offering sanitised and ‘upmarket’ festival experiences, up-selling luxury camping packages, ‘V.I.P.’ packages, and ‘add-on’ day tickets which permit early entry (Johansson & Toraldo, 2017: p.227). There are, however, trade-offs to be made between these options. For example, increasing audience capacity may increase revenue through ticket sales, but it will create additional demands on the event’s resources. Attracting alcohol industry sponsorship may increase revenue but conflict with ‘countercultural’ event branding (Anderton, 2019).

The other side to the coin of protecting commercial interests is loss prevention, which involves predicting risks and threats, attempting to minimise them, and insuring against them.⁶ Given that it is often more time and resource efficient for corporations to prevent a loss rather than to try to recover a loss after it has occurred, this engenders a pre-emptive orientation towards potential hazards, wherein security systems and personnel are employed to proactively identify risks and to mitigate them (Wakefield, 2004). It makes commercial sense for the costs of mitigating risk to be less than the potential loss from the risk. For example, putting up a *Glastonbury*-style ‘super-fence’ in order to prevent fence jumpers will be likely to benefit profit margins if it encourages ticket sales (Thomas, 2008). For the purposes of insurance, however, events must demonstrate that contingencies, systems and paperwork, risk assessments, and health and safety policies are in place, even if these risks include the remote and unpredictable ‘known-unknowns’ (Anderton, 2019; Marshall et al., 2019).

Preventing risk is also paramount to attaining and keeping an event licence. Festival organisers must demonstrate to the Licensing Authority that, through their planning, infrastructure, systems and personnel, they can uphold the objectives of the Licensing Act 2003.

These objectives are:

1. The prevention of crime and disorder;

⁶ Insurance covers a range of liabilities. potential losses and hazards, including public liability, employers liability, equipment damage, cancellation and severe weather.

2. Public safety;
3. The prevention of public nuisance;
4. The protection of children from harm;

Satisfying these objectives is complicated and requires specialist expertise, experience and planning. Strategies for the management of drugs straddles the first two of these objectives (Fisher & Measham, 2018). The police play a regulatory role as a 'responsible authority' within the licensing process, with the power to make 'representations' regarding an event licence application, if they consider the event to have inadequately demonstrated their ability to uphold the licensing objectives (Hadfield, Lister & Traynor, 2009). It is important for risk reduction for events to keep the police happy with their approach, as a challenge to the licence may incur additional, unforeseen costs for the event.

While from the event perspective 'drugs' are a risk to be managed, there are important choices to be made in terms of how to do this. In reviewing risks of violence and disorder from intoxication in event settings, Harris, Edwards and Homel (2014) identify an array of interacting environmental and situational contributory factors. These include the nature of alcohol and drugs consumed, the audience profile, the event type, site layout, event location, transport availability, enforcement and regulatory responses. Mismanagement of such risks can be reputationally damaging for events and dangerous for the audience. Robinson (2015) describes the violent destruction that plagued *Reading* and *Leeds* festivals in the 2000s. Popular with school leavers, the combination of an alcohol fuelled teenage audience, and the absence of any entertainment after 11pm led to 'large, drunk, bored and destructive' crowds and setting fire to tents (p.17). The acceleration in the number of music festivals in various formats suggests that a policy formula towards drugs and alcohol intoxication has been achieved that maintains profitability, while sufficiently minimising risk in order to satisfy Licensing Authorities and insurance providers.

Festival drug use: trajectories, risks and enforcement

This section synthesises the research literature to unpack the relationships between the festival setting, drug use within it, and enforcement. I analyse the available research evidence concerning festival drug use prevalence, its socio-spatial dimensions and the relationship between settings and harm. I then turn to the sociological and anthropological research on festivals which draws attention to the centrality of these to festival space, and the commercial interests in sanctioning them (Anderton, 2019).

A very brief history of drugs, clubs and dancing outdoors

The history of music festivals has been explored extensively by festival scholars elsewhere and it is outside the scope of this chapter to comprehensively review it (see McKay, 2015; Anderton, 2019). In very briefly considering their history in this section, the important points I make are that drug use and intoxication have been an integral component and facilitator of indoor and outdoor dance settings and youth culture throughout the post-war period in Britain, and that the state response has shaped the nature of the spaces and intoxication within them (Measham, 2004a; Shapiro, 1999). The contemporary, large-scale outdoor festival format emerged in Britain as Jazz festivals in the 1950s, concurrent with the growth of popular music. The psychedelia movement which followed, spurred by the wider availability of LSD, was central to the emergence of ‘mega-festivals’ in the late 1960s and 70s, and its counter-cultural ethos thrived in the ‘Free festival’ movement throughout the 1970s, coalescing with the ‘New Age Traveller’ movement in the 1980s (McKay, 1996: p.25; Robinson, 2015). In the late 1980s, the ‘acid house’ and rave movement took hold in youth culture, with ecstasy fuelled illegal ‘pay parties’ and free parties taking place in repurposed industrial sites and rural locations around the country (Collin, 2009). Concurrently throughout this period, youth subcultures such as the ‘mods’, ‘northern soul’ and ‘punk’ featured in the British ‘club’ scene, promoting all night

dancing cultures sustained by amphetamine use (Shapiro, 1999). The rise in popularity of dance spaces, and intoxication within them, can be observed in tandem with the increasing significance of leisure to image and identity construction in youth cultures, and the centrality of consumption to the leisure experience (Presdee, 2000; Rojek, 2000).

Yet, throughout this period, dance spaces were met with a disparate state response. Shapiro (1999) and Measham (2004a) observe that while outdoor events were often met with a strong-arm policing response and criminalisation, indoor dance and club events followed a more commercially sanctioned route. There were notable instances of heavy handed policing in response to free festivals, such as the Windsor Free in 1974 and the Stone Henge Free Festival in 1985 (Anderton, 2019). In the late 1980s, media concerns over safety, drug use and ‘gang’ related violence, prompted cat-and-mouse chases between police and ravers to disrupt illegal outdoor parties (Collin, 2009). Heavy fines for rave organisers were introduced through licensing legislation, which forced outdoor raves to move indoors to out of town leisure centres and nightclubs in the early 1990s. There were still ‘free parties’ organised in the early 1990s, famously culminating in a week-long festival on Castlemorton Common in May of 1992, attended by 40,000 people (Shapiro, 1999). Dancing outdoors was eventually criminalised in the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, with increased financial penalties for organisers and attendees.

The dual processes of criminalisation and licensing in the state response was important in shaping dance spaces and dance cultures, and intoxication within them in Britain. The ‘decade of dance’ in the 1990s has been described as ‘catalytic’ in facilitating a shift in British intoxication cultures beyond the confines of dance clubs and counter-cultural events, towards the regular and ‘normalised’ weekend consumption of party drugs amongst young people in Britain (Shapiro, 1999; Parker et al., 1998). When unlicensed events became licensed, it introduced the interests of the beverage alcohol industry into these spaces through promotions,

sponsorship and marketing (Measham, 2004a). By the late 1990s and early 2000s, this process facilitated the emergence of superclubs like *Gatecrasher* in Sheffield, *Cream* in Liverpool and *Ministry of Sound* in London, which became multi-million pound 'brands'. Measham and Moore (2009: p.440) observe the tensions within these spaces, which contained 'a seemingly contradictory combination of 'mainstream' businesses, 'underground' aesthetics and transgressive spaces in which illegal drug use is culturally sanctioned, if not expected'. Licensing liberalisation helped to develop night-time economies in city centres, which was accompanied by the recommodification of alcohol products to target a new, female consumer base. While ecstasy became less fashionable and its use declined in the early 2000s, its legacy was to pave the way for a 'new culture of intoxication' involving the sessional consumption of alcohol to emerge in the 2000s (Measham & Brain, 2005). Although distinctions have been made between the 'underground' and 'mainstream' events and venues in terms of intoxication preferences within them, with illegal drugs more associated with the former and alcohol with the latter, there is evidence of distinctive yet 'prolific' weekend poly-drug using repertoires amongst nightlife consumers in different cultural 'scenes' (Malbon, 1999; Measham & Moore, 2009).

From looking at the shape of dance spaces, and intoxication within them in the post-war period, what is evident is that the ebbs and flows in the popularity of intoxicating substances is strongly linked to the nature of the dance and leisure settings in which they are consumed. Both of these have been shaped by the interplay between commercial interests, regulation, enforcement, music, fashion, and forces in the illegal drug market (such as availability, price, accessibility and innovation) (Measham, 2004b; Measham, Moore, Newcombe & Welch, 2010). Contemporary music festivals are founded on these trajectories of leisure based consumption, youth culture, drug use and intoxication, yet their growth since the millennium marks a significant departure from the criminalised outdoor/licensed indoor dichotomy of dance space regulation in the 20th century. As licensed music festivals are one of the more

recent, widely attended incarnations of dance space, it may be deduced that they play an increasingly important role in shaping British intoxication cultures within them. For example, the re-mainstreaming of dance music and commercial success of ‘EDM’ since 2010 has been linked to a resurgence of popularity of MDMA amongst young consumers (EMCDDA, 2016). My research which analyses how festivals manage illegal drug use within them, therefore, is essential to moving the focus of party drugs research beyond nightclub settings, in order to help understand the nature and patterns of contemporary drug use and intoxication, and their intersections with control, policing and regulation.

‘Party’ drugs and drug users

Evidently, there are strong connections between dance settings and drug use, and this connection extends to *which* drugs are used. My reference to ‘drugs’ throughout my analysis concerns a group of substances which are commonly over the course of a ‘party’ session. Often referred to as ‘recreational’ drug use, I am primarily concerned with the ‘non-daily, non-injecting and non-dependent use of drugs other than crack-cocaine and opiates, [which are] taken predominantly in leisure and social settings’ (Smith, Moore & Measham, 2009: p.19). While researchers note that within a party drug use session, different substances are often used in different combinations in different settings before, during, and after the ‘party’ event (Boys, Lenton, & Norcross, 1997), multi-day camping festivals tend to host to all of these settings at once (Dilkes-Frayne, 2016).⁷ The use of different drugs in combination within a session is common within party contexts, and the term ‘polydrug use’ refers to the ingestion of two or more substances in combination, at the same time or in close proximity to one another, so that the effects of the substances overlap (Hakkarainen et al., 2019). In spite of health risks associated with polydrug use, research emphasises that recreational drug use is often a rational, controlled

⁷ An unexhaustive list of these substances includes cannabis, cocaine, MDMA or ‘ecstasy pills’, ketamine, LSD, magic mushrooms, amphetamine, 2-cb, GHB and benzodiazepines.

endeavour which involves drug users adopting self-directed harm reduction strategies to minimise risk, and increase the anticipated pleasures of drug experiences (Hunt, Evans & Kares, 2007; van Schipstal et al., 2016). These strategies to ‘maximise the highs’ and ‘minimise the lows’ include sharing substances, sharing information within peer networks, using ‘trusted’ suppliers, measured and rationing use, using drug-testing kits, maintaining a healthy lifestyle and following rules relating to polydrug use and water consumption (Jacinto et al., 2008a; Greenspan et al., 2011).

Festival drug use

Most of the empirical evidence concerning festival drug use comes from quantitative surveys, and indicates that festivals are important settings for elevated drug use, drug initiation, resumption and experimentation, both nationally and internationally. Findings from the UK’s longest ongoing festival survey, the *English Festival Study (EFS)* indicate that festivals are sites of elevated, ‘atypical’ intoxication and drug consumption (Turner and Measham, 2019). Out of the 2250 respondents who were surveyed across 11 outdoor music festivals in 2018, 52.4% had taken illegal drugs or intended to take them that day. A minority of *EFS* respondents (7.9%) reported that they *only* took drugs at festivals. In terms of alcohol consumption, 86.8% had consumed alcohol or were intending to that day, with elevated consumption amongst both daily and occasional drinkers, and higher levels of alcohol consumption in the morning and lunchtime than in everyday life. In *EFS* survey findings from 2019, 68.2% of festivalgoers reported lifetime use of illegal drugs (McCormack, Measham & Wignall, 2021). The international evidence supports that festivals contain a higher percentage of illegal drug users compared to the general population (Fernández-Calderón, Díaz-Batanero, Barratt, & Palamar, 2019; Hesse & Tutenges, 2012; Martinus et al., 2010). Surveying a large multi-genre festival in Denmark, Hesse, Tutenges and Schlieuwe (2010) found that 5-10% of past year illegal drug abstainers reported using amphetamine, ketamine, MDMA and cocaine at the festival, and

30% reported resumed using cannabis. Such elevated and atypical patterns of drug and alcohol consumption within festivals supports the contemporary significance of festivals as a setting and stage for permissible and 'legitimised' drug use, even amongst those who otherwise abstain (Askew, 2016).

Large scale surveys on drug use overlook some of the heterogeneity amongst festival audiences and drug use within them. Research suggests there are likely to be major differences in intoxication levels and cultures between events, with music being an important determinant. Survey research by Hesse and Tutenges (2012) found that dance music preferences were associated with illegal and legal substance use, pop music preferences were associated with reduced substance use except for alcohol, and rock music was more heavily associated with cannabis but not with other illicit drugs. Survey research by Van Havere et al. (2011) at a Belgian festival found stronger associations between dance music and illegal drug use compared to rock music, which was especially pronounced within certain genre preferences (80% of 'goa' party attendees reported illegal drug use in the previous year). This finding suggests that broad genre categorisations of 'dance music' and 'EDM' may obscure some of the nuances in the association of intoxication and music, and the fragmented 'cultural hierarchies' between dance music consumers (Turner, 2018).

Social and spatial fragmentation

An important contribution to the field of festival drug use is made by Bhardwa (2014), whose ethnographic research draws attention to the patterns and spaces of festival drug use, and their relationship with audiences and their music preferences. Exploring dance cultural participation and control between Ibiza and British music festivals, she observes that dance music festivals contain heterogenous audiences, typologised as the *Dance Tourists*, the *Regulars* and the *Committed*, who have variable commitment to dance music and to illegal drug consumption. She found

that mainstream dance events are associated with *Dance Tourists*, who are more likely to pursue ‘determined drunkenness’ but abstain from drug use; *Committed* dance music consumers are often *drug users*, for whom drug use is central to their experience. *Regulars* are often *dabblers*, who occasionally and opportunistically use drugs. She notes that a key difference is *drug users* are willing to bring drugs into the festival, despite the risks of being caught, while drug use amongst *dabblers* is malleable, and influenced by the availability of drugs in social networks. These insights show that enforcement may be more or less effective at reducing drug use depending on the audience’s degree of commitment to both drug consumption and dance music.

Bhardwa’s (2014) research highlights how festival participation and drug use is spatially and socially fragmented, with dance consumers engaging in ‘othering’ to erect ‘impermeable boundaries’ along the lines of aesthetics, chemical preferences, class, gender and ethnicity (p.105). For example, she discusses how *Committed* dance music consumers ‘carve out’ spaces in certain dance tents at the exclusion of others. Importantly for this thesis, her findings indicate that this fragmentation is shaped by enforcement as well as dance consumers. She observes how, when there are policed borders between the festival campsite and arena, campsites provided a safe, private space for ‘priced out’ festivalgoers to consume drugs and cheap alcohol (p.124). What this demonstrates is that drug users enact self-control and modify their drug using behaviour in response to enforcement. Her work highlights the ways that control is embedded within festivals, and provides a limited ‘over the shoulder’ perspective of festival policing, which I will explore in greater depth in Chapter Three.

Bhardwa’s findings are supported by Dilkes-Frayne’s (2016) ethnographic investigation of the socio-spatial patterns drug use in Australian festivals. She found that illegal drugs are consumed in all spaces in the festival site, but the use of certain drugs is more associated with certain places and times in order to confer the benefits of their psychoactive effects. She makes the case that the ad-hoc nature of campsites helps to foster sociality and community and

reciprocal relationships for drug sharing, experimentation and information exchange, as facilitated by the relative shelter and privacy afforded by tents. Although her work explicitly concerns camping festivals, it may be deduced that factors such as whether a festival is a weekend or day event, and the programming of music and other entertainment, will have important implications for patterns of drug consumption within them. Together this research emphasises that setting specific features of festivals, which includes the presence and activities of enforcement within them, play a role in mediating drug use behaviours within them.

Drug use, risks and settings

While it may be the case that the ingestion of certain substances can result in unpleasant reactions, acute toxicity, and serious, long-term detrimental health consequences, it is important to clarify that most ‘party’ drug use does not result in serious, immediate health harms to the user (Feltmann et al., 2021). A longstanding focus of research concerns the emergence of intoxication effects, as a product of the interactions between a substance, the mindset of the user and the settings of drug use (Zinberg, 1984; Duff, 2008; Hakkarainen, O’Gorman, Lamy, & Kataja, 2019). Moving away from the individual, the ‘risk environment’ framework put forward by Rhodes (2002; 2009) considers the interactions between different types of environment (physical, social, economic, and policy) and the levels of environmental influence (macro and micro) in the emergence of drug-related harm. The ‘risk environment’ framework can help illuminate how features of settings can give rise to harmful outcomes, and is helpful in identifying barriers to drug users accessing harm reduction, which increases drug related risk. Rhodes (2009: p.193) argues that, by giving primacy to context, the framework ‘shifts the responsibility for drug harm, and the focus of harm reducing actions, from individuals alone to include the social and political institutions which have a role in harm production’. The other side to the coin of the ‘risk environment’ is the ‘enabling environment’. These

environments provide social, material and affective resources to facilitate and remove barriers to harm prevention (see Duff, 2010; Moore and Dietze, 2005).

As I have highlighted in relation to the spaces of festival drug use, enforcement plays a role in shaping the nature of drug use within dance settings (Dilkes-Frayne, 2016; Bhardwa, 2014). The ‘risk environment’ framework brings to light how enforcement, as part of physical and policy micro context, can serve to increase the risks of drug use by encouraging users to adapt their behaviour in order to avoid surveillance and detection. Applying this framework to ‘EDM’ festival contexts, Cristiano (2020) describes how drug users hurriedly consume substances in toilets without measuring doses or examining the substances properly. In the Australian festival context, research has identified how enforcement with sniffer dogs can result in drug user behavioural changes which increase the risks of drug use (Hughes et al., 2017; Grigg et al., 2018; NSW Ombudsman, 2006). For example, their findings suggest that enforcement encourages festivalgoers to hastily ‘pre-load’ substances to avoid detection and to conceal substances internally in body cavities. Additionally, the adoption of ‘zero-tolerance’ drug policies by nightlife venues may inhibit preventative action being taken to minimise drug-related risks. By way of illustration, Fisher and Measham (2018) describe an incident where an interviewee dropped a gram of 2-cb in a nightclub, which presented a significant risk if it was found and consumed by someone else, yet the nightclub felt precluded from taking action because doing so was in contravention of their zero-tolerance drug policy.

In spite of this, there is evidence that dance settings have adopted practices and altered their environments to reduce drug-related risks at the micro context level. The significance of the ‘setting’ to the emergence of drug-related harm from party drugs was highlighted in the 1990s, where fatalities and hospitalisations following ecstasy use were linked to over-heating, after ventilated outdoor raves moved to less ventilated indoor premises (Measham, 2004). In response, the *Rave Research Bureau* helped to formulate Manchester’s *Safer Dancing Guidelines*,

which drew on drug harm minimisation principles developed in the 1980s in response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, which mandated that nightclubs adapt their environments by providing chill out areas and free tap water (Newcombe, 1994). This ‘healthy settings’ or settings-based harm reduction approach has been influential in nightlife and festival environmental design (Bellis et al., 2002). According to Ruane (2017: p.130), festival organisers in the UK adopt a ‘two-pronged strategy’ to drug use, which publicly distances themselves from anything that might be perceived as ‘condoning drug use’ to placate local authorities, while putting in place extensive infrastructure in order to reduce and manage the risks of drug use. As part of this infrastructure, festival contract on-site welfare, medical facilities, drug checking, and psychedelic support services (Luther, 2018).

There is a growing body of evidence that ‘Front of House’ drug checking services located at festivals, which engage drug users in ‘brief interventions’ and provide feedback on substances, can encourage drug users to engage in less risky behaviours (Maghsoudi et al., 2021; Measham & Turnbull, 2021; Measham, 2018). These studies find that drug checking interventions can encourage users to reduce their dosage, extend consumption periods, and dispose of unanticipated substances and share harm reduction advice amongst friendship networks. Through service provision in close proximity to the point of consumption, festival drug checking can provide drug users with resources to facilitate ‘enabling environments’ for harm reduction (Dilkes-Frayne, 2016). As a micro-level policy, drug checking helps to mitigate some of the harms of the macro-level policy context of drug prohibition, where there is an absence of quality control, consistency, information within illegal drug markets, meaning substances may be adulterated or missold altogether (Palamar, Acosta, Sutherland, Shedlin, & Barratt, 2019).⁸

⁸ ‘Misselling’ refers to when the substance purchased is different to what was expected (Measham, 2018).

Ruane's (2017) ethnographic research with festival psychedelic care spaces, however, is somewhat critical of harm reduction service provision at festivals. She found that networks of security operatives play an integral, yet stifled, fragmented and aggressive role in responding to drug users and service users on the ground. She argues that welfare and medical spaces are 'contaminated' by association with security operatives and 'the authorities', generating the concern that seeking help might incur criminal repercussions from having drugs found on one's person (p.232). These factors contribute to the 'dark figure of drug-related harm', in which festivalgoers choose to manage the negative effects of intoxication without assistance from services (p.232). Although her findings raise concerns about the compatibility of harm reduction and the macro prohibition policy context, the relationship between the risk environment and enforcement is not always necessarily harm aggravating. When drug checking piloted in Britain in 2016, the service was coined as 'Multi-agency Safety Testing' and introduced with police support (Measham, 2018). Yet beyond the police implementing a 'tolerance zone' around the checking facility, the extent of their facilitation and dynamics of the working relationship are presently unclear.

Another important issue concerns the pervasive relationship between licensed leisure settings and sexual harassment and violence against women, with reported lifetime prevalence reaching 50% in numerous studies (see Quigg et al., 2020). Research finds bars, clubs and pubs in the NTE to be highly gendered spaces which facilitates the harassment of women (Kavanaugh, 2015). Within these spaces, there are interrelated dimensions which shape incidents of victimisation, including a hypermasculine and heteronormative 'vibe' of an event, and its social organisation, such as the level of crowding, the role of security and the orienting themes of sex and alcohol (Kavanaugh & Anderson, 2009). Researching women's experiences of sexual harassment at festivals, Wadds et al.(2022) consider music festivals to be hypermasculine spaces which, when coupled with high levels of drug and alcohol consumption,

creates the ‘cultural scaffolding’ for sexual violence to occur (p.10). They found that women’s participation within festivalspace is mediated and curtailed by their past experiences of sexual violence, and by security guards responding to reports of sexual harassment with victim blaming. Bows, King and Measham (2020) found that while the vast majority (86%) of their festival survey respondents reported feeling always or usually safe, they note that a third of women reported experiencing sexual harassment at a festival in the previous 12 months, and call for further research attention to the paid to the gendered and spatialised experiences of music festival attendees. While an explicitly gendered analysis is not adopted in this thesis, the question of how festivals manage gendered risks to women which are is relevant in considering the management and policing of risks related to drug use and intoxication.

In reviewing this evidence, I make the case that enforcement is a key tent of the risk environment in drug use settings, and therefore a worthwhile focus of research in spaces of drug use. This evidence also underlines that dance and festival settings are infused with harm reduction approaches. Through empirical, in-situ research in festival contexts, my study enhances our understanding of the interactions between harm reduction and enforcement and its relationship to the risk environment.

Pleasure, consumption and transgression

‘Safety valves’ and the carnivalesque

Cultural criminologists have situated patterns of late-night leisure and intoxication cultures within late-modernity and consumption societies. As Measham (2004a) argues, ‘play spaces’ such as clubs and bars, and the sessional weekend consumption of drugs and alcohol within them, permit ‘time out’ from pressures, constraints, stresses and control of working life. Intoxication within them facilitates the ‘controlled loss of control’, a response to the prevalence of ‘ontological insecurity’ combined with the ‘hyper-banalisation’ of being over-controlled

within late-modernity (Hayward, 2002: p.6). Presdee (2000) draws on Mikhail Bakhtin's (1968) concept of the 'carnavalesque', which is often cited to understand the emergence of music festivals within their wider historical and social context (Anderton, 2019; Buck-Matthews, 2018). Bakhtin's analysis identified 'carnival' time in the Renaissance and Middle Ages as a recurring, temporary period, involving the inversion of laws and norms, the suspension of social hierarchies and etiquettes and the foregrounding of transgressive and subversive behaviour, as sanctioned liberation by the ruling powers. Presdee (2000: p.47) considers contemporary festivals to retain 'fragments' of the Bakhtinian carnival, but transgressions within them to be so commodified and appropriated, that they have been stripped of any disruptive potential. Instead, these spaces are a 'secondary carnival', which performs a 'safety valve' function for people to experience relief, hedonism and excitement within the binds and grinds of capitalism.

Concurrently with their structural role, festivals facilitate meaningful experiences for their participants and can be seen as significant spaces of contemporary youth identity performance and construction. The festival experience is often referred to in terms of its 'liminal' qualities, which describes an 'in-between' state of being, the sense that normal rules are suspended, and the experience a sense of comradeship and togetherness called 'communitas' (Turner, 1969). A sense of separation from the everyday is integral to liminality. As Luckman (2014: p.189) observes, the sense of remoteness of Australian 'doof' festivals in the outback 'deepens the experience and facilitates the creation of a secular 'liminal culture'', reinforcing the festival as a qualitatively different space to the outside world. It is through this separation that festivals provide a 'backspace' for 'playful deviance' and expression of the 'secret-self' (Redmon, 2003: p.28), giving young people opportunities for excess and experimentation, away from the 'panoptic gaze of parents' (Turner and Measham, 2019: p.93). Perhaps paradoxically, they enable consumers of music, fashion and drugs to signify 'subcultural capital' against an

‘Instagrammable’ backdrop for conscious self-presentation online (Thornton, 1995; Schwartz & Halegoua, 2015).

Rather than being passive consumers, however, festivals may be seen as a mode through which young people engage in ‘everyday’ forms of politics, citizenship and participation at the informal group level through leisure pursuits (De Certeau, 1984). Applying Maffesoli’s (1996) neo-tribal theory, Riley, Griffin and Morey (2010) consider electronic dance music spaces to be ‘pockets of sovereignty’, in which participants live out alternative value systems and practices in temporary moments. In her research which challenges media representations of festival activities and consumption as hedonistic and unproductive and forefronts the agency of festival participants, Buck-Matthews (2018) demonstrates that:

‘Festival space gives rise to a myriad of social phenomena that have a positive effect on young people: engaging them in forming tribes, bonding and uniting them in a shared space with a shared purpose and providing the opportunity for the exploration of personal identity and meaning’ (p.271).

For some festivalgoers, the opportunity for semi-sanctioned transgressive experiences, facilitated through permissible drug use and intoxication, is an important part of the draw (Griffin et al., 2016). Yet, as Wadds et al. (2022) argue, as well as facilitating norm inversion, carnivalesque space also reinforces heteronormative gender norms: they illustrate that festival intoxication may be performed in ‘hypermasculine’ ways, and how the carnivalesque liberation from norms, which permits heightened levels of drug use, alcohol consumption and facilitates a more liberal sexual environment, also provides the backdrop for the occurrence and normalisation of sexual violence (p.11). As a result, the position of some women within carnivalesque inversion is ‘tenuous and conditional’ as they routinely engage in ‘safety work’, by avoiding certain spaces and interactions, to produce a sense of safety (p.12).

Producing pleasure

For commercial festival organisers, profitability depends on how well they can sell the promise of unique, 'authentic' and memorable experiences (Morey et al., 2014). The counter-cultural recent history of festivals and rave has been influential in contemporary festival production and design, although it is balanced with 'the sanitised and commercialised aspects' for the modern consumer (Martin, 2014: p.88; Anderton, 2011). In a process of feedback loops, festival organisers have sought to induce liminality, flow experience, and *communitas* through event production by incorporating ceremony and ritual (Ruane, 2017; Gilmore, 2010). Turner's (2018: p.39-40) research in Ibiza explicitly connects these commercial objectives to the cultures of intoxication contained within them. Applying a *Disneyization* framework to 'bounded play spaces', he argues that through *theming* and *branding* as 'other-worldly domains', festivals physically and symbolically present the stage for hedonism, encouraging participants to step into a 'temporary sphere of behaviour' and undertake intoxication that would be otherwise unacceptable. Under *hybrid-consumption*, the distinction between legal and illegal forms of intoxication is eroded, making drug use normalised as a 'natural feature of the consumer experience'. Pleasure and excitement is actively sought through event production, as lighting, music, entwine with drug use to produce *atmospheres*. Relevant to festival policing, he argues that police and security engage in *performative labour*, and turn a blind eye to drug possession and supply. Turner's research emphasises how commercial forces actively work to extend the parameters of acceptable drug consumption in festivalspace and that from the drug user perspective, drug use is not only sanctioned, but encouraged, by policing which appears to be lenient by participants of the play spaces.

Considering festivals in carnivalesque terms is useful for considering the interests in producing events and approaches to policing transgressions within them. It reinforces that, for festival participants, transgressions must be perceived as semi-sanctioned and this implies a level

of inconsequentiality. As Clarke (1982; p.27-8) observes, festivals in the 1960s rapidly became enclaves for drug use and dealing without fear of police harassment and attracted ‘weekend hippies’, looking for relief from the binds of ‘straight society’, without totally rejecting it. Carnival time is a bounded licence, a sphere of temporary behaviour, after which ordinary life resumes. As separate from the everyday, carnival provides a ‘moral curtain’ for transgression (Ravenscroft & Matteucci, 2003), allowing its participants to take a ‘moral holiday’ without commitment to deviancy or negative repercussions on everyday life (Matza, 1964). If there is too much control and serious repercussions for transgression, it defeats the essence and function of the space. Furthermore, given their ‘hegemonic’ social role within capitalism (Ravenscroft & Gilchrist, 2009), it is in the interests of those in power to adequately license festival play spaces, or they may otherwise have to manage and respond to unlicensed carnivalesque spaces arising elsewhere. These are significant considerations in thinking about the interests in both policing and regulating festivals as carnivalesque spaces.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, I have made the case that festivals, and the policing of drugs within them, is a vitally worthwhile subject of academic attention. I have reviewed a breadth of literature from anthropology, club studies, public health and tourism in order to analyse the relationship between festivals and drug use within them. Through situating contemporary festivals within their the recent history and within the wider context of dance spaces in Britain, I argue that drugs have been, and continue to be, a central component to indoor and outdoor dance space iterations from the dance consumer perspective. Furthermore, through examining the evidence concerning the relationship between drug use and dance settings, I make the case that enforcement is a significant factor of the ‘setting’ of drug use. This supports the importance of empirical research which aims to understand the policing of dance spaces, which has been a fruitful topic of interest in nightclub settings, yet there is a relative paucity of research which

considers festivals in their own right. What's more, I illustrate how enforcement and state regulatory responses play a role in shaping dance spaces, and the modes of intoxication within them. This research contributes to the small but growing evidence base concerning the use of recreational drugs in festival spaces, where its novel contribution in this field is in engaging the policing perspective.

What is evident is that there are significant tensions between the interests of commercialism, transgression and state control within contemporary festivals. I raise the point that risk and its mitigation is a central component and objective within festival settings for the purposes of licensing, insurance and loss prevention. At the same time, it is strongly in the interests of festivals to license 'carnavalesque' and transgressive behaviour within them for commercial reasons, and in the interests of the state to license this type of 'safety valve' space which contains them. The proliferation of festivals in Britain suggests that a status quo exists which adequately satisfies these tensions. Empirical research is needed to investigate how this plays out on the ground, and what the consistencies are between events.

Chapter Three: Policing, security and drugs

Introduction

Having critically reviewed the literature on music festivals and intoxication within them, the purpose of this chapter is to situate my study within the policing research landscape and analyse how existing conceptual frameworks can be used to understand security and policing at festivals. Drawing on post-Foucauldian studies of governmentality and policing, I define festival drug policing as the ‘governance of drug security’ and critically examine key issues and tensions raised by the body of work relating to the ‘pluralisation’ of policing in licensed leisure spaces, typically associated with hosting drug use and intoxication (Wakefield, 2003; Hobbs et al., 2003). Reviewing these studies illustrates that surveillance, exclusion and ‘situational crime prevention’ are paramount to understanding policing in these spaces, and raises important considerations for the working dynamics of policing partnerships. Secondly, I review the available evidence on ‘recreational’ and ‘party’ drug markets to provide some important context to the likely players, nature and shape of festival drug markets. I argue that police-centric studies have largely omitted consideration of recreational drug markets and policing in private space, to which this study makes an important contribution. After critically highlighting the role of enforcement in generating harmful outcomes, I introduce the framework of ‘harm reduction policing’ as a policing approach which takes account of this (Stevens, 2013). Finally, I demonstrate that there is a paucity of research concerning drug policing at music festivals despite, as I argued in Chapter Two, the significant role that enforcement can play in the emergence of drug related harm, shaping licensed leisure spaces and intoxication within them.

Governmentality and policing

The governmentality analytic

This thesis is theoretically grounded in a body of post-Foucauldian scholarship on ‘governmentality’, which originated in a series of lectures Michel Foucault made at the College de France (Burchell, Gordon & Miller, 1991). In these lectures Foucault proposes that, from the 16th century onwards, a certain ‘mentality’ has become the common ground of modern forms of political thought and action in Western states. Foucault argues that contemporary neo-liberal political and economic regimes can be characterised by a way of thinking about the problems at the population level that can and should be addressed by authorities. The aim of liberalism is to govern civil society and economic life in ways that modulate the well-being, security and prosperity of individuals and populations. Marking a retreat from a state-centred welfarist model of government, liberalism represents an ‘art of governing that arises from a critique of excessive government—a search for a technology of government that can address the recurrent complaint that authorities are governing too much’ (Rose et al., 2006: p.84). Governmentality analysis directs attention to the apparatuses, techniques and procedures, regulations and processes through which power is exercised, human behaviour is directed, and populations are governed in pursuit of this task. Governmentality, as Foucault summarises it, is ‘the ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics, that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power which has as its target population, as its principal form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security’ (Burchell, Gordon & Miller, 1991: p.102).

Through asking particular questions of the phenomena that it seeks to understand, which can be answered through empirical inquiry, a governmentality approach avoids reductionist or totalising analyses, instead encouraging open-ended, positive account of practices of governance in specific fields (Rose et al. 2006). These questions include: Who or

what is to be governed? Why should they be governed? How should they be governed? To what ends should they be governed? (Ibid.). The governmentality analytic provides an appropriate lens for analysing the policing of commercial music festival settings because it resists reducing political power the actions of state institutions (O'Malley, Weir & Shearing, 1997; Miller & Rose, 1990). Instead, analysis aims draw 'attention to the diversity of forces and groups that have, in heterogeneous ways, sought to regulate the lives of individuals', bringing to light the indirect mechanisms of rule, networks and alliances that have enabled 'government-at-a-distance' (Miller & Rose, 1990: p.3). For Rose et al. (2006), recognising that a variety of authorities govern in different sites, in relation to different objectives spurs further questions: Who governs what? According to what logics? With what techniques? Toward what ends? Through this attention to the 'microphysics of power', the lens is useful for illustrating how networks of power, programmes and practices of rule operate within 'micro-settings' such as music festivals (O'Malley, Weir & Shearing, 1997: p.501).

Governmentality analysis examines how practices of exercising power are embodied within particular ways of thinking ('rationalities'), specific ways of acting ('technologies') and how power acts upon (or 'subjectifies') individuals and populations (Miller & Rose, 1990). The first of these, rationalities, encompasses the aims, the assumptions, the moral justifications of governing. Rationalities may be discursive in character, requiring attention to the language associated with conceptualisations, explanations and calculations (Rose & Miller, 1992). A critique of post-Foucauldian analysis is that its predominant focus has been on 'discursive governmentality', which draws on documents and texts of governance and government, rather than practice, to analyse political rationalities (McKee, 2009). Yet consideration of rationalities does not have to be limited to textual analysis: as Garland (1997) observes, rationalities are 'ways of thinking and styles of reasoning that are embodied in a particular set of practice', which are 'forged in the business of problem solving and attempting to make things work' (p.184). As

argued by Kammergard (2020), this makes empirical, ethnographic methodologies well suited to accessing the problems, discourses and reasonings which would be inaccessible by only studying texts. Secondly, technologies (or ‘techniques’) are the ways in which rationalities become operable, with a focus on the ‘invention and assemblage of particular apparatuses and devices for exercising power and intervening upon particular problems’ (Rose, 1999: p.19). Analysis of technologies pays attention to the mechanisms through which authorities ‘shape, normalise and instrumentalise the conduct, thought, decisions and aspirations of others’ in order to meet desirable objectives (Miller and Rose, 1990: p.8). It aims to understand how alliances are made, and how one actor convinces another that their interests, goals and problems are linked and they can achieve their shared objectives by working together, the deficits, unexpected problems and tensions of that arise in this process. The third component of governance according to Foucault concerns how it acts upon individuals in specific ways. In his essay, ‘The Subject and Power’, Foucault (1982) stressed the importance of the *active subject* through which power is exercised. Governmental power cultivates ‘subjectivity’ by encouraging people to understand themselves in certain ways and to self-govern accordingly, with outcomes desired by authorities. Governmentality analysis pays attention to how remote and indirect state action establishes self-governance through technologies which ‘responsibilise’ people into being healthy, productive, entrepreneurial subjects.

My research questions no.1 (What approaches and tools are used by festivals in policing drugs?) and no.2 (What rationales and interests shape the drug policing activities of agencies, and what are their implications?) reflect the analytical tools of rationalities and technologies for understanding the governance of music festival drug control. While I do not engage the audience perspective, I draw on concepts related to subjectivity in Chapter Five when considering the objectives of festival drug policing at the gate, which is the key point of interaction with the audience. Rather than adopting governmentality as an analytical

framework, my approach in this thesis is to apply its concepts as part of an ‘analytical toolbox’ which is ‘capable of being used in conjunction with other tools’ (Rose et al., 2006: p.100). In the following sections, I explore how governmentality analysis has been influential in scholarship on policing and security, before turning my attention to the literature on drug markets and drug policing.

Risk and security

One important strand of criminological governmentality scholarship has concerned how the rationalities of security, risk management and insurance have been operationalised in the pursuit of policing and crime control (Ericson & Haggerty, 1997) and in the management of offending populations (Feeley & Simon, 1992). For Feeley and Simon (1992), the ‘new penology’ is concerned with sorting, classifying and separating the more dangerous from less dangerous offenders, in order to regulate the levels of deviance in society. Influential to this scholarship is the work of Giddens (1999) and Beck (1992) who emphasise the increasing importance of risk and its management in human affairs. It is Shearing’s (2001: p.203) contention that the criminal justice system has experienced an ‘instrumental turn’ in which it has become primarily forward-looking, concerned with risk and loss prevention, rather than backward looking notions of ‘justice’. Both Shearing (2001) and Garland (1997) argue that a new rationality for the governance of crime has come into existence which is organised around economic forms of reasoning, underpinned by notion of ‘rational choice’ and ‘routine activity theory’ to explain the occurrence of crime. The rationality, argues Garland (1997), is embodied through ‘analytical language of risk and rewards, rationality, choice, probability, targeting and the demand and supply of opportunities’, with objectives such as ‘compensation, cost-control, harm reduction, economy, efficiency and effectiveness’, and is enacted through ‘technologies such as

audit, fiscal control, market competition and devolved management to control penal decision-making' (p.185).

One way in which these economic rationalities are exemplified is in the proliferation of 'situational crime prevention' (SCP) technologies and approaches as a means for reducing offending. Seeing offenders as rational actors who respond to criminal opportunities, and who balance the anticipated risk and rewards of offending, the objective of SCP is to deter and reduce crime through environmental and situational manipulation. It is a forward-looking approach which aims to 'forestall the occurrence of crime, rather than to detect and sanction offenders' (Clarke, 1997: p.2) by engaging five core principles: increasing the effort, increasing the risks, reducing provocations, reducing the rewards and removing the excuses for offending (Centre for Problem-Oriented Policing, 2021). For example, increasing the efforts and risks of criminality may be pursued with 'target hardening', using physical security measures, devices and barriers, which make it more difficult to carry out criminal behaviour in a particular space (Herbert & Harries, 1986). Additionally, SCP and economic rationalities have brought into view what Garland (1997: p.187) terms the 'criminogenic situation', which are crime 'hotspots' containing valuable targets and criminally inclined individuals. Highlighting the negotiated nature of security technologies in pursuit of crime control, he notes that often criminogenic situations have 'functional ends' which are 'easily disturbed by heavy handed regulation', and have their 'own internal dynamics and processes' between the actors involved (p.187). Consequently criminogenic situations cannot be completely or coercively controlled but must be governed in a light and unobtrusive way. In these situations, the aim of governance is to align the objectives of actors with those of the authorities, making them 'active partners in the business of security' (p.187). The utilisation of SCP to deter drug-related criminality is particularly relevant to music festivals, and is explored in-depth in Chapter Five of this thesis, where I examine the gate and entrance processes at festivals. My findings here reveal how the

technologies adopted to control drug-related crime are negotiated by the interests of actors involved and mediated by commercial interests of producing an event in which carnivalesque behaviour is semi-sanctioned.

In exploring these negotiations, my findings draw on the work of Zedner (2009) who highlights that there a number of paradoxes generated by security objectives. Firstly, she distinguishes between security in the 'subjective' and 'objective' sense, with the former relating to the perception (or sense) of safety, and the latter to a state of being safe from threats. She argues that a state of 'absolute security' in the objective sense is a chimera, because security is a 'relational' concept and its realisation relies on being continually tested by threats. It is therefore in the interests of security providers to continually draw attention to the existence of threats, in order to sustain their role in mitigating them. As absolute security is unachievable, security is best understood as a 'pursuit' rather than a goal, constituting activities and efforts of those so authorised to mitigate threats. The distinction between objective and subjective security helps us to understand that security efforts often have different objectives, with inconsistent outcomes. Security efforts may be symbolic forms of 'security theatre', such as intensive airport security luggage checks, which aim to enhance subjective security while doing little to mitigate threats to objective security (Schneier, 2006). She highlights that efforts in the pursuit of objective security may enhance subjective insecurity by drawing attention to the existence of threat. The pursuit of security therefore often creates tension and necessitates negotiation between these objectives and the actors involved.

The pursuit of both subjective and objective security is imperative for festivals; as I argued in Chapter Two, managing and mitigating objective security risks to the personal safety of festivalgoers is integral for legal and commercial reasons. Research on festivalgoer experiences supports that a sense of safety is important for facilitating the carnivalesque atmosphere. As Wilks (2011: p.291) observes, it is important for festival audiences to feel like

everyone else is likeminded and without malicious intent, so they can ‘walk around drunk all day and not feel unsafe’. Yet the efficacy of festival pursuits in subjective security may vary according to the audience profile. Survey research by Hoover et al.(2022) found that there were differences in the safety concerns and reception of surveillance depending on gender and whether individuals had prior experience within festival settings, with men experiencing surveillance more negatively than women. Irrespective of gender, their findings illustrate a consistent negative orientation towards security, police and surveillance, with 44% of participants reporting they felt anxious about surveillance. How festivals balance these objectives and interests in their security pursuit is an important empirical question that this research interrogates.

The plural policing landscape

The governmentality approach to reject the state as the centralised locus of power enables an extended conception of ‘governmental authorities’, which dissolves rigid demarcations between ‘public’ and ‘private’ as the object of analysis (Garland, 1997: p.175). This is useful for understanding ‘policing’ because, as post-Foucauldian scholars have argued, this function has been increasingly ‘pluralised’ amongst a host of private, public and regulatory agencies (see Bayley & Shearing, 1996; Shearing 1992; Dupont, 2006; Johnston, 2003). The ownership and accessibility of space has important implications for the agencies who undertake the policing task within it, their responsibilities, objectives and legal powers. Whereas the police are responsible for policing in public space, private spaces have been conceptualised as ‘bubbles’ of governance wherein policing is entrusted to an omniscient private security presence in both manned and technological forms (Rigakos & Greener, 2000). These studies observe that the ‘patchwork’ of autonomous policing agencies collaborate as ‘partners in order maintenance’, each making a distinctive contribution in terms of their knowledge and services (Wakefield,

2003: p.44; Newburn, 2001: p.841). In private leisure settings, it is common for public, private and sometimes voluntary organisations to make strategic arrangements to work together in partnerships (or 'multi-agency partnerships') to undertake a range of policing functions.⁹

Accounting for the widespread pluralisation of the policing 'patrol' function, Crawford and Lister (2006: p.165) argue that the combination of 'global insecurities' and 'localised anxieties' has given rise to 'fear of crime' as a major issue of concern. The 'reassurance deficit' (or 'gap') between the public's subjective security and their objective security, has spurred a 'hybrid market' for visible patrol as a way to 'offer a tangible response to the public's quest for symbols of order and authority' (Ibid.). Yet Loader (1997b) is critical about whether private security patrol can adequately provide reassurance, arguing that while private security may wear 'copy-cat' police uniform, they lack the police's 'symbolic aura' to spread a 'gratifying sensation of order and security' (p.152). Even where security and the police carry out similar functions, Reiner (2010) argues that the uniqueness of the police role is in the discreet symbolic potential for the use of force which resides in the background of police-citizen interactions, facilitating 'order maintenance', or the settlement of conflicts by means other than law enforcement (p.144). This is why, Crawford (2006) argues, leisure spaces such as shopping malls contract several police officers to conduct patrol, in addition to an abundance of security operatives and CCTV systems in place for crime prevention.

Attempts to effectively harness the symbolic dimension of a police presence in order to bridge the 'reassurance gap', can be observed in the rise of 'reassurance policing' in Britain (Innes, 2014). Reassurance policing recognises that certain 'signal crimes' negatively affect how

⁹ Wakefield (2003: p.24) distinguishes private space according to accessibility: 'quasi-public' space (such as shopping centres) is accessible to the general public whereas 'restricted' private space is not. s Commercial music festivals are bubbles of 'restricted' private space to which access is controlled through ticketing and physical barriers (Thomas, 2008). The police may be invited to enter or may exercise statutory powers to do so in certain circumstances. Events may contract the police to provide a police presence through 'special police services' (SPS) agreements, allowing the police to recover the costs of policing they provide to an event, providing it has been requested by the event organisers and takes place within the private space (Wakefield, 2003).

safe people feel, and how they act. High visibility policing is used selectively, with the aim of sending ‘control signals’ to communicate that something is being done, in order to enhance the public’s sense of safety, and to deter potential perpetrators (Ibid. p.129). The signal crimes perspective also recognises that ‘control signals’ can induce negative effects, where they ‘defray public conceptions of security’ or damage public trust in state institutions (Ibid. p.138). Control signals may be interpreted differently depending on the values of the audience and the ‘dosage’ of visibility. The role of police and security visibility is discussed in Chapter Five with reference to entrance spaces, where I consider the role of high-visibility policing and its intended symbolic effects within the carnivalesque festival environment.

Pluralised policing partnerships and networks of relations formulated within private leisure space make governmentality analysis well suited to these contexts, yet the difficulty of extending the definition of policing beyond the police institution is, as Bayley and Shearing (1996) point out, that it starts to encompass the activities of all institutions which play a role in social control. Emphasising the disciplinary and coercive role of policing, Reiner (2010: p.5) considers policing to be ‘the set of activities directed at preserving the security of a particular social order’, specifically, the ‘creation of systems of surveillance coupled with the threat of sanctions for discovered deviance’. Yet a limited research focus on coercive activities may overlook how festivals have adopted harm reduction approaches, as indicated in research evidence discussed in Chapter Two (Ruane, 2017; Measham, 2018). This thesis takes inspiration from Shearing (2001), who defines policing as the ‘governance of security’, which refers to efforts ‘intended to create spaces within which people can live, work and play safely... to ensure that bodies are not hurt and goods are not misappropriated’ (p.203). Governance efforts, as defined by Hadfield (2008), are understood as ‘purposive actions of a web of institutional actors... who seek to shape and influence the conduct of individuals, groups and wider populations, in furtherance of particular objectives’ (p.429). My thesis defines policing as

the ‘governance of drug security’, which concerns the purposive efforts and practices of festival agencies (including police, security, welfare, medical provision and drug checking) to guide and direct the conduct of festival populations in regards to the use, possession and supply of drugs. Discussion of festival drug ‘policies’ in this thesis refers to decisions, expressed formally and informally at a managerial level, which aim to guide the activities and pursuits of those implementing them.

The post-regulatory state

Aligned with governmentality studies’ pluralistic understanding of governance, a body of scholarship has emerged on the ‘post regulatory state’ (Braithwaite, 2000). Arising from neo-liberal ‘responsibilisation’ policies pursued by Conservative governments in the 1980s and the hollowing out of state agencies, in the ‘new’ or ‘post regulatory state’, the state aims to maintain a ‘steering’ role, while co-opted private organisations take more responsibility for the ‘rowing’ (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992). A central tenet of regulatory theory is the use of multiple strategies to encourage compliance with state objectives, which escalate according to the level of coercion involved. Applying Braithwaite’s ‘regulatory pyramid’, Ritter (2010) argues that drug policies tend to focus on *voluntarism*, encouraging people ‘to do the right thing without coercion’ at the bottom of the pyramid, and *enforcement* through command and control, and criminal penalties at the top (p.266). Drawing on Foucault, Garland (1996) argues that the contemporary crime control landscape embodies a contentious mixture of regulatory policies and heavy-handed, coercive ‘law and order’ policies. He argues that high crime rates have become a ‘social fact’, and the limitations of the state’s ability to govern social life have become increasingly apparent (p.446). This has led to states adopting policies which are by nature contradictory: on one hand, states have attempted to assert their sovereign dominance through punitive ‘law and order’ policies as a form of denial to the limitations of crime control, giving

the appearance that 'something is being done' (p.461). One the other, state have used 'adaptive' strategies, including the 'responsibilisation' of non-state actors to engage in crime prevention, the 'defining down' of deviance as a necessity for conserving resources, and redefining success and failure in meeting criminal justice objectives (p. 462).

Within the pluralised policing and regulatory landscape, governmentality researchers have adopted 'network analysis' to consider the fault-lines, tensions, and flows of information between webs of security agencies, and 'nodal' analysis to understand the dynamics between layers of security at the points of intersection in its delivery (Lewis & Wood, 2006). For example, Whelan & Molnar's (2018) nodal analysis of international 'mega-events' such as the Olympic Games illustrates how security is continuously negotiated between a multitude of security, policing and government agencies, giving rise to ongoing tensions over the 'look and feel' of security. Debate in this field resides in whether security networks can be thought of as 'flat', with the police having no special status as a security 'node', or hierarchical, with the police playing a dominant role through regulation (see Zedner, 2009: p.159). In the British context, Crawford (2006) challenges the notion of state 'decentring' by highlighting the government's ambitiously interventionist policies in the spheres of education and anti-social behaviour. The unique contribution of the police within security networks has been maintained by Ericson and Haggerty (1997), who understand the police role to maintain a central position as 'knowledge brokers', through collecting, analysing and sharing information on security risks with private agencies.

Acknowledging the complexity of the 'frayed, fragmented and fragile' patchwork of plural policing, Crawford and Lister (2004) consider the position in Britain to be 'a precarious combination' of both hierarchical and flat models of governance, wherein the police are both regulators and service providers in the policing marketplace (p.426-7). They observe there has been a 'blurring of their distinctiveness' between the police and security services, given the rise

in contexts where ‘the state is regarded as a tactical resource for private governance’ and risk management (p.426). As Wakefield (2004) demonstrates regarding quasi-public space, the police and security may organically form alliances and work together by sharing information and resources, because doing so is mutually beneficial to their interests and extends their reach beyond their own spatial parameters. It is argued by White and Gill (2013) that working in partnership has led to a ‘blurring’ of rationalities between police and private security, in which both agencies draw on public good and market rationalities to inform how they carry out their role. Conversely, in the NTE, the relationships between nightclub bouncers and the police have typically been characterised by tension, mistrust, avoidance, suspicion and antagonism (Hobbs et al., 2003). In the Danish NTE context, Sogaard, Houborg, and Tutenges (2016) argue that the police pursued their agenda of ethnic governance through strategic partnerships with bouncers, although this was stifled by competing interests, the absence of trust and tensions in personal relationships. This makes the question of how festival partners perceive each other, the dynamics of working together, and the tensions in doing so, relevant for understanding festival policing networks. This forms the basis of the rationale for research question no.4 (How do agencies from work together partnership, and what tensions arise from this?).

Attention to organisational culture is relevant to understanding these dynamics. Ethnographic research which engages the police world-view and sensemaking has identified a number of enduring ‘core’ traits of police occupational culture, including conservatism, masculinity, action orientation, group mentality and hostility to outsiders (see Reiner, 2010; Loftus, 2019). Cultural traits are product of how members of the organisation manage, define and experience the contingencies, challenges and uncertainties of the role as they see it (Manning, 2014: p.524). In spite of their hostility to outsiders, the police cultural trait of pragmatism is argued to be a facilitator of the police embracing crime-reduction partnership work (O’Neill & McCarthy, 2014). Research has identified overlaps in organisational culture

between police and private security, such as machismo, action-orientation and group loyalty (see Terpstra, 2016) and even a police 'Wannabe' crime fighting culture amongst private security (Rigakos, 2002). When considering security and police culture, it is important to note that the work of private security has been described as highly stigmatised, with low pay and high staff turnover. The role has been conceptualised as 'dirty work' in three senses (Hughes, 1951; Löfstrand, Loftus, & Loader, 2016): It is physically dirty, as it involves touching people, objects and bodily fluids; it is socially dirty, because security operatives are required to manage stigmatised people and behave in a servile manner; and it is morally dirty, as the occupation is viewed as 'tainted' and disreputable. Löfstrand et al.(2016) argue that this gives rise to organisational culture as a resource for 'taint management' and resistance to the stigmatising elements of the role. As there have been no studies on the role, perspectives, or experiences of festival security operatives in particular, this research addresses this gap by considering how the demands of the festival environment shape the organisational culture of security, and how the role is carried out.

Policing private space: surveillance and exclusion

The central tenet of Foucault's (1977) work *Discipline and Punish* concerns the exercise of 'disciplinary power' as a means for controlling individuals. In this text, Foucault observes how power emerges from a set of relations, apparatuses, techniques and architectures between individuals within a context, rather than being something innately possessed by a ruling class or institution. Foucault distinguishes 'disciplinary power' from earlier incarnations of 'sovereign power' exercised by sovereigns in pursuit of maintaining their rule over a territory, where punishment was a public 'spectacle' of painful inflictions on individual bodies. He compares examples of spectacular punishment with the schedule of a prison in the 19th century, in which punishment involved the surveillance, regimenting and control of individuals. Notably,

Foucault describes a range of architectural mechanisms through which disciplinary power is exercised over individuals to achieve this, such as through the physical separation, distribution and sometimes the enclosure of individuals within a space, creating systems of surveillance that are at once functional, hierarchical and continuous. Surveillance is functional in the sense that those who conduct it often undertake a dual role, enabling it to be 'discreet enough not to weigh down with an inert mass on the activity to be disciplined, and not to act as a brake or an obstacle to it' (p.174). The disciplinary power of surveillance is illustrated by the 'Panopticon' prison, as represented in the writings of Jeremy Bentham. The Panoptic principle relied on the 'creation of an architecture of the gaze' wherein there is a single, unidentifiable observer installed in a central tower, within a surrounding semi-circle of prison cells (O'Malley & Valverde, 2014: p.318). Foucault argues that through the Panopticon, Bentham instils a disciplinary power that is both visible and unverifiable: 'Visible: the inmate will constantly have before his eyes the tall outline of the central tower from which he is spied upon. Unverifiable: the inmate must never know whether he is being looked at at any one moment; but he must be sure that he may always be so' (1977: p.201). As summarised by O'Malley (2009: p.2), disciplinary power works on the body of individuals to effect 'normalisation', closing 'the gap between the individual in question and a norm created as the proper or desired condition'. It is through the anxious awareness of being observed that the subject of surveillance internalises the 'normalising gaze' and alters their behaviour as a result of it: 'He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection' (Foucault, 1977: p.202-3). With a light touch, the objective of disciplinary power is to create useful and docile subjects who learn to conform to the norm and enact self-discipline.

Foucault's understanding of disciplinary power and surveillance has been influential in studies of policing in leisure space. Echoing Foucault's notion of continuous surveillance, it is argued by Shearing and Stenning (1981: p.218) that in order to protect the commercial interests of their employer through loss prevention, private security operatives conduct an 'unremitting watch', with enhanced surveillance on individuals whose appearance or behaviour suggests they are risky. Wakefield (2003) illustrates the 'functional' nature of surveillance in day time quasi-public spaces, where security operatives monitor 'known' and suspected troublemakers through foot patrol and CCTV alongside their other 'housekeeping' duties related to customer service. In Shearing and Stenning's (1985: p.302) vignette of Disneyland, the authors describe how control and surveillance is justified in the interests of personal safety and built into the 'woodwork' through costumed staff and pervasive instructions, so its presence is 'unnoticed but its effects are ever present'. Risky and unruly behaviour may be more permissible within 'carnavalesque' licensed leisure settings, yet there are still limits to carnivalesque inversion and the behaviour of patrons is often monitored by the whole team of venue staff. As Measham and Moore (2012: p.65) observe, policing leisure spaces 'involves not only law enforcement – apprehending and prosecuting offenders – but also 'order maintenance' through, for example, control of crowd flow or surveillance of customers by club toilet attendants', in addition to a plethora of 'informal' social control mechanisms (such as music selection and drink pricing) to minimise violence and disorder amongst intoxicated customers (see Hadfield, 2006). The prevalence, use and nature of surveillance in festivalspace has been observed by researchers who centre the festivalgoer perspective and experience (Hoover et al., 2022; Bhardwa, 2014). In Chapter Six, I draw on Foucault's analysis of surveillance as an apparatus of disciplinary power by identifying its application in a range of discreet and indiscreet forms within festivalspace. I consider the rationalities of these surveillance practices through my analysis of how tools and approaches to surveillance vary throughout spaces in the festival site.

That there are rules which carry the threat of punishment through exclusion, or even violence, if transgressed underpins the coercive authority of private security operatives in leisure spaces and nightlife venues (Hobbs et al., 2003). As a form of ‘contractual governance’ (Crawford, 2003), restricted private space may require consent to a venue’s ‘terms and conditions’ as a condition of access; the implications of this is that patrons must accept whatever forms of control specified by the venue, however intrusive, and they must regulate their behaviour to avoid exclusion for breaches of the contractual terms. Compared to the public police, Reiner (2010: p.21) observes that private security enjoy the power to exclude without due process hurdles faced by the police in public space, and can conduct intrusive and discriminatory searches, all with minimal accountability. As the custodians of private, restricted space, nightclub bouncers exercise wide discretion in controlling access to venues, making judgements which forefront its commercial interests, and the reduction of the risk of violence to themselves and to other patrons (Hobbs et al., 2003; Hadfield, 2008). Often excluded are those who are deemed undesirable to the venue’s image, or ‘risky’ as determined by cultural associations with dress, class, social group and race (Rigakos, 2008; Hobbs et al., 2003; Sogaard, 2017). Researchers have observed that, where combined with regulatory and structural processes, security discretion has produced and reproduced ‘ethnic governance’ in nightlife, particularly at the exclusion of Black people and music associated with Black communities (Wicks, 2021; Hadfield & Measham, 2009; Sogaard, 2014).

The racialised and classed dynamics of surveillance and exclusion in festivals is a relevant question, especially as festivals have been described as notably middle-class and ‘White’ spaces in terms of their clientele (Chowdhury, 2019; Wilks, 2011). As festivals are ticketed events which are, in theory, open to anyone who can afford to buy a ticket, it raises the question of how security operatives manage access to the event, exercise coercive authority, and whether they uphold the processes of ethnic governance observable in nightlife. In

Chapters Five and Six, I examine how festival private security operatives make judgements about who they decide to target for enhanced surveillance, how this is enacted, and the rationales for deciding to exclude certain individuals from festival space.

Situational crime prevention

Governmentality scholars observe that state regulation has ‘responsibilised’ licensed leisure venues to be active partners in the pursuit of crime prevention (Hadfield, Lister & Traynor, 2009). In the night-time economy, the Licensing Act 2003 gave the police formal powers and ‘levers’ to regulate the conduct of individuals and businesses, and a special status to make representations to the Licensing Authorities concerning a venue’s license if dissatisfied with the crime prevention efforts of venues (Ibid.). A consequence of this dynamic is the widespread adoption of SCP measures in licensed leisure venues in order to deter drug use by increasing the risks and the efforts for drug users (Hadfield, 2006). In addition to some environmental designs (such as removing flat surfaces in toilets and putting Vaseline on ones that remain), the drug policy focus for licensed leisure venues has been on ‘hard’ approaches to prevent drugs entering venues, through robust searching, amnesty boxes and sniffer (drug detection) dogs (Fisher & Measham, 2018).

Given the strong association between nightlife venues and illegal drug use, the functional efficacy of these deterrence efforts is questionable. Although recreational drug use may be understood as a ‘rational’ choice (Parker et al., 1998; Hunt et al., 2007), cultural criminologists have critically questioned whether SCP is effective in deterring this type of behaviour with its strong ‘emotive’ element (Hayward, 2007). Deterrence efforts may even contribute to its seduction as a ‘sneaky thrill’ (Katz, 1988). A further critique of SCP concerns its role in generating crime ‘displacement’: drug-related crime might be displaced to nearby places (spatial), to another other time (temporal), occur in another way (tactical) or might be transformed to another crime altogether (target) (Mazerolle & Ransley, 2004). When

considering these flaws, crime prevention and security efforts may be seen to have a greater symbolic value compared to their purported functions. In nightlife contexts, O'Brien (2010) considers entry searches to be firstly a 'staging ritual' which displays to police that the venue operates responsibly, minimising unwanted attention and interference, and secondly to establish 'lines of authority' and set the tone of the culture of control inside the venue (p.127). Haggerty and Tokar (2012) account for the widespread adoption of ID scanners at the entrance to nightlife venues in Canada in terms their 'sign value' in demonstrating 'good practice' to the authorities, despite a host of implementation problems and little evidence of their effectiveness. It is strongly in the interests of venues to demonstrate willingness to adopt SCP approaches, to show that they can be entrusted with the policing task. This helps to minimise police interference, especially in venues which typically contain high levels of drug use.

A body of research evidence from Australia suggests that SCP approaches in the form of sniffer dogs, which are common at festivals, are largely ineffective and inaccurate. Research by the NSW Ombudsman (2006) found that 74% of searches following a dog indication resulted in no drugs being found. Studies have sought to measure their deterrent effect by investigating festivalgoers' response to their presence. Hughes et al.(2017) used hypothetical experimental vignettes to ascertain the effect of different policing approaches on festival goers' drug use, possession and supply. Compared to no police presence, the use of sniffer dogs led to a 15.7% reduction in drug possession, but the majority of festival goers were not deterred from drug use and possession. In terms of drug supply, a quarter of respondents reported they would engage in some form of supply, and a police presence was associated with an increase in on-site buying. Grigg et al. (2018) surveyed festivalgoers and found that only 4% would not use drugs if they anticipated a sniffer dog presence, and 63% reported behaviours that may increase the risks of drug use. These findings are reflected in qualitative research by Malins (2019) and Demant and Dilkes-Frayne (2015) who found that the possibility of a sniffer dog presence

influenced the time drugs were taken, the dose ingested, and the drug of choice, while fear produced by the dogs led to unpleasant and paranoid drug experiences among festival customers. Despite this evolving evidence base, the dominance of politics, ideology and morality in drug policy means that sniffer dogs continue to be used at an increasing rate in Australia (Ritter & Lancaster, 2013; Hughes, Ritter, Lancaster & Hoppe, 2017).

These harmful unintended consequences are worrying and should be of paramount concern for festivals in the pursuit of risk reduction, especially given findings from the Global Drug Survey that British respondents were as likely to report seeing a sniffer dog as Australian respondents (Hughes et al., 2018). Yet their use in Britain is entirely unregulated, and there is a near total absence of empirical research on their use in the British context.¹⁰ An exception is Marks (2007), who raises concerns about the implications of their use in Britain for the right to privacy. She argues that their use by police may be illegal, depending on whether people are ‘funnelled’ past them and whether a ‘sniff’ counts as a police search.¹¹ She critiques that positive dog indications lead to the presumption of guilt, wherein recipients must be able to account for the indication or be searched by police. How sniffer dogs, and SCP technologies more generally, are used at festivals in Britain is a pressing issue and one that has been drastically overlooked. The existing evidence suggests that what is needed is the engagement of the policing, security and management perspectives, in order to interrogate the organisational, personal, cultural imperatives and motivations behind policing decisions and activities in festivals. Some significant questions raised by this research include: how do festivals use SCP? With what objectives? And how are assessments of whether they ‘work’ factored in to the

¹⁰ Police dog use is guided by ACPO Police Dogs Manual of Guidance 2011. There is no guidance for how private dogs are used, but handlers will be trained and accredited by a body such as National Association of Security Dog Users (NADSU).

¹¹ According to s.10.28.5 of the ACPO Police Dogs Manual of Guidance 2011 “people may not be funnelled, delayed, targeted, interfered with, or requested to change their direction, in order to facilitate the dog’s deployment as this may constitute a search”.

decisions to use them? These questions further contribute to the rationale for research questions no.1 (What approaches and tools are used by festivals in policing drugs?) and no.2 (What rationales and interests shape the drug policing activities of agencies, and what are their implications?). I explore these questions in depth in Chapter Five in my focus on ‘the gate’ and festival entry processes under ‘Prevent’.

The nature and shape of ‘party’ drug markets

The attention of this review now turns to the evidence on drug markets, and the enforcement efforts taken by the police against them. 50 years of drug law enforcement under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 has done very little to stem vast illegal drug market in Britain. An independent review commissioned by the Home Secretary estimated the market value to be £9.4 billion per year in 2020, significantly greater than the estimated value of £5.3 billion in 2003/04 (Black, 2020; McSweeney, Turnbull and Hough, 2008). Despite the millions of pounds invested into drug law enforcement internationally each year, drug markets are extremely resilient, fluid and adaptive to enforcement efforts. Before focusing a lens on drug policing, it important to consider the nature of ‘recreational’ or ‘party’ drug markets, and their relevance to festivals, in order to understand and provide some context to the task that festival drug policing is ‘up against’ (Bacon, 2016: p.49). The term ‘drug market’ describes the contexts in which drugs are bought and sold, but contexts are overlapping and can refer to a whole host of different indicators, such as the mode of distribution, the type of drug(s), the quantities, the location and the relationships between buyer and supplier.¹² There is a notable skew in research attention towards understanding the more accessible and visible ‘problem’ drug markets, which typically involve ‘hard’ drugs and dependent users within a geographic area, and a total absence of research which considers festivals as drug markets in their own right. While the available evidence on

¹² The terms ‘dealer’ and ‘supplier’ are used interchangeably in this thesis in reference to a person who gives or sells illicit substances to another person.

‘party’ or recreational drug markets is dated and not festival-specific, it provides helpful frameworks for understanding the players, nature, shape and distinguishing features of these markets.

Modes and relationships in drug distribution

Festival drug markets can be thought of as retail, or ‘street-level’, markets wherein dealers sell to drug users, rather than higher up in the supply chain. The literature categorises retail markets by the relationships between buyers and sellers within them. May and Hough (2004) distinguish between ‘open’ markets’ where there is no prior relationship between buyer and seller; ‘semi-open’ markets operate in nightclubs, where buyers have to ‘look the part’, sometimes with complicity or directly controlled by nightclub bouncers and; ‘closed’ markets rely on established relationships between buyers and sellers, and someone to vouch for new buyers. Technological advancements, particularly widespread mobile phone ownership since the 1990s and more recently social media platforms, have greatly facilitated the operation of closed markets as a way for sellers to minimise the risks of visibility to enforcement inherent in open and semi-open markets (May and Hough, 2004; McCulloch & Furlong, 2019). Common at the retail level, particularly in cannabis markets, is ‘social supply’ distribution which takes place through pre-existing friendship networks on a non-commercial basis (Coomber & Turnbull, 2007; Potter, 2009).

The relationship between buyers and sellers is important for considering the nature and extent of risk within a given market. Research has found there are important differences between the norms, nature of interactions and the level of violence between ‘closed’ and ‘open’ markets (see Sandberg, 2012). Whereas violence in illegal drug markets has been considered to be a ‘systemic’ feature (Goldstein, 1985), other studies emphasise that violence is bad for business in closed markets, which rely on low-visibility to reduce the risk of attention from law

enforcement (Curtis & Wendel, 2000). Measham et al.(2001: p.142) note that while the media portrayed dance clubs in the 1990s as ‘dens of vice with drug ‘dealers’ ready to prey’ on innocent victims, they found semi-open venue-based suppliers were considered favourably by clubbers and staff for their products of a consistent quality. This relates to the point that closed distribution systems can be a tool for quality control amongst drug users, as there is a feedback loop which gives dealers an incentive to ensure repeat custom (Bright & Sutherland, 2017). Additionally, getting ‘sorted out’ through social networks provides drug users with a perceived safer way of acquiring substances and minimises the risks of meeting ‘real dealers’ (Parker, 2000). Similarly, crypto-markets, which contain customer reviews and provide users with anonymity, have become more a more prevalent way for users to reduce these risks and ensure quality control in their purchases (Shortis, Aldridge & Barratt, 2020).

In this thesis, I distinguish between ‘internal’ and ‘external’ festival drug markets, as research arising from drug checking services indicates there are differences in selling practices between them, with more ‘misselling’ taking place internally (Measham, 2018). As the nature of drug user/dealer relationships of internal festival markets is an unexplored empirical question, realistically they may encompass a mixture of overlapping closed, semi-open and open distribution systems or markets, and these systems may be associated with varying levels of risk in terms of violence and the product being sold. It raises the question of how and whether festival policing identified and responds in different ways to the varying types of drug-related risk presented within the ad-hoc festival drug market.

Party drug dealers

There are pervasive ‘pusher myths’ in the social consciousness in which drug dealers are perceived as amoral, violent and exploitative gangsters (Coomber, 2006), and these myths help the police to make sense of their role in policing drugs (Bacon, 2016). Conversely, the evidence

suggests that party drug dealers have a variable commitment to commerciality and to deviance. Whilst acknowledging drug markets are highly fluid, Dorn Murji and South (1992) set out a typology according to drug dealer characteristics, motivations and practices. Relevant to ‘party’ markets specifically, amongst commercially oriented dealers they found ‘retail specialists’, who have established office hours, mirroring legitimate businesses; ‘Opportunistic irregulars’, who are multi-commodity ‘street entrepreneurs’, driven by money, excitement and recognition in local social networks. On the less commercial side, they identify ‘trading charity’ dealers, involved with supplying ecstasy at raves and shared ‘a commitment to or enjoyment of the social and cultural aspects of using the drug and the context in which this is done’ (p.10). There is contemporary evidence of ‘trading charity’ dealers, for example, Turner (2019) found that it is common for seasonal workers in Ibiza to supplement their income with drug dealing in order to fund their own party drug use. Finally, Dorn et al.(1992) identify ‘mutual societies’ with reciprocal buyer/dealer relationships where no money is exchanged. This dynamic is reflected in the strong sharing ethos found within cannabis and party drug subcultures, where the ‘social supply’ of substances may be ‘normalised’ within friendship groups, without a profit incentive or otherwise on a ‘minimally commercial’ basis (Van Schipstal et al., 2016; Coomber, Moyle & South, 2016; Coomber & Moyle, 2014).

These studies help to illustrate that within party drug markets, there may be variation in terms of commercial motivation and the distinction between ‘buyers’ and ‘dealers’ is sometimes artificial. Even within more commercial retail markets, a dealers’ commitment to a deviant lifestyle may vary. Jacinto et al. (2008b) found that ecstasy dealers who operated in private settings resisted labelling themselves as ‘dealers’ and ‘drifted’ into it without deviant commitment (Matza, 1964). Recent research emphasises that there is a significant, subset of well-educated drug dealers in respectable employment who use drug dealing to supplement their income, and carefully avoid stigmatising labelling processes (Askew and Salinas, 2019;

Salinas, 2018). The point is not to suggest that recreational drug markets cannot be violent or the targets of ‘organised’ drug distribution systems. These are valid concerns, given that ‘an influx of drug dealers, organised criminal gangs, weapons and consequent violence’ plagued unlicensed raves in the early 1990s and particular nightclubs in Manchester (Measham, 2004a: p.339; see Collin, 2009). I draw on this literature to emphasise the heterogeneity of the drug market and the variation in risk association with different drug market actors.

An important point raised by this body of research is that successful drug dealers tend to be risk averse and responsive to enforcement, continuously adapting and innovating their practices to subvert detection. As Dorn and South (1990) put it, ‘the more creative the drug dealers, the more they will be able to keep ahead of their direct competitors and of the police’ (p.172). By focusing a lens on pre-event preparation over two festival seasons as well as the event days, my research helps to understand how festival drug policing, and festival drug dealers, have adapted and continue to adapt to the risks of evolving enforcement approaches and technologies.

Policing drugs and festivals

This section is concerned with drug law enforcement more specifically. Making the case for my focus on discretion in research question no.3 (How is discretion exercised in relation to drug law infringements and what influences it?). I argue that understanding discretion is integral to understanding drug policies in practice, and its use is invariably tied to context and the perspectives of policing actors. I introduce the framework of ‘harm reduction policing’ and analyse the available evidence on festival drug policing.

The ‘bottom up’ perspective

Drug laws and policies are shaped ‘on the ground’ by people who implement them. In Lipsky’s (2010) seminal research on ‘street level bureaucrats’ (SLBs), the ‘bottom-up’ perspective reinforces that public sector workers who interact with the public face excessive demands on their time, which necessitates the utilisation of shortcuts to make their role easier. Police discretion has been a longstanding theme in street-level policing research, since early ethnographic studies found that policing involves a diverse range of non-criminal emergency matters and was therefore more concerned with ‘peacekeeping’ than law enforcement (Banton, 1964; see Reiner, 1992). The exercise of discretion is intimately connected to context. The police are described by Muir (1977) as ‘street corner politicians’, who selectively over-enforce and under-enforce the law, responding differently depending on the contexts they are in and its situational demands. Bittner (1967) sees police peacekeeping as ‘a process of matching the resources of control with the situational exigencies... to reduce the total amount of risk in the area’ (p.713). Risks associated with inaction may be a ‘preferred risk’, when balanced with the immediacy and severity of the anticipated risks of enforcement or intervention (Bittner, 1967; Horlick-Jones, 2005). The normative perspectives of policing actors is relevant to this, as the police perception of a particular location’s ‘moral order’ shapes their use of discretion and risk assessments within a space (Herbert, 1996). Research finds that police decision making is heavily guided by personal beliefs and norms about what is fair (Maynard-Moody & Musheno, 2000).

In the Oslo NTE context, Buvik (2016) applies an SLB framework to unpack the influence of variables on police officer discretion. She considers *situational variables*, such as the seriousness of the offence, public perception and visibility, to be the most important variable. She found that officers prioritised more serious offences within the chaotic nightlife context, but felt there was a need to ‘be seen to respond’ in less serious cases where they were summoned or were in the presence of crowds. Consistent with the excess in demand places on SLBs and

their need to manage this, she found that when *system variables* (or resources) were stretched, this often led to a more lenient response, as did *offender variables*, such as a compliant and cooperative demeanour. She found that *officer variables*, such as moral judgements and personal beliefs, shaped how police saw their role and influenced how reactive or proactive they were in enforcing rules.

This is a useful framework for considering how discretion operates in festival contexts. Although festivals share commonalities with both NTE spaces, the festival research I reviewed in Chapter Two reminds us that there are important contextual differences between them. Festivals are distinctive and fairly unique leisure spaces, encompassing an amalgamation of activities which have typically either been associated with day time leisure, night time licensed leisure, and private non-leisure space. They blend the consumption of music, food, fashion, art, licensed and illicit intoxication, sociality and ‘otherworldly’ experiences, as well as hosting temporary dwellings for rest, recovery and attempted sleep. These factors may have implications for patterns of drug using behaviour and the boundaries of social acceptability (Bhardwa, 2014; Dilkes-Frayne, 2016). Fitzgerald and Threadgold (2004) observe that, while ‘drug use behind closed doors is rarely a matter for intervention’, the public use of drugs is dirty, taboo and ‘matter-out-of-place’, which therefore demands a policing response (p.409). Questions over how policing discretion is exercised in festival contexts, where there are very few ‘closed doors’ and there may be varying degrees of drug ‘normalisation’ and ‘open’ drug use, provides the rationale for research question no.3 (How is discretion exercised in relation to drug law infringements and what influences it?).

‘Street-level’ drug policing

The literature on discretion in drug law enforcement emphasises that the law is a useful resource or a ‘tool’ for coercion and control (Greer et al., 2021; Bradford & Loader, 2015). For police

tasked with order maintenance in public space, drug laws provide the ‘authority to intervene to disrupt drug markets and harass participants, and with opportunities to make self-initiated arrests’ (Maher and Dixon, 1999: p.491-2). As a consequence, street-level drug law enforcement is concentrated on the most visible, and often most marginalised, drug market participants, whereas whiteness, economic and social capital are protective factors against enforcement (Perrone, 2009). This is one reason why the criminalisation of drugs cannot be separated from its racialised origins as a tool for controlling, persecuting and stigmatising marginalised communities of colour (Koram, 2019). In the UK, these origins are still embedded in the continued use of ‘stop and search’, despite widespread criticism since the 1960s and findings of significant racial disparities in its use (Eastwood, Shiner & Bear, 2013). Given its low ‘hit rate’, Bradford and Loader (2015) argue that stop and search is a tool for controlling and disciplining suspect populations, keeping order by perpetuating social marginality. They note that police stops can usefully be ‘legalised’ by suspected drug possession arising from the (alleged) smell of cannabis.¹³

Not only is stop and search harmful to those who experience it and internalise a deviant label, its use can have harmful consequences for policing by consent. According to procedural justice theory, when policing is used in a way that is perceived to be unfair, it blunts police legitimacy within communities most affected, with implications for gaining intelligence from communities and ‘policing by consent’ (Bradford, 2016; Bottoms and Tankebe, 2012). Influences on policing decisions to engage in proactive drug policing, and the racialised elements of this, is therefore a pertinent concern in the field of drugs research, and is highly relevant to festival and carnival contexts. In regards to the policing of Notting Hill Carnival, Chowdhury (2019) argues that policing tactics, characterised by ‘pre-emptive arrests, facial

¹³ Research on the use of stop and search carried out by the Home Office found that where drugs did not necessarily form the origins of suspicion, it could become a factor during the interaction based on smell, conduct and visible drug paraphernalia (Quinton et al., 2000: 38).

recognition technologies and a saturated police presence’, are predicated on ‘disciplining mass, Black, politico-cultural expression’ (pp. 56-59). This approach can be contrasted with the ‘public health’ policing orientation of commercial music festivals, exclusively afforded to the white middle classes.

By exploring drug policing in the commercial festival context, my contribution to this field is to enhance our understanding of how drug policing and discretion operates in private space, when policing is a shared enterprise between festival agencies. Shearing and Stenning (1981: p.210) argue that what distinguishes police from private security is that security are ‘generally not under any legally defined public duty to perform their duties in the public interest’ and therefore the exercise of discretion will be ‘more influenced by their perceptions of the interests of their immediate employer’. This influence is evident in studies of security policing in quasi-public space, where their routine interactions are primarily concerned with the control, monitoring and exclusion of problem drug users (Lister et al., 2008; Kammersgard, 2020). Conversely, the research evidence from the NTE tells us that drug use and supply inside licensed venues is not always unwelcome. Instead, nightclub bouncers operate strategically and pragmatically in response to it, using their discretion to make decisions based on their interpretation of the risks and profits associated with a particular course of action (O’Brien, 2010). Hobbs et al. (2003) found that tolerating drug use was in the commercial interests of certain venues, and was considered preferable to alcohol-related violence in alcohol-oriented venues. Many nightclubs can only be financially feasible through the ‘implicit understanding [and] a ‘knowing wink’’, between club promoters, clubbers and venue staff with regards to permissible drug use within them (Goulding et al., 2008: p.9). Studies have found bouncers to be involved in the control of drug markets inside venues, both actively involved in supply and complicitly by taking payment or ‘tax’ from other suppliers (Sanders, 2005; Hobbs et al., 2003).

These studies omit to consider how discretion operates, or who it is used by, within a policing partnership arrangement in private space.

Detecting drugs

Beyond the street-level, a small body of research which considers the ‘craft’ of drug detectives provides some useful insights into some of the unique challenges of policing drug supply and drug markets (Collison, 1995; Dorn, Murji & South, 1992; Bacon, 2016). The primary aim of drug law enforcement is to restrict the supply of drugs which, in theory, reduces their availability, increases their price, and increases the time which buyers must spend in searching for a supply, thereby reducing drug use (Dorn et al., 1992: p.43; UKDPC, 2009). These studies emphasise the impossibility of eradicating drug supply altogether through enforcement. Collison describes the drug detective role as keeping ‘the lid on the market’, by ensuring its orderliness, stability and predictability (1995: p.39). These studies highlight that, whereas most crime comes to police attention through reporting, drug transactions tend to take place between consenting parties, and therefore they are not often brought to light through the reporting of a ‘direct’ victim.

With fewer opportunities to police reactively, drug policing must often be especially proactive and offender focused, which creates a great deal of scope for discretion in terms of targets and priorities. As Collison (1995: p.35) explains, drug detectives ‘drum up their own business’ and do so according to ‘occupational, organisational, legal and sometimes personal imperatives and meanings’. For drug detectives, Bacon (2016) posits, the ‘quintessence of real detective work’ involves making cases against the ‘Mr Bigs’ of the market, concerned with trafficking and wholesale drug distribution, while recreational drug markets are essentially deprioritised and left to be managed ‘around the edges’ (p.118). Collison (1995: p.41) found that careful timing, as informed by extensive surveillance and intelligence gathering, is integral

to the drug detective craft: drug detectives aim to make ‘good collars’, involving the arrest of a ‘known dealer’ holding large quantities of substances and other incriminating evidence. Arrests of known dealers with small quantities, which can be explained away as possession, are seen as ‘demeaning of their craft competence’ (p.41). This research also reveals that the policing tools adopted by drug detectives are often ethically dubious, including extensive intelligence gathering through surveillance, the licensing of informants, covert operations, and the use of ‘buy-bust’ tactics (Bacon, 2016). Although the targets of enforcement may be ‘Mr Bigs’, these tools may implicate the low-level, ‘low hanging fruit’ of street suppliers, because of their potential as informants which may lead to the ‘major players’ (Maher & Dixon, 1999).

These studies are helpful in understanding the nature and demands of drug supply policing, which is explored in the festival context in Chapter Six under the *Pursue* pillar. They demonstrate how, given the excess of demand, drug supply must prioritise targets and these targets are shaped by the organisation priorities and personal imperatives of those who undertake it.

What works in ‘drug law enforcement’?

Another body of research on drug policing maintains an evaluative angle of proactive policing operations targeted at drug markets, as part of a drive to make policing more ‘evidence-based’ (Sherman, 1998; Mazerolle, Soole & Rombouts, 2007; May, Harocopos, Turnbull & Hough, 2000). Reviewing this evidence, Mazerolle (2017: p.164) claims that ‘we know... how best to police entertainment precincts, music festivals, and street corners with open air drug market problems’, even though none of these evaluations relate to music festivals and there is no empirical evidence to suggest that festivals only contain ‘open air’ drug markets. Most evidence concerning drug law enforcement at festivals concerns the use of sniffer dogs in Australia, as discussed, which suggests they are ineffective at their purported deterrence aims and highlights

a range of concerns with their implementation and the potential for drug-related harm (NSW Ombudsman, 2006; Hughes et al., 2017; Malins, 2019).

Instead, evaluations are mostly concerned with place-based policing approaches in embedded ‘problem’ drug markets. The evidence indicates that partnership approaches (sometimes referred to as ‘third-party policing’ and ‘problem-oriented policing’), involving the police working with communities to identify problems within an area, working with third-parties, and tailoring solutions, can be effective in reducing drug-related crime while producing the fewest harmful consequences (Mazerolle, Soole & Rombouts, 2007; Mazerolle & Ransley, 2004). In comparison, intensive, geographically focused ‘crackdowns’ and ‘hot-spot’ operations, which use an array of tactics such as premises ‘raids’, stop and search, a heightened police presence, surveillance and vehicle checks, have been found to be ineffective in the long term, and to generate a wealth of harms for drug users, drug markets, and their surrounding communities (May, Harocopos, Turnbull & Hough, 2000; Mason & Bucke, 2002; Weisburd & Telep, 2014). Studies show that ‘crackdowns’ primarily implicate the ‘low hanging fruit’ of drug dealers, and the void in the market creates conditions for instability, violence, and volatility (Werb et al., 2011; Maher & Dixon, 2001). Intensive enforcement can have a damaging impact on the health and behaviours of injecting drug users and the wider experiences of targeted communities (Kerr et al., 2005; Werb et al., 2008; Wood & Kerr, 2005). Mason (2020), for example, discerns a plethora of ‘relational harms’ such as social exclusion, fragmentation of community networks, damaged trust between police and residents; increased anxiety and mental health harms; and racialised territorial stigma amongst young people in a community targeted by a crackdown.

The harmful unintended consequences of crackdowns for drug market dynamics and health risks are underlined by Coomber, Moyle and Mahoney (2019). Drawing on Innes’ (2014) ‘signal crimes’ framework and Edelman’s (1985) notion of ‘symbolic policy’, the authors see the

use of ‘crackdowns’ in drug markets as an exercise in ‘symbolic policing’. Given their often vague objectives and lack of long term impact on the drugs trade, they argue that high-visibility tactics (and their subsequent media coverage) are adopted to signal that ‘action is being taken’, in an attempt to ‘assuage fear of crime through visibly negotiating the signs of illicit markets’ (p.2). Although perhaps more relevant to embedded, problem drug markets rather than recreational festival markets, reviewing this evidence reinforces that drug policing, like ‘security’, may be a primarily symbolic rather than functional exercise. The disjunction between the intended community ‘reassurance’ impacts, and experiences of targeted communities impacts, highlights the differential reception of policing amongst a multitude of audiences. With my specific focus on commercial music festivals which take place in private space, my study digresses from pervasive police-centric drug policing research and enhances the field’s theoretical understanding of policing recreational drug markets.

Harm reduction policing

In light of this evidence, a growing body scholarship has made the case for the application of ‘harm reduction principles’ to drug policing, as a framework for conducting drug policing with specific objectives and minimising the negative consequences of drug markets and enforcement (Bacon, 2016; Caulkins & Reuter, 2009; Kammergaard, 2019; Maher & Dixon, 1999; Stevens, 2013). A harm reduction policing approach starts with a recognition the ‘level of harm is more important than the size of the market’ and level of drug market activity (Stevens, 2013: p.11). Dorn and South (1990) argue that given enforcement cannot prevent illegal drug markets, the aim should be to shape markets to take the least undesirable and least harmful forms. In this way, enforcement is a ‘regulatory strategy’ which can shape the market by targeting its most noxious harms (Bacon, 2016). It is framed as a pragmatic approach which gives the police an opportunity for doing ‘more for less’ by using resources on things that have been proven to

‘work’, and less on things that don’t or create more harms in their own right (Stevens, 2013: p.11). Starting with a clear understanding of what the harms are, it requires them to be listed and ranked as objectively as possible, which involves balancing stakeholder interests (Caulkins & Reuter, 2009: p.10). Sometimes the approach means abstaining from doing certain harmful policing activities and, instead, using resources to ameliorate particular harm priorities over others. Spicer (2019: p.196) argues that targeted policing of the most violent drug suppliers is an ‘internally and externally’ acceptable way of implementing harm reduction policing within the current prohibition framework.

A harm reduction policing approach recognises that criminal repercussions for those caught in breach of drug laws can do more harm than good, by negatively impacting on future employment and travel prospects. In what has been described as a ‘quiet revolution’ in drug policy (Eastwood et al., 2016), policing has been one of the key vehicles in which the global prohibition consensus has been ruptured through ‘decriminalisation’ and ‘depenalisation’, permitting novel approaches which centre public health and harm reduction to emerge in the cracks (Stevens et al., 2019). A number of police forces around the UK have implemented drug ‘diversion’ schemes for low level drug offenders, driven by the growing emphasis on evidence-based policing, the recognition of the futility of drug law enforcement and its harmful consequences (Spyt et al., 2019; Bacon, 2021; UKDPC, 2009).¹⁴ These diversion schemes may be considered a form of *de facto* drug ‘depenalisation’, in which police discretion is exercised to reduce the proportion of offenders who receive criminal penalties (Stevens et al., 2019). While praised as a step forward, how depenalisation works in practice is inextricably shaped by the country contexts and mechanisms where it is adopted (Stevens et al., 2019; Greer et al., 2022). Given that Bacon’s (2021) research found that police officers describe a ‘suspension’ of ‘conventional approaches’ to drug enforcement at festivals, in which the police ‘don’t deal with

¹⁴ Avon & Somerset, Durham, Thames Valley and West Midlands police forces (see Bacon, 2021)

simple possession’, the issue of whether and how depenalisation operates at festivals is especially pertinent in the evolving drug policy landscape (p.10).

Beyond police-led initiatives, harm reduction policing can involve working with and facilitating the efforts of third parties to reduce drug related harm. For example, drug consumption rooms (DCRs) have emerged in several cities around the world, sometimes with increased multi-agency cooperation and a reorientation away from prohibition approaches in places where DCRs have been established (Watson et al., 2018). Kammersgaard (2019) found that the decriminalisation of drug possession surrounding the Copenhagen DCR in 2012 facilitated an alternative ‘governable identity’ for drug users, and resulted in policing efforts to actively target acts of violence towards drug users. The introduction of drug checking services at British festivals can be seen in relation to these developments, as part of the police ‘doing things differently’, prioritising harm reduction over enforcement, and working with agencies to achieve this (Marks & Howell, 2016; Measham, 2018). At the licensing level, some festivals have shifted away from official zero-tolerance drug policies, instead adopting a ‘3:Ps’ approach, which stands for ‘Prevent, Pursue, Protect’ (Fisher & Measham, 2018). As this thesis will demonstrate, *Prevent* aims to stop drugs getting in to the festival; *Pursue* prioritises supply policing and; *Protect* aims to reduce harms from drug use. The shift has been credited in facilitating the wider adoption of drug checking services, as prior to this, zero-tolerance policies prevented events acknowledging the existence of drugs on-site. This study breaks new ground as the first empirical research which takes account of these developments, the motivations, perspectives and processes behind them.

Policing drugs at festivals

Studies which consider festival drug policing primarily centre the audience experience and perspective of control. Applying Ritter (2010), Bhardwa (2014) observes that festival entrance

spaces combine the regulatory strategies of *voluntarism* with the use of amnesty bins to encourage festivalgoers to ‘do the right thing’, alongside with *law enforcement* through robust security searches and drug sniffer dogs. Together, these signal to dance consumers that control is ‘the condition of play’ (p.179). She observes marked differences in policing between the entrances compared to the inside spaces of festivals. Inside events, drug use was tolerated on the condition that ‘it did not interfere with the image, the expansive commercial or economic interests of the dance space’ (p.185). She therefore considers the task of festival drug policing to be centred on ‘controlling the visible excesses of drug use’ rather than eradicating it (p.186). Additionally, this study offers a glimpse into the ‘over the shoulder’ perspective of festival policing through Bhardwa’s observation of a police briefing, in which officers were told to look out of ‘Albanian gangs and scallies’, indicating selective enforcement priorities shape policing inside the event (p.178).¹⁵ Such an approach to identifying ‘undesirables’ supports her wider argument that dance space participation is stratified along the lines of race, class, and gender (p. 178).

Emphasising the commercial imperatives of festivals, Thomas (2008: p.212) refers to as the strategy of ‘containment’ as one which permits festivalgoers to engage in carnivalesque behaviour, such as drug use in view of police and security, so long as the behaviour remains within the festival perimeter. He considers ‘containment’ to be necessary to minimise the impact of carnivalesque disruption, and to support the event’s commercial interests, as the value of the ticket is maintained by the demarcation of festival space to non-festival space. The commercial interest in permissible drug use is echoed within Turner’s (2017; 2018) *Disneyization* framework, as discussed in Chapter Two. He posits that police and security in Ibiza undertake ‘*performative labour*’, given their complicity and ambivalence to drug use and supply on the island. He proposes that given the social, structural and experiential similarities of music festivals with Ibiza, drug policing at festivals may be similarly *performative*, citing the low drug arrest rates from

¹⁵ “Scallies” is a derogatory term, often used to describe working class youths involved with petty criminality from the north-west of England (Boland, 2008).

Glastonbury Festival 2016 as evidence for this (54 arrests in total, or 0.03% of the population) (Turner, 2017). These studies from the audience perspective are helpful for considering how policing is experienced within festival spaces, in particular, the stark differences between the gate and inside the event. However, by centring the audience perspective, these studies paint a piecemeal picture of the *observable* policing approaches used in relation to drugs.

With the exceptions of ethnographic research by Nabben (2010) in the Netherlands, the festival policing perspective has been almost entirely overlooked. Nabben's (2010) study describes the implementation of 'zero-tolerance' drug policies at dance festivals in Amsterdam, with the use of covert 'snatch teams' loitering near queues to observe drug use and concealment and the search and detention of over 200 festivalgoers. Yet removing all drugs at the gate is considered to be 'mission impossible' by security operatives, given a number of legal and resource constraints, and the task conflicted with other interests, such as maintaining crowd flow (p.22). He found that the vast majority of customers surveyed were not deterred from bringing drugs into the festival, while others carried in smaller amounts, sought to obtain drugs inside the festival, or consumed more substances ('pre-loaded') before entering the event, echoing the evidence surrounding the use of sniffer dogs. Nabben's (2010) study usefully illustrates the relevance of less visible or covert forms of festival policing, and how competing priorities, legal constraints and contextual demands come together to shape drug the nature and consequences of it. Given the integral role of discretion in nightlife settings, arrest statistics can tell us very little about policing and informal resolutions to deviance and law breaking. Without an in-depth empirical lens on this context, these are important gaps which this thesis aims to address.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have synthesised a wide ranging body of research literature from the fields of policing, licensed leisure, drug markets and drug law enforcement, and assessed their relevance

to understanding drug policing at music festivals. Concurrent with governmentality studies, I adopt a broad definition of policing as the ‘governance of drug security’ which encompasses the pursuits of festival agencies in relation to drugs. This is essential for accounting for the emergence of drug checking, ‘harm reduction policing’ and other activities outside of preserving social order through coercion, surveillance and law enforcement. I highlight the integral themes of exclusion and surveillance to understanding the role of security operatives, and highlight that security and policing can have symbolic objectives, in addition to or instead of, their purported functional ones. In reviewing the use policing drugs and discretion, I illustrate that an important contribution of my research to understanding how discretion is exercised in private, restricted leisure spaces and within public-private partnership arrangements. My focus on drug policing at music festivals refreshes the exceptionally police-centric research evidence and deviates from its focus on ‘problem’ drug markets. This discussion supports the adoption of an ethnographic research methodology to explore the dynamics and contextual factors affecting how it operates in the festival context.

Throughout this chapter, I raise a number of questions in regards to festival policing, which this thesis aims to address through empirical research. To reiterate, my research questions emerging from this review are:

- 1.** What approaches and tools are used by festivals in policing drugs?
- 2.** What rationales and interests shape the drug policing activities of agencies, and what are their implications?
- 3.** How is discretion exercised in relation to drug law infringements and what influences it?
- 4.** How do agencies from work together partnership, and what tensions arise from this?

In this review, I robustly make the case that music festivals, and the policing of drugs within them, are a pertinently underexplored space and a critical evidential gap in the drug policy field. Drawing on Foucault, Stevens (2011) emphasises that drug policy consists of individual interactions and is ‘continually produced and reproduced in our bodily practices and utterances’, which means it needs to be studied in ‘all the contexts that it is produced and practiced’ (p.402). I demonstrate that there is a paucity of empirical research on festival drug policing, and the policing perspective has been almost entirely overlooked. This is despite the fact that festivals have become socially significant as a staple leisure activity for millions of people each year. Recent developments including the introduction of drug checking within them, the potential for police-led depenalisation at festivals, and the move away from ‘zero-tolerance’ at some events further strengthens my argument that festivals are important arenas for drug policy in action and academic enquiry.

Chapter Four: Methodology

Introduction

The aim of this study is to critically explore the policing approaches used by agencies towards and in response to illegal drugs at English music festivals, where policing is understood as ‘the governance of drug security’. As I have argued throughout Chapters Two and Three, festivals contain complex and competing interests in relation to policing drugs, and how these are realised in festivals is a pertinent empirical question. This chapter outlines the research design, data collection and data analysis I undertook in pursuit of this aim. The first section on research design outlines the constructionist philosophy of my research design. Aligning with an established body of ethnographic research in policing and dance spaces, I justify my adoption of an explorative, multi-sited ethnographic methodology for addressing my research questions and my pursuit to understand the contextual, in-situ realisation of drug policing efforts. I use reflexive insights to describe how I went about data collection in the field, presenting myself, across time, space, and participants. I observe that emotions played a significant role in my research, the extent to which only really became clear with a degree of critical distance from the field. I reflect on the role my identity, emotions and outsider status played in the type of data generated and their role in my ‘situated’ ethical deliberations. I describe some of the difficulties I experienced in undertaking ‘instant’ ethnography, while working across festivals and agencies. The final section on data analysis considers my positionality in the process of ethnographic ‘textwork’ and story construction.

Research design

Research philosophy

The theory of knowledge held by the researcher has important implications for the research process, from design through to analysis. The ontological and epistemological foundations of this research are constructionist. Whereas researchers within the 'objectivist' paradigm assume there is a single reality that can be uncovered by a neutral observer, researcher aligned to the constructionist paradigm posits that the aim of social research is not to uncover an objective truth or reality because reality is not waiting out there to be uncovered. Instead 'reality is multiple processual, and constructed... under particular conditions' (Charmaz, 2008: p.402).. In this paradigm, the research process, and data arising from it, is seen as co-constructed between researcher and participants. Research validity is not borne out of researcher objectivity, which is considered impossible, but the opposite. According to Weber (1978), the aim of constructionist research is to achieve *verstehen*, which denotes a deep and sympathetic understanding between researcher and participants. For Ferrell (1997), the researcher should go even further by seeking a degree of *criminological verstehen*, through full participation in the world under study, in order to understand and share the meanings and emotions that occur within moments of crime and crime control.

As constructionism sees reality as co-constructed, it is integral for researchers to reflect on their role in this construction process. Since the 'reflexive turn' was spearheaded by feminist researchers in the 1990s, qualitative, constructionist researchers in the social sciences have paid far greater attention to their 'ethnographic self' (O'Reilly, 2005). Reflexivity recognises that 'the researcher-as-subject is always there, even if only as a silent, hopefully unobtrusive, but nevertheless significant and looming presence', and this presence has implications for the generation of data, as co-constructed between researcher and participant (Pearson, 1993: p.viii). Summarised by Berger (2015) reflexivity entails 'the process of a continual internal dialogue and critical self-evaluation of a researcher's positionality, as well as active acknowledgment and explicit recognition that this position may affect the research process and

outcome' (p.220). Within this dialogue, 'positionality' relates to elements of the researcher's social position, identity, relationship to participants, and relationship to the field of study.

There is some academic disagreement concerning how far researchers should engage in reflexivity, and to what end. Feminist researchers, Ryan-Flood and Gill (2010: p.5) are critical of the tendency for researchers to only set out the identities held by the author 'with little or no attempt to reflect on the significance of those positions for the research. It is as if simply acknowledging' one's location is enough to eradicate its effects'. Conversely, indulgent self-reflection and extensive 'confessional tales' which point to the messiness of fieldwork have been criticised as a strategy which aims to increase the perceived trustworthiness, and therefore reliability, of the researcher (van Maanen, 1988). In striking a balance between these critiques, I aim to consider my positionality in a way that produces useful reflexive insights for future festival researchers, and the extent to which my participation in the festival site helped me to achieve a degree of *criminological verstehen*. Coffey (1999) considers emotions to be an important part of the research process, yet they are often marginalised, seen 'as issues to be acknowledged and if possible dealt with, rather than seen as epistemologically productive in the analysis of fieldwork and the fieldworker self' (p.6). I take inspiration from Bhardwa (2013) and Bott (2010) who explore the emotional aspects of fieldwork in dance-spaces and lap dance clubs respectively, to produce reflexive insights into how my emotions shaped the research process.

Ethnographic methodology

An ethnographic methodology was adopted to answer the central aim of this project for two significant reasons. Firstly, ethnography is particularly well suited to research which demands attention to the social, spatial and temporal organisation within particular contexts. There is a rich tradition of ethnography in 'club studies' which provide a window into dance, club and drug cultures in nightlife settings (see Thornton, 1996; Malbon 1999; Redhead, 1997; Jackson, 2004; Rief, 2009). The researchers' ethnographic and participative immersion in clubs in these

studies helps to reveal the spatial, social and atmospheric dimensions and complexities of these spaces, and their relationships with intoxication and pleasure. While sharing similarities, festivals are atmospherically, spatially and experiential distinct from nightclubs and clubbing as an activity. Ruane (2017: p.75) describes them as ‘temporary self-contained worlds’ containing an ‘effervescent multisensory tapestry’ for the audience. Festivals are mostly built from the ground up over a few weeks, as a ‘deliberate construction of an ‘event of place’ (Anderton, 2019: p.112). In a departure from quantitative methodologies which have dominated festival research on drugs (see Chapter Two), a growing body of ethnographic festival-focused research has been integral for examining the inter-relationships between the contexts of time, space, social dynamics, and control in festivals, and the role and nature of intoxication within this milieu (Thomas, 2008; Bhardwa, 2014; Ruane, 2017; Dilkes-Frayne, 2016; Buck-Matthews, 2018; Turner, 2018). Where these festival ethnographies have illustrated the complexities of the socio-spatial dimensions of festival drug use in response to enforcement and control, my research aims to reveal the other side of the coin. Through ethnographic observation of the policing of festivals, I attempt to make sense of its role within this context and how the dynamics of context, with its multiplicity of space, actors and interests, shapes policing. Only by physically being in the festival could I attempt to share some of the affective and embodied parts of the context with both the audience and research participants.

Secondly, ethnography is an established methodology for understanding and accessing people’s behaviours and sensemaking across different situations, in both routine patterns and in response to the unexpected (Ybema, Yanow, Wels & Kamsteeg, 2009: p.6). Engaging the ‘bottom up’ perspective of front-line decision makers reveals how, by necessity, policies are produced and rationalised through and between people, in light of multiple contextual, personal and organisational demands and aims (Lipsky, 2010). In policing research, in-situ ethnographic observation has been instrumental for illuminating the use of police ‘discretion’,

the ‘contrasts and contradictions between the ideal and the real’, the discrepancies between what people do and what they say they do (Manning, 2014: p.522; Banton, 1964; Bittner, 1967; Skolnick, 1966). Observation has the crucial benefit of proximity to situations in which decisions and behaviours are undertaken, and enables the researcher to consider incidents which may otherwise not be recounted by participants in interview settings. It is therefore worthwhile to focus an ethnographic lens on decision making and discretion within festivals, a context which has been largely neglected until now.

Participant observation and immersion

The ‘textbook’ approach to participant observation entails long-term researcher immersion within a community and context, in order to build relationships of trust with participants, and achieve sympathetic *verstehen* for the culture. This approach has been adopted by researchers for accessing the hidden and deviant cultures of drug users and drug dealers, their everyday experiences, and interactions with formal control, producing some of the most well-renowned, significant and textually rich criminological studies (see Becker, 1963; Maher, 1997; Bourgois, 1995). Given the police are renowned to be culturally hostile to ‘outsiders’, prolonged participant observation is considered integral to police ethnography. According to Punch (1989) the task becomes ‘to circumvent the minefield of defences that protect the concealed reality of police work’ and to ‘crack the code’ of policing (p.178). ‘Good’ police ethnography is often judged on whether the researcher has been able to access the ‘backstages’ of policing, in which the police display their otherwise hidden ‘canteen culture’ (Waddington, 1999). Similarly, ethnographic studies of bouncers have revealed hidden deviancy, micro-interactional dynamics, and the cultural masculinities of the trade which structure the ‘violent encounter’ (Hobbs et al., 2003; Rigakos, 2008; Sanders, 2005). Covert and sustained full participation as a bouncer is considered to be essential for accessing these concealed worlds (Winlow et al., 2001).

Although there are challenges for sustained ethnographic immersion in the ‘textbook’ sense at music festivals, which last for a few days each year, ethnographic methodologies have been suitably adapted to studying short lived phenomena. For example, ‘focused ethnography’ is used by researchers who are already familiar with their field to conduct intensive observations for short bursts of time (Wall, 2015; Knoblauch, 2005). Musca, Perez, Rouleau, & Giordano (2012) use ‘extreme organisational ethnography’ as a framework for the in-depth study of project teams and temporary organisations, where participants focus on a common objective, and both participants and researchers are removed physically from their ordinary context and familiar worlds. Extreme organisational ethnography research can reveal how participants construct rules between them, act and interact to bring a project to fruition, how they construct their context, and interpret unexpected events that arise. Drawing on Lyng (2005) and Ferrell’s (1996) work on ‘edgework’ and adrenalin, ‘instant ethnography’ has been advocated by cultural criminologists in pursuit of *criminological verstehen*, without the need for years of immersive fieldwork (Ferrell, Hayward & Young 2015). Instant ethnography attempts to get inside the ‘immediacy of crime’ by documenting and sharing heightened emotions, sensations, ‘flashes of fear and transgression’ with participants (Ferrell, 1997). It is an ethnography of ‘moments and ephemeral meanings’ in which crime and crime control are negotiated, where the researcher becomes ‘part of the process by which meaning is made’ (Ferrell, Hayward and Young 2015: p.211; Ferrell, 2009: p.14). On a practical level, Holloway et al. (2010) see the defined festival time-space as an advantage for ethnographic researchers in delimiting the fieldwork period.

For these reasons, when designing this research, I did not consider the ephemeral nature of festival events to detract from ethnography’s potential to access the social world, actions and behaviours of festival participants in a meaningful way, and its potential to produce rich and valid insights into festival policing. Instead I saw it as an opportunity to understand policing as an ad-hoc set of practices which takes place outside of an everyday, routine context.

Situating my research within the field

An element of researcher ‘positionality’ to consider is how the research is situated within the wider field of study. In a departure of from its more critical earlier incarnations, the 21st century has seen a drive for policing to be more ‘evidence-based’, and policing researchers meeting this demand in order to acquire funding (Sherman, 1998; McLaughlin, 2007). As McLaughlin (2007) argues, this process of ‘disciplining’ in police research means researchers are expected to meet the policy demands of professional practice, and there is ‘less room for those scholars who wish to work from the outside to interrogate the state institution’ (p.ix). My research is a product of what Davies (2016) suggests is a new ‘collaborative’ phase of policing research which aims to facilitate knowledge *exchange* rather than *transfer*. Collaborative partnerships have made accessing police and police data easier for academics, and have made the police more receptive to researchers. My research was funded in part by the N8 Policing Research Partnership (N8 PRP) as part of a block research grant to facilitate collaboration, research co-production, to strengthen the evidence-base of policing and support innovation. This arrangement was beneficial in giving me the opportunity to liaise with an informal ‘police supervisor’, who facilitated my access to pre-event meetings at one festival, Allsorts. As the research direction expanded to other festivals and became more concerned with security, I began to see my work as more to do with ‘policing’ than the work of the police specifically. Aligning with Spicer (2019) and Murji (2011), I adopt the position of ‘critical friend’ of the police, in an attempt to produce a study that is of interest and useful to a number of festival stakeholders, as well as insights that are sufficiently critical and ‘capable of conceptualising policing developments against socio-cultural, economic and political transformations’ (McLaughlin, 2007: p.ix).

Tales from the muddy field: Doing festival ethnography

This section outlines my approach to data collection, from identifying festivals, negotiating access and sampling across time and space in the field. I consider some of the challenges I faced in doing festival fieldwork, and reflexively consider some of the ways my identity, as a white, young, middle-class female, and my emotions affected the research process.¹⁶

Relationship with the field and researcher 'status'

The subject of research is often aligned, in some way, to a social scientist's personal experiences and interests. Researching what is familiar helps researchers to benefit from 'insider' knowledge and experience in the field, such as faster and more willing access to the cultural codes at play. I was an 'outsider' to the agencies which I observed for this research, but prior festival experience gave me a level of 'insider' understanding of the environment, its challenges and drug use within it. My familiarity with festivals, and belief in them as culturally and socially important spaces, was a motivator for taking on this research. Festivals are one of my regular summer leisure-time pursuits. My interest in festivals emerged initially in my mid-teens, kickstarting my love-affair with *Glastonbury Festival*, strengthened by seasonal catering work at events in my early 20s. My experience was beneficial in equipping me for fieldwork, in terms of understanding the physical demands. I had learnt from many packing mistakes in the past (too many uncomfortable clothes, forgetting sun cream, wet-wipes, a hat, dry shampoo etc.). Although it was still daunting going alone, my whiteness and middle-classness helped me to feel comfortable and not out-of-place within festival audiences, which predominantly are comprised of people with a similar identity and background to me (Chowdhury, 2019).

Researchers in nightlife contexts have generally avoided reflexive engagement concerning if or how their own drug use may have shaped the research process. Given the illegality of drugs and stigmatisation associated with their use, there are legitimate concerns for

¹⁶ I was in my mid-twenties when I started this project and conducted fieldwork, and middle-class as a second generation university student.

the impact of this discussion for career prospects (Ross et al., 2020; Blackman, 2007). As a consequence, self-censorship has been the preferable option for junior academics, which means that often reflexive engagement in club research and other drug use settings is ‘obscured by a façade of respectability’ (Measham and Moore, 2006: p.22; Blackman, 2016). These tensions have recently been reiterated by Ross et al.(2020), who consider that ‘deeper reflection and conversation on disclosure of drug use would be beneficial both for academic rigor and for challenging the stigma associated with drug use’ (p.4). In answering this call, researchers have been ‘coming out’ as people who use drugs (Hart, 2021; Zampini et al., 2021). Recognising there is a ‘damned if you do, damned if you don’t’ paradox to this issue, my reflections are measured. As a regular patron of festival, rave, and dance music scenes, I consider myself to be drug ‘savvy’, in the sense of familiarity with recreational drug use settings, and how drugs are used within them. I care about these spaces, the interests, and the welfare of those who participate in them. Given my constructionist research approach, I do not see this starting point as a barrier to my ability to conduct rigorous and sympathetic research of the social world of festival policing.

Accessing the field

An important early step was to define the field of study. Atkinson (2015: p.26) reminds us that ‘fields are not bounded entities [...]. We create the fields we study, in collaboration with hosts and informants, through the research we enact’. As described in Chapter Two, the concept ‘music festival’ can be difficult to define. They are ‘fuzzy fields’ with different meanings for the range of key actors involved in them (Nadai and Maeder, 2005). The days which constitute ‘the event’ are, of course, vitally important for observing policing in action, but the ‘festival’ field is much more extensive. Early on in fieldwork, it became apparent that festivals involve a plethora of planning meetings (both inter-agency and intra-agency), phone calls, emails, document and contract exchanges, licensing committee meetings and presentations in the year leading up to

the event. As this research will explore, festivals are interrelated with people, money, and information, so events and meetings could be better thought of as focused points of coming together and activity within the annual ‘festival season’ field. I took the approach of working backwards from the concept of a ‘festival event’, as defined in Chapter Two, by seeking out a range of potential fieldwork sites which were ticketed greenfield events, with amplified music in their programming. From there I sought to negotiate access to pre-event planning meetings, official documents, and correspondence.

I took a pragmatic approach to fieldwork site access negotiation in the first instance, following Spradley’s (1980) recommendation to prioritise simplicity, accessibility, unobtrusiveness, and permissibility. I was introduced to two industry gatekeepers by my supervisor, Professor Fiona Measham, which helped me to negotiate access to four festivals which were varied in size, duration, location, and target audience demographic, referred to by their pseudonyms ‘Allsorts’, ‘Teenparty’, ‘Daypicnic’ and ‘Familyfest’. Given the association with dance music and drug use outlined in Chapter Two, I sought to negotiate access to a smaller dance music festival for comparison. I used ‘snowball sampling’ through participants I had met at Allsorts pre-event meetings, in order to approach the management of another event. Pedro, the director of the security company (SC1), recommended approaching the event directors of ‘Dancevillage’ and facilitated my introduction to them.¹⁷ I was grateful for this assistance, however, it raised the issue that three out of six festivals used the same primary security contractor (SC1). I wanted to ensure I could observe the working practices of other security firms. In 2019, I recruited a further festival, ‘Greenfields’, motivated by my attendance at this event in a personal capacity two years earlier. My personal experience here contrasted to my research observations in 2018 at other festivals in terms of their gate policies. In order to do this, I attended an industry event and invited one of the directors to participate in interview,

¹⁷ Pedro and SC1 are pseudonyms.

and afterwards requested permission to conduct observations. Within these successes, there were several other failed attempts to negotiate access, testament to the commercial sensitivities of festival drug policy (Martinus et al., 2010).

The benefit of observing multiple events is that I could trace festival policing in a multitude of iterations. I considered this to be important for meeting my research aim, especially given the role of context to enforcement, decision making and drug use practices and prevalence. Observing different festivals throughout the season enabled me to appreciate the interrelationships of people and information between events, and returning to two of these festivals in the second year of fieldwork was helpful in considering how policing changed over time at the same events. This illustrates that multi-sited ethnography is useful for facilitating comparison across contexts, and can provide answers to different questions like ‘elements of a puzzle’, which can be synthesised to form a complete picture (Nadai and Maeder, 2005).

The limitations of my approach to fieldwork sites are that my pursuit of breadth potentially came at the expense of depth. As Van Duijn (2020) describes, the ‘segmented’ field in multi-sited ethnography can make it difficult to negotiate and renegotiate access given the multitude of actors. As a result, access permitted by event management fluctuated between events. At Teenparty I was not allowed to talk to the police and had limited interaction with security operatives, except by appointment. In comparison, the ‘N8’ collaboration structure was significant in facilitating police access by way of approval from ‘Gold’ and ‘Silver’ commanders at Allsorts and Daypicnic, especially as one police participant from Allsorts, Austin, acted as my ‘police supervisor’ in the first year.¹⁸ I was thus invited to some planning meetings and ‘Safety Advisory Group’ (SAG) meetings.¹⁹ Between April and June in 2018, I attended three SAG meetings and one police-only planning meeting for Allsorts, and one

¹⁸ In the police command structure, Gold is the strategic commander, Silver is the tactical commander and Bronze is the operational commander (College of Policing, 2013).

¹⁹ SAG meetings are pre-event advisory meetings between agencies with an interest in the festival.

planning meeting for Familyfest between police, security and management. In 2019 I attended one SAG meeting for Daypicnic and two SAG meetings for Allsorts. Even though I was granted access to pre-event meetings at Allsorts and full site access, access was still partial in the sense that I do not have a full picture of the meetings, negotiations, discussions, and activities which were hidden.

Ethical considerations: Anonymity and confidentiality

I gained prior approval for my research from the Durham University Sociology Department Ethics Committee, which applies the British Sociological Association's (BSA) (2017) standard for ethics in social research. Consistent with BSA (2017) guidance, assurances of anonymity and confidentiality were made to all participants and all festivals implicated in the study. Doing my utmost to minimise the risk of harm to participants, and to respect reassurances made in respect of access, festival names have been anonymised and great efforts have been made to remove identifying information. Festival drug use is an extremely politically and commercially sensitive issue for festivals, so falling short on this risks irreparable commercial and reputational damage. As a researcher, it is my responsibility to not 'spoil' the already scantily populated field of festival research on drugs (Seale et al., 2006: p.222). The importance of this was reinforced when Greenfields requested me to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement shortly prior to my observational fieldwork. Not wanting my observations to be unduly influenced by this while undertaking fieldwork, I declined, which resulted in tentative last minute negotiations, renewed reassurances of anonymity, and a commitment to ensure the festival are happy with the level of anonymity prior to submission of the thesis. A limitation of this guarantee is the possibility that some of my participants may be able to identify themselves, and potentially their co-participants, from the data presented in my findings where it relates to particular interactions

and conversations which took place with and between them and other participants at the same time.

Festival fieldwork sites

In order to strike a balance between the necessity to preserve anonymity and the research focus on the dynamics of context in festival policing, I have included a table (*Table 1*)²⁰ which describes some key characteristics and features of the festivals I attended, and in which years I attended. The characteristics are useful for illustrating the breadth in the festival ‘type’ that my research explores.

<i>Table 1</i>	Teenparty	Daypicnic	Dancevillage	Familyfest	Allsorts	Greenfields
Capacity Small: <15,000 Medium: 15,000-75,000 Large: 75,000>	Large	Large	Small	Small	Medium	Small
Camping?	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Demographic	Teens and young adults*	Teens and young adults	Young adults	Young adults, families	Teens, young adults, families, older adults	Young adults, families, older adults
Music genres represented	Rock, hip-hop, electronic music	Electronic and pop music	Electronic music	Indie, electronic music	Indie, rock, electronic music	World, indie, electronic music
Other arts represented?*	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Location	Rural	Urban	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural
Duration	3 days	2 days	4 days	3 or 4 days	3 or 4 days	4 days
Season position*	Late	Early	Mid	Mid	Mid	Late
Year attended	2018	2018 and 2019	2018	2018	2018 and 2019	2019

²⁰ * Young adults’ means people in their 20s and early 30s. ‘Other arts’ means comedy, exercise, craft, educational talks, circus and other activities. ‘Season position’ refers to the timing of the event in the summer.

Research participants

Table 2 outlines the participants mentioned explicitly by their pseudonym throughout this thesis, the festivals which they were involved in to some degree, and their role in the festival. The table is included to assist the reader, rather than being an exhaustive list of all participants. There are many other participants who contributed significantly to my understanding of festival policing and greatly facilitated my fieldwork. There other participants referred to in this thesis who remain pseudonymless due to the brevity of our interactions and my recording omissions.

<i>Table 2</i>	Greenfields	Daypicnic	Allsorts	Familyfest	Dancevillage	Teenparty
Senior Event Management team	Greg Tina Alice Gavin	Clive			Max Dan	Sarah
		George		Francesca		
			Jess			
Welfare (W) & Drug Checking (DC)	Gareth (W)		Maria (DC) Jacob (DC) Grace (DC)		Nick (W)	Ben (W)
Security	Harrison Chrissy Alistair	Bob Andy	Michael Pedro Ellen	Sammy Liam Bradley	Harry Jack Tom	Amanda
Police	Ricky	Patrick Nigel	Austin John	Paula		
Festivalgoers	Michelle Kyle	Max			Miles	

Ethnographic methods

My primary methods were participant observation and in-situ 'ethnographic interviews'. The term 'participant observation' encompasses a range of roles for the researcher in the field, depending on the level of participation and the nature of observation (Gold, 1958). My lack of 'insider' status with festival agencies involved in policing meant that I primarily adopted a passive, non-participant observer role. My objective was to record a 'running description of events, people, things heard and overheard, conversations among people, conversations with people' (Lofland & Lofland, 1995: p.93). I conducted a significant (and difficult to quantify) number of unstructured 'ethnographic interviews' and 'conversations with a purpose' during observational fieldwork (Burgess, 1984: p.102). Mirroring Tutenges' (2010) experience, it became clear early on that drugs and drug policy were topical issues, as my presence prompted participants to share their stories, experiences, and opinions on the subject with me. As such, many conversations were 'active interviews', with a view to making sense of incidents, behaviours, and interests (Holstein & Gubrium, 1997). Many of these conversations were spontaneous, improvised, informal and unstructured. Although generally guided by the theme of drug policing, I endeavoured to be led by my interview participants, and 'to provide an environment conducive to the production of the range and complexity of meanings that address relevant issues, and not be confined by predetermined agendas' (Ibid. p.123).

Without an active observer role, I sought to reach a degree of 'criminological verstehen' (Ferrell, 1997) through ethnographic participation within the festival environment, sharing some of the physical and emotional demands with participants, such as sleeping in a tent, battling the elements, and braving the 'portaloos' for days on end. Most days of fieldwork I conducted observations for 10-12 hours at a time, with some extended periods of up to 18 hours, and restarted observations the following morning. I estimate that my active periods of observation came to approximately 250 hours, taking into account time off and sleep. I

conducted observations on every event day, where permitted by the festival, in order to consider to how policing changed over the event.

In addition to on-site observations and interviews, I conducted eleven (n=11) semi-structured interviews out of festival time. I intended these interviews to perform different functions. With some participants who I met on-site, I arranged an interview to follow up on incident and moments that I had observed during observations, but without wanting to interrupt their work at the time. These interviews were experimental in a sense, to see how events which occurred on site were recalled and understood, away from the messiness and intensity of the event setting. Interviews with senior event management and police were conducted to understand the interests, drivers, barriers and justifications for drug policing approaches and decisions. Nine interviews were conducted after the first summer season of festivals, between September 2018 and May 2019, and two after the second festival season in 2019. Six participants were senior event management. Of these, two participants, George and Clive, were involved with Allsorts, Daypicnic and Familyfest. Sarah with Teenparty. Dan with Dancevillage and Greg with Greenfields. Oliver directed a small festival which I had attended previously in a leisure capacity. Two participants, Ben and Gareth, were directors of welfare at Teenparty and Greenfields respectively. Two participants were police officers: Alan was the Gold Commander for Allsorts, and Joel was a Force Drug Expert at Teenparty. One participant, Richard, was a security consultant with experience of festivals other to my fieldwork sites, who I recruited based on the recommendations of other participants. These interviews drew on my participants' experiences with my fieldwork sites, and on their expertise across the festival industry more generally. Interviews were conducted in person, at a convenient time and place for the participants, or on the phone where I had met the participant before.

With the permission of document authors and where made available to me, I collected and read relevant policy documents and agreements in advance of observations. These were helpful in informing talking points in interviews and observations for some events, in terms of comparing policy as formally expressed with policy as negotiated and implemented, which is the emphasis of this project.

Researcher risk

Ethnographic research within drug use and supply contexts alongside ‘active criminals’ is unquestionably an ‘untidy business’, necessitating researchers to employ strategies to negotiate morality, to maintain confidentiality and to manage the risks to personal safety of themselves and others (Pearson, 1999: p.483). The appropriate and sensitive management of risk is especially pertinent in licensed leisure and night-life contexts, as ethnographic researchers have highlighted the cultures of violence associated with bouncers and their interactions with intoxicated individuals (Winlow, Hobbs, Lister & Hadfield, 2001). Reflecting on their experiences researching in drug and sex work markets, Bacon and Sanders (2016) emphasise the need to be sensitive and responsive to unpredictable situational exigencies as they arise. While the exact nature of risks that arise might be unpredictable, there are a number of practical steps and strategies that researchers of precarious contexts can adopt to minimise risks of harm to themselves, in particular, maintaining physical distance. In order to maintain ‘psychological safety’, Williams et al.(2002) recommend creating ‘safety zones’ of physical space surrounding the researcher, by ensuring there is social acceptance amongst participants, and by paying attention to hazards from the physical environment. While researching alongside drug detectives in the night-time economy, Bacon recalls remaining in the police car to avoid a potentially violent interaction, although his decision to do this came at the expense of not ‘backing up’ his participant which could have damaged the research relationship (Bacon &

Sanders, 2016). This highlights that conducting ethical research involves engaging in ongoing reflection on the relationships and responsibilities the researcher owes to participants.

Equipped with my personal experience at music festivals, I anticipated and prepared for health-related hazards of the physical environment such as sunburn and dehydration. However, I felt less prepared for the emotional demands and sense of vulnerability derived from being a female ‘lone researcher’ within a chaotic nightlife environment (Bhardwa, 2013). In order to help me feel more psychologically safe, I arranged a daily in-person check-in with my supervisor and another colleague who were present in professional capacities at the first two festival fieldwork sites, and remained in regular contact via text at others. This check-in system helped me to discuss and reflect on my approach to potentially risky situations as they emerged while I was still in the field, and to adapt my approach accordingly. How I adapted to particular situations as they arose is discussed throughout this section.

Presentation in the field

Decisions on how I presented myself in the field were made in an attempt to balance the expectations and perceptions of the different agencies I researched with, and the wider festival context. I endeavoured to present myself as a neutral third party, unaffiliated with any particular agency and the festival management team. One rationale for this was to gain the trust of participants from different agencies, who may not have trusting inter-agency relationships with one another. I also wanted to be taken seriously by the professional agencies I was researching, which can be challenging for nightlife researchers, and I was sometimes confronted with the ‘ironic insinuation’ of passing off fun and leisure as work (Rief, 2009: p.13; Tutenges, 2010). In a bid to balance these interests, to distinguish myself as a university researcher and remind participants who I was, I adopted a ‘professional armour’ consisting of ‘Durham University Criminology’ department T-shirts (England, 1994: p.81). Otherwise I

wore casual, comfortable, jolly clothing which felt in-keeping with the festival setting. This approach backfired at Greenfields, however, as my ‘Criminology’ T-shirt was considered to be inappropriate for the environment, and I was asked to change by the event management. I had not appreciated that the word might have been a source of distress or concern for the audience, and out-of-place amongst the carnivalesque atmosphere. This highlights how researcher presentation, style and demeanour can influence the perception of neutrality amongst research participants, and the importance of this for maintaining researcher safety and social access in the field (Williams et al., 1992).

Ethnographers describe the challenges of writing fieldnotes in ways which minimise the ‘Hawthorne effect’, wherein the validity of data is tainted by the researcher presence (Miller & Tewksbury, 2010). For example, Cook and Crang (1995: p.34) describe the phenomenon of an ‘ethnographer’s bladder’, arising from frequent trips to the toilet to write jottings in privacy. My approach to taking jottings was to carefully consider the context and interaction at hand. Given the lack of private space in festivals besides my tent, I found that recording jottings on my phone, either using the ‘notes’ app or making an audio-recording, was relatively inconspicuous compared to making handwritten notes. I visibly made hand-written jottings during meetings, continuing my role as ‘note-taker’ that I established in pre-event meetings (Emerson et al., 2011). When using a notepad, I followed Bacon’s golden rule (2016: p.87) that I would be ‘descriptive rather than analytical’ and I would ‘never write down anything that I would not want my participants to read’.

Sampling people, time, and space

My sampling across time and space was informed by two objectives. Firstly, to divide my time between agencies (the police, security, and welfare, drug checking) in order to access multi-agency perspectives. Secondly, to ‘be there’ during the moments in which crime control were negotiated and ‘particularly salient periods and junctures’, as advised by my participants

(Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007: p.37). I primarily structured my observations around Events Liaison Team (ELT) meetings at midday, 6pm and midnight each day of the festival. Taking place in 'backstage' management offices, ELT meetings involved representatives from each key agency on-site. As I discovered at Dancevillage, the importance of these meetings became evident in times of emergency and crisis, where something was going wrong that needed a proactive multi-agency response. It became apparent that participants used the time before and after ELT meetings to engage in discussions with other agencies, so I accompanied participants on their way to and from the meetings where possible. Similarly, I realised that inter-agency negotiation happened shortly after SAG meetings had officially finished, so I often ended up lingering around after the meetings to listen in on these conversations. Other salient periods included the gate during *ingress* periods, usually on day one or two of a camping festival, and in welfare facilities at night when there were 'peak' level periods of intoxication.

The rest of the time I aimed to spend with security and police doing 'routine' activities such as patrol, and proactive supply-side enforcement. To achieve this, I purposely left a great deal of my time unstructured, giving me the flexibility to arrange ethnographic interviews, to 'follow the people', and their advice about where to go and when (Marcus, 1995). I overtly 'shadowed' security management as they walked around the site, conducting 'conversations with a purpose' about drugs and the issues of the day (Trouille and Tavory, 2016). These 'walk along' or 'go along' interviews connected place and time with the situated feelings and actions of my participants (Kusenback, 2003). They were revealing of the 'micro-geographies' of festivalspace from the perspective of security operatives, such what they considered to be the 'dodgy' parts of the campsite and requiring of additional surveillance (Elwood and Martin, 2000). As shadowing security management often led to them being called on the radio to respond to incidents, this strategy helped to lead me to the moments of crime control negotiation as they unfolded.

My approach to fieldwork meant that some days were physically demanding, with hours of walking followed by disrupted sleep, day after day. Whereas I had intended to spend more time with security at night, often by night time I felt exhausted and totally saturated by the day's observations. I cringe at recalling one awkward conversation with a participant, Max, where my exhaustion led to a total mind blank on basic geography. I had to accept that I could not observe 'round the clock', and that my observations could only ever be partial and mediated by my human capacity (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). My experience was consistent with that of other researchers who note the substantial cumulative effect of sleep deprivation, and the intense physical and emotional demands of being a lone ethnographic researcher in festivals and licensed leisure (Ruane, 2017; Hadfield, 2006; Bhardwa, 2013).

Social access and building relationships

Even where my physical access to spaces had been agreed, as Hornsby-Smith (1993:53) notes, 'getting in', does not always equate to social access and 'getting on'. Social access at each festival had to be negotiated with each agency individually on-site. Researching across different agencies and having such a relatively short time in the event presented challenges for establishing relationships with participants. My strategy for securing social access was to spend extended periods in the same place, while attempting to not get in the way. Spending hours at a time with welfare services one night at Dancevillage, my role became 'observer-as-participant', where I made tea and chatted to welfare visitors in a bid to make myself useful (Brewer, 2000: p.84). As welfare teams were often comprised of volunteers on an ad-hoc basis, the separation from ordinary working routines and practices facilitated social access because there were no 'real natives' with a hidden culture to crack (Hannerz, 2003: p.210), and I was able to 'blend in' as one of the strangers in the welfare tent (Van Duijn, 2020).

In comparison, I faced more difficulties in social access with the police. Police researchers describe how establishing trust in order to gain social access can take an extensive

amount of time, commitment, social accommodation, and responding appropriately to ‘tests’ as informal gateways to the ‘backstage’ (Wicks, 2021; Souhami, 2020; Bacon, 2016). Generally, I found police participants to be helpful and willing to share their perspectives, mostly in one-to-one conversation, when I became a more familiar face over the event. I do not claim to have established the level of trust, relationship with any festival police to sufficiently have penetrated a hidden ‘festival police culture’, and I understand that the perspectives shared with me may be a reflection of the ‘official line’ rather than backstage perspectives.

I found my ‘outsider’ status to festival agencies be an ongoing challenge for social access. On reflection, during the fieldwork period, I felt anxious, and echoing Bott’s (2010) experience, a ‘self-conscious awareness of my lack of experience’ (p.163). At times I felt like a leech, not conferring benefit, or contributing to the festival. This feeling was intensified by being a young woman without any ‘insider’ experience in an industry which is dominated by men at the very top. I was acutely aware of the imbalanced power dynamic between myself and some participants in festival management positions. A source of concern was that management could easily and quickly revoke access if they found me annoying or simply changed their minds. This made me self-conscious at meetings if I got there early and took a seat, if it meant that someone who had a *real* job had to stand. I walked, sometimes unsuccessfully, an awkward line of ‘self-monitoring’, trying to not be totally redundant and to understand when a contribution would be worthwhile, and knowing when to keep quiet (Goffman, 1959). For example, during a pre-festival multi-agency meeting I attempted to join in the table discussions, and quickly realised that I was overstepping.

Fieldwork rarely became less daunting, as I found the ‘dip in and out’ nature of multi-sited fieldwork to renew these anxieties before each festival (Bhardwa, 2013). Although I felt comfortable in the festival context, my outsider status amongst festival agencies and the festival audience alike meant I didn’t ‘fit in’ with spaces in the festival or backstage. Over time, I

successfully built friendly rapport with some participants from SC1, and seeing familiar faces over the season made me more comfortable and ‘confident in my skin’ (Bott, 2010: p.166). As a consequence of these emotions, my comfort with participants influenced how I sampled in the field. I spent less time in Event Control where I felt ‘in the way’ of senior management, and more time ‘on the ground’ in the event with security operatives. On reflection, I feel a sense of indebtedness to the kindness of participants from SC1, who adopted me into their communal spaces and even fed me at their expense on several occasions. This speaks to the difficulties of balancing the pursuit of *verstehen*, and maintaining good research-participant relationships, without getting too close and losing critical distance, especially in challenging or extreme fieldwork sites where these relationships are well received for increasing researcher comfort.

That being said, I consider my outsider status as an independent drugs researcher to have generated some interesting insights. I had frank conversations with participants from different agencies about drugs and their personal experiences. I had a number of conversations with police officers about the deficits of prohibition and drug law reform. Additionally, some of these difficulties I experienced in building relationships over this short time gave me first-hand insight into the challenges of partnership work in the festival environment. For example, the police’s shift patterns at Allsorts meant that I sometimes had to start again from scratch each day with building relationships with police officers who I hadn’t met before. These insights may not have been accessible had I been too closely affiliated to any one agency.

‘Confessionary tales’ and situated ethics

The research objective to engage the perspectives and decision making of participants was influential in my adoption of a mostly ‘overt’ research role, coupled with the BSA (2017) standard of ethics which emphasises a preference for ensuring voluntary, informed consent is obtained from participants. Prior to on-site observations, I provided a participant information sheet and consent form to a number of ‘key informant’ participants who I expected to have a

sustained research relationship with. Before formal pre-event meetings, I asked the meeting chair to distribute the information sheet to participants via email, and at the start of meetings used an ‘opt out’ by show of hands if participants did not want anything they said to be noted.²¹ The use of this consent procedure felt appropriate given the formal context. Conversely, while on-site, I endeavoured to take informed consent verbally because using paper forms felt out-of-place within the informal environment. In the first event I carried forms in my bag, until realising the impracticality of taking consent this way in the rain, standing in a field with few surfaces. My approach was to give a simple explanation that I was interested in ‘how policing is done at festivals and why it is done in the way it is’ and emphasised that participation was voluntary. In spite of my efforts, it is difficult to know how ‘voluntary’ any consent was given the hierarchical structure of all the organisations I worked with, especially the police, where I had senior level authorisation for fieldwork. Arguably, the idea that full, informed consent is achievable, or sometimes even desirable, in qualitative criminological research is a fallacy. Information sheets and consent forms ‘do the right thing’ and ‘play the game’, but once they have been read and signed, participants cannot consent to *how* their data will be interpreted (Winlow and Measham, 2016).

When applied in practice, general ethical principles, and terms such as ‘consent’, ‘harm’ and ‘risk’ require a degree of interpretation and necessitate researchers to make in-situ judgements about how to manage and apply them (Bacon & Sanders, 2016). Criminological researchers emphasise that the ‘messy’ reality of conducting ethnographic research demands a situated and ‘relational’ approach to incidents and interactions that might occur (Calvey, 2019; 2008; Pearson, 1993). Often researchers must make decisions which balance risks to themselves, with the interests of producing useful research which captures and interprets the social world under study as vividly as they possibly can (Miller & Tewkesbury, 2010). Situated decisions on

²¹ There were no opt-outs.

ethics are not neutral because they involve balancing an assessment of harms and violations with the researcher's own interests, which means that some decisions made in the field will inevitably be controversial on reflection (Miller & Tewkesbury, 2010).

In the endeavour to avoid presenting a 'glossed over' or 'sanitised' (Calvey, 2008: p.909) account of my research, the fieldnote excerpt 'Campsite raid' describes my attempt to observe a proactive policing operation at Allsorts in 2019, on the Saturday afternoon.

Fieldnote: Campsite raid, Saturday at Allsorts 2019

I was at a loose end, having tried chatting to security operatives in the catering tent without any luck: spirits were low, everyone was wet and tired from the relentless rain. I was soggy, lonely, and frustrated, and I wanted to go home. I resorted to walking around the festival site, to see if I might bump into anyone I knew. I had nearly given up and thought I'd try again at the security hub. On my walk back to the hub, I saw Liam, a security manager, and one of the drug squad police officers I recognised from the day before, along with several other police and security marching towards me. Around seven or eight in total. They walked straight past me, so I turned around and started walking alongside Liam, asking what was happening, given they were marching with such a purpose. "*We're responding to something in the campsite*" is the only information he gave me. Great, I thought, finally something to do, so I started following. The police drug squad officer turned around and shouted back at me, "*There's a risk of violence with this one, you should hang back here, I can't be responsible if anything happens to you*". I followed them for around 10 mins, hanging back around 10 metres away, but fully visible, to see where they were going. The drug squad officer turned back and gestured to me to let me know he knew I was there (I had not attempted to be covert, I was quite clearly following). After some back and forth gesturing, the drug squad officer agreed to let me observe from a distance. They went down a track, leaving the backstage area, and stopped next to a fence which separated the track from a campsite close to the arena. Security operatives

helped to undo the fencing, so there was a gap which they piled through. I missed their initial arrival into the campsite, being so far away and having my view blocked by fabric over the fence, so I moved to find a viewpoint where I could see into the campsite, and tried to make sense of what was going on. Police and security were standing amongst a group of tents, talking to several teenage boys. They began searching the tents one by one. After an hour or so, two sniffer dog handlers arrived with their dogs, and started searching the cluster of tents one by one. Four teenagers were escorted one by one through the fence, out of the campsite in handcuffs by police, and transported in a police vehicle waiting on the track. The police lined up the remaining seven teenage boys along the fence (which I was on the other side of, looking into the campsite). One of the boys, noticing me watching, asked if I was “*Enjoying the show?*”. Security operatives asked them to empty their pockets and patted them down one by one. Overall, I stood for two hours by myself in the pouring rain watching this unfold.

The fieldnote excerpt illustrates how I applied a situational and negotiated approach to ethics, based on a balance of factors. In this instance, voluntary consent to my observation was not initially established, but a negotiated consent agreement emerged over time. I was not trying to covertly hide my presence by ‘stalking’ (Büscher and Urry, 2009), and in line with the concerns of the drug squad officer, I mitigated the risk of harm to myself by physical distance and remaining on the track side of the fence. I felt reassured that my covert presence towards ‘the boys’ was not invading their privacy (the raid was publicly visible to anyone in the campsite, I did not have a better view than anyone else in the campsite, and I could not hear what was being said or see very well). Taking these factors into account, I made the decision to observe the incident because it was an important moment for illustrating aspects of the festival’s drug policy, and one which I wanted to capture in my data. Undoubtedly, my emotional response

to tiredness, frustrations, and the challenges of observing until that point in the day motivated me to observe some policing in 'action'.

This incident also reveals how, in spite of my efforts, it was really difficult to plan 'being there' during instances of crime control negotiation, particularly where these occurred sporadically. I mostly heard details about 'chance encounters' with suppliers at ELTs after the fact. Even when I was lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time, such instances as described in 'Campsite raid' made it very stark how far I was considered an 'outsider outsider' (Brown, 1996) by agencies working in the space. An important limitation of my work is that many decisions, incidents and interactions that I recorded were second hand accounts, as retold and interpreted by participants. Despite my best efforts to corroborate information, second hand accounts are likely to be skewed and partial, at best.

Covert observation

A more accurate description of my researcher role was that it fluctuated on a continuum between 'overt' and 'covert'. As a white, female in my twenties, I felt able to blend in with festival audiences when it suited me to do so. Often while walking around the festival I slipped into a passive and covert 'voyeur' role (Norris, 1993). I considered this approach to be generally ethical, given I was covertly observing what was publicly accessible to the audience. On a more practical level, it was impossible to be overt to everyone I interacted with or saw all the time. Taking a 'semi-covert' approach, I was often overt to festival staff but covert to the people they interacted with (Norris, 1993). As Punch (1986) argues, in a large organisation engaged in constant interaction with a considerable number of clients, it is physically impossible to obtain consent from everyone. These difficulties are even more pronounced in 'chaotic' nightlife environments, rife with intoxication (Tutenges, 2010), where it would be contextually inappropriate to attempt to explain the research in taking consent, thus disrupting the

environment (Winlow and Measham, 2012). This is why at Teenparty I found myself lingering behind a bush to watch security operatives searching tents in one of the staff campsites.

With the objective of minimising the risk of harm to myself and to my participants, I adopted a semi-covert role in situations where security operatives interacted with the potential offenders. Pragmatically, I was wary of escalating a tense situation by attempting to explain my presence and the research, which would likely get in the way of police and security trying to do their job. The fieldnote excerpt from Allsorts in 2018 describes how this approach sometimes backfired:

Fieldnote: Aggressive male, Allsorts, 2018

I was shadowing Michael, a security manager, when he got a radio message about an 'aggressive male' who had been violent towards security when he was stopped for not having a wristband. Security who stopped him had taken him to the gate, and wanted Michael to meet them there. When we got there, the aggressive male was surrounded by four security operatives in public view, just next to the gate. He did not resemble the young, middle class festival demographic. He was skinny, middle-aged, wearing dirty jersey shorts and a black hoody. He had a broad Glaswegian accent, very short, balding grey hairs and very few teeth. He was explaining to the security operatives that his wristband had fallen off and was clearly agitated, so I chose to be covert in order to not distress him further. I stood near to the interaction, wanting to hear what the operatives said, but not too close to mitigate the risk harm to myself or get in the way. He became aggressive with security, and kept asking who I was. I felt scared, unsure what to say to him. I did not want to increase his agitation or make the job more difficult for security. I stayed quiet and I tried not to look at him, in an attempt to indicate I that I was more interested I security than him. Michael appeased him by telling him I was a steward.

This incident illustrates a dilemma I faced in making situated ethical decisions, and the necessity of presenting oneself in the field with careful consideration of the ongoing interaction. While taking a semi-covert role, my attempt at presenting myself in a ‘neutral’ way through my clothing made my role ambiguous in the interaction, and created confusion for the man being searched. This incident heightened my attention to self-presentation in the field, and made me consider how to ‘blend in’ where appropriate. After consulting how to manage these interactions with my supervisor, I borrowed a high-vis security vest from SC1 to keep in my bag, so I could quickly blend in as part of the security team in future incidents. The fear and uncertainty I experienced here was influential in my future interactions with festivalgoers, where I kept a greater distance from incidents to avoid a similar reaction. In the festival, with its multiplicity of people, stakeholders and interests, researchers must pay careful attention to self-presentation and be willing to adapt to the situation at hand.

Data analysis and ethnographic ‘textwork’

This section aims to reflexively examine my approach to the data analysis process I undertook in constructing the empirical work presented in this thesis. Ethnographers pay attention to a whole host of behaviours and activity displayed by participants, which constitute their routines, rituals, moments of unexpected crises, rules and decisions, yet not everything is written down in fieldnotes and swathes of what is written down does not make it into the final thesis. Ethnographic ‘textwork’ is a product of selection, interpretation and construction about what the researcher considers to constitute ‘real’ and worthy fieldwork data, as influenced by research funding, the anticipated audience, the need to ‘persuade’ that the account is a good representation of a social world (Souhami, 2020).

Data analysis

My analytical approach was thematic, as informed by the literature and by my sense of important issues that arose from being in the events. The first stage of analysis was to translate my jottings and recordings into fuller notes in 'Word' documents as soon after each event as possible, and to transcribe the interviews. My fieldnotes prioritised descriptions of behaviours and interactions between agencies and festivalgoers in relation to drugs, the interactions between participants from different agencies, and participants perspectives of each other, their role in drug control, and on drugs in general. During this process I made analytical notes, reflexive notes, and highlighted emergent patterns in the data as potential themes. After the first season of events, I printed out the word documents and physically cut and pasted key chunks of data under headings. Together this process helped me to identify talking points for the interviews, and to identify areas for further investigation the following festival season. For example, I found that my presence prompted security operatives to share stories from other festivals that '*I should definitely go to*' because of the drugs, gang-related and crime issues they faced there. At first I took this advice literally, making notes of festivals to attempt to contact for access in the future. Through analysis, I realised that these stories were common, and were insights into security operatives understandings of their job and the risks involved. This process helped to identify areas which I had a lot of data on, compared to issues which could be explored in more depth. While my observations in the first season were oriented towards the use of discretion, by the final festival, I spent as much time as possible in the central command centre where policy responses were formulated, rather than observing integrations between security and audience.

After the final festival and the end of the fieldwork period, I compiled my notes within a writing app called 'Scrivener' which functions as a binder for all types document. Within this app, I made sub-documents of themes and sub-themes, comprising of data excerpts from my fieldnotes and transcripts. From there I drew out some second and third order themes, but it

was through writing about themes that I began to discern more specific key issues. As such I agree with Madden (2010: p.153) that, ‘analysis and interpretation are ongoing and unfolding aspects of the ethnographic data... the act of ethnographic writing is a form of collating, reporting and interpreting at the same time’. I wrote mini-discussions of the significance of incidents, how they connected with the theoretical literature and to other incidents or themes. This led to me identifying themes such as ‘discretion’, ‘partnership work’, ‘risk perspectives’ and ‘risk mitigation’, which cut across the three analysis chapters in this thesis to varying extents. In the process of writing and putting together the thesis in a readable, coherent thesis, I adopted a structure based on the ‘3:Ps’ pillars, which I consider these to represent core festival security and policing ‘approaches’.

Constructing the story

The craft of good ethnographic writing is in the construction of persuasive, well evidenced, storytelling. There is a ‘sweet spot’ which lies between presenting a sense of validity, and answering ‘the literary challenge that is rich and persuasive description’ (Madden, 2010: p.154). Part of this task lies in appropriately balancing instances of the ‘mundane’ with the ‘exceptional’. Souhami (2020) is critical of ethnographic policing research for prioritising moments of action, excitement and crime control, at the expense of the mundane, everyday realities of police work, in constructing a compelling story. Rowe and Rowe (2021) argue that the role of time spent by police during quiet times and ‘nothing spaces’ is as important to consider alongside moments of action and drama in the production of police culture. In my ethnographic textwork, I attempt to balance the attention I give to commonplace and minor interactions and exciting, unusual and unexpected incidents. An appreciation for the mundane is integral for making sense of the unusual incidents and moments of crisis, which stood out as important in my analysis. It was in these critical moments that the competing interests, tensions

and rationales of drug policy were negotiated. In Chapter Seven, an incident following an ELT meeting (which I refer to as ‘Fentanylgate’) is described as it generated negotiation of the festivals’ drug policy approach. Experiencing and appreciating the mundanity of normal ELT meetings helped me to understand this as an important time of crisis. In their narrative ethnography of the U.S. ‘prepping’ subculture, Mills and Fleetwood (2019) argue that *criminological verstehen* can be enhanced by sharing in sensory moments and excitement and exhilaration that preppers experience, as situated within the usual drudgery of the activity. From this perspective, both moments of excitement and boredom are important, complementary facets of the story to be told.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have traced my methodological approach, from conception to construction. My objective is to convince my readership that this study is both valid and rigorous, and reflective of the world under study as best as I could access it. I advocate for the suitability of my chosen ethnographic methodology in meeting my research aim to critically explore the approaches to drug policing which are commonly used within music festival settings. Using examples of research from the fields of policing, festival and drug studies, I illustrate that ethnography is well suited for its attention to context, in-situ processes, for engaging the perspectives of those who make decisions and implement policies. I describe how I secured access to festivals, conducted sampling across time and space, and have upheld ethical research standards throughout. Furthermore, I engage reflexively with my identity, my relationship with the field of study, and my emotions, in order to consider the role they played in the data collection process. It is my intention that these reflections may offer some guidance and considerations for future festival researchers. It is through these reflections and through highlighting instances which illustrate the ‘messiness’ of ethnographic research that I aim to

provide a frank and vulnerable consideration of the strengths and limitations of my research lens.

In the following chapters, I present my analysis of the data that I gathered in my fieldwork in order to meet my research aim and answer my research questions, which are:

1. What approaches and tools are used by festivals in policing drugs?
2. What rationales and interests shape the drug policing activities of agencies, and what are their implications?
3. How is discretion exercised in relation to drug law infringements and what influences it?
4. How do agencies from work together partnership, and what tensions arise from this?

In answering the first question, the policing approaches are explored under three, interdependent security pillars, *Prevent, Protect, Pursue* ('The Three Ps') in this order. Research questions no.2, no.3 and no.4 are answered throughout these chapters.

Chapter Five: Prevent

Deterrence, detection and depenalisation

Introduction

My analysis begins with the first major emphasis of drug policing in the chronology of the festival-event, *Prevent*. *Prevent* primarily takes place at the gate and entrance spaces during the audience arrival process ('ingress'). As I argue in Chapter Three, the limited picture of festival drug policing from the audience perspective suggests that gates and entrance spaces are a key, visible focus of festival drug policing efforts and resources. Festivals may adopt a police and security presence, amnesty bins, and sniffer dogs in order to deter drug offenders (Ritter, 2010; Bhardwa, 2014; Demant & Dilkes-Frayne, 2015; Hughes et al., 2017). The inefficacy of drug policing at festival gates has led them to be described as 'performative', implemented in order to 'be seen to do something' to counter drug use within venues (Turner, 2018, Fisher & Measham, 2018). In the years I spent undertaking this research, I found myself in countless conversations with festivalgoers eager to share their stories about close calls from 'running the gauntlet' at festival gates, and their secrets of success in managing it (Race, 2014: p.321).

There has, however, been scant empirical engagement with the aims and practices of policing and security within these spaces in the English festival context. This chapter asks: What can engaging the perspectives of policing agencies and management contribute to our understanding of this area of drug control? What are the differences and similarities between festivals in their *Prevent* approaches, and how can we account for them? The primary focus of this chapter compares the *Prevent* approaches at three festivals: Allsorts, Daypicnic and Dancevillage. These festivals all adopted a range of law enforcement and situational crime prevention strategies, implemented at festival gates and entrance spaces with the purported aim

of stopping (or ‘*Preventing*’) drugs from being carried into the event by the audience. Through this comparison, I illustrate how the varied partnership arrangements and resourcing between gates represented different interests and risk management approaches. The second focus of this chapter concerns the exercise of discretion in response to drug offences, in order to answer research question no.3: How is discretion exercised in relation to drug law infringements and what influences it?

Getting in: ingress and the gate

It is important to firstly provide some context to ‘ingress’ and festival gates. The task of ingress is to ensure that the ticketed audience safely access the event through the designated entrances and structures. The gate structures and processes must be able to withstand the busiest ingress periods, which primarily occur on the first and second day of multi-day camping events, and in the morning and early afternoon of non-camping events. The process demands extensive resource allocation, and co-ordination on the ground between a whole host of agencies: security operatives, stewards, box office, event management, traffic control and, sometimes, the police, as facilitated by the festival’s central communications hub ‘Event Control’.²² Gates are integral checkpoints for controlling *what* and *who* can enter festivalspace. They are often comprised of fencing, lanes, tables and event staff, with entry lanes for new arrivals and a ticket-to-wristband exchange, exit lanes for people to leave through and, at camping events, ‘re-entry’ lanes for those who already have wristbands.

The gate aims to protect commercial interests and minimise risk by ensuring that only festivalgoers with the necessary accreditation can enter, and ensuring prohibited possessions (including illegal drugs) are prevented from being taken in with them.²³ In pursuit of this,

²² ‘Event Control’ is a physical space backstage in which at least one agency representative is stationed to facilitate inter-agency communication and co-ordinate incident response.

²³ Festivals exercise the discretion to explicitly prohibit festivalgoers from taking in particular items in their possession. Lists of prohibited items are often distributed to ticket holders prior the event, and are specified on a

searches are conducted as a condition of entry, to which ticketholders agree to when purchasing a ticket. As a pre-event preventative measure, ticketholders are often reminded of this agreement and prohibited items via email, ahead of the event. Ticketholders must consent to a security search, however, refusing to consent may forfeit their right of entry.

Increasing the risks: deterrence and detection

This section considers the gate processes at three festivals in turn: Dancevillage, Daypicnic and Allsorts. All three use enforcement and SCP in the form of sniffer dogs (and their respective handlers), amnesty bins, and searching, albeit within their varying private and public arrangements, which I categorise as ‘hybrid’, ‘security-led’ and ‘police-led’. I explore the drug deterrence and drug detection mechanisms of *Prevent* in tandem because they are interdependent: where SCP aims to deter drug use by increasing the *perceived* risks of offending, then the likelihood of detection (actual and perceived) plays an important role in the decision to offend (Dilkes-Frayne & Demant, 2015).

Dancevillage: Security-led enforcement

After driving for hours through the English countryside, I arrived at Dancevillage in the mid-afternoon of the first event day (Thursday). The following fieldnote excerpt is taken from my observational data on this afternoon:

poster at the gate. The lists I observed were usually comprised of items that may harm other people (i.e weapons, sharp objects, glass, mallets), items that may be inconvenient or annoying for other customers (i.e gazebos, portable toilets), items that may create health and safety hazards (i.e flares, campfires and illegal drugs). The law on the power of search by private security operatives is unclear. According to the Private Security Industry Act (PSIA) 2001, security operatives who undertake ‘manned guarding’ of licensed premises are required to have an SIA Licence. SIA Licence training specifies that searchees must give consent prior to a search, and search depth is limited to an over-clothing body pat down by someone of the same sex and the inspection of possessions and outer clothing. For SIA Licence holders undertaking a Door Supervision role at a licensed premises, searching of persons or bags to ensure that no-one with prohibited drugs enters the premises falls within paragraph 2(1)(a) of Schedule 2 of the PSIA 2001 as an activity that consists of “guarding premises against unauthorised access”.

Fieldnote: 'Trendy' queue in the rain. Thursday, Dancevillage, 2018

Taking a shortcut through the backstage, I approached the main gate from the car park, which had been filling up all day. Tucked out the way, against the fence in the carpark, I noticed there was an amnesty bin (in the form of a wheely bin with a padlock), and a small sign warning that drug searches would be conducted. Approaching the gate, I could see perhaps several hundred people in the queue who mostly appeared to be in their mid-twenties, of white ethnicity. They looked like a 'trendy' crowd, with bucket hats, record label T-shirts, and colourful windbreaker jackets. They were standing, carrying all their luggage and camping equipment, moving a few inches forward every minute or so. It had been spitting with rain intermittently all day. I noticed that some people looked a bit miserable and lethargic, while others were smiling and seemed to be excited that they were near the front of the queue. They followed fencing which curved up and down like in an airport (referred to by security management as 'Disney' fencing). There was a space at the front where queuers waited, before being directed by a security operative from SC1 down one of the ten search lanes, where security operatives were looking in the tops of bags.

This fieldnote excerpt is included to give a flavour of the contextual policing dynamics at Dancevillage. It's clearly a busy period in the ingress process, and the queue is building. Festivalgoers remain cheery but are starting to get wet in the spitting rain. Although I observe amnesty bins for *voluntarism* embedded on the gate approach, they are discreet and separate from the gate (Ritter, 2010; Bhardwa, 2014).

After observing, I spoke to the security gate manager, Sammy, to find out more about the *enforcement* process of security bag searching. Sammy told me she had instructed security operatives to do "*less intensive searches at the moment*". She had timed the queue, and found that festivalgoers had been queuing, in the rain, for over an hour. Her concern was that they would

become “*welfare cases*” if they were to get too wet. One of the difficulties security operatives face in detecting drugs in a search is that they are often small and easy to conceal, especially within luggage and camping equipment. Finding drugs within possessions takes time. For Sammy, the objective of finding drugs at that moment was less important than ensuring the queue kept moving quickly enough. Her decision to undertake less intensive searching was part of a ‘risk trade-off’ rationale (Horlick-Jones, 2005: p.264), which she made in light of the impossibility of ‘absolute’ security and the possibility of new security risks arising (Zedner, 2009). On balance, the *hypothetical* risk that some Dancevillage festivalgoers might be carrying substances was less pressing than the *imminent* health risks from queueing for too long outside the gate, and the demands that these risks may create for other agencies (i.e welfare services) and their resources.

Security assess this balance of risks with the specific festival audience in mind. I gathered from several conversations with security operatives that, while they anticipated that Dancevillage would be a ‘druggy’ dance music event, it was less concerning here compared to other events as the festival attracted a particularly ‘nice crowd’. The festival’s programming and expensive tickets attracted an audience of affluent middle-class, *committed* dance music consumers, who were perceived to be more mature and drug experienced, compared to less experienced *dance tourists* and the more mainstream audiences (dubbed the ‘Creamfields crowd’ by Max from the management team) (Bhardwa, 2014).

Potentially, Sammy’s rationale for reducing the search intensity factored in customer service concerns too. In my experience, the process of getting to a festival and getting in can be an ordeal. Prior to the event, there may be extensive preparation, travel, costs, booking days off work, planning and co-ordination. The journey to a festival plays an essential role in marking a separation of festival time from the everyday, deepening the liminal experience and setting the stage for a ‘temporary sphere of behaviour’, but it can also be arduous and time consuming (Turner, 2018). At camping events, just getting from the carpark to the gate may

involve walking across multiple muddy fields and navigating carparks, while carrying equipment and provisions for the weekend ahead. As the first point of physical contact between the festival and audience, there are commercial interests in minimising the time spent in a queue to make the ingress experience as smooth, easy and painless as possible.

Against this majority audience context and the need to secure the ‘safety and pleasure of consumers and decent citizens’ (van Liempt & van Aalst, 2012: p.290), security operatives strategised to ‘profile’ festivalgoers they perceived to look or sound like ‘troublemakers’ based on pervasive classed and racialised stereotypes (Hobbs, 2003; Rigakos, 2008). In particular, I found there was a persistent association between regional North-West ‘scouse’ accents and criminality amongst the security firm SC1, who informally nicknamed an enhanced search lane for profiled festivalgoers as ‘Liverpool Street’. Potentially, the strength of this association owed to the security firm originating from the North-West. Amongst security operatives from the same region, individual past experiences and encounters with certain groups can become part of a security firms’ collective memory and their ‘vernacular risk perception’ (Søgaard, 2017: p.261). The selective approach to searching illustrates how drug policing processes mirror the classed ‘othering’ processes which occur *between* dance consumers (Bhardwa, 2014). Through the logics of risk reduction and risk perceptions of individual policing actors, the status of the ‘usual suspects’ in external drug markets is maintained, allowing the ‘silent majority’ of middle-classes drug users and drug suppliers to subvert the attention of enforcement (Perrone, 2009; Askew & Salinas, 2019).

There had not been a sniffer dog presence when I arrived at the gate, but Sammy informed me that one was due back from its break soon. After a short while, a dog handler arrived with an excitable Cocker Spaniel in tow. The handler (and dog) was a private contractor who sported a ‘copy-cat’ police uniform (Loader, 1997b) consisting of all black clothing with black bomber boots, a black baseball cap and wraparound sunglasses, and a vest which said

‘Dog Handler’ on it. Dog and handler took up position at the front of the queue, with the dog placed to sniff festivalgoers before they proceeded ahead to the security search lanes and wristband exchange. I observed nearby alongside the handler for a while.

Fieldnote: Sniffer dogs. Thursday, Dancevillage, 2018.

I observed for reactions in the queue upon seeing the dog. Some people looked happy to see the dog and appeared calm, but some got wide eyes, made eye contact with each other, and discreetly nudged one another. Others didn’t notice it or pretended not to. The dog kept running back to me, then to the people at the front of the queue, excitedly sniffing their crotches, shoes, luggage and hands. The dog jumped up on one of the men at the front of the queue, wrapping its front legs wrapped around his leg (the handler said this was a ‘strong’ indication). The handler sent the man down the down the right-hand lane for an ‘enhanced search’. I saw one man with long hair attempt to ignore the dog indication. He protested slightly when the handler told him to join the right-hand lane. After a few minutes, the dog handler noticed that the long hair man had changed queues. ‘*Oi, you, you’re meant to be in this lane*” he said to him. I saw the dog give up to 10 indications – mainly on young men. I went to the right-hand lane to observe the searches. The long-haired man and a few others who got indications had their bags thoroughly searched, with small cases or bags were opened. There were no drugs found in these searches.

As this extract exemplifies, the sniffer dog’s role in drug detection appeared to be selecting individuals for an enhanced possession search. It essentially served as a filtering mechanism, which enabled the policy of ‘*less intensive searches*’ to be carried out on most of the queue, bar a select few who received indications. Despite research indicating that sniffer dogs may be influenced by handler bias, the dog’s presence here was potentially useful in providing a guise of neutrality for security operatives, who otherwise fore fronted their classed and racialised risk

perceptions in the search process (Lit et al., 2011). Although it is feasible that the sniffer dog presence may have enhanced the *perceived* likelihood of drug detection amongst festivalgoers in the queue, without enhancing the security power of search, its use did not readily translate into drug seizures. As the defiant behaviour of the ‘long-haired man’ suggests, festivalgoers felt able to resist the coercion of the gate security system. Both the dog handler and security manager, Michael, found the limitations of security searching to be a source of frustration. As Michael commented, “*Most people will be carrying stuff [drugs] but they won’t be stupid enough to let us find it*”. He considered the use of sniffer dogs without a police presence and private search tents to be insufficient for detecting drugs, because the system lacked the necessary ‘pressure’ after the dog indication to encourage drugs to be surrendered.

The role of sniffer dogs in the gate process may be thought of as mostly a symbolic display of ‘security theatre’ (Schneier, 2006), contracted as evidence of the festival’s intolerance to drug use. This was reinforced in interview by Dancevillage’s Health and Safety manager, Dan, who described the use of *Prevent* strategies as a ‘*PR exercise*’: “*It’s to demonstrate we are upholding the licensing objectives. Doing what we said we would do in the Event Management Plan. Demonstrating we are doing everything we can to prevent anti-social behaviour and drug use. [Event professionals] know that most people who go to festivals want to take drugs. If they really want to, they will get them in there, and consume their drugs. We know that, so we are probably more focused on making it look like we are doing all we can to stop it, than actually being concerned about that happening*”. Consistent with the use of ‘symbolic policing’ in external drug markets, the value of sniffer dogs resides in the festival being ‘seen to do something’ to visibly tackle the drug market, thereby satisfying internal and external stakeholder interests rather than meeting instrumental objectives (Coomber, Moyle & Mahoney, 2019; Haggerty and Tokar, 2012). *Prevent* approaches are concerned with reducing the risks that the festival might be perceived as too ‘soft’ on drug use by the police and local authority.

These concerns became especially evident, when the police made an unanticipated visit to the festival in the early evening on Thursday as described in the following fieldnote excerpt:

Fieldnote: 'Washbags out'. Thursday, Dancevillage 2018

I bumped into Michael, who was on his way to the gate. He told me that “*We need to find some drugs - the police are here*”. The festival had not paid for a police presence so Michael said he had not expected them to be on-site. I followed him to the right hand search lane and watched as he joined in the search operation. When gate arrivals got to his search table, Michael asked them to find and retrieve their washbag out of their rucksack. He inspected toiletries one by one, opening tubs of hair-wax, shaking roll-on deodorant, and checking for hidden compartments. One man had several condoms and lube in his bag, which Michael joked about with him. Another man was found with a box of Viagra and looked embarrassed, but Michael agreed with him that it should be allowed in. Wallets, bum-bags and pockets were also checked, but no drugs were found.

That the police presence was a catalyst for security operatives to increase the intensity of gate searches illustrates how security efforts, and the management of risk, is negotiated between security actors and these negotiations can emerge over the course of an event. A similar dynamic occurred at Familyfest, while I joined security director, Pedro for a walk to the gate to meet Tom, the gate manager.

Fieldnote: Booze and Hammers. Thursday, Familyfest, 2018

“*Have you find much?*” Pedro asked Tom

“*No, just bottles of booze and hammers*” Tom replied. Pedro instructed him to ramp up searches because “*We need to find some drugs to keep the police happy*”.

Pedro told me that the police would be coming to collect the drugs from the amnesty bins and if there aren't many confiscations, he thought the police would say they aren't good enough at searching.

As both fieldnote excerpts describe, police oversight of drug seizures appears to function as a 'lever' for increasing the drug searching intensity at the gate (Hadfield, Lister & Traynor, 2009). Oversight at Familyfest was enhanced by agreement that the police would attend the event each day to empty the amnesty bins and dispose of confiscated substances.

In 'Washbags out', Michael makes a dedicated effort to finding substances by targeting hiding places in luggage, albeit with limited success. In nightclub contexts, searching has been described in symbolic terms as a public 'staging ritual', which represents to police and licensing officials that the venue 'operates responsibly', in order to prevent unwanted attention from police (O'Brien, 2010: p.127). For Michael, undertaking the staging ritual of searching is insufficient, on its own, to appease the police; he is motivated to demonstrate that the security provision is proficient at finding and removing drugs from the audience, by having some tangible 'outputs' to show for the *Prevent* efforts (UKDPC, 2009). Potentially the fact that there was no paid SPS arrangement added to the pressure that Michael felt to show that security was effective at preventing drugs getting in at the gate. Failure to do this convincingly risks incurring a cost increase for the event the following year if gate security is judged by the police to be insufficient.

Daypicnic: 'hybrid' and 'hard' enforcement

Compared to Dancevillage, Daypicnic adopted a 'harder' gate security approach which intensely controlled the behaviour of festivalgoers throughout the ingress process. The following fieldnote excerpt is taken from my observations just outside of the gates of Daypicnic, at 11am on the first day at the festival, shortly before the peak ingress period. As with Dancevillage, this

observation excerpt illustrates the embedded use of drug control on the gate approach, albeit with a much more lively queue context.

Fieldnote: 'The edge of chaos'. Saturday, Daypicnic 2019

I stood just outside the main gate, watching young people in small groups pile in from the queue on the outside of the park. A small group of security operatives were allowing them in, slowly, a few groups at a time. The space I stood in functioned as a holding bay for these arrivals before they were directed by more security operatives (three of them altogether) in high vis uniforms to join one of the search lane queues under the gate marquee. There was a gravel road through the middle of the holding bay, so they were halting the flow of arrivals when a vehicle needed to get through. I noticed that there was a bright yellow amnesty bin on the ground, around the height of a litter bin, which arrivals walked past to get into the holding bay from outside the park, stationed in view of at least five security operatives. I did not observe it being used by any of the arriving festivalgoers, who appeared to bypass it in eager excitement at reaching the gate. A high-visibility uniformed police presence was stationed on both sides of the marquee. Small signs attached to the marquee warned incoming festivalgoers of the search and sniffer dog processs ahead. Many festivalgoers appeared to me to be intoxicated, indicated by their shouting, laughing, and carrying tins of alcohol. There was an atmosphere of excitement, teetering on the edge of chaos, but the crowd remained orderly and followed security instructions to '*ditch your cans*' of drink before joining the queue. It felt like the calm before the storm.

The role of security operatives, described in this fieldnote, appears to be primarily concerned with 'order maintenance' amongst the excitable and intoxicated ingressing festivalgoers (Moore & Measham, 2012): they conduct surveillance, manage the flow of people, direct them into queues and regulate their behaviour. They help to ensure that alcohol is discarded in order to

protect the commercial interests of the event. I consider this focus to be a product of risk reduction of particular threats arising from the event being a 'day' festival. Compared to the steady ingress at Dancevillage, ingress at Daypicnic is concentrated over just several hours, and peaks in activity present a challenge to preventing the queue from building up. As can be the case prior to nightlife events, consumers at day festivals are likely to 'preload' substances in order to avoid high bar prices inside the event (Haydock, 2016). If masses of intoxicated arrivals must queue for too long, it increases the risks of restlessness, disorder and violence, with serious implications for public safety, particularly in extreme weather (Harris, Edwards & Homel, 2014). There can be reputational damage for an event if harm occurs and this is reported in the media. For example, in 2019 it was widely reported that queues for *We are FSTVL* in London led to disorder and health harms after festivalgoers were left queuing for hours in hot weather (Baggs, 2019).

The 'holding bay' just outside the gate functioned as a 'domain of generalised suspicion' (Feeley and Simon, 1994: p.182) to encourage order amongst unruly and intoxicated festivalgoers, as fortified by a high visibility police presence at the gate ahead, and security operatives issuing directions to the ingressing crowd. The bay also created the opportunity for low visibility surveillance of potential drug users. Concurrent with covert 'Zero-tolerance' approaches in the Netherlands (Nabben, 2010), I was told by one of the festival's Bronze commanders, Nigel, that Daypicnic contracted a security firm with specialised '*behaviour identification training*', to spot festivalgoers '*acting suspiciously*', such as by putting things in their mouth or playing with clothing, while in the holding bay. Although the team wore plain black clothing, they were identifiable by their baseball cap and sunglasses uniform. Nigel expressed concern that they were '*creating carnage*' by picking out too many festivalgoers, which slowed down the ingress process.

Amongst all the excitement, the festival's efforts to encourage *voluntarism* through the placement of amnesty bins outside the gate were, in Nigel's words, mostly 'redundant'. Instead the Daypicnic gate attempted to coerce festivalgoers to surrender substances at the point of search. Upon reaching the front of the queue, festivalgoers were initially met by a security operative who conducted a 'light' search and advised festivalgoers that they could surrender any substances before proceeding. With police nearby and sniffer dogs in view ahead, this is a crucial point for 'situational deterrence' by increasing the fear of being caught (Cusson, 1993).

After the initial search, festivalgoers walked through an open, grassy space to get to the wristband exchange, in which there were three lively sniffer dogs and their handlers operating at any one time, scanning and making indications on festivalgoers as they passed through. Those who received a dog indication were led by a security operative to join a queue for the two private search tents on either side of the grassy area, in which security operatives conducted 'enhanced' searches. The following fieldnote excerpt describes my observations inside one of the private search tents during the Saturday morning of 2019, alongside search operative Bob. A man who appeared to be in his 20s, Max, entered the tent after he received a sniffer dog indication.

Fieldnote: 'Plugging'. Sunday, Daypicnic, 2019.

I stood next to the table, while Bob, the search operative, asked Max, to put his belongings in the grey table on the tray and whether he '*had anything on him*'. Max paused briefly, then said "*yeah mate, one second*", and started rummaging in the back of his shorts. I looked away. "*Sorry about this love*" Max said to me, and after a couple of seconds he retrieved a condom from his rectum. It made the tent smell of faeces. I tried to keep a straight face. "*Ah mate, that's rough*" said Bob, "*for fucks sake*". Max handed the condom to Bob, who turned his latex glove inside out to contain it. "*What am I meant to do with that?...what is it?*"

“It’s just two pills” Max replied.

“Right, is that it?”

“Yeah mate, swear down”

“If I find anything else mate you’re straight out you know that”, said Bob, while patting him down, making him sit down and remove one shoe at a time, to feel inside his socks.

The enhanced searches conducted in these private search tents were far more thorough than those conducted at Dancevillage. I observed Bob open tobacco pouches, empty out wallets, look in the back of phone cases and check small pockets. He felt behind shirt collars, around waistbands, and got people to sit down to remove their shoes, so he could feel their socks to check between their toes. Yet, as this fieldnote excerpt describes, Max readily admitted, retrieved and handed over ‘plugged’ illegal drugs, just as a result of Bob asking him to, before any searching took place in the tent.²⁴ Given the limitations to security search powers, these substances were unlikely to have been found in the search. As Bob told me after Max had exited the tent: *“If he’d be clenching, I might have got the police involved to do a more in-depth search, but they were inside. He would have got away with it”*. Observing further encounters between Bob and festivalgoers in the private search tents, it was evident that Bob took it upon himself to actively reinforce norms and standards of behaviour amongst the festivalgoers found with drugs.

Fieldnote: ‘You could have ruined your life’. Sunday, Daypicnic 2019.

Another man came into the tent, followed by Patrick (police). *“He got indicated by the dog and has admitted he’s got 11 wraps of ketamine on him”* Patrick told us. The man pulled it out from his shorts. *“It’s 11 bags but they are halves, its 5 grams”* he replied.

²⁴ Transporting illicit substances in internal bodily cavities such as the rectum or vagina (often referred to as ‘plugging’), is a commonly used strategy to conceal substances to avoid detection by sniffer dogs (Race, 2014; Malins, 2019).

“He’s given it up, and I’ve done a background check. He’s got no priors. Check there’s nothing else on him” Patrick instructed. Bob got him to empty his possessions into the tray, and went through the pocket, collar, sock search, and through his wallet, and took his phone case off. Afterwards, the man asked Bob *“What’s going to happen now?”*

“You’re getting nicked mate”

“You serious?”

“No, I’m only kidding”

The man looked relieved. *“You scared me then”*.

“You’re not getting in, but because of resources and that, you’re lucky that you’re free to go. Any other place and you’d have been nicked for possession with intent. It’s a serious offence. What do you do?”

“I’m a chef”

“What would your employers say if they found out? Wouldn’t be good would it? You could have ruined your life today. It’s not worth it”. Bob wrote him an ejection slip, cut his wristband off, and put the drugs in an evidence bag.

As this interaction illustrates, the search process gave Bob the opportunity to reprimand the man’s behaviour with an informal ‘telling off’ in addition to refusing entry. As the man was already being ejected, this conversation did not appear to be motivated by profit maximisation or risk reduction, but by norm enforcement and Bob’s own morality concerning drugs, illustrating how the implementation of security policies are shaped by the perspectives of policing actors on the ground (Buvik, 2016; Lipsky, 2010).

I consider there to be two important differences between this gate and Dancevillage. Primarily, there was a high-visibility police presence at the sides of the gate, close to the queue for the search tents, including uniformed ‘Force Drug Experts’ (FDEs), such as Patrick in the fieldnote above, who were occasionally called into the tents to make decisions on supply cases (discussed in the next section). The mere high visibility police presence allowed security

operatives to benefit from the ‘symbolic authority’ (Loader, 1997a), in order to encourage drug surrenders by in-explicitly leveraging police involvement, carrying with it the threat of a police search as a response to non-compliance. In circumstances where ‘reasonable suspicion’ is satisfied, a police search for drugs can legally be more extensive than the security power of search.²⁵ The police co-presence in the gate vicinity, therefore, allowed security to apply the requisite *pressure* (as Michael described it at Dancevillage) to encourage festivalgoers to readily volunteer substances, prior to any search taking place. Secondly, the use of private search tents may have encouraged voluntary surrender of substances, by mitigating some of the embarrassment associated with retrieving plugged substances in the more public gate setting (Malins, 2019).

Throughout my observations at the gate, I was aware of the police only occasionally conducting searches within the tents, and only after substances had already been found or volunteered. I posit that the role of police at the Daypicnic gate can be understood in terms of their ‘skilfully backgrounded’ (Reiner, 2010: p.17) symbolic capacity for force, which helped the event to generate drug seizures and to communicate the robustness of its security to any and all potential threats, however remote. This strategy was credited by one police officer I spoke to in 2019, to have deterred groups associated with ‘gangs’ from targeting the festival: “*It would be chaotic without us. The festival had gang concerns in the past, but now much less so, because they know there’s a strong police presence and it’s not an easy target*”. From a signal crimes perspective, the high-visibility police presence was a ‘signal to control’, used to show ‘some form of controlling presence is active and so troublesome or problematic behaviours should not be engaged in’ (Innes, 2014: p.152).

Security threats are far more extensive than drug use alone, as George from Daypicnic senior management, highlighted the in interview: “*The gates aren’t just about keeping the drugs out.*

²⁵ Under s.23(2) of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971

They are about the front line of protection – that everyone who comes to the event has bought a ticket. That’s the message you need to send – you need strong gates to show that the people who are trying to get in without a ticket, or a forged ticket, that the event is robust enough to repel those people at that point.” As the value of the event ticket, in part, derives from the event’s ‘containment’ and inaccessibility to the general population (Thomas, 2008), profitability is sustained by the festival’s capacity to exclude imposters. The ‘hard’ policing approach, implemented through the apparatus of drug control, can be seen as a mechanism for repelling any manner of external threats in order to protect commercial interests. I regard the ‘hard’ *Prevent* process at Daypicnic to be a precautionary, pre-emptive deterrent approach to ‘deal with incalculable but threatening futures’ by ‘using undifferentiated measures that target everyone’ (Zedner, 2009: p.84). It is not just for external threats, however. For event director Clive, a ‘hard’ gate enforcement process is a useful management strategy for encouraging the audience’s self-regulation of behaviour once inside. He explained in interview: “*There’s a strong correlation between an audience’s behaviour and the nature of your gate. If people know when they’re entering an event that there is a quality level of security, who are relatively robust, their behaviour is toned down a bit compared to if its lax and you can just walk in*”. Order maintenance, searches and sniffer dogs, all conducted in the police shadow, help to establish ‘lines of authority’ and ‘set the tone’ to shape the ambience and behaviour inside the event (O’Brien, 2010: p.127).

From this perspective, evidence which suggests sniffer dogs are ineffective (see Hughes et al., 2017) at drug use deterrence matters less than their capacity for finding *some* drugs on *some* (unlucky) people, in order to create a level of embodied stress, fear and anxiety to prompt self-regulation and ‘toned down’ behaviour. Far from being unintentional, the potentially traumatic and humiliating experience of being stopped and searched following a sniffer dog indication is integral to this strategy (Malins, 2019). The accuracy of sniffer dogs is also less important when seen in this way: their inaccuracies make them less predictable, and therefore

less easy for festivalgoers to mitigate. The fact that indications were made on festivalgoers with ‘plugged’ substances (which are not, apparently, detectable to sniffer dogs) is testament to these unpredictable inaccuracies.

Although the quantities of substances detected in the two fieldnote excerpts involving Bob were minimal, there were some instances of more substantial drug finds over the event. For example, in 2019, one young woman reportedly surrendered 50 ecstasy pills which were concealed in a bodily cavity, following a dog indication. Even with these seizures, some police officers I spoke to considered that *Prevent* efforts would ‘barely make a dent’ in the level of drug use inside the event. Rather than drug seizures indicating success in reducing levels of drug use, they were indicative of the opposite. For example, on the Sunday, Patrick mentioned there was a ‘lad’ who surrendered small quantities of ketamine, cocaine and 10 ecstasy pills. Patrick said that during search, “*He told us he got in with the same stuff yesterday, there must be absolutely loads getting in*”. The problem with drug seizures is that, depending on interpretation, they may indicate that the drug market is bigger because there are more drugs in it, or smaller because more drugs have been seized from it. This highlights an important paradox of festival drug security, that efforts to increase ‘objective’ security by keeping drugs out under *Prevent* draw attention to the extent of the threat, and increase the subjective perception of the festival as insecure to drugs (Zedner, 2009). As a consequence, events which adopt ‘hard’ *Prevent* policies to increase drug seizures may experience an ever increasing ‘ratchet effect’ in their security to counter the eradicable threat (Loader, 1997b: p.154).

I speculate that an unintended consequence of the ‘hard’ gate was the spatial, temporal and target displacement of drug use and supply (Mazerolle & Ransley, 2004). The festival attracted a number of ‘NOS’ suppliers operating *outside* the event during ‘egress’.²⁶ While

²⁶ ‘Egress’ describes the process of the audience leaving the event. NOS’ is a commonly used abbreviation of Nitrous Oxide or ‘laughing gas’. It is contained in small metal canisters, which are dispensed into a balloon and subsequently inhaled. Possession of NOS is legal but supply is prohibited under the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016.

infrequent NOS use is generally low-risk (Winstock & Ferris, 2020), this displacement was a concern for the event's local community relations. As Thomas (2008: p.162) argues, the fence 'is a tool to contain as much as to keep out', and there may be licensing implications for events where carnivalesque behaviour overflows. The particular problem with NOS is that, unlike other substances which can be purchased discreetly for later consumption, NOS transactions are noisy, indiscreet and the 'balloons' require consumption at the point of sale. Empty NOS canisters create visible litter, sometimes left in the street and in the gardens of people who live locally to an event. These factors mean that, although legal to possess, NOS transactions taking place outside an event may be interpreted as a 'signal crime' of visible, public drug dealing and drug use, which negatively affects the local community's perception of the festival (Innes, 2014). In Barton and James' (2003) study of event policing in a rural town, they found that disjunction between police and community perceptions of risk led to dissatisfaction with the policing of the event. As consequence of this pattern is the event had to re-direct resources towards attempting to prevent NOS supply occurring outside the event footprint. While this form of displacement might be welcome as a lower risk alternative to the supply of higher risk 'party' drugs on-site, it highlights the impossibility of 'absolute' security, and the necessity of policing which attempts to balance risk perceptions and interests in light of this (Zedner, 2009).

Allsorts: police-led gates

The Allsorts gate was distinguishable from Dancevillage and Daypicnic in two key ways. Firstly, the police undertook a leading role in the process and secondly, there was a much greater emphasis on *voluntarism* alongside *law enforcement* (Ritter, 2010). The gate approach heavily embedded 'situational deterrence' to coerce drugs to be surrendered *before* the search process (Cusson, 1993). Festivalgoers approaching the Allsorts gate could observe a high-visibility uniformed police presence, with a police van and cars parked nearby. 'Disney' fencing directed festivalgoers past a large, red sign which read:

YOU ARE NOW ENTERING THE AMNESTY AREA. BEYOND THIS POINT YOU MAY BE THE SUBJECT OF A SEARCH. IF YOU ARE FOUND TO BE IN POSSESSION OF ANY CONTROLLED DRUGS OF OFFENSIVE WEAPONS YOU MAY BE REFUSED ENTRY AND HANDED TO THE POLICE. TO BE ABLE TO ENJOY THIS FESTIVAL PLEASE DISPOSE OF ANY PROHIBITED ITEMS THAT YOU MAY HAVE IN YOUR POSSESSION INTO THE AMNESTY BINS.

The sign ‘removed the excuses’ for those who were considering entering the event with drugs (Centre for Problem-Oriented Policing, 2021). After the sign, festivalgoers walked into a fenced area, covered with yellow fabric, which contained an amnesty bin. According to the festival’s written drugs strategy, this provided ‘*the opportunity to discretely dispose of any drugs*’ by hiding festivalgoers from the view of police and a sniffer dog waiting just around the corner. The fabric, therefore, attempted to minimise any reluctance to discard substances out of fear of repercussions, as observed in the Australian context (Malins, 2019). Consistent with the ‘instrumental turn’ in criminal justice, the use of *voluntarism* in tandem with *law enforcement* demonstrates how exclusionary and criminal repercussions are leveraged to coerce compliance in pursuit of security objectives (Shearing, 2001). The entrance process also attempted to minimise unintended risks arising from deterrence. According to Pedro, the director of Allsorts security, it was common to find drugs discarded in a bush or on the ground at festival gates where the enforcement presence was visible only after the amnesty area. This gate process reduced the risk that another festivalgoer could find and consume previously discarded substances.

The gate’s high-visibility police presence is indicative of its alignment with ‘reassurance policing’, yet the appropriate visibility ‘dosage’ was a point of contention between police and management (Innes, 2014). According to Alan, the Allsorts police Gold commander, in 2017 there was consensus that a heavier police presence was desirable for ‘reassurance’ purposes

following the Manchester Arena terrorist attack, which occurred shortly before the summer festival season. In 2018, with temporal distance from the attack, Allsorts management expressed a preference for the police presence to be more discreet in pre-event meetings, which influenced their decision to move the police compound away from the main gate, thereby reducing the quantity of police vehicles parked there. As a ‘control signal’, too much policing can foster a negative response for subjective security (Inner, 2014). As Boyle and Haggerty (2009: p.264) observe ‘if it becomes too egregious, security stops being reassuring and can paradoxically accentuate the prospect of extreme unmanageable danger’. The changes enacted to the gate over the ‘look and feel’ of a visible police presence suggests that festivals attempt to balance the protective and threatening dimensions of ‘reassurance policing’ (Whelan & Molnar, 2018). As festivals sell the promise of carnivalesque experiences, too heavy policing might be received negatively by the audience. This tension illustrates that the anticipated reception to policing may transform over time depending on the wider security context, and festival policing must be negotiated, and renegotiated, in order to be contemporaneous with it.

In the detection stage of the gate, the use of profiling appeared to be a way that Allsorts attempted to ‘soften’ the gate *Prevent* experience for some festivalgoers and to ‘harden’ it for others. Two plain clothed ‘Drug Squad’ police officers were stationed just after the amnesty area, tasked with profiling the ingressing audience. They directed festivalgoers either down a ‘red channel’ to walk past a police sniffer dog and handler, or straight to the main gate for a security-led bag search. Out of the mixed audience demographic, consisting of families with young children on the one hand, and groups of teenagers on the other, the police officer conducting profiling appeared to target the latter. As Allsorts has a particularly local audience draw, police and security were sometimes able to identify ‘known troublemakers’ from the area. One police officer at the gate, for example, told me she had successfully recognised a teenager from ‘Pubwatch’ in the local area, who was found with a ‘grinder’ and a small amount of

cannabis.²⁷ Yet how profiling was used on the ingressing audience was contentious: the Bronze police commander, John, said that whereas the festival wanted a “*maximum of 10%*” of arrivals to go past the dog, the police wanted 25%, and this is what they had agreed. Ultimately, that percentage was at the discretion of the Drug Squad police who were carrying out profiling. During a period of observation on the gate on the Friday afternoon, I estimated that approximately 80% of arrivals were sent past the dog, with only a few families with young children avoiding it.

I observed that arrivals who walked through the red channel and received a police sniffer dog indication were initially questioned by the police dog handler. Following this, they were either taken aside for an enhanced possession search by other police officers, or allowed to continue to the security-led bag search. A dog handler told me the gate searches were primarily undertaken on a contractual basis, as a condition of entry, rather than under police search powers.²⁸ He said that he would only consider using the latter if there were “*additional indicators*” that the person might be concealing more substances, such as “*nervousness*” and “*drugs being found during the initial search*”. This illustrates that sniffer dog indications are not perceived, by themselves, to be sufficient to meet the bar for ‘reasonable suspicion’ to legalise the use of formal police powers.

The use of police searches as a condition of entry is concerning because it marks a significant extension of direct police contact with the public, carrying with it an extension of coercive reach. At festival gates, ticketholders must accept all manner of policing and security efforts in order to access the event. Within this form of ‘contractual governance’, the ability of ticketholders to ‘consent’ to a search is ‘encircled by coercion’ (Crawford, 2003: p.500).

²⁷ ‘Pubwatch’ schemes are run by local, voluntary groups of licensees who share information and enforce bans on individuals who have been found to causing trouble in licensed premises. A ‘grinder’ is often used in preparation of cannabis prior to consumption.

²⁸ Under s.23(2) of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and Code A of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984

Through festival partnerships, the police extend their coercive reach through the commercial ‘back door’, thereby mitigating due process hurdles faced in public space. Although police searches may be conducted on the same legal basis as security searches, they are likely to be a different experience for recipients, as police searches carry the symbolic authority to coerce compliance in their interactions through the backgrounded legitimate use of force (Reiner, 2010). When used alongside profiling, police contact may have ‘labelling’ implications, triggering the internalisation of an inscribed ‘suspect’ status amongst young people who are profiled as targets (Mason, 2020: p.13).

Increasing police contact through gate searches may have detrimental consequences for police legitimacy, where search powers are exercised in a way that is perceived to be unfair (Bradford, 2016). In the following fieldnote excerpt, I recount an incident which unfolded at the gate, which illustrates how this may unfold:

Fieldnote: ‘The same bucket hat’. Thursday, Allsorts, 2019

I observed there was a shirtless teenager at the gate, who had been put in handcuffs by police. I saw them lead him to the private search tent, while his mother, who was waiting and visibly upset, exclaimed “*He’d never do something like that, you’ve got the wrong person!*”. After a short while I asked what had happened. One of the security operatives told me that the police had ‘intelligence’ that there was a shirtless young man, in black shorts and a bucket hat who was trying to smuggle drugs in. That boy fitted the description and “*He had the same bucket hat on*”, but it wasn’t the right person.

In the hot weather, a hat and shorts was the outfit choice of most teenagers that day.

The police conducted a search and found nothing.

Although from this fieldnote it is unclear whether the police exercised their power of search on a contractual basis or used formal search powers arising from the intelligence, the situation

appears traumatic for the mother and the young man who was searched, and is unlikely to have reflected well on the festival or its policing from their perspectives.

My observations at Allsorts exemplify how drug policies are mediated by the demands of an unpredictable, outside, ad-hoc festival environment. A number of factors inhibited the drug detection process, according to the dog handlers working on the gate in 2018. In particular, handlers expressed concern that their dogs' efficacy was hindered by the hot weather. In the sun, the 'red channel' blocked the wind and became a "*heat trap*", making the dogs too hot to work effectively because they were "*panting more than sniffing*". In order to keep the dogs cool, they were rotated every 10 minutes, to and from airconditioned police vehicles parked outside the gate. As a result, the management's concern for a less visible police presence was not adhered to. When I returned to the festival in 2019, I noticed that the gate system had been revised. In the new system, there was no red channel and all ingressing festivalgoers walked past a sniffer dog on first time entry. This change illustrates how drug security under *Prevent* can be subject to refinement and experimentation, year on year, in light of review and identified weaknesses, and how it can adapt throughout the event in response to emergent contextual factors and the concerns of policing agencies on the ground.

Consistent with my findings at Dancevillage and Daypicnic, the *Prevent* process can be understood as a symbolic exercise. In both years, there was an additional dog and handler stationed on the re-entry lane, to scan festivalgoers who were returning from the carpark after visiting their cars. I spent time on the Thursday afternoon of 2019 observing this lane. A consistent stream of festivalgoers were still arriving for the first time, but many people were exiting the event then returning carrying possessions and supplies from the car park.

Fieldnote: 'There's only so much we can do'. Thursday, Allsorts, 2019

The handler drew my attention to a group of around six young men, who appeared to be teenagers, exiting through the gate. He said he had seen them "*go in and out*

already” earlier that day, and told me to watch out for when they returned to go back in. It was a hot day, so they were all wearing just shorts and a hat. Around half an hour later, a few of them approached the re-entry lane, with one carrying a water bottle, but no other visible possessions. They went past the sniffer dog and handler on the re-entry lane without receiving a dog indication.

“Why would you go all the way back to the car, just to get a water bottle? Doesn’t make sense, they could at least pretend they’re going back for something else. Lots of condom wrappers have been found in the car parks. They’re all plugging it.” he told me. I asked how he saw his role, given his suspicions about plugging.

“There’s only so much we can do’ he said. *‘If they’re all plugging then this isn’t going to stop them getting in. Even if they get searched, they will still get in, unless they are clearly acting suspiciously when we talk to them. We only get the tip of the ice berg, hardly scratch the surface of it, but what can we do? If anything, this is about sending a message rather than preventing it getting on site. The clever ones just find new ways around it – plugging on re-entry, or chucking it over the fence, down where the woods are, away from the gate.’*

The handler’s perspective here highlights the challenge of policing festival drug markets in which the ‘clever ones’ are adaptive and resilient to enforcement efforts. Echoing the symbolic dimensions to gate policing at Dancevillage and Daypicnic, the handler understood his role in terms of enforcing abstinence norms amongst the audience by ‘sending a message’ to would-be drug offenders, rather than the ‘mission impossible’ objective of preventing drugs from getting on-site (Nabben, 2010).

My findings support the critique levied by cultural criminologists that SCP approaches are unsuitable for deterring ‘emotional or expressive’ forms of criminality such as party drug use (Hayward, 2007; p.237). Malins (2019: p.69) makes the case that festival drug users are ‘rational’ decision makers who weigh up risks and costs of taking drugs into the event, only this balancing act does not often translate into the decision to refrain from taking drugs. For

committed festival drug users, using amnesty bins increases the costs and risks of re-stocking on the internal drug market, such as time spent looking for festival suppliers and the risks of being mis-sold substances (Bhardwa, 2014; Demant & Dilkes-Frayne, 2015). On balance, attempting to mitigate the risk of detection through concealment (such as ‘plugging’) can be seen as a rational decision by drug users, in reducing the risks of experiencing drug-related harm. The intrinsic flaw of SCP strategies at festivals is that they do very little to ‘reduce the rewards’ of partaking in the festival experience under a preferred state of intoxication, and it is this promise of pleasure and liminal experiences that helps to sell tickets year on year (Turner, 2018)

Considering the relationship between enforcement and drug use patterns, the temporal and spatial displacement of drug use and supply is a likely consequence of this flaw in SCP approaches (Bhardwa, 2014; Dilkes-Frayne, 2016; Mazerolle & Ransley, 2004). From a risk reduction perspective, both Pedro and Michael expressed their concern that the gate’s role in removing drugs from festivalgoers might increase the risks of drug use by fuelling demand within the internal ‘open’ drug market. The role of gate policing was suggested by a gate manager to have induce some displacement of drug use to the carpark. Much like campsites, carparks provide festivalgoers with a place of privacy, warmth and shelter for drug consumption, without the risks of carrying the substances through the gate (Dilkes-Frayne, 2016). This can create drug-related risks if cars are used for ‘pre-loading’ substances. An example of this materialised on the Friday afternoon of Allsorts, while I was observing at the gate alongside the dog handler. A man and a woman stumbled up to the gate from the carpark, both appearing intoxicated, and attempting to speak to us but not making any sense. Shortly after, the man collapsed and appeared unresponsive, prompting intervention from police, security and the medics.

Amongst these *Prevent* flaws, there were some notable ‘successes’ from the gate operation in detecting drug suppliers. For example, in 2019, a 17 year-old teenager who received a dog

indication on his way through the 're-entry' gate was searched and found with two ecstasy pills in his wallet and a bottle of lubricant in his possession. A subsequent police pat down revealed there were two 'kinder eggs' hidden in his shorts which were found to contain 40 pills. This led to his arrest, to the identification of a 'stash' vehicle and his acquaintances who were found to be involved in a supply operation on-site. This incident highlights that beyond deterring drug possession, the value of *Prevent* can be in identifying and stemming drug supply early in the event. It is important to highlight such instances of success, however infrequent, because they justify the maintenance of a 'hard' policing presence to counter potential future threats and allow the risk aggravation potential of these security systems to be overlooked.

Greenfields and Familyfest: 'Soft' gates

The *Prevent* strategies of three events, Allsorts, Dancevillage and Daypicnic have been explored in depth in order to illustrate how events place different emphases in their gate policing approaches, despite having similar processes and policing tools. A consistency between them is that they have symbolic objectives beyond drug deterrence and detection. It is important to note that two other gates I observed took a different approach: Familyfest and Greenfields. At both events, there was no police or sniffer dog presence at the gate and security conducted 'light' searches and queues moved quickly. At Greenfields, festivalgoers generally had their camping rucksacks patted down on the outside, and sometimes opened at the top. After the wristband point, festivalgoers entering the event were greeted with live music and dance performances, and stewards at hand to help with luggage. The gate process plays a symbolic role in 'setting the tone' for the event, but in pursuit of a different security objective. A gate manager explained the rationale behind this approach: "*Entering a festival should be enjoyable - it should be like stepping into a fantasy land. Doing it this way shows the customers that we trust them. And they respond by trusting us. That way they report things, they come to us for help if they need it*". As the initial key point of physical contact with the festival, the gate process was seen as an opportunity to develop

trust, establish mutual respect from festivalgoers and to foster a community ethos within the festival.

The 'soft' Greenfields gate approach raises the question of whether it can be considered an exceptional case, or an example that others could successfully follow. There were a number of factors which I deemed to be important in facilitating the arrangement such as: a trusting working relationship with the police; an emphasis on a respectful 'culture' amongst festivalgoers; its relatively small size and mixed age demographic; low instances of drug-related harm; and the absence of an on-site fatality from drug use in previous events. The exception illustrates, however, that there is extreme variation of gate policing approaches between events, and that the approach is heavily influenced by the particular risk concerns of the festival in question.

The 'worst case scenario'

Making sense of the *Prevent* approaches across these events, I argue that gate policing efforts are primarily a symbolic endeavour to satisfy a range of commercial and regulatory interests. Yet in the commercialised, risk reduction context, it might seem inconsistent for events to invest in expensive, fallible policing approaches, which may increase the risks of drug use and supply (Hughes et al., 2017), especially as these flaws are acknowledged by policing actors. While *Prevent* at Dancevillage may be understood as a 'PR exercise' to demonstrate good practice, it was more important for Daypicnic, Allsorts and Teenparty to invest in 'hard' *Prevent* policies. For these events, by the nature of their size and young audience demographic, the occurrence of drug-related fatalities was a more pressing risk. Because of this, investment in *Prevent* may further be understood as an exercise in satisfying the police's drug-related risk-perceptions, with the overriding objective of loss prevention. Even though Dancevillage was 'druggy' and 'dance event', its *committed* dance consumer audience meant that this was less concerning.

Drawing on the work of Giarchi (1984) and Kemshall (2002), Barton and James (2003: p.267) argue that the regulation and policing of temporary events is influenced by a number of different ‘communities of interest’ within a specific location, with contested, ‘value-laden’ perceptions of risk, who campaign for a share of the available resources to meet different ‘end results’. With this in mind, it must be restated that *Prevent* mechanisms *did*, to a limited extent, help to deter, find and remove concealed drugs on festivalgoers at the gate. These efforts appear to align with the police’s risk perception of causality in drug-related harm. At Daypicnic, in discussions concerning the festival’s *Prevent* policies, Nigel told me that he saw all drug use as inherently dangerous and repeatedly used the phrase ‘*one pill can kill*’. This understanding may be symptomatic of the media’s ongoing distortion and over simplification of many ‘rave’ deaths to the ‘worst case scenario’ of a single dose being taken by an innocent teenager for the first time (Forsyth, 2001: p.436). The significance of a ‘*one pill can kill*’ understanding of drug-related risk is that policing efforts under *Prevent*, which communicate drug abstinence norms and seize substances from festivalgoers entering the event, are perceived as compatible with reducing the likelihood of drug-related harm occurring. In an equation where ‘drugs equal death’, efforts to generate drug seizures (‘end results’) are a worthwhile endeavour, no matter how small the quantity of substances found are as a proportion of the vast quantities that go undetected.

It is especially important that *Prevent* efforts satisfy the police’s interests and risk perceptions in the event of a drug-related death occurring. In a pre-event meeting for Familyfest, one police officer advocated for use of sniffer dogs because he wanted to confidently be able to tell the Coroner that the event did “*all they could*” to prevent drug use if a drug-related fatality occurred. Echoing these concerns, Sarah, licensing manager for Teenparty, saw sniffer dogs as device for resisting the scrutiny of the Coroner in the event of a fatality. She explained: “*If someone dies at a festival – regardless of how much time energy and commitment we put into harm reduction, we would still be criticised for the fact that those drugs exist in the festival. You see it time and time again. If we*

have dogs, we've got a defence there. Very brutally, it's as simple as that". Coroner's inquests following a fatality can be financially and reputationally costly for festivals: If the Coroner deems there is a risk of fatalities occurring in similar circumstances, they have a power and a duty to write a 'Preventing Future Deaths' report, which is sent to organisations in a position to take action to reduce the risks.²⁹ For example, following the death of Anya Buckley at *Leeds Festival* in 2019, the Coroner raised concerns about the festival admitting unsupervised ticketholders aged 16 and 17 (McLoughlin, 2021). The utility of a 'defence' provided by sniffer dogs lies in 'responsibilising' drug using festivalgoers for harm that occurs to them (Fischer et al., 2004). The individualisation of drug risk alleviates some of the event's responsibility, and functions as an insurance policy against loss prevention in these circumstances

So long as sniffer dogs are a worthwhile technology for satisfying these interests, evidence which indicates their inefficacy is less important. Security consultant Richard, emphasised this point in interview. *"There's two ways of looking at it. Are we doing enough to satisfy the licensing committee, and is it effective. Those are two different things. For licensing, we supply the dogs, tick. Because we said we will, because the police want us to. So we use them to tick the box. Are they effective? * he shrugs* Are the licensing committee concerned about that? Maybe not... I dare say, we don't have to prove it. It's the term of the licence. It shows the police and the licensing committee that as a festival we take drugs seriously. Its effective at that. It shows we won't sit back and do nothing... we are serious about drugs. Therefore we keep our licence"*. In this interview excerpt, Richard refers to an event he worked for which had experienced a drug-related death on-site in recent years, which he considered to be an important factor the event taking a 'hard' approach to satisfy the police.

Depenalisation and arrests in responding to drug finds

Insofar this chapter has analysed how festivals attempt to deter and detect drugs on the audience. The question of what happens next, in terms of how drug offenders are responded

²⁹ Reports are made under Regulation 28 of the Coroners (Inquests) Regulations 2013

to, is also significant to understanding festival drug policing under *Prevent* and the exercise of discretion at music festivals. The following data primarily draws on observations I conducted at Daypicnic and Allsorts, following drug detections by their ‘hard’ gates. I argue that a policy of ‘depenalisation’ in response to drug possession is integral to the keeping the police, security and the audience happy while conserving finite resources. I do however, identify variations in the responses which are reflective of police, security and commercial risk and resource priorities.

Below the threshold and ‘depenalisation’

A common response when a small quantity of drugs are found is that the substances are confiscated and the festivalgoer is allowed to enter the event.³⁰ Confiscations are facilitated by the use of ‘threshold’ systems, under which it is agreed that festivalgoers found in possession of drugs below a certain, specified quantity will not (generally) receive a formal, criminal justice response from the police. The threshold system requires there to be a shared understanding between management, police and security concerning the quantity of substances. According to Pedro from SC1, thresholds are often set pragmatically, with the ‘nature’ of the festival and its anticipated level of drug use in mind. At Allsorts, the police and security agreed to have a ‘sliding scale’ threshold which changed depending on the day of the event. It is considered more reasonable for a drug user to carry a greater quantity drugs intended for their personal use on the first day of a multi-day camping festival, compared to the last day of a festival. The importance is therefore placed on whether the substances are intended for personal use or supply, rather than the quantity in question.

³⁰ It impossible for me to claim this happens in 100% of drug finds. I cannot account for any ‘Hawthorne effects’ that my presence may have had. Situations in which a security operatives did turn a ‘blind eye’ without confiscating would not have come to mine or anyone else’s attention.

The Daypicnic threshold was set at *'five and two'*, which translated approximately to five grams and two pills, although I do not know whether this was an aggregate total or not. Thresholds are 'indicative' and supposed to be interpreted with pragmatic and reasonable judgement about what 'obvious' possession looks like (Talking Drugs, 2020). As a context in which high levels of drug possession may be expected, the threshold system means that drug possession is 'defined down' in order to expend fewer policing resources (Garland, 1996). The use of confiscations in response to drug possession, rather than escalation to the police, is common practice in licensed leisure venues (Fisher & Measham, 2018). However, festival thresholds have to be agreed between agencies in order ensure they are applied consistently. As such, festivals may be considered to be spaces of *de facto* 'depenalisation' for drug possession, in which existing criminal sanctions are reduced at the discretion of the police (Stevens, Hughes & Hulme & Cassidy, 2021).

As a commercialised space, festival policing actors retain the option of engaging civil penalties, such as exclusion, for 'below threshold' quantities where doing so meets risk reduction objectives. For example, a security operative at Allsorts mentioned how he had applied the 'attitude test' earlier in the day in the decision to refuse entry to a 'non-compliant' teenager he found carrying a small amount of cocaine. The 'attitude test' is widely used method by nightclub bouncers and police to assess the potential for someone to challenge their authority (Loftus, 2010; Hobbs et al., 2003). Illustrating the importance of 'offender variables' in security discretion, festival security operatives described their tendency to reward compliance and politeness with greater leniency, while disrespect and non-compliance was penalised with refused admission to the event (Buvik, 2016). An important difference between nightclubs and festivals is that festival security operatives have far less discretion to exclude individuals or groups at the entrance, given that ticketholders pay a significant sum in advance to guarantee their access to the event. Finding substances and then engaging the 'attitude test' is a useful

mechanism for excluding people from the event, helping security to maintain territorial control. Even within a depenalised approach to drug possession, this suggests that drugs rule infringements maintain their utility as a resource for security operatives to control people and territory (Lister et al., 2008).

Representing an anomaly in my fieldwork sites, I observed that Daypicnic implemented a blanket, 'top-down' policy to constrain individual security discretion in response to drug possession. On the Sunday morning of 2019, I conducted observations near one of the private search tents. Looking out from the gate, I sensed a lively atmosphere outside the festival, as groups of young, intoxicated people descended on the festival from the local public transport stop. I asked one of the gate managers how security operatives were responding to drug detections. She told me: *"If they admit to carrying something and we don't find anything else, that they were lying, they can still get in. As long as they aren't getting in with drugs it's not a problem as far as I'm concerned. Look how many are being searched. If we kicked them all out, it would be chaos outside, and we can't control what they do outside. It's the sensible thing to do."* After a short while, the gate manager received radio communication from the head of festival security, clarifying that the gate policy was that *no-one* found with drugs would be allowed in to the festival. This interaction illustrates that there can be conflict between top-down policy and the in-situ risk assessments made by security operatives on the ground. As the festival subcontracted a number of security firms, it highlights how festival partnership work must be implemented between contractors and subcontractors, as well as between agencies. Ensuring that everyone is *"singing off the same hymn sheet"*, as Pedro put it once, can be difficult where policies vary between festivals and there is little time for training prior to each event.

The blanket refusal of admission to anyone found with illegal substances can be understood as an extension of the 'hard' *Prevent* approach and 'sending a message' to both the audience and local authorities that the festival takes drug possession seriously. One police officer

at Daypicnic saw entry refusals as the ‘equivalent’ to issuing a fine. Regarding a different festivals, security consultant, Richard explained that: *“If you have a festival where drugs are an issue – you might have to enforce a policy you may not agree with, because of the licence. We had to enforce a policy that if you got found at the gate with anything you’re out. Anything. We had to – and that didn’t go down well with staff. People paid 200 quid for a ticket. They get thrown out for a bit of cannabis at the gate. It’s harsh.”* Here Richard emphasises that implementing such a policy is counter-intuitive to customer service interests, and may be motivated by an event wanting or needing to be perceived as ‘tough’ on drugs by external stakeholders.

Above the threshold and ‘proportional’ discretion

On occasions where an ‘above threshold’ quantity of substances is found on a festivalgoer at the gate, the decision on how to respond is often made by police on a case-by-case basis, taking account of ‘system’, ‘situational’ and ‘offender’ variables (Buvik, 2016). The written Allsorts drug policy stipulated that each and every case brought to police attention should be treated on its own merits, and listed a number of factors to aid police in their decision making about whether the drug find should be treated as supply or possession. In this section I draw on my observations at Daypicnic in 2019 to illustrate how these variables were factored into arrest decisions, enabling depenalisation to extend to ‘above threshold’ drug finds in some instances.

In 2019, Daypicnic stationed several police ‘Force Drug Experts’ (FDEs) to operate on the gate, to be called upon by security operatives when an ‘above-threshold’ quantity of drugs was found on a person in the search process. FDEs were part of a ‘triage’ of arrest decision makers, who liaised via radio with the festival police compound, where arrests were processed, and with Event Control who had a direct line to local police stations, where arrestees were sent to police custody. The police triage had the option of issuing what they referred to as ‘restorative justice’ (RJ), where a person would be simply be refused entry to the event without further

consequences, but the incident was still recorded as a crime. At the Daypicnic planning meeting in April 2019, the festival's Silver police commander justified introducing the FDE and RJ policies in terms of 'proportionality'.

"We get 17 year old kids who come in and get caught with 10 pills, maybe carrying it in for their mates. They're not a threat to anyone. Instead of everyone caught over the threshold being transported to the central police custody for processing, the force expert at each gate will make a decision about whether to take it any further, based on individual risk factors. We can get information from other forces on their background – do they have a record? Are they known for selling drugs in other places? Are they dangerous? How much else was found on them? We take a decision to weigh up whether processing that person and criminalising them will have any benefit. If that person isn't a risk or a real criminal, then it will do more harm than good. If we don't think it's appropriate, this is a way to deal with them proportionately. We don't want to criminalise when it's not going to be in the public interest."

The use of 'RJs' in response to low level supply exemplifies how the commercial space extended the policing 'sanction catalogue' by introducing civil penalties in lieu of criminal ones (Bjelland & Vestby, 2017). The 'proportionality' rationale for the 'RJ' system, expressed by this police officer, explicitly recognises that the criminalisation of some drug offenders may create more harm than good. As an example of applied 'harm reduction policing' (Stevens, 2013), it reflects Bacon's (2021) findings that police motivation to create drug diversion schemes stemmed from the realisation that enforcement be a source of harm and can have 'little positive impact on drug use' (p.15).

The emphasis on the '*individual risk factors*' in this rationale implies a focus on 'offender variables' above other concerns. I observed that, in practice, this focus resulted in divergent arrest decisions being made even where comparable, very low-level quantities were found. While I was observing in the police compound, the police decided to give an 'RJ' to a man found with 15 pills, who had a criminal record for public disorder from five years ago. Another

man who was found with 14 ‘wraps’ was arrested after a background check found he had a pending ‘PWITS’ decision for cocaine supply.³¹ Another man who gave up small quantities of coke, ketamine and 10 pills, with a record for Class B supply from 2014, was given an RJ. In this instance, Patrick told me *“It would have been different if it had been Class A and in 2016 for example. It’s all done on a case- by-case basis. He gave it over willingly, he’s been very compliant, nice lad, so it’s part of the amnesty”*. In these instances, it appears that a criminal record involving a recent, similar drug offence was a key *‘individual risk factor’*. Yet given the tiny margins of difference between these cases, decision making in the case-by-case system appears to be a channel for the police doubling down on offenders who ‘should know better’ rather than based on whether they presented a real ‘risk’. This approach reinforces a two-tier system in which ‘nice lads’, who have more to lose from a formal sanction, are treated more leniently in order to conserve resources for the more deserving ‘usual suspects’ (McAra & Mcvie, 2007).

Speaking to people involved in this process, I found that situational and system variables appeared to be important for motivating the RJ and FDE system in the first place. One of the FDEs, Patrick, who I spent time observing with at the gate saw his role in terms of enabling fast, *“on-the-spot”* arrest decision making. One police officer I spoke to in the police compound noted that the FDEs were helpful in distinguishing drug finds as either supply or possession, thereby filtering out more serious from less serious offences at an earlier stage: *“He could look at the bags and say that’s that, that’s that, that’s that – it’s clearly for personal use and not supply”*. This helped to prevent too many low level offences from clogging up the system. Patrick mentioned that the festival had issues implementing the threshold system the previous year: *“Security saw it [the threshold] as a really strict level, and anything found above that would be instantly referred to the police and they would be taken to the compound for processing. It created a backlog by taking police officers out to transfer them”*.

³¹ PWITS is a commonly used acronym for the offence ‘Possession With Intent to Supply’ under s.4 and s.5(3) of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971

Where a backlog was emerging, the triage system enabled the quantity of people who had already been arrested to be factored into arrest decisions. A case which illustrates this dynamic occurred on Sunday afternoon, where Patrick showed me an evidence bag containing a small tub from a PWITS arrest earlier in the day. He told me the tub contained 40 ecstasy pills and had been found in a man's trouser back pocket during the security search. Later in the day I was in the police compound, and I saw a witness statement on the table describing the same incident, given by the security operative. While I was reading it, the police officers in the portacabin told me that the person had been allowed to leave with an RJ, and the statement was going in the bin. The police in the compound had just started on shift change, so could not definitively explain why the decision was made but suggested that it was "*probably resources*" as they "*always had to be mindful of custody capacity*". Potentially, the timing of the arrest on the Sunday afternoon played a role in the decision to issue an RJ, as the custody suite was under pressure from prior arrests in the event. These examples show that, even with an 'offender variable' focus, 'system variables' have an overriding influence on arrest decisions.

Hybrid tensions: Making cases and working together

In the previous section, I describe how the hybrid, partnership arrangement was beneficial for drug detection because it extended the reach of the police's 'symbolic authority' (Loader, 1997a) and coerced drugs to be surrendered to security operatives undertaking the search. I found that this system worked well when small, below threshold quantities were surrendered, which could easily be confiscated without police involvement. However, when above-threshold quantities were found and the decision to arrest was made, it triggered case-building process which was largely inconvenient for security, and sometimes a source of frustration for the police.

From the police perspective, a drawback of the Daypicnic partnership arrangement centred on evidential issues in making a sound cases for supply, which arose in the search process. Firstly, the police expressed uncertainties surrounding the legality of exercising their

search powers. As reasonable suspicion must be based on ‘accurate’ information, the absence of regulation in the private sniffer dog industry is cause for concern.³² While I was walking with Nigel on the Sunday of Daypicnic in 2019, he expressed these trepidations: *“If someone is indicated on by a private dog, what’s the legality of that as reasonable suspicion? What reassurance do I or the police have that the dog is adequately trained, good enough and qualified, will the handlers be able to give evidence to that effect, and will that will stand up as evidence in court if its challenged?”*. A second concern arose from the opportunities for drugs to be planted. As the majority of drug detections at the gate are made by security operatives in the first instance, Andy, from Daypicnic security management explained that *“If someone gives up 10 grams of coke, we’ll flag that up. Another security operative will come to escort them, then there will be an enhanced search. By that time, they might have come into contact with four more security operatives. That provides a defence for that individual in court, because they could argue the drugs have been planted”*.

The hybrid system means that witness statements from security operatives are an important part of case-building in order to link the evidence (drugs found) with the suspected supplier. One police officer informed me that two or three arrests had been lost because the police were unable to get a witness statement from the security operative who found the substances. A gate manager explained that in one instance the problem was the volume of interactions that security at the gate: *“The police came and took him away too quickly, and it was low level so the security on the gate don’t remember who it was who found him.”* This included the man, mentioned previously, who was arrested after being found with 14 wraps. Yet the police’s objective to make cases was sometimes burdensome for security and other agencies, who experienced their own occupational pressures and objectives. For security management, having their search operatives undergo the rigmarole of providing witness statements left the gate short staffed in busy periods. In an ethnographic interview, Amanda, the gate manager for Teenparty

³² Code A of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984

who had been in the role for 10 years, expressed her frustration at the demands of the police's case-building agenda: "*When some of them [search operatives] find drugs they get excited, and I'll come over and say no, it's possession, put it in the bin. But when they find 40 pills or something I think *she mouths* 'oh shit'. Because it takes one of my guys out for 3 hours, time doing witness statements for the police. I've never been to court as a witness on a drugs charge, and probably never will, so it feels like a waste of time when they do it and its frustrating*". As well as demanding resources, it led to situations which increased the risks of drug-related harm. Patrick told me about the following incident that was occurring on the gate:

"There's was a guy who volunteered his drugs at the search, but when he went to get them out his bum, he found the condom had split, with all the drugs still up there. He didn't say how much there was but they were individually wrapped, so there's no immediate concern for his safety, although it could be dangerous if they start to leak or come loose from the wraps. We can't get him to pass them naturally in a portaloos or we'll lose the evidence, so he's had to go to the medics for retrieval. Not a nice job. Only then can we make a decision on whether to amnesty. It's one of those weird situations that you only get at festivals".

In this case, the police's commitment to evidence preservation appears to override the option of allowing a more pragmatic solution, for the person to pass the substances naturally. It meant that the medics' resources were being used for evidence 'retrieval', which increased the risk of harm by delaying the removal process.

Whereas the 'hybrid' gate system allowed the police and security to mutually benefit from working together where their interests aligned, these findings suggest that partnership tensions increased with the police's attempt to 'make cases' for supply. The demands of assisting the police in making cases creates additional work for security operatives and negatively impacts the gate resourcing during busy ingress periods. For the police, working with security sometimes presents a hindrance to making cases, which results in both police and security resources being

wasted making unsound cases. A shortcoming of the 'hard' gate may be to disincentivise security from bringing 'above threshold' amounts to police attention, in order to avoid these extra demands on their resources.

Discussion and conclusions

This chapter identifies and critically discusses a range of SCP enforcement approaches which are embedded at the gates and entrances spaces of three festivals under the pillar '*Prevent*'. At face value, these approaches aim to deter and detect drugs on the audience, in order to reduce the quantity of illegal drugs being taken into, and subsequently bought, sold and consumed within the event. The tools include searching, profiling and sniffer dogs as mechanisms for detecting drugs, signage and amnesty areas, and high-visibility policing. In support of the limited, festival and nightlife research from the audience perspective, my findings strongly indicate that gate policing efforts under *Prevent* have multifaceted symbolic objectives, but the particular *Prevent* arrangements and resourcing are reflective of the more general security priorities of the festival in question, such as the audience demographic. For some events, high-visibility *Prevent* enforcement with a police and sniffer dog presence are adopted as 'signals to control': they might aim to 'tone down' audience behaviour and to communicate the strength of event security to potential threats (Innes, 2014). For other events, a 'soft' *Prevent* approach is preferred to foster a sense of community within the event, thereby increasing the capacity of the audience as active participants in the security pursuit. My multi-sited ethnographic approach at different festivals reveals that *Prevent* approaches can be varied in terms of their processes, resources and arrangements, which I categorise as 'security-led', 'police-led' and 'hybrid'.

A significant finding of this research is that investment in *Prevent* technologies is worthwhile for some events, in order to mitigate an array of political, legal and reputational risks which threaten the festival's commercial interests, rather than to meaningfully reduce drug

use in the event. It is important for events to convince the police that they can be entrusted with the policing task by 'doing something' about drug use and drug-related crime in the event. A cynical interpretation is that this echoes Garland's (1996) analysis that in the face of high-crime rates, punitive strategies are favoured by the state to give 'the appearance that 'something is being done...here, now, swiftly and decisively', as a form of denial to the limitations of the state to control crime (p.460). This might be the case for some festivals, such as Dancevillage which, due to its size and audience demographic, is a lower risk event for drug related harm.

For festivals with a younger, higher risk audience and bigger capacity, my findings also suggest that SCP under *Prevent* aims to satisfy the police's drug risk-perceptions concerning causality in drug-related harm. As sniffer dogs are a 'technology' dedicated to drug detection (Marks, 2007), what matters more than being effective or accurate is that they succeed in removing *at least some* drugs from festivalgoers, and therefore they are *perceived* to be effective by the police and licensing authority. The benefit of satisfying the police's risk perceptions and 'responsibilising' drug users through sniffer dogs and SCP is that these efforts function as an insurance policy, allowing the event, police and local authority feel confident that they can say to the Coroner that they 'did all they could' in the 'worst case scenario' of a drug-related fatality occurring. However, my findings suggest there may be risk 'trade-offs' in going *too* far to satisfy the police interests in this way. As Zedner (2009: p.28) observes, a paradoxical 'collateral effect' of scaling up security efforts can be to foster a greater awareness of these threats. I highlight that, although drug seizures are a tangible 'output' of drug policing which are easily quantifiable, there may be contradictory interpretations of what they indicate.

As a product of this ambiguity, the task for event security may be to undertake a delicate balance; investing enough resources at the gate in order to demonstrate commitment to upholding the Licensing Objectives, but not *too* much in case seizures are interpreted to indicate that the festival has a lucrative drug market or a 'drug problem'. I found that sniffer dogs are a

useful tool for this balancing act. They are *perceived* to be effective, while being inaccurate and ineffective enough to ensure the scale of festival drug use remains mostly hidden. Potentially, for some sold-out events, the use of sniffer dogs (as a tool for refusing admission) may be seen as consistent with commercial objectives by enabling them to sell more tickets than their ‘official’ capacity. Furthermore, sniffer dog inaccuracy and legal limitations on searching means gate policing is lenient enough, especially for *committed* dance consumers, to not significantly detriment the carnivalesque festival experience. They are inaccurate enough for the audience to interpret a dog indication as a stroke of ‘bad luck’ while ‘running the gauntlet’ to avoid detection (Race, 2014: p.321). Although investment into ‘hard’ *Prevent* approaches may be costly compared to using a ‘softer’ gate approach, it is important to satisfy the police’s interests and risk understandings to avoid the police deciding to exercise ‘levers’ over the event licence, thereby increasing policing costs anyway (Hadfield et al., 2009).³³

My findings illustrate the complexity of the institutional interests behind sniffer dogs, which has important implications for the applicability of evidence-based policing to festival security. Given the delicate balance of interests that sniffer dogs can help to achieve, I found that it is not necessarily in the interests of any decision makers to question their efficacy. It is likely that the evidence of their role in generating inadvertent, harmful implications for drug users will be purposefully overlooked, so long as drug seizures are taken as an indication of drug policing ‘efficacy’. The task for festivals who use them is to sufficiently manage their harmful implications within the existing event infrastructure, such as in the case of displacement of drug use and supply to outside festivalspace.

An important contribution of this chapter concerns how drug policies are subject to *ongoing* revision and negotiation, in response to the evolving risk context, and resulting pressures on finite resources. At Dancevillage, I observed how the mitigation of *imminent* safety risks from

³³ SPS ‘officially’ has to be requested by the festival, but specifics negotiated between police and festival.

the queue were prioritised over generalised drug detection during the search process, and searching resources were directed towards risky ‘troublemakers’ instead. In light of the impossibility of ‘absolute’ security, the task for festival drug security is to balance the likelihood and consequences of risks (Zedner, 2009). This balance may result in the health and safety of festivalgoers being prioritised over drug law enforcement. Festival drug security policies, rather than being fixed or stagnant, can therefore be thought of as ‘relational’, fluid and adaptable to risk and resource circumstances. Crucially, they are implemented through people, and are filtered through the risk-perceptions and perspectives of those who carry them out.

In answering research question no.3 (How is discretion exercised in relation to drug law infringements and what influences it?) I discovered that events operate a general policy of ‘depenalisation’ through agreed, indicative ‘thresholds’, allowing small quantity drug finds to be dealt with informally (Stevens et al., 2019). The discretionary approach to punishment may be seen as a counter-weight to enforcement-heavy gate policies in terms of customer experience: an olive branch extended to festivalgoers after subjecting them to the stress and trauma of gate searching and sniffer dogs (Malins, 2019). Depenalisation gives festivals access to a wider ‘sanction catalogue’ than available with formal responses, enabling civil penalties to be used where this is deemed more proportionate to the perceived risk associated with individuals (Bjelland & Vestby, 2017). Moreover ‘defining down’ drug-related deviance in festivals is an indispensable response to the high demand on policing resources in festival contexts (Garland, 1996: p.457). Applying Cohen’s (1985) analogy of a ‘net’ to describe the state’s reach of control, I suggest that the ‘hard’ *Prevent* policing may be analogous to ‘net-tightening’, making it essential to adopt a system which allows most ‘small fish’ escape the overwhelmed net.

While depenalisation may be considered to be a relatively lenient approach compared to criminalisation, Zedner (2009) reminds us that a paradox of security is that precautionary, risk-based approaches may be more punitive than retributive conceptions of justice, as they

erode principles such as the presumption of innocence and fairness. Through the ‘contractual governance’ of festival ticketholders, ‘hard’ *Prevent* approaches may bring far more people into contact with the coercive arm of the state than otherwise would be the case, without the protection of due process procedures in public space (Crawford, 2003). This finding is concurrent with a recent trend in licensed leisure wherein the police have sought to extend their coercive reach, facilitated by ‘conditions of entry’ to private space and justified on the basis of ‘security’. For example, the Metropolitan Police faced criticism recently for an operation where they conducted drug swabbing at the entrances to nightlife venues in London, ‘legalised’ as a condition of entry, and justified as an operation to promote ‘safety’ (Ahmed, 2022).

Chapter Six: Pursue

Surveillance, 'Good collars' and (de)prioritisation

Introduction

Once the 'ingress' period is mostly complete, the attention of festival agencies turns inwards towards the freshly populated festivalspace, as excitable festivalgoers set up camp and find their bearings around the site. For the event duration, the overarching task of festival management is to ensure the delivery of the event as planned, according to schedule, and to foresee, monitor and minimise the risks of incidents that may disrupt the event or detriment customer experience. The existing research from the audience perspective characterises drug policing inside festivalspace as distinctive from enforcement at the gate, in being 'low-key', tolerant, and primarily concerned with 'controlling the visible excesses' of drug use (Bhardwa, 2014: p.186; Turner, 2017). This chapter critically engages with the less visible aspects of drug policing inside the event which, often purposefully, circumvent the attention of the audience.

The focus of this chapter is drug policing efforts under the second pillar, *Pursue*, so called because it encompasses efforts to locate and remove (or pursue) drug suppliers operating in the event. In the first section of this chapter, I argue that *Pursue* aims to target certain suppliers with suspected malicious intentions over others. I explore the array of surveillance and intelligence gathering mechanisms through which security operatives, as the '*eyes and ears*' of the event attempt to identify and locate potential suppliers. The second section examines how suppliers, once identified, are responded to. I use examples of response and arrest decisions to illustrate that that *Pursue* policing is a negotiated product of the balance between resources demands and risk reduction objectives. In the third section, I contend that the deprioritisation of possession is the antithesis to supply prioritisation. Through exploring how policing actors respond to

‘open’ drug use, I make the argument that drug possession is selectively policed in situations and contexts which suit the risk and customer service interests of the event.

Drumming up business: targets and intelligence gathering

The targets of *Pursue*

Policing approaches under the *Pursue* pillar recognise that there is potentially infinite demand of drug security threats within the festival drug market. Rather than attempting to achieve ‘absolute security’ (Zedner, 2009), it makes more sense for policing resources to attempt to mitigate the most imminent and significant security threats. While *Prevent* approaches take an indiscriminate, ‘precautionary’ approach to external threats, policing inside the event under *Pursue* is more focused on individual offenders. Like drug detectives who prioritise ‘Mr Bigs’ (Collison, 1995), festival drug policing makes distinctions between types of drug suppliers and types of drug market, according to an assessment of their anticipated threat to the security of festivalgoers.

The priority of *Pursue* is catching profit-motivated drug suppliers who operate on the ‘open’ market without a relationship with their prospective buyers, who are there to ‘*get in and get out*’ without actively partaking in festival activities. As Alistair, the head of Greenfields security, explained to me at the event in 2019: *“If someone brings a bit extra in to sell to their mates, then that’s not a priority. It’s about whether someone is the type of person you want at the festival. They might be carrying a weapon. And if they are there to just make money – get in get out - and they don’t take it themselves, then it’s more likely that the gear is dodgy and they’re ripping people off, because they’re not selling to mates”*. For Alistair, the wrong ‘*type of person*’ involved in festival drug supply is a person who is likely to present additional security risks. These risks might arise through their propensity for violence or through selling ‘dodgy’ gear to festivalgoers, given the absence of ‘feedback loop’ as a tool for quality control (Measham, 2018). These suppliers who populate the ‘semi-open’ festival

drug market are a more worthwhile target for security resources, compared to festivalgoers who engage in ‘social supply’ or ‘minimally commercial supply’ in ‘closed’ distribution systems (May & Hough, 2004; Coomber & Moyle, 2014). It makes sense from a resources perspective to target ‘real dealers’ with greater quantities to sell, compared to people with *‘a bit extra to sell’* within friendship networks. From a commercial perspective, suppliers who *‘get in, get out’* are more worthwhile targets than regular festivalgoers because they do not engage in consumption within the event.

Drug policing under *Pursue* is therefore heavily entwined and embedded with risk mitigation, commercial objectives, and resource constraints of festivalspace. The threat from drug supply itself may even be subsidiary and incidental to security efforts to mitigate the array of threats posed by certain individuals. For Alistair, Greenfields security were *“more interested in thefts because we had a few last year. If we target them that tends to lead to finding drugs and to PWITS”*. Over the course of fieldwork, I came to understand that instances of low level crime, such as tent theft, are fairly common at festivals. As these crimes are not ‘victimless’ like drug transactions, failure to prevent it or to respond effectively may negatively affect both the objective and subjective security of the audience (Collison, 1995). It suits security objectives for drug policing to target individuals who are more likely to have nefarious intentions *in addition* to supplying drugs. Drug suppliers with other nefarious intentions are often referred to as ‘OCGs’, which is an acronym for ‘Organised Criminal Gang’. Although no particular definition of ‘OCG’ was offered by my participants, I heard the term loosely used in reference to groups of ‘career criminals’ and ‘real dealers’ in the outside world, who operated with ‘profit-maximisation’ objectives and posed a risk of serious violence.

The *Pursue* prioritisation of ‘OCGs’ and ‘dangerous’ drug suppliers strongly reflects the application of ‘harm reduction’ policing approaches, which advocate directing policing resources towards the most noxious and harmful suppliers, often in ‘open’ drug markets, in

order to shape the market into a less harmful form (Stevens, 2013; Bacon, 2016; Spicer, 2019). The Greenfields drug policy, as it was described to me, explicitly centred a ‘harm reduction’ approach by aiming to reduce the likelihood of someone buying an unknown substance from an unknown supplier on the ‘open’ drug market. Given this prioritisation, in the next section, I present an analysis of the strategies festivals adopt to meet these objectives. I argue that, consistent with the discretionary nature of drug supply policing, festival drug policing is mediated by the contextual nuances of festival drug markets, in tandem with the occupational, personal and cultural imperatives of policing actors (Collison, 1995; Bacon, 2016).

Pre-event preparation

Festival policing made attempts to anticipate threats from particular suppliers ahead of the event. I found that the police undertook a ‘knowledge broker’ role by sharing intelligence relating to drug supply and other criminal threats (Ericson & Haggerty, 1997). On a local level, Information Sharing Agreements (ISAs) were signed by event production, police and security firm ahead of an event taking place.³⁴ A limitation of my ‘outsider’ status in conducting this research is that I cannot know the full extent of intelligence that was shared prior to events, or how it was used. However, I was party to the complaints of my participants concerning the efficacy of the information sharing systems. One issue is that information and data sharing under the GDPR needs to have a specific purpose, and this requires the police to decide on what counts as relevant information.³⁵ In the previous year at Greenfields, as Greg explained, information concerning a local spate of car thefts was not shared with the festival as it was deemed irrelevant, and the festival was subsequently targeted by the same group of individuals. Pedro from Allsorts security felt hindered by the GDPR because it prevented information on

³⁴ ISAs are documents which outline the legal basis, guidelines, boundaries and limitations for sharing data between partner agencies who work together.

³⁵ The General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679

the ‘associates’ of ‘known offenders’ being shared, which he found to be frustrating because similar groups of people targeted Allsorts each year.

On a national scale the ‘National Events Intelligence Unit’ (NEIU), within Leicester Police, distribute a weekly bulletin to events and security firms containing information about crime-related issues which have occurred at festivals around the country in the previous week. The information is gathered from event security teams, ‘analysed’ and collated onto a PowerPoint. It often contains information about roaming ‘OCGs’ or groups of pickpockets who have been found to repeatedly target events around the country. Identifying offending trends, in theory, makes sense to help events take preventative action against risky individuals, yet the information is so vague that it is rarely useful for security teams. I was only aware of one instance where NEIU intelligence was used within the *Pursue* pillar. At Allsorts in 2018, a silver car which had been identified acting suspiciously near Familyfest was picked up by the police on ANPR travelling towards the event.³⁶ Although this was useful information for SC1 in terms of their perimeter surveillance and was facilitated by the police-security partnership, Pedro noted that it was SC1 who provided that intelligence to the NEIU in the first place.

These findings suggest that a challenge of *Pursue* policing in internal festival drug markets is that they are ad-hoc, fleeting and unpredictable. Compared to supply policing in external markets, which favours ‘drumming up business’ with informants and long term surveillance to understand the key players, festival policing does not have this luxury of time or consistency (Collison, 1995). Intelligence of ‘known offenders’ (Wakefield, 2004) in the festival circuit is less helpful than in localised policing arrangements, because it is impossible to accurately predict which suppliers will turn up on the day. This is especially the case when there are so many festivals taking place throughout the summer, and many on the same weekend. This means that, in spite of policing efforts to be proactive and offender-centred ahead of the

³⁶ Automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) is a technology installed on highways for automatically reading vehicle number plates.

event, most intelligence pertaining to drug market activity is gathered on-site *during* the event when the drug market is active, under substantial time pressure. In the following sections, I explore how this is enacted.

'The eyes and ears' of the event

Security operatives were referred to as the '*eyes and ears*' of events by festival director, Clive. Consistent with semi-public leisure contexts, 'people watching people' is a commercial management strategy which underpins the role of security operatives while they undertake an array of customer service, access control and risk management functions (Wakefield, 2004: p. 530). At the larger events I observed, Daypicnic, Allsorts and Teenparty, surveillance on the ground was conducted collaboratively with CCTV operators in Event Control, who monitored a panoptic wall of screens from cameras placed around the site. Together, the security presence performs a continuous 'unremitting watch' (Shearing & Stenning, 1981: p.218), which is a highly visible, uniformed, physical symbol of control, yet simultaneously invisible, so pervasively embedded and omnipresent within the physical structures of the event's access points and stages that it becomes a natural feature of the event surroundings.

Some surveillance activities take on a more visible character, for example, 'campsite patrol', which involves security operatives in high visibility uniforms walking around the campsite and interacting with festivalgoers. On the Saturday afternoon of Dancevillage I was invited by Emma, a security operative and self-certified 'campsite queen', to join her on campsite patrol. The following fieldnote provides some insight into the dynamics in the interactions between Emma and festivalgoers on this patrol:

Fieldnote: 'Did you see them look at me then?' Saturday, Dancevillage, 2018

Emma and I walked down the main campsite path towards the arena. It was mid-afternoon, and groups of customers (mix of male and female, mostly white people

in their 20s) were sitting outside their tent, getting ready to go into the arena for the night ahead. Emma said ‘*alright guys*’ to groups of people sitting under a gazebo near the path. “*It’s funny seeing their faces when they see me*”, she told me. We turned in to the campsite, about halfway down the path, stepping through groups of tents and over guy ropes. There was a small group of people sitting on camp chairs in a circle not far from the path. A few of the group looked up in surprise when Emma and I approached, and hurriedly stopped their conversations. They were playing music on a portable speaker, and were smoking and drinking out of cans. We greeted them and continued through the tents. “*Did you see them look at me then?*”, she asked me, smiling, when we were out of earshot. We carried on through the tents, and came across a camp with a group of about 10-12 people sitting under their gazebo. There was a mirror, face down on the floor under the gazebo. “*Alright lads, what’s that there?*”, Emma said, pointing at a little plastic cylinder pot next to the mirror. One of the group held up the pot for us to see— “*It’s glitter, do you want some?*” he asked. Emma laughed and said she’d come back later to get glittered up, and we carried on walking through. She said people often smuggle their drugs in through glitter packaging, which is why she asked to look at it.

In this fieldnote excerpt, I consider Emma to be engaging in ‘communicative surveillance’ through her interactions in the patrol (Lister et al. 2008). This concept has been used to describe the instigation of conversations with drug users by police at the street-level, with the dual aims of gathering intelligence and reminding drug users that they are being monitored. Emma’s sporadic approach to walking through the tents gave our presence the element of surprise when approaching groups of tents. Whereas, from the audience perspective, campsites offer relative safety and privacy for drug use (Bhardwa, 2014; Dilkes-Frayne, 2016), this strategy appears to keep festivalgoers ‘on edge’, judging by some of their facial expressions. Within Foucault’s (1977) ‘disciplinary society’, surveillance plays a central role in the exercise of coercive power, and where surveillance is visible and unverifiable, it increases the ‘anxious awareness of being

observed' (p.202). Sporadic campsite patrol serves as a visible, unpredictable reminder for festivalgoers to enact self-control and regulate their drug-using behaviour, thereby 'controlling the visible excesses' of drug use (Bhardwa, 2014: p.186). In terms of intelligence gathering, Emma's friendly, conversational approach with festivalgoers in this fieldnote excerpt was in-keeping with the customer service mandate of festival security and may be understood as a trust-building exercise to facilitate the flow of intelligence. Additionally, I considered Emma's interactional approach (such as asking about the glitter pot) to be part of her performative authority in the space, which allowed her to test the group's hostility or acquiescence to event security, as a source of intelligence about the composition of the campsite.

Emma's generalised campsite patrol illustrates how the preventative emphasis of private security extends the net of surveillance beyond 'potential troublemakers' to everyone in a position to break the rules (Shearing & Stenning, 1981: p.214). Yet, festival surveillance is more concentrated on some people and spaces over others. Given the low visibility and victimless nature of drug transactions, the process of finding drug suppliers often entails the use of extensive low-visibility surveillance in order to gather intelligence about the drug market (Collison, 1995; Bacon, 2016). Reflecting this, I found that *Pursuing* festival suppliers involves concentrated and systematic surveillance on certain groups of people. In the following fieldnote excerpt, Emma led me to a part of the campsite where there was a group of tents she thought were 'dodgy' looking.

Fieldnote: 'Dodgy' campers. Saturday, Dancevillage, 2018

Walking along the outskirts of the campsite, we headed towards a gazebo with a few small pop up tents near it. "Yeh", she said "*I think this is it – see – there's foil on the ground*". I looked around at the floor next to these tents. There were tobacco pouches, rizla king skins and empty cans strewn on the floor, some empty snap bags

and a bit of foil. It didn't look out of the ordinary for me – most groups of tents I'd seen nearby had this sort of litter.

“I've had my eye on them since the first day – that's how we do it. Go round on the first day, say hi to everyone on your patch, make sure you clock anyone and groups of tents who look a bit dodgy, and then keep going back to them and let others know to keep an eye on them.” I asked what raised her suspicions. *“They just don't look like typical festival goers. Doing this job enough you get to know who looks like a festival goer”*, she explained. She told me they were a group of three black guys, but what raised her suspicion was that they were too *“well dressed”* for regular festivalgoers.

This fieldnote illustrates the process in which certain groups of people in the campsite, following initial interactions, become subjected to more intensive surveillance over the event once earmarked as ‘dodgy’. Emma’s suspicions were initially guided by her understanding of the appearance of ‘typical’ festivalgoers as a basis for identifying groups of people who were ‘matter-out-place’ (Douglas, 1966). Alistair, the head of Greenfields security, referred to this learned intuition for identifying ‘untypical’ festivalgoers as the festival security ‘nose’. From a street-level bureaucrat perspective, developing the ‘nose’ for untypical festivalgoers is a ‘shortcut’ (Lipsky, 2010) which helps security operatives identify the ‘get in and get out’ suppliers who are not there primarily to enjoy the event. Given the importance of clothing as an identity symbol in leisure contexts and club-cultures, it may be that being too ‘well dressed’ indicated to Emma a lack of familiarity with the (often muddy) festival environment, and with contemporary playful and flamboyant festival fashion (Buck-Matthews, 2018).

Although Emma sought to explicitly disconnect race and gender from her suspicion, her identification of three Black men as ‘dodgy’ is relevant within the context of a predominantly ethnically white festival. The distinction between the appearance of a person’s clothing and the appearance of the person wearing them may be artificial, given that in nightlife

contexts, researchers have consistently found that racially coded dress policies are discretionary tools for the exclusion of Black and ethnic minority men from these spaces (Rigakos, 2008; Sogaard, 2017; Hadfield & Measham, 2009; Wicks, 2021). Whereas Wicks (2021) describes how bouncers of nightclubs in provincial British towns refuse entry to Black men whose clothing is not smart enough, the men Emma identified were ‘out-of-place’ for being ‘too well dressed’. My findings suggest that ‘cracking the code’ to these policies is made more difficult given their changeability according to different dance, festival and club contexts (May et al., 2008).

Covert surveillance: ‘Mancs chasing Scousers’

Another way that surveillance is enacted is through ‘covert teams’ of plain clothed security operatives. Covert surveillance efforts are designed to subvert the attention of the audience and supply targets alike. This fieldnote excerpt describes my observations with a covert team on a rainy Sunday afternoon at Allsorts in 2018. The team was made up of five male security operatives, of whom two appeared to be in their twenties, three appeared to be in their forties, mostly wearing plain clothes (hat, wellies, jeans, and dark coloured raincoat) and a transparent radio wire in one ear. The covert team manager, Liam, said they were going to arena to have “*a look around*” because they didn’t have any specific intelligence to follow up.

Fieldnote: Covert team at Allsorts, 2018

We lingered near one of the music tents close to the arena entrance. One of the covert team indicated to us with a nod that he wanted to follow somebody, so we started walking, separately in silence. I wasn’t sure who we were following until Liam pointed them out to me – it was two skinny teenage boys in matching grey hooded tracksuits and wellies. I asked Liam if they look for any particular clothing. “*We don’t – we look for activity*”, he told me. We followed, watched and lingered from a distance as they went to buy cigarettes from a stall, then went to one of the music tents, came out and went to another. We followed them for twenty minutes or so, but then lost

them as they went around a corner and blended in to the flow of people coming towards us.

While Liam claimed the covert team was looking for dealing ‘activity’, we appeared to be following two teenage-looking boys in grey hooded tracksuits. This excerpt suggests that security surveillance efforts are oriented towards clothing cultural signifiers of the working class (although, on this rainy day, their clothing resembled that of many other festivalgoers). My impression of these activities appeared to be confirmed by Tom, another Allsorts security operative, who referred to the covert team as “*a bunch of Mancs chasing Scousers*” reflecting the attempted profiling for ‘scousers’ at festival gates.³⁷

Both of these examples of surveillance suggest policing efforts under *Pursue* are concentrated on people who, by their dress or other cultural signifiers, do not ‘fit in’ with the white, middle class environment. This finding supports Bhardwa’s (2014) contention that festival policing differentiates between ‘types’ of consumers; compared to the ‘typical’ middle class festivalgoer, socially and economically marginalised groups are subject to heavier policing. I argue that this differentiation arises from risk and commercial concerns: targeting surveillance on people who look ‘out-of-place’ arises from the assumption that they *must* be ‘up to no good’, at the festival *only* to sell drugs or make some fast cash in other nefarious ways, rather than spending money on enjoying the event. Although it was not made verbally explicit by my security operative participants, my observations suggest that surveillance efforts are primarily targeted at groups of males. The more intensive surveillance of males within festivalspace may help to explain findings by Hoover et al.(2022) that males had a more negative response to the presence of security measures.

The fortification of festivalspace

³⁷ ‘Mancs’ is short for ‘Mancunians’ and ‘Scousers’ is slang for Liverpoolians.

Vast amounts of time and resources are spent on the ‘fortification’ festivalspace at the event perimeter, in order to *Pursue* suppliers who jump the fence (Martin, 2011: p.33). Out of my fieldwork sites, Teenparty and Daypicnic adopted ‘hard’ tactics such as ‘ring of steel’ fencing, but even at these events I heard reports fence jumpers (Whelan & Molnar, 2019). Throughout the night in particular, the fortification of festivalspace involves security operatives, sometimes alongside ‘general purpose’ dog handlers and the police, conducting surveillance around the perimeter fence in order to counter break-in attempts. I did not observe this directly, but security operatives often reported their efforts to foil break-in attempts at ELT meetings the following day. The investment in perimeter policing was considered by Greenfields security operatives to be a necessity, given the festival perimeter was ‘fairly porous’ and ‘like a sieve’. The festival used technologies such as night vision goggles to help identify heat sources, emanating from bushes around the perimeter fence. The objective to identify fence jumpers extends to inside the event, where security operatives conduct wristband checks at arena gates and other ‘pinch points’ or bottlenecks around the site.

A consequence of the unpredictability of festival drug markets is that efforts to target suppliers under *Pursue* overlap with the preventative orientation of policing under *Prevent* at the gate and perimeter. The task of *Pursue* involves predicting strategies and technologies that suppliers might adopt to circumvent *Prevent* efforts. For example, the concern that drones could be used by suppliers to transport drugs over the fence at Daypicnic led to the adoption of anti-drone technology for the first time in 2019. This preparation exemplifies how drug security is ‘relational’ and must be continually renegotiated in light of new technologies and newly identified threats in the drug market (Zedner, 2009). Identified security weaknesses or ‘blind spots’ under *Pursue* can also inform the *Prevent* approach at future events. Through observing pre-event policing and SAG meetings at Allsorts, I understood that the discovery of a supplier

operating in the campervan field at the festival in 2017 meant that campervans were identified as a potential security weakness, and were targeted for increased searching at the gate in 2018.

The loss-prevention imperatives for repelling fraudulent tickets and ensuring that only legitimate ticketholders can access festivalspace, as discussed in Chapter Five, are applicable to the objective of preventing break-in attempts. More significantly, fortification serves critical risk mitigation and prioritisation objectives. Within the context of finite resources and the impossibility of ‘absolute’ security, *Pursue* resources and efforts are physically concentrated on inhibiting people who are deemed most likely to pose a significant security threat to festivalgoers (Zedner, 2009). The rationale is that if a person wants to avoid going through the gate, then they are likely to have ‘something to hide’ and malicious intentions. Violent, profit-motivated drug dealers are considered to be more likely to jump the fence, in order to avoid spending £200+ on a ticket, and to mitigate the risks of taking their drug supply through the gate search process (particularly where festivals adopt a ‘hard’ *Prevent* strategy). The Greenfields policy towards fence jumpers makes stark the emphasis placed on distinguishing between the ‘*wrong type*’ of people over others. Security operatives told me that they were allowed to offer attempted break-ins the opportunity to buy a ticket to the event if they seemed like the “*right sort of person*”. As well as commercial incentives, there may have been practical reasons for this policy, as one security operative noted, “*If they eject them to [the nearest town], they’ll probably just try again the next night*”.

Police surveillance and intelligence sharing

In addition to intelligence generated by security surveillance, I found that festival policing may be informed by other sources of drug supply-related intelligence, which influences the way *Pursue* is enacted in terms of its targets and practices. In the following fieldnote, I observed the police at Greenfields share intelligence with security during the event. The excerpt describes a

post-ELT conversation between the police (Ricky), a security manager (Chrissy), and the festival night manager (Tina) and operations manager (Gavin).

Fieldnote: 'Dodgy traveller with a van'. Saturday, Greenfields, 2019

Ricky started the meeting, *“Last night there was a report of a white van parked suspiciously near the festival. The van was then spotted outside a Chinese [restaurant], which sped off when we pulled in. He had been asking for pallets. We took his number plate. His girlfriend then turned up this morning at the festival in the van”*.

Tina and Chrissy said they knew instantly who Ricky was referring to. He was well known amongst festival crew because he often supplied them with caravans, and he had a reputation as a ‘blagger’. Tina described him as an *“old style traveller, with long hair and no shoes”*. She suspected him of supplying Class As, but was more concerned with his other ‘nightmare’ behaviours at other events, such as stealing caravans. Chrissy added *“He’s well known to us. He’s not malicious or aggressive. He knows the deal - sometimes he comes out with his arms up waiting to be searched! But we’ve never found anything on him. The pallets would be for his bonfire...”*

Ricky replied, *“If you think he’s got criminal links, you can search him under your power. He’s on your site. If he says no then call us”*.

Chrissy agreed with Ricky. *“I’d love to spin [search] his van, but without pulling up the floor or stripping the walls I don’t think we’d find anything. We’ll send someone down to chat to him and have a look in the van – make sure he’s got a valid campervan pass too – he’s known to swap them with his pal.”*

After the meeting Gavin remarked *“Isn’t it funny how someone can go from a big dangerous Class A dealer to a dodgy traveller with a van within a few minutes.”*

This conversation illustrates the police actively sharing information within the multi-agency partnership to facilitate the event security pursuit. Yet it is the experience of Tina and Chrissy in their management and security roles which enabled them to interpret the information and

formulate a proportionate response to the risks the man posed. As event professionals often work at multiple events, year on year, they build a repository of intelligence concerning ‘the usual suspects’ on the festival circuit over time. This means they are often better equipped for understanding the risks posed by individuals to an event, compared to police who often work at one event per year.

What is interesting about the security response to this intelligence is that even though Chrissy did not think that they would find any drugs in the van, she was still keen to ‘*spin*’ it, given that the man was a well-known nuisance to the event. The use of security searching in this case appeared to be a tool for social discipline and the performance of authority. According to Choongh (1998) the Social Disciplinary model of policing carries the objective of reproducing social control and ‘maintaining authority by extracting deference’, in which coercion is used ‘to remind an individual or community that they are under constant surveillance... to punish or humiliate the individual’ (p.625-6). By mentioning their suspicions concerning Class A supply, Tina and Chrissy extended their own coercive power through the potential for police intervention in the event of non-compliance.

Audience reporting

The ad-hoc nature of festivals campsites means that the audience is often exceptionally close together, and individuals have very little access to private space beyond their tent. This can pose a challenge for festivalgoers making drug transactions which subvert the attention of security and other groups of nearby festivalgoers. As a result, I observed instances of drug market intelligence arising from festivalgoers who reported suspicious behaviour in the near vicinity of their tent, as facilitated by technology. At Allsorts in 2019, a festivalgoer Tweeted the event saying she had observed drug dealing in the campsite, and subsequently sent a private message with more information. This allowed CCTV operatives in Event Control to monitor the specific area of the campsite to corroborate this intelligence. The ubiquity of smartphones,

together with improved internet connectivity at festivals, is a relatively new phenomenon (although still not guaranteed) which allows festivals to communicate with their audience directly in real-time, and vice-versa, through purpose built apps and social media. The direct line of communication between events and the audience facilitates instantaneous intelligence reporting from within the event, permitting the audience a more active role in surveillance and the security pursuit.

Greg, the event director of Greenfields, emphasised the importance of fostering and encouraging audience intelligence reporting in interview: “*Strategically the community itself is the greatest tool. An example that springs to mind is tent thefts. If you’ve been unlucky to have been hit with a professional gang of tent thefts, you could flood the place with police and security and it would cost an absolute fortune and probably won’t be effective because these guys are clever. But if you maintain and promote an active awareness amongst the campsite, then you’ve got a chance of them reporting*”. Although Greg refers to the audience reporting tent thefts in this excerpt, the principle is relevant to drug supply, as this chapter argues that the identification of people with malicious intentions is part of the parcel of drug security under *Pursue*.

To encourage reporting, Greg emphasises the importance of facilitating communication with the festival, which Greenfields achieved through campsite ‘hubs’, the presence of stewards, an app with a direct line to Event Control, and a 24 hour phone line. Despite the ubiquity of security operatives within an event, this emphasis on alternative lines of communication outside of the security team is potentially motivated by ‘tainted’ negative perceptions of security, which may have reduced the likelihood of reporting (Löftstrand et al., 2016). The final component to Greg’s strategy was to respond effectively to intelligence once the festival was made aware of it. The festival response is considered in more depth in the next section, but what is important to note here is that ‘being seen to respond’ is seen as integral to fostering trust and facilitating the flow of intelligence from the audience. The audience is

unlikely to continue reporting intelligence if they feel the festival response to it is inadequate. In this way, intelligence which originates from the audience, rather than being generated by event security, can alter both the targets and visibility of festival policing under *Pursue*.

Catching suppliers: ‘good collars’ and getting lucky

This section considers some of the inherent complexities for festival police and security operatives working together in response to drug supply intelligence, and to ‘chance encounters’ with suppliers without prior intelligence. Despite the prioritisation of certain, risky suppliers under *Pursue*, I illustrate that the policing response may be subject to negotiation between agencies, in light of risk concerns and contextual resource constraints.

The threat of ‘determined dealers’

I found that the policing response to suspected suppliers is often commensurate to the perceived level of risk posed by individuals. Exclusion is a powerful tool used by private security in leisure spaces to mitigate the risks posed by particular individuals. Yet, as the festival’s power of exclusion is confined to the footprint of the event, it can be insufficient for mitigating the risks presented by ‘determined dealers’ over the duration of the event. At Greenfields, the operations manager Gavin recounted an episode that illustrates these challenges particularly well: *“A couple of years ago I worked at a lovely little festival. On the Thursday night, 3 huge black brand new BMWs show up. They were so out-of-place. So we had our eye out for them and they were easy to spot. Didn’t look like part of the clientele at all. We caught a couple on the first night but they’d done a switch and dumped their gear without us noticing. We ejected them anyway as they didn’t have tickets. They were so cocksure they came back the next night! We got them then. They had loads on them – turned out they were from a proper organised gang – they had property all over London! Those are the kind of people you want to catch”*.

Gavin’s anecdote exemplifies how prospective festival suppliers, who may have travelled far to a rural location with a large quantity of substances to sell, are a high risk for retargeting

the festival the following night if merely excluded by security. In these circumstances, it is strongly in the festival's interest to work effectively with the police, in order to ensure that the efforts made by security operatives to identify and apprehend suppliers can be translated into arrests. The criminal law is, therefore, a useful resource for incapacitating determined dealers in order to meet security objectives (Shearing, 2001). To achieve this, the objective of security and police is to make 'good collars', in which suppliers are apprehended with significant evidence of supply on their person (Collison, 1995). This requires careful timing, in order to avoid the suspected supplier '*dumping their gear*' beforehand, as was the case in Gavin's anecdote.

Campsite raids and 'joint operations'

I observed instances of intelligence-led partnership work between police and security which resulted in 'good collars' being made. An illustration of this occurred on the Saturday of Allsorts in 2019, where I observed from a distance as police and security operatives undertook a campsite 'raid' together.³⁸ As part of this raid, at least twenty police and security personnel in high visibility uniform entered the campsite unannounced through a fence, and descended on a large group of tents. Over two hours, they conducted searches of people, used sniffer dogs to search inside tents, and made several arrests. In the ELT later that day, the raid was described as a '*successful joint operation*' by the security representative and was reported to have resulted in three arrests for PWITS and one detention pending further investigation. I enquired in the meeting how the raid came about, and learnt that it was instigated after a CCTV operative observed suspected dealing activity in one of the campsites. It is therefore an example of a planned, carefully timed, joint policing response to intelligence of drug supply.

In observing this incident from afar, what struck me was the sheer amount of resources dedicated to it. It was unequivocally a lengthy and high visibility operation, with uniformed

³⁸ A fieldnote excerpt detailing the challenges I faced observing this can be found in Chapter Four p.94-95

security, sniffer dogs, and police, in the middle of a campsite during broad daylight in the afternoon. The policing response appeared to be a ‘control signal’ which ‘sent a message’ to the wider campsite that drug dealing was taken seriously by the festival (Innes, 2014). Observing at a distance, I was able to appreciate how their presence appeared to initiate a ripple of communication between festivalgoers. In the immediate aftermath, I observed that people from nearby tents who saw the raid take place were immediately on the phone. Over the two hours I observed the incident, dozens of teenagers in the campsite came to look at the raid taking place, before being instructed to leave by security operatives in the vicinity.

The coercive utility of the police presence in this ‘joint operation’ campsite raid is especially evident when compared with reports of another campsite raid which took place at the same festival, under similar circumstances. A security operative explained that CCTV had identified “*people queuing outside the tent, coming and going, that sort of thing*”, so security went down to investigate. He said that, when security arrived, “*They were refusing to come out the tent, saying they were ‘indecent’. It took around twenty minutes for them to come out, and by that time they could have hidden or destroyed anything they had, you know in drinks or something. Security didn’t find anything*”. Mirroring the partnership arrangements at festival gates in Chapter Five, this incident emphasises that the police role in festival partnerships may be understood as a contingency, enabling them to share their ‘symbolic authority’ with security operatives in specific situations where this is imperative for meeting security objectives.

In stark contrast to the low visibility surveillance and intelligence generating elements of *Pursue*, drawn out, high visibility ‘joint operation’ policing raids harness the vast and immediate communicative potential of policing responses. Speaking to Pedro, the director of Allsorts security, doing this appeared to be part of a long-term policing strategy. He considered of such high visibility raids to have a lasting impact for the festival’s drug market in the future. “*It takes a couple of years for a festival to get a reputation for being hard to sell drugs at or break into, and*

eventually real dealers will decide to target elsewhere” he explained. The festival’s response to these suppliers can be interpreted as preventative, deterrent action towards drug market activity the following year. This suggests that festival drug markets, rather than being discrete events, are connected between festival years and may have regenerative properties, and that their nature can be shaped by policing and security each year.

I was initially surprised to hear that only three arrests had been made in the campsite raid, given the wealth of time and resources dedicated to the raid. I mentioned this to the event operations manager, Jess, who agreed with me but saw its benefit for the policing and security teams. She noted *“it gives them something to do”* and is *“exciting for them”*. The festival security role can be especially mundane, especially where the event runs smoothly and to plan. The role involves working in cold and wet conditions, on disrupted sleep, away from friends and family. Michael explained that these conditions meant that most security operatives *“can’t hack it”*, with the consequence of security firms experiencing staff shortages by the end of the festival season. With these conditions in mind, such instances of proactive drug policing may be seen as an exciting part of the job.

The use a sniffer dog in the joint campsite raid is interesting too. It demonstrates how dogs may be used in specific circumstances under *Pursue* within the event, as well as at the gate under *Prevent*. This dual role was sometimes the cause of tension however, when making supply cases for other police departments got in the way of gate responsibilities as this fieldnote excerpt suggests:

Fieldnote: ‘That’s what they are paying for’. Friday, Allsorts, 2019

I was chatting to the dog handler at the gate when a police tactical advisor came to speak to him. *“We need a dog to go down to do a car in the car park”*

“Well I can’t do it – or there won’t be a dog on the gate” replied the handler.

‘There’s no one else who can do it’.

The handler seemed disgruntled when the tactical advisor left. We both got in the police car to head down to car park and I asked him about the conversation. He explained the tensions:

“We get it from both sides you see. It’s very clear from the festival that our remit is to be on the gate. That’s what they are paying for. We get told off when we don’t do that. But then the other police want us to go and do a job which takes us away from it, and we can’t say no because it’s our job. It’s political between those above me— I try to stay out of it, but it gets very political. Everyone’s got their own interests and priorities, and resources are always tight. Even in the police — you’ve got us, the drug squad, local PCs, all working together.”

In this fieldnote excerpt, the dog handler describes some of the tensions arising from working within a ‘user-pays’ policing agreement, wherein the police role is clearly defined according to the festival’s expectations (Ayling & Shearing, 2008). The ‘politics’ he refers to suggests that the Allsorts police struggled to balance their position as a *Prevent* service provider with their ‘operational independence’ to make cases under *Pursue* (Crawford & Lister, 2004). It highlights that tensions between pillars can arise in the context of stretched policing resources and an excess in demand for them.

‘Negotiated’ responses

In the joint operation described above, surveillance and intelligence gathering through CCTV enabled a coordinated response with a successful outcome for the police, security and the festival. In other cases, surveillance permitted negotiated decisions to be made over whether to apprehend a supplier, in which agencies could balance the resource implications of taking action with anticipated risks. The following fieldnotes describe the rationale given in an ELT by security manager, Michael, as to why the security team permitted a group of NOS sellers to continue operating on site on the Saturday night of Dancevillage:

Fieldnote: NOS sellers, Saturday at Dancevillage 2018

In the midnight ELT, Michael raised that three NOS sellers had been reported to them. From the description - three very built black men - they sounded like the three men who I had witnessed get ejected earlier that day after being found with fake wristbands and thousands of NOS cannisters. Michael said that they knew about them but “*didn’t have the resources to deal with them*”. There were no ejection facilities, and they couldn’t be taken to nearby cells because they were full. If they were arrested, they would have to be taken to another county around 2 hours away, which would remove the two police officers from site for most of the night. Michael said they were more concerned with ongoing issues of people breaching the fence. Preventing other fence jumpers was considered to be a more important priority than apprehending the NOS sellers, and taking security resources out of the perimeter operation to do this would “*leave the perimeter vulnerable*”. There was a concern that if they confiscated even more NOS from the group and ejected them, they might just break in again and start robbing tents to cover the cost of the NOS. Seeing as the group of three had already re-entered the festival after being ejected, the preferable option for dealing with the group was to leave them alone.

This reasoning was presented in an ELT in which the police were present, which implied to me that the course of action had been agreed between them prior to the meeting. There appeared to be an alignment of resource concerns from both security and police in this decision, and the decision to eject the same men without arresting them earlier in the day. As there were three men, the situation required at least six officers to be present in order to transport them off-site post-arrest (this was more police than were on-site at the time). The festival’s ongoing resource concerns were exacerbated by its very rural location in a large county. These factors were combined with an assessment of relative risks from taking action, compared with inaction. As NOS supply was deemed less harmful than the risk of tent thefts, it was deemed preferable to let the NOS suppliers continue uninhibited.

The how, where and when of some arrests was also subject to negotiation between police and festival agencies, in light of contextual concerns. After the 1am ELT meeting on the Friday night at Greenfields, I observed one of the police officers sounding frustrated in conversation with Gareth, the medical manager. *“Do they want us to police it or not?”* the police officer asked. I followed it up in interview with after the event, who explained that a customer had reported drug dealing to one of his medical staff in the woodland area of the arena that night, and this information was passed on to the police. The woodland was a dedicated late-night area within the arena, with a number of stages playing dance music, light installations and seated chill-out areas. As Gareth described it, *“The whole thing is set up to be quite psychedelic – it’s that atmosphere and environment where people might enjoy it more under the influence of certain drugs”*. Gareth said while the woodland was not strictly a ‘no-go area’ for the police, there was a understanding that *“some parts of the festival site between certain hours are managed by security. Or they don’t need managing – we might manage them from a medical point of view if there is any issues”*. In light of this understanding, the police agreed to arrest the suspected dealer when they were leaving the woodland area, rather than to *“charge in all guns blazing”*.

Gareth considered this *‘softly, softly catchee monkey’* policing approach to the late-night woodland area to be integral to maintaining the wider ‘ethos’ of the festival and its security, which prioritised fostering customer trust and community. He explained that, *“Because they do it the way they do they get the support of the customers and the clientele. And if there’s anything untoward, they will come to say to medical and to security. Whereas if they take a hard-line like they do at other festivals, nobody reports anything, anything goes”*. This incident suggests that festival concerns over the visibility of a uniformed police presence and the anticipated audience reception to it can have restrictive effects on the police role and the spaces of policing around the site. In this instance, the concerns over police visibility were more pressing given the ‘psychedelic’ atmosphere, especially during night-time, of the particular space. Respecting the psychedelic-friendly environment, was seen

as more important to the broader security objective of fostering audience trust and reporting, and this took precedent over arresting a supplier, even though it was a source of frustration for the police. As we know that patterns of drug consumption are shaped by enforcement in festivalspace (Dilkes-Frayne, 2016), my findings here suggest that patterns of enforcement are symbiotically shaped by patterns of drug consumption. Festival drug policing must, to a negotiated extent, facilitate the pleasures of drug use within certain spaces, as doing so can be essential so meeting broader security objectives.

‘Getting lucky’ and chance encounters

The instances of arrests described so far involve measured decisions in response to intelligence, as informed by contextual factors and multi-agency negotiation. I found that in spite of extensive intelligence gathering efforts, many interactions between security operatives and drug suppliers occur fairly instantaneously and without careful attention paid to timing. Bad timing, sometimes made more difficult by the nature of the festival, increases the evidential hurdles to achieving ‘good collars’ (Collison, 1995). Camping festivals contain many tents, and unlike vehicles and houses, it is not always obvious who they belong to. Festival suppliers may attempt to mitigate the risk of being caught with incriminating evidence on their person by using several ‘stash tents’, in which substances are stored somewhere in the event.³⁹ The use of ‘stash tents’ can make it difficult to link people to evidence of drug supply, without prior surveillance.

These hurdles were evident in an incident involving a group of suppliers at Allsorts in 2018. At the Sunday ELT meeting, it was reported that Liam’s covert team had discovered a group of 11 men from Liverpool who they believed to be linked to a significant quantity of drugs and £1700 in cash found in a ‘stash tent’. After being initially arrested, the 11 men were ‘de-arrested’, and issued with dispersal orders, meaning they could be arrested if they returned

³⁹ ‘Stash tents’ are designated tents used for storing quantities of drugs intended for supply. Mirroring practices in external drug markets, their use minimises the risks of supplying substances by reducing the quantity carried on a person at any time (Haracopos & Hough, 2005).

to the event.⁴⁰ After the ELT, I asked Liam to describe what had happened. He said that he had recognised one of the men from an incident at another festival, so he searched and found drugs on him. The man then led the covert team to a ‘stash tent’ which contained the drugs and cash. There were other people in his camping group, but the group refused to tell the security team who the stash tent belonged to or whether there were other stash tents. In this instance, Liam and his team ‘got lucky’ encountering a supplier, which yielded a positive result for the festival in terms of removing drug supply from the festival. Yet, as it was unanticipated and not intelligence-led, the evidence was insufficient for the police to make arrests for drug supply.

In another instance, the impromptu discovery of a supplier at Dancevillage resulted in a resource intensive and harmful situation. It was reported in the midday ELT on Saturday that a man had been found with 50 bags of illegal substances and some NOS canisters had been taken to hospital in the early hours of the Saturday morning. The following fieldnote recalls a conversation I had with one of the security managers, Ellen, who relayed the encounter to me.

Fieldnote: Saturday morning arrest. Saturday Dancevillage, 2018

I went to speak to Ellen in Event Control to find out more details about the arrest that morning. She said *“Basically, there were security at [the stage] this morning at around 5.30am, and they thought this guy had been acting suspicious – passing something to another guy. So they stopped him to chat, and as they did that, another guy who he was with started backing away slowly from the conversation. They said “oi, why are you so keen to get away” and then noticed a bulge in his back pocket. So they searched him, found the drugs, and got the police involved”*.

She said that it was only when the police got involved that he started sweating

⁴⁰ ‘Dispersal orders’ can be issued to exclude a person from an area for 48 hours, under s.35 Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014

profusely and saying he felt unwell. Ellen suspected he had either taken something before or had swallowed some drugs when they found him.

Following arrest, the man was taken to hospital and had to be monitored around-the-clock by two police officers for two days. There was some scepticism from security operatives I spoke to about his reaction, with the suggestion that he had been feigning illness in order to avoid arrest. This incident highlights that supply arrests which are unplanned and occur haphazardly can have harmful, unwelcome consequences. In this instance, the policing intervention resulted in a dangerous situation for the supplier and created a substantial burden on policing resources for the event duration.

Making conversation with some security operatives backstage, I raised the question of whether the timing of this arrest could have been better. They agreed, “*Yeah, before he sold anything*”. This perspective highlights the differences in the occupational imperatives of policing festival drug supply, as compared to drug policing in external drug markets. Whereas drug detectives in external drug markets might expend time gathering intelligence in order to identify ‘Mr. Bigs’, in the commercial festival context of risk reduction, it is imperative that festival suppliers are identified and removed from the drug market as early as possible. The more time that a supplier has to operate on-site, the more of their potentially ‘dodgy’ drug supply enters circulation, increasing the risks of drug use. From a commercial perspective, suppliers operating on-site is also counter-intuitive for events wanting to generate revenue from bar sales, if festivalgoers expend capital in the illegal market instead. From a supplier’s perspective, it makes good business sense to act quickly, as more time spent operating on-site equates to a greater risk of detection. As Liam, from the Allsorts covert team, explained, “*Only really stupid drug dealers are still selling on Sunday. Most go in and shift everything on the first two nights*”.

Together, these imperatives mean that policing drug suppliers at festivals under *Pursue* entails ‘a race against the clock’ to find them as quickly as possible. I consider this to be a factor

in perpetuating a ‘crime fighting’ mentality and orientation amongst security operatives (Rigakos, 2002). The engagement of security operatives on the ground in this race can conflict with the prioritisation of certain, more dangerous suppliers favoured by security management. It means that often low level suppliers are caught in ‘chance encounters’ with the web of security surveillance, without prior intelligence gathering to allow a balance of risks to be made.

Catching the ‘low hanging fruit’

Despite the prioritisation of *Pursue* policies on the dangerous ‘OCGs’ dealers who jump the fence, throughout the fieldwork period, I was aware of very few arrests for supply involving a substantial quantity of drugs. This may be a result of clever evasion of enforcement by the more sophisticated suppliers, or it may be the case that ‘OCG’ and large scale festival drug dealing operations are relatively exceptional. Many suppliers caught in the policing net are very low-level, carrying ‘borderline’ supply quantities, only marginally greater the agreed possession thresholds (discussed in Chapter Five). To illustrate this, the following fieldnote excerpt is comprised of information which I pieced together over the course of the Saturday at Greenfields:

Fieldnote: ‘10 bags of white powder, 2 packs of valium and some magic mushrooms’. Saturday, Greenfields, 2019

Michelle, aged 18, was caught without a wristband by security at a wristband check point. She was a straight-A student who had just got her A-level results and a confirmed place to study medicine. She told security her wristband had fallen off (it later transpired that she had given it to her boyfriend, Kyle, who had broken in to the festival). She was taken to get a new wristband at one of the gates, at which point she was searched as a condition of entry. She was found with ‘*a carrier bag full of drugs*’, as it was reported on the radio, and she was arrested by Ricky, the police officer. When I asked Ricky about it, he said she initially told security the bag belonged to her boyfriend, Kyle, which was taken as evidence of her intent to supply illegal

substances. Ricky said she wet herself, which had never happened before in his time in the police, and he advised her to contact a solicitor. Later on, two of Michelle's friends came to production, adamant that the drugs belonged to Michelle's boyfriend, Kyle, who was *'a really bad guy'*. This seemed to convince Ricky that she wasn't a 'real' dealer. *"He's the one we want to catch. Sounds like a nasty piece of work. He's taken advantage of her naivety and put the risk all on her"*, he told me. I asked if there was any way the police could use their discretion in this instance. Ricky told me *"No, it's clearly more than a personal amount, and we're aware of it now so we have to enforce the law. That's our duty."*

Later in the day, I read the official Event Control log of the incident. It described quantities of substances which were far smaller than what I had expected from the Event Control communication– 10 bags of white powder, 2 packs of Valium and some magic mushrooms. It would have been reasonable to say that it was a possession quantity for 2 people for the weekend, far from the heavyweight dealing operation that was implied earlier in the day. I told Alistair I was surprised, especially since it was communicated over the radio that it was one of the biggest drugs finds the festival has ever seen, which made it out like an organised dealing operation. He said she essentially just got unlucky. He explained, *"She was in evictions and the drugs she had on her were visible on the table. The police were down there dealing with the other lads and saw the amount laid out and said that's clearly a PWITS. If it had been up to us it was a clear amnesty and evict. We'd have never have got the police involved for that. But once they're aware of it, they can't turn a blind eye"*.

This incident reveals how low-level suppliers can be caught in the policing net unintentionally. Alistair's comments concerning how Michelle got 'unlucky' in this case, suggests that security operatives act as a 'buffer' for some supply low level cases, by using their discretion to not bring them to police attention in instances where arrest would be unwarranted for risk reduction purposes. The incident surprised me because it demonstrates a firm application of the threshold

system by police, which implicates a person who was not regarded by the police or security as a 'real' dealer. Potentially, a consequence of the softer *Prevent* approach at Greenfields was that the police took a firmer, less discretionary stance in relation to arresting low level suppliers under *Pursue*.

By comparison, the police at Dancevillage used their discretion to flexibly respond to low-level, low-risk suppliers. For example, in one case, two twenty-year-old men were found by security with 16 pills, 4 snap bags of powder and £200 in cash. The police decided to search their tents and if no more drugs or evidence of supply was found then they would be ejected, but if more were found they would be arrested. Although it was an 'above threshold' supply quantity, the police described the men as "*low risk*" and "*clearly not part of an OCG*". The worst case scenario according to Michael was "*they get back in and spend money*". Another man was arrested then de-arrested after being found with a similar quantity, because of his suspected vulnerability. As Ellen described it: "*He was homeless and had been sofa surfing for a while. He said he was forced into it. He was 22 and had a 2 year old at home. It wasn't right to arrest him – there wasn't enough custody space and it would've removed police resources for a borderline PWITS. He probably spent loads on those drugs and now owes someone a lot of money – I hate to think what will happen to him when he goes back with no money or drugs*". In another case, Max from Dancevillage event management explained the use of discretion in terms of fairness: "*We caught a dealer who had just finished his law degree. Arresting him would have ruined his life. I didn't get into this to ruin people's lives... That's what the amnesty is for, to bend the rules when it is fair to do so*". The decision making processes here echo the 'proportionality' test in arrest decisions adopted at the Daypicnic gate. In all these cases, there appears to be alignment between police and security that the public interest and risk reduction interests of making an arrest were less significant than the harms of doing so. Consistent with 'harm reduction policing' approaches, discretion is used flexibly to minimise the harms of drug

law enforcement, to conserve policing resources for high risk, more deserving ‘real dealers’ (Stevens, 2013).

I consider this discretionary approach to supply to have implications for how policing was carried out by security operatives under *Pursue*. I observed the police at Dancevillage telling security management in an ELT that security should “*act as normal*” in looking for dealers, but they “*might not be treated as expected*” by the police. Security operatives at this festival expressed frustration their efforts to catch dealers were not translating into arrests. It appeared to be demoralising and had the effect of disincentivising their efforts to pursue suppliers. For example, one security operative told me that he “*saw dealing under the seated bit in the arena*” but did not intervene because of the anticipated lack of police response. He rationalised that “*the police aren’t able to support us because they don’t want to leave site. We need more space to detain people we catch*”. This cause and effect demonstrates that drug policies are enacted through people on the ground, and they might not be implemented as expected where the efforts are unrewarded or they appear to be contradictory.

The ‘OCG’ bogeyman

As far as I was made aware, none of the events in which I conducted fieldwork faced an ‘OCG’ problem on-site. Potentially, this was a result of the reputation of my fieldwork sites as difficult targets for supply, as I am sure some security teams would argue. Even so, I consider the presence of festival OCGs to be fairly exceptional rather than typical.⁴¹ Yet throughout my fieldwork it was common for security operatives to share stories with me about their past experiences at another festival “*that I should definitely go to*”, where there was a “*real OCG problem*”, and their job involved chasing groups machete-wielding ‘gangsters’ around the site. Although I do not doubt that there are elements of truth to these stories, I am sensitive to how security

⁴¹ Their appearance is likely to be influenced by factors such as the size of the event and the lucrateness of its drug market.

gossip can easily spread around festivals with significant exaggerations. Overall, I consider ‘OCGs’ to have a ‘bogeyman’ status in festival policing. Reaffirming the bogeyman is way for festival security to draw attention to sources of insecurity, in order to maintain demand and a level of investment into festival security systems (Zedner, 2009).

The prevalence of OCG *stories* suggests that the threat of their presence is important to the organisational culture of security operatives. Reaffirming the ‘OCG’ that may materialise without a strong security presence, however unlikely or remote, frames the role as purposeful and meaningful. It provides security operatives with resistance to the ‘taint’ of the occupation (Löftstrand et al., 2016). Framing the role in this way foregrounds a cultural orientation towards excitement and crime control which mirrors elements of police culture (Reiner, 2010). This orientation is likely to shape, and to be shaped by, the demands of the festival environment and ‘race against the clock’ to find suppliers as early on as possible and exciting relief from its mundanity. Through these stories, past successes in targeting and identifying ‘OCGs’ are shared within security teams and become embedded in the ‘institutional memory’ of a firm (Fleming & Rhodes, 2018). This may affect the ‘vernacular risk perception’ that Sogaard (2017) refers to, wherein perceptions of risk associated with of groups of people are produced and reproduced through stories, media and selective memories of previous encounters.

Deprioritising drug possession and managing the ‘excesses’

The *Pursue* pillar primarily concerns the prioritisation of resources towards supply policing. Implicitly, this means that festivals deprioritise less serious drug-related deviance. Earlier in this chapter, I explore the role of security in conducting ‘communicative surveillance’ around campsites as a tool for managing ‘the excesses’ of drug use (Lister et al., 2008; Bhardwa, 2014). Building on this, in this section, I argue that important part of the ‘craft’ of festival security involves making judgements about when to enforce the rules and when to ‘turn a blind eye’ to

drug use and possession. This section adopts Buvik's (2016) framework of discretionary variables (system, situational, officer and offender) to discuss how these factors influenced security decision making.

System variables

The use of low-level possession thresholds, adopted in the interest of conserving security resources as discussed in Chapter Five, facilitate the general depenalisation of drug possession within events. With the exception of Teenparty, who used drug searching between the arena and campsite, I found that drug possession is not proactively policed, in the sense that security operatives do not search all festivalgoers they suspect to be in possession of drugs. In this way, possession is deprioritised as well as depenalised. Security operatives do, however, frequently come across drugs being openly used during routine surveillance. Emma told me that the 'unofficial' policy of her employer, SC1, was to not 'challenge' drug possession in these instances, such as through confiscation or a verbal warning. Alistair from Greenfields explained the rationale behind briefing his security team to not challenge open cannabis use: "*The audience here are very switched on – if we went and told someone to put out their spliff, we'd end up in a half an hour debate about legal rights and that. It's not a good use of resources to tell my staff to do that when there's more important things to be getting on with*". Through briefings, security management sought to restrain individual operative discretion in pursuit of consistency, resource management and customer service interests, as informed by familiarity with the audience. At times, however, this direction conflicts with the police's attempt to 'steer' policing (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992). During Familyfest, police officer Paula highlighted their concern surrounding open drug use in an ELT meeting by reminding the security team that people openly smoking cannabis needed "*to be told to put it out*".

Situational variables

The discretionary response of security operatives to drug use and possession vary according to the situational variables in play. Open drug use in the view of security operatives may be considered to violate the ‘knowing wink’, between the event and festivalgoers that drug use inside the event is permissible as long as it remains discreet (Goulding et al., 2009). It puts security operatives in a position where they must ‘be seen to respond’, given the publicness of the offence (Buvik, 2016). As far as security operatives conduct surveillance on the audience, they are also under surveillance from one another, CCTV, and the audience, and must therefore perform their role according to a range of expectations. While I agree with Bhardwa (2014) that security operatives attempt to manage the visible *excesses* of drug use, I argue that the line between permissible and impermissible varies significantly depending on situational variables. Returning to campsite patrol with Emma at Dancevillage, this fieldnote excerpt reveals her rationale behind intervening in some drug use and not others.

Fieldnote: ‘Leave weed’. Saturday Dancevillage 2018

We came across several NOS canisters scattered on the floor between tents. She picked one up to check it was empty and kicked some of the others. *“I’m not really bothered about NOS to be honest... oh that sounds bad doesn’t it”. I asked whether she would confiscate drugs if she saw them being used. “I’d confiscate Class As if they were being obvious, but I’d leave weed. Often you smell it and don’t know where it comes from – it could be from anywhere in the campsite”.*

Emma distinguishes between types of substances and how they are used in her discretionary decisions. She considered the classification of substances under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 to be influential, with possession of ‘Class As’ constituting a more serious offence than possession of ‘Class Bs’ such as cannabis. She also mentions the detectability of these substances. While NOS and cannabis may be detected through sound or smell, the origin of these indicators

is not always obvious within a densely populated campsite, and it would take up Emma's time trying to track it down. Security operatives do not have to 'be seen to respond' to smell or sound, and they are more able to 'turn a blind eye' to drug possession if they cannot visually detect the act.

In another instance, one of Liam's covert team at Allsorts told me about their decision to eject a festivalgoer who they had witnessed pass a 'baggy' containing a white substance amongst his friends in the crowd. The covert team had not been targeting drug possession, but they felt they "*had to step in because he did it in broad daylight and there were children close by who may have seen*". Given that the team was covert (relieving the pressure to be seen to respond) their decision may be seen as a product of norm enforcement and upholding customer satisfaction. In terms of the former, the enforcement of this minor rule infringement could be seen as tool for setting the standards for acceptable behaviour. As Berkley and Thayer (2000) found in their research in entertainment districts, policing can evoke the logic of 'zero-tolerance- policing' by doubling down on minor law breaking in order to avoid to creating an 'anything goes' atmosphere. The acceptability of behaviour is judged in light of contextual factors such as the 'type' of event, the audience demographics, and the perceived extent of anticipated drug 'normalisation' (Parker et al., 1998). In 'family friendly' events, visible drug use may trigger complaints and affect repeat attendance. As the team were motivated to respond by the context of daylight and proximity to children, it supports that the perceived degree of drug 'normalisation' within an event is fluid between spaces, may change from day to night, and these factors will skew the margins between excess and acceptable behaviour (Measham & Shiner, 2009).

Offender variables

In some instances, drug possession was proactively enforced when 'risky' or undesirable festivalgoers presented a security concern. The following fieldnote excerpt describes a conversation I observed on the Friday evening of Greenfields between Alice, the Event Control

manager, and Harrison, a security manager, concerning an incident involving a group of teenage boys causing problems in the campsite.

'Scrotey boys' At Greenfields, 2019

It was early evening in Event Control and Alice was on shift as Event Control manager. She called in Harrison for a conversation. She said she'd just been in a meeting with the bar manager and his daughter. His daughter was upset about a group of boys - referred to as 'the scrotey boys'- who were camping close to her boyfriend in the campsite. The scrotey boys and the boyfriend knew each other from home. They were all aged 15-18. They tried to mug one of the boyfriend's friends, but he resisted and they ran off. The scrotey boys later went back and stole from their tents, although adults nearby intervened so most of the property was returned. The daughter and boyfriend were concerned for their safety, but didn't want it known that they had reported it, because there might be implications for them both back home if the scrotey boys knew they snitched. Alice proposed they could create a story that the adults who intervened in the tent thefts took pictures of them and passed the information to the festival. *"Let's get the stewards on board with the story too – and we can get them ejected for selling valium and coke"* she suggested. Alice later came back into Event Control with pictures of the boys – screenshots taken from Facebook – and showed them to Harrison and Alistair. Alistair instructed a response team to find their tents in the campsite. Later in the day, I heard an update from Harrison. One of the group was arrested for assaulting a steward and another was arrested for drug possession. Two other boys in the group who were under 18 were ejected. Harrison told me that police officer Ricky had been *"giving those two a bollocking. You need to think seriously about who you hang around with' kind of stuff. They had a bit of weed on them which was amnestied. He says they've been very compliant and apologetic, saying they understand how lucky they are to be let off without being charged for the drugs"*.

As this instance illustrates, drug possession is proactively policed because it suits the wider security interests of the event to do so, rather than being an objective in itself. The festival's response appeared to be motivated by the aim of mitigating risk. As a rule infringement, drug possession can be instantaneously proven by searching and finding substances on a person. In festivals where it might be assumed that most festival customers will be carrying illegal substances, finding drug possession can usefully and easily justify and facilitate the ejection of undesirable customers acting in unfavourable ways which threaten the audience's security. Crucially, suspected or discovered drug possession facilitates the threat of police involvement in a situation, enhancing the coercive power of security. In this situation, it may have also been less preferable to eject the 'scrotey boys' for their anti-social behaviour, as this would have negatively implicated the victims for 'snitching'. Mirroring the use of 'Stop and Search' in public space, drug laws are harnessed in festival policing as a 'multi-purpose tool', used selectively for controlling 'threatening populations ... [and] doing what is deemed necessary to maintain the particular version of 'order' that such individuals threaten or transgress' (Bradford & Loader, 2015: p.26). Even within the festival environment of generalised 'depenalisation', drug laws are a resource for festival policing to draw on in pursuit of other security concerns and for maintaining a particular order within the space (Greer et al., 2022).

Additionally, this incident reveals some of the negotiation and complexities behind decision making in the security response to some incidents. The response aligns with the Greenfield's security strategy, which placed emphasis on responding effectively to audience concern in order to encourage reporting. An insensitive or ineffective response to the incident had the potential to damage the festival's relationship with staff and audience (given the connection to the bar manager). It demonstrates how the pursuit of risk reduction involves the consideration of commercial concerns, and how audience generated intelligence can be

influential for determining which instances of drug-related rule breaking receive a proactive policing response.

Officer variables

I found that the security ‘craft’ of knowing when to respond to drug use was learnt on the job, with experience and familiarity within the festival environment (Fleming & Rhodes, 2018). An incident that illustrates this occurred at Greenfields while I was in Event Control. It was reported over the radio that a pair of “*dealers with shit loads of drugs*” had been found in the arena, and there was a real buzz in the room as we waited for them to be escorted to the production area, to receive an enhanced search. Rather disappointingly for all the excitement, the two young men were found in possession of a very small quantity of cannabis resin and ketamine between them. After the search, Alistair confiscated the drugs and told them that if they were caught again they would be ejected, and let them go back into the arena.

I was interested in how two people could go from being described as “*dealers with shit loads of drugs*” to regular festivalgoers with a small, personal amount of substances. Alistair explained to me they had been observed using a key to inhale substances in the arena by a security operative who was “*ex forces*” and “*not used to festivals*”. He said that security operatives with a forces background tend to have “*a strict set of ideas about what’s acceptable and what’s not*”, which meant they “*might take a harder line than the guys who have been doing this a while*”. A security operative at Familyfest echoed that new security recruits could be ‘*over-zealous*’ and take a less tolerant approach to possession, in order to impress early on. Experience in the carnivalesque environment over the season facilitated pragmatism and the craft of judging what drug infringements were worthy of using security resources to make an intervention.

Considering officer variables also relates to the normative and cultural influences which guide decision making. Contrary to the ‘moral taint’ and suspected drug supply involvement associated with the security role in licensed leisure, many security operatives I spoke to

expressed moralistic, ‘anti-drugs’ perspectives (Löftstrand et al., 2016; Sanders, 2005). Potentially, this motivated some security operatives to take the job in the first place. A number of security operatives I spoke to were ex-forces or ex-police, or prospective police recruits who took the role over summer to gain relevant work experience. Tentatively, this indicates that there may be a degree of ‘blurring’ (White & Gill, 2013) between police and security identities amongst some festival security operatives, exacerbated by the crime fighting occupational imperatives towards catching drug suppliers.

The spaces of policing and the security ‘buffer’

In the context of ‘normalised’ and ‘atypical’ drug use, I found that event management considered a pervasive security presence to be far more palatable for the interests of the festival and its audience, compared to a police presence (Parker et al., 1998; Turner and Measham, 2020). This is because private security exercise discretion to meet the interests of their employer, rather than in the ‘public interest’ (Shearing & Stenning, 1989: p.210). To illustrate this, I describe how the festival security ‘craft’ involves making decisions about when to enforce the rules which balance the objectives of risk reduction, commercial interests, and resource concerns. Festival security play an integral role to the functioning of festivalspace by providing a discretionary policing ‘buffer’ between festivalgoers and the police. Away from the gate, the separation is mostly maintained, except in specific situations (such as arrests and joint operations) where it suits the event’s commercial, risk reduction interests to reduce the ‘buffer’.

In order to maintain separation between the police and audience, I found the spaces which the police were permitted to access during the event are carefully managed by event management. At Dancevillage there was no paid policing arrangement (SPS), so the arrival of two police officers on the first event day was a surprise for the event’s management team. Francesca, the operations manager, told me she was careful to manage the relationship. She did not want to appear hostile or arouse their suspicions that the festival had “*something to hide*”

but was careful “*to test the police’s attitudes*” before agreeing to let them into the arena. Her desire to control the police’s access to festivalspace came from concern they would not understand the environment. “*We don’t want them to go in the arena, see someone doing a key of ket and arrest them*”, she explained.⁴² She was also concerned that, especially given the festival’s rural location, the police might not be used to or very knowledgeable about drugs and drug use, and this might make them less tolerant.

Francesca’s concerns were echoed by Pedro at Allsorts, who thought that a police campsite presence could put police officers in a difficult position if they saw open drug use. They may be compelled to take formal action, as it would look bad “*if anyone saw them ignore it, or worse if anyone filmed them ignoring it*”. I was told by Greenfields management that the SPS agreement between the police and the festival explicitly defined the police role on-site, specifically for prisoner arrest and transportation, which meant that prior agreement was needed for the police to enter the arena. On the Friday, I heard discussion in Event Control about a police officer walking around in the arena without prior agreement. Alice explained that “*We’ve got a firm agreement that they should stay in the campsites. It’s a grey area – they might see things they aren’t used to seeing and create a whole issue when they shouldn’t be there in the first place. She said she’d got lost – she went to have a look basically*”. Delimiting the police’s access to festivalspace was a strategy which simultaneously managed ‘frontstage’ appearances (Goffman, 1959) for the event, while protecting the audience from potentially over-zealous law enforcement, thereby protecting the carnivalesque atmosphere of the festivalspace.

Failure to effectively manage ‘frontstage’ appearances in this way can result in costly consequences for a festival. By way of illustration, during fieldwork at a Familyfest planning meeting I attended in April 2018, the police raised that an off-duty officer who had attended the event as a customer the previous year made a subsequent intelligence report that

⁴² ‘Ket’ is an abbreviation for the substance ‘Ketamine’.

festivalgoers were “*openly smoking cannabis without being challenged*” and that there were “*drug suppliers*” operating in the arena. As a result of this intelligence, the police were in favour of the festival implementing a costly sniffer dog presence at the gate, and a ‘*round the clock*’ on-site police presence. This negotiation exemplifies how the police may use informal ‘levers’ over the festival’s licence which can incur increases in policing provision and costs (Hadfield et al., 2009). It also exemplifies how the festival security pursuit is an evolving process which adapts each year of the event to newly identified and emergent risks and threats, as a product of negotiation between festival agencies.

Discussion and conclusions

This chapter presents a critical analysis of the policing approaches and activities which take place inside the event under the second pillar *Pursue*. I found that security operatives are embedded into the event infrastructure and play an integral role as the ‘*eyes and ears*’ of the event, conducting continuous surveillance of festivalgoers. They use strategies such as high visibility patrol to engage in ‘communicative surveillance’ and gather intelligence on the festival drug market. By engaging an ethnographic ‘over the shoulder’ (Nabben, 2010) perspective of security operatives, my study brings to light the less visible strategies of policing, which are intentionally covert and take place throughout the night under the cover of darkness, away from the bright lights and festival entertainment.

My findings in this chapter are important to understanding the use of policing discretion towards drugs in the commercialised festival context and answering research question no.3 (How is discretion exercised in relation to drug law infringements and what influences it?). I show that discretion in festival contexts is invariably tied to risk reduction, resource conservation, and commercial imperatives. Within commercialised space and the multitude of ‘potential hazards’ within the ephemeral festival drug market context, it is more time and

resource efficient for security to target fewer, more prolific, and more dangerous ‘OCG’ drug suppliers. Through the prioritisation of the most noxious suppliers in the drug market, supply enforcement aims to be a ‘regulatory’ strategy which shapes the festival market into less violent and less ‘open’ forms, rather than attempting to eliminate it (Bacon, 2016; Stevens, 2013). A consequence of prioritisation is that the process of securitisation is distributed unevenly and inconsistently across time and space: at night it is often hidden at the margins, concentrated at the perimeter, to mitigate the most likely, imminent and severe supply threats who attempt to jump the fence. The emphasis on balancing risk and resources means that, in some cases, inaction is a preference to enforcement even where ‘determined dealers’ are identified. I argue that, implicit in the prioritisation of suppliers under *Pursue*, is the ‘deprioritisation’ drug possession offences. In this chapter I illustrate how the ‘craft’ of security operatives is cultivated with experience in the festival environment, and involves making judgements concerning appropriate drug-using behaviour in light of the contextual variables at hand. This means that discretion has a temporal and spatial dimension within the event. I maintain that drug prohibition is a useful ‘tool’ in the security pursuit of by facilitating the exclusion of troublemakers from the event. My findings concerning the use of discretion helps to explain the audience perspective of festival policing as ‘tolerant’ and show that that formal, quantifiable outputs of policing (such as arrest statistics) can tell us very little about festival policing (Turner, 2017).

My findings reveal that there are strong occupational and contextual imperatives which shape how *Pursue* is carried out in practice by security operatives. A challenge of prioritising certain suppliers in festival drug markets is that there is very limited available time in which to generate drug market intelligence. Security operatives must ‘race against the clock’ to detect suppliers as early as possible in the event, before suppliers have a chance to ‘get in and get out’. What this means is, within the primarily ethnically white, middle-class festival context, the

prioritisation of ‘real dealers’ translates into security using ‘shortcuts’ by conducting heavier surveillance of festivalgoers whose appearances appear ‘out-of-place’ according to classed and racialised stereotypes. For the festival security ‘nose’, whiteness is the default, and non-whiteness is ‘othered’ in festivalspace. With parallels to the policing of external recreational drug markets, this means that drug suppliers who are white, who look and act ‘the part’ amongst the middle classes are better equipped to subvert the security surveillance radar, while ethnic minorities are considered to be ‘bodies out-of-place’ and ‘marked out as trespassers’ (Puwar, 2004: p. 8; Perrone, 2009). Potentially festivals may be considered ‘institutionally white’, in the sense that they ‘are orientated ‘around’ whiteness, insofar as whiteness is not seen’, with the effect of making non-white people feel ‘uncomfortable, exposed, visible, different, when they take up this space’ (Ahmed, 2007: p.157). Festival drug policies and policing contribute to an ‘ethnic governance’ process, which helps to produce and reproduce festivals as exclusive ‘play spaces’ for white, middle-and-upper class debauchery (Chowdhury, 2019; Samara, 2010). In festivals, the ‘cultural elites’ within dance music are sustained by discretionary and informal processes which exclude minority ethnic and working class consumers, despite the music’s origins in urban, Black and queer cultures (Measham & Hadfield, 2009; McLeod, 2001).

The extensive and wide surveillance net, in combination with a security crime-fighting cultural orientation, means that many low-level, low priority, suppliers end up being caught in the *Pursue* process. Although, as I have argued, this does not always translate into their arrest, security must be seen to respond through exclusion. A risk-increasing unintended consequence of this may be, as Ruane (2018) highlights, that policing reduces the availability of social networks as a means for quality control amongst drug users and discourages more time-consuming ‘responsible dealing’ practices in the drug market (p.342).

Relevant to research question no.4 (How do agencies from work together partnership, and what tensions arise from this?), I found that the police attempt to be ‘knowledge brokers’

concerning supply intelligence, but the ad-hoc festival drug market makes this difficult (Ericson & Haggerty, 1997). Although a police presence is common at festivals, under *Pursue* the police role is mostly available in ‘contingency’ to support the activities of security operatives and enhance their coercive authority when faced with the threat of ‘determined’ suppliers. Engaging drug laws and the criminal justice system is a ‘useful governing strategy’ for promoting security objectives by extending the coercive, exclusionary reach of festival security (Shearing, 2001: p.209). I found that the police role on-site is carefully managed, negotiated and spatially defined in order to protect the carnivalesque nature of space. The utility of security operatives as primary festival policing actors is their position as a policing ‘buffer’ between drug users and the police, which enables discretionary decisions to be made in the commercial interests of the event.

Chapter Seven: Protect

Responding to drug use and intoxication

Introduction

Under the third and final approach, *Protect*, I focus a lens on the approaches and activities of festival agencies towards managing drug use, intoxication, and the risks arising from it. Festival drug use endures prolifically, owing to the inefficacies of coercive enforcement efforts under *Prevent*. Research of festival audiences in England and abroad has found festivals to contain elevated, experimental and ‘atypical’ drug using behaviours; in-situ surveys of 2250 festivalgoers in England in 2018 found that 52.4% of respondents had already taken or intended to take a drug on the day they were interviewed (Turner & Measham, 2019; Hesse & Tutenges, 2012). For many festivalgoers, it is an important facilitator of the ‘otherworldly’, carnivalesque festival experience (Turner, 2018). Although not technically illegal under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, drug use represents a risk to safety be managed by the event.⁴³ Therefore, the activities and efforts made by festival agencies towards this fall within my definition of drug policing as the ‘governance of drug security’, irrespective of whether the efforts are concerned with law infringements.

In this chapter, I examine the collaborative efforts made by the network of festival services in implementing drug harm reduction. The first section of this chapter explores the ground-level, reactive implementation of *Protect* by welfare services, which prioritises reducing the risks and vulnerabilities of intoxication through a ‘non-medicalisation’ approach (Luther, 2018). Assessing the role of security operatives within the harm reduction network in relation to its provision on the ground, I argue that security operatives must make difficult decisions

⁴³ The Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 prohibits the possession and supply of scheduled substances but not their use.

which balance the anticipated risks of intoxication with resource concerns. Applying a ‘risk environment’ framework, I argue that festival security operatives, as part of the physical, social and policy micro level festival context, are both facilitators and barriers to the effective delivery of harm reduction services (Rhodes, 2002).

The second section analyses how festivals anticipate trends in drug-related harm, and attempt to take a preventative approach to drug harm reduction through the identification of intoxication trends as they materialise. An original contribution I make in this chapter is my ethnographic insight into the work and tensions of festival drug checking services in implementation. My findings demonstrate that drug checking services can help festival drug harm reduction take on a preventative, rather than reactive, approach to drug risks where it is implemented with specialist expertise and information sharing is facilitated. With a lens on the process of making drug ‘alerts’, I demonstrate how festival harm reduction is negotiated between agencies, and constrained within the commercialised context. My findings demonstrate that *Protect* is the most important pillar for risk reduction, but its reach is hindered by enforcement in the micro and macro prohibition context.

Harm reduction services

Festivals contract a mixed economy of services to respond to unfolding and potential health-related emergencies and incidents which occur during the event, as and when required, in order to uphold the Licensing Objective of ‘Public Safety’. All my fieldwork sites contracted an emergency first-aid provider (here-on the ‘medics’) and a welfare service (here-on ‘welfare’), except Greenfields which used an ‘in-house’ combined medics and welfare service, in addition to a separate mental health support service. At all fieldwork sites, the medics and welfare facilities were located in a publicly accessible tent in close proximity to the campsites, except for Daypicnic which, as a non-camping festival, located these services in the arena near to the

mainstage. I conducted observations in the welfare tents at Dancevillage, Daypicnic and Teenparty in order to observe their responses to drug intoxication and relationships with other agencies. ‘Medics’ are typically made up of volunteer paramedics and first-aid responders, with at least one doctor overseeing care. They are responsible for providing first-aid treatment on-site and they can decide to send a patient to hospital in an ambulance, depending on the level of on-site resources and the needs of the individual. I made the decision to not conduct direct observations within these facilities, on the basis that I did not want to get in the way or to distract medics at work. Analysis of the emergency provision of first-aid and treatment by medics is made from observations with participants from other agencies, and observations in ELT meetings, where I was party to perspectives and information concerning their activities.

Three festivals, Allsorts, Teenparty and Daypicnic, operated a form of drug checking service.⁴⁴ I observed three different models of drug checking in total: In 2018, Allsorts contracted a drug checking service provider (‘Testing NGO’) to deliver a combined ‘Back of House’ (BoH) and ‘Front of House’ (FoH) service, but service provision was revised in 2019 to remove the FOH element. Daypicnic contracted Testing NGO to provide a BoH service in both 2018 and 2019. At Daypicnic and Allsorts in both 2018 and 2019, the medics and Testing NGO agreed that they would have a ‘loose BOH’ system, meaning that the medics could take substances of concern to Testing NGO if they were handed over by unwell patients.⁴⁵ The police operated a BoH facility at Teenparty in 2018, which I was not permitted by the festival to directly observe. Given this obstacle, the majority of my discussion focuses on the services provided at Allsorts and Daypicnic.

‘Healthy settings’

⁴⁴ The term ‘drug checking’ is sometime used to describe the ‘Front of House’ model (Barratt et al., 2018). For conceptual clarity in this chapter, I use the term ‘drug checking’ to refer to the process in which illicit substances from the festival site are tested and analysed in an on-site laboratory.

⁴⁵ This arrangement has elsewhere been referred to as a ‘Halfway house’ model (Fisher and Measham, 2018).

It must be underlined that most drug use and intoxication in festivals is a means in the pursuit of pleasure, and does not result in serious short-term adverse health outcomes for individuals. This means that, with some exceptions as discussed in Chapter Six under *Pursue*, states of intoxication and drug use inside festivals are accepted and tolerated by event security, so long as individuals are not causing harm to others. In terms of preventative risk reduction, it makes sense for events to adapt the physical aspects of the festival micro-context, in recognition that these conditions can have an impact on the health of intoxicated individuals (Rhodes, 2002). I observed that all my fieldwork sites adopted a ‘healthy settings’ approach to drug risk reduction by providing free and easy to access drinking water, on-site health facilities and services and, to varying extents, I observed seated ‘chill out’ areas near to dance spaces, and relaxed, covered tents to provide shelter and rest (Bellis et al., 2002). The spatiality and accessibility of these features is clearly important for harm reduction in a ‘healthy settings’ approach and in facilitating ‘enabling environments’ (Bellis, 2002; Dilkes-Frayne, 2016), however, my research lens is more narrow and primarily focuses on the spaces and activities of festival agencies in the delivery of harm reduction services.

Responsive harm reduction: working together on the ground

In this section, I describe festival welfare provision and examine how agencies work together to responsibly implement harm reduction to individuals who need emergency attention.

Welfare provision and ‘everything that falls between the cracks’

I observed a number of consistencies in the lay-outs of welfare tents between different festivals. Behind a reception area in the front, there were larger areas containing several ‘bays’, kitted out with a roll mat, a sick bucket and a chair. As Daypicnic, the bays were separated by screen dividers to provide some privacy for service users. The following fieldnote excerpt describes my observations on the Saturday evening of Daypicnic in 2019.

Fieldnote: 'You're so fucked' at Saturday, Daypicnic, 2019

The tent was divided into two, with a smaller holding bay at the front, and the bays/dividers and matts at the back in the much larger section. In the front section, small groups of friends sat round leaning against the outside of the tent. Two people were fast asleep in the corner, under a sheet of bubble wrap. I did a quick lap of the tent – all the bays were full, with patients (mostly young people) passed out on the camping mats, next to a cardboard sick bucket. I watched as one welfare volunteer carefully attempted to carry a sick bucket full of liquid across the tent without spilling any or tripping over other patients scattered around the tent. A young male and female couple were sitting on the floor opposite me, leaning against one of the flimsy dividers that separated the bays. They were smiling at each other, his arm round her shoulders, staring into each other's eyes, while the girl's jaw firmly clenched and opened every few seconds. He laughed at her – *"You're so fucked"*, *"No you're so fucked haha"*, their conversation went. A different patient attempted to stand up from a chair to go outside, fell back and crashed into the divider behind him. A welfare team member came and quickly helped him back up and escorted him outside, through the back of the tent. A group of 12 or so young people sat cuddling their knees on the floor, some in chairs, some with bubble wrap wrapped round their shoulders, surrounding the heater in one corner.

This fieldnote excerpt is included to give a flavour of the extreme, chaotic environment that the welfare tents can be, especially during the climactic points of audience intoxication (this particular tent was much calmer when I visited earlier in the day). The welfare response in this fieldnote excerpt reflects a 'non-medicalisation' approach to drug use and intoxication, which focuses on the management of abnormal symptomology and particular individuals at-risk, while allowing other intoxicated patients to rest and recover (Luther et al., 2018). This approach permits intoxicated visitors and their friends to remain in a bay until they feel better, to vomit

and sleep as needed, and to subsequently return to the festival if they exhibit normal vital signs. By providing space for heavily intoxicated festivalgoers to recover under supervision, the ‘non-medicalisation’ approach minimises the health risks and vulnerabilities associated with excessive intoxication.

It must be noted that the welfare remit is extensive, and concerned with reducing all manner of health risks beyond responding to intoxicated drug users. Reception areas are used for dispensing drug and health-related information on posters and flyers, and distributing items such as condoms, sun-cream and earplugs. Ben, the welfare manager for Teenparty, described the role of festival welfare as managing “*everything that falls between the cracks...sometimes welfare can be information and advice... other times it can be dealing with a customer who is really distressed or who is clearly not in control of themselves, and they need to sit down, lie down, until we reconnect them with friends*”. As a consequence of this brevity, I found that welfare services vary substantially between festivals, as shaped by the anticipated level of demand for particular functions. Whereas the Dancevillage welfare team considered their service to be specialised to meeting the needs of dance festival audiences and drug users, and their volunteers were experienced in this, welfare services at Allsorts were considered to be better suited to meeting ‘family-oriented’ welfare needs. George, from Allsorts senior management, described them as better at “*giving out cups of tea, ponchos and locating lost children*”, and less experienced with managing and understanding drug-related intoxication effects. Potentially, these different specialisms between welfare services help to explain Ruane’s (2017) findings concerning the judgmental perception of welfare services amongst drug using festivalgoers. It is therefore imperative that welfare services which cater to a mixed audience demographic, such as Allsorts, are expressly non-judgemental and experienced in meeting the welfare demands of drug users too.

Security and the ‘contamination’ of welfare

Building on Ruane's (2017) critique of medics and welfare services as inhospitable and 'contaminated' settings from the drug users' perspective, my ethnographic perspective enables further consideration of the security role in relation to festival harm reduction services. The following fieldnote excerpt is taken from my observations inside the Daypicnic welfare tent, which stood out to me as an illustration of the proactive role that security operatives play in the delivery of welfare services during peaks in demand.

Fieldnote: 'Out they go' at Saturday, Daypicnic 2019.

There was a huge roll of bubble wrap near the back exit, and I saw one security operative in orange high vis go to cut some bubble wrap off the large roll, to take to the front of the welfare tent.⁴⁶ I went to speak to him when he wasn't running about, and asked about how security and welfare work together. He told me, "*Our job is to try to stop hoards coming in – everyone is cold and wet and they just want a sit down. I keep kicking the same groups out. It's fine obviously if they need help, but sometimes they come in and then start dancing. That's where I draw the line – out they go*". I said that I'd noticed him taking on some of the welfare duties like getting bubble wrap and escorting people to the bays. "*I'm making myself useful where I can – they clearly need more help and so if I can make it easier for the welfare team I will*".

In this fieldnote excerpt, the security operative describes his role in the welfare tent in terms of managing and controlling access to the space. The exclusion of those less in need, as indicated by their 'dancing', is requisite for ensuring that stretched welfare resources are directed towards festivalgoers who most need them the most. That the security operative went beyond this remit by helping to fulfil some of the welfare duties for intoxicated visitors to make himself 'useful', establishes their potential for undertaking customer care and 'housekeeping' roles (Wakefield, 2004), beyond enforcement and surveillance, to facilitate harm reduction services.

⁴⁶ Bubblewrap is used as an insulation blanket for cold festivalgoers.

In other instances, I observed that a security presence in welfare can contribute to creating a more hostile, ‘contaminated’ environment to drug users, which is potentially a barrier to harm reduction provision (Ruane, 2017). I spent several hours in the welfare tent on the Saturday night of Dancevillage, and got talking to Miles, a festivalgoer from London who was “*waiting out a boring LSD trip*”, and warming up in the tent with a cup of tea. While we were sitting and talking, a security operative I had met earlier in the day, Bradley, came in and sat opposite us. After some light conversation, he asked Miles directly what drugs he had taken. Miles replied that he had taken “*LSD earlier, and a bit of a pill [MDMA] not too long ago*”, to which Bradley replied “*so why do you put all that dangerous shit together in your body then? For shits and giggles or..?*”. Miles rolled his eyes, “*Oh, here we go...*” he replied. Nick, one of the welfare volunteers who was sitting with us, interjected informing Bradley that “*actually LSD and MDMA are pretty safe drugs in themselves and there aren’t many dangerous side-effects to mixing them*”, which seemed to diffuse the tension slightly. I consider the explicit judgment conveyed here by Bradley towards Miles concerning his drug use in this conversation to be consistent with the normative ‘anti-drugs’ orientation I identified amongst security operatives in Chapter Six. My findings suggest that there is an inherent conflict in festival drug policy which, on the one hand centres a crime fighting, anti-drugs orientation amongst security operatives, and simultaneously demands a non-judgemental approach to drug use in harm reduction services on the other.

In some cases, fear of repercussions for drug use arising from the ‘macro’ prohibition policy context plays out in the interactions between festivalgoers and harm reduction services within these spaces (Rhodes, 2002). This is illustrated in the following fieldnote excerpt, which describes an ongoing incident during my time in the welfare tent on Saturday night of Dancevillage.

Fieldnote: GHB case. Saturday, Dancevillage, 2018

I noticed there was a guy hanging around in the welfare tent for a while, who I was told was waiting for his girlfriend who was in the medical tent next door, while a group of her friends were also waiting in one of the bays. Late in the night, security manager Michael came in and told the group they could go and see her and she was okay. I spoke to Michael outside and asked what happened. *“She went into medical really unwell but said she had taken nothing – and kept insisting that. After a while she then said she’d been spiked. There was that guy hanging round who said he was her boyfriend, but she said he wasn’t, so we were a bit wary of him and letting her go. But her saying she’d been spiked meant it was a crime issue, which would have meant getting the police involved. In the end she admitted she’d taken GHB and used it regularly. I got the medics, welfare and security all together to discuss it and make sure we were all on the same page”* .

This incident highlights how festival harm reduction services may be faced with challenges and delays in meeting the health needs of drug users. I speculate that the GHB user’s reluctance to admit to using the drug, and her subsequent framing of her intoxication as involuntary, is indicative that she feared exclusionary or criminal repercussions for her drug use. My speculation is supported by the findings of Askew and Salinas (2019: p.318), who note that drug users who lead otherwise conventional and law abiding lifestyles will ‘omit information and behaviour’ concerning their drug use in arenas that they deem unsafe in order to avoid stigmatisation. In this case, the sense of unsafety may have been exacerbated by the necessity of welfare and medics services to work with security operatives, who play an enforcement role in the festival micro context under *Prevent* and *Pursue*. This enforcement role may ‘taint’ security as untrustworthy to drug users in the audience (Löftstrand et al., 2016).

The unfortunate irony of this particular situation was that the patient’s initial claim to have been spiked triggered security involvement in the incident. Her claim required security and welfare to assess the risks of sexual violence occurring, if they allowed her to leave the tent with the man who claimed to be her “boyfriend” (who she did not recognise as such). Ergo, this

excerpt also reveals how individual cases involving intoxication may require a careful and considered multi-agency negotiation and response, which is sensitive to gendered dynamics and vulnerabilities, in order to safeguard female festivalgoers from the risk of sexual violence.

‘Scooping up’ and emergency response

Although many festivalgoers who experience negative effects of intoxication seek medical or welfare attention of their own volition, sometimes incapacitated or unconscious festivalgoers need emergency attention and assistance in getting to a service. Consistent with Ruane’s (2017) findings, I found that security operatives are the best resourced, most visible and connected agency on the ground. In ‘scooping up’ incapacitated festival goers, they are a vital ‘node’ in the harm reduction network and facilitator of service provision. An example which illustrates the importance of this role occurred at Daypicnic in 2018 on the Sunday afternoon, where I observed a security operative sprinting across the arena towards the medical tent, carrying a seemingly unconscious young woman in his arms. I heard later from one of the event management team that the young woman had a collapsed lung and would have been unlikely to survive if there had been any delay to her receiving medical attention. She had mixed several substances together in one bag and consumed them by ‘lucky dipping’ from the mixture, potentially as a strategy for minimising the risks of detection at the gate under *Prevent*.

Facilitating harm reduction services presents challenges for security, who have to always be mindful of resources. The following fieldnote excerpt describes an incident at Allsorts in which security operatives were called upon by a festivalgoer to respond to a potential drug emergency.

Fieldnote: Tent emergency. Saturday, Allsorts, 2018.

I spent some of Saturday evening with roaming security patrol Jack and Harry. It was just getting dark, sort of dusk time, and there was a lively buzz in the campsite

as hordes of people made their way through to the arena. I could hear amplified music from the arena in the near distance. We were standing in a thoroughfare between two campsites when a teenage boy ran up to us, asking for assistance. He said his mate was *“in a tent and not responsive”*. He led us to a group of tents up the hill, closer to the arena entrance. I got the impression that this is where the younger customers camped – there were empty cans, fag packets, litter and half eaten food strewn everywhere, cheap pop-up tents rammed in together. All around were dozens of groups of teenagers, drinking, smoking and laughing outside their tents, getting ready to head into the arena for the night. I followed Jack and Harry through the tents, over guide ropes, until they stopped at a tent half way up the campsite hill. Our arrival made lots of other groups in the campsite point and stare. After a few minutes of leaning into a tent, Harry and Jack pulled an unconscious teenage boy from a tent, each with an arm around his shoulders. He was just in his boxers, and woke up quickly. *“What the fuck are ya doing?”* he exclaimed. His friend found him a sleeping bag to keep warm, and he slumped in a camp chair outside the tent. After some conversations, reassurances and thanks from his friends, Harry and Jack left him in the chair. Afterwards, Harry said he thought he had pissed himself, and he had got piss on his hands pulling him out the tent. *“Often people will come to security saying someone needs medical attention, and then we get there and find they’re just in a K-hole, and need to sleep it off,”* he explained. He felt sorry for the group of friends, as he didn’t think the tent belonged to teenager they pulled out, so someone would be coming back to their tent later with all their things covered in piss.

The interaction illustrated in ‘Tent emergency’ exemplifies how not all instances of potential drug-related risk are brought to the attention of harm reduction services, even where they come to the attention of the event security. Part of the festival security ‘craft’ is understanding drug-related effects, and making judgements on how to respond to them based on an assessment of the risks to the individual and to others. The individual health risks from intoxication are

weighed with the risks of vulnerability arising from a person becoming isolated from their friends, for example. Additionally, part of their role can be understood in terms of ‘filtering out’ cases in order to not overburden welfare and the medics. Making these filtering judgements requires sufficient experience and training with responding to drug intoxication, in order to identify cases where there is a risk of serious health implications from delayed response. Moreover, this fieldnote exemplifies some of the degrading, obstructive and unsanitary demands of festival ‘dirty work’ which can occur while responding to instances of drug-related harm (Hughes, 1951; Löfstrand et al., 2016). Potentially, these ‘dirty’ elements and demands help to entrench a negative perception of the role’s harm reduction elements, especially relative to the exciting and purposeful crime fighting elements, and strengthens an anti-drugs sentiment.

The intoxication effects of certain drugs present particular challenges for security operatives in making these assessments. For example, a person experiencing a ‘K-hole’ from ketamine use may be unresponsive initially, but will become responsive and appear to be fine after a short time.⁴⁷ Without familiarity or prior knowledge of these effects, this situation may be particularly alarming for both friends of ketamine users and inexperienced security operatives called to respond. At Greenfields, I was informed by Alistair about an incident in which a person, thought to be intoxicated from LSD, who was exhibiting ‘*aggressive*’ behavior, and ‘*spouting racist and derogatory language*’. The security operatives who responded chose to physically restrain him to minimise the risk of harm to the wider audience, despite the potential for their response to negatively impact on the experience of the individual.⁴⁸

Clear communication is essential to the provision of emergency response. Greenfields trained stewards and security operatives to use an ‘AVPU scale’ as a framework for responders to make assessments of consciousness, and to communicate this to the medics to enable them

⁴⁷ A K-hole describes feelings of dissociation and a deep, catatonic state which may arise from using ketamine in larger doses (Lakenau et al., 2008).

⁴⁸ Psychedelic support services advocate a method of restraint which is similar to performing a ‘hug’ for LSD-users undergoing challenging trips (Ruane, 2017)

to commit the appropriate resources to incidents.⁴⁹ Delays in the emergency response arise when information is communicated through the improper channels. For example, on the Saturday of Dancevillage, Michael was on the radio near to the medics tent. He appeared stressed and was pacing up and down outside the tent. I asked him what was wrong and he explained: *“One of the bar staff had seen a guy near the dance stage having a fit – and radioed through to the medics directly saying there was a guy having a cardiac arrest. He wasn’t – he was having a seizure from a mix of the drugs and strobes. He bypassed Event Control though, which meant that there was also other people radioing through to them about a guy having a seizure. This meant we didn’t know how many people there were or what condition they were in or what they needed. I’m going to go to bar staff and give them a bollocking”*.

Applying a ‘risk environment’ framework (Rhodes, 2002), what is evident from my research is that security operatives on the ground play a vital role in reducing the festival’s micro-level physical barriers to harm reduction services. They facilitate an appropriate, timely response from these services, and help to ensure they do not become overburdened. Yet simultaneously, owing to their enforcement role under *Prevent* and the prohibition policy environment, their presence in and around these services may create barriers and ‘contamination’ for individuals seeking assistance from welfare and medics (Ruane, 2017). My findings indicate there are incompatibilities inherent in the security role, which concurrently demands implementation of both harm reduction and law enforcement objectives in the same physical environment.

Drug-related emergencies and identifying trends

‘Fentanylgate’ and establishing trends

⁴⁹ AVPU is an acronym for 1. Alert, 2. responds to Vocal stimuli, 3. responds to Painful stimuli or 4. Unresponsive to all stimuli. This scale enables a rapid initial assessment of a person’s conscious level (Resuscitation Council UK, 2021)

Insofar this chapter has explored harm reduction ‘on the ground’, which is mostly responsive to instances of drug-related harm and risk, as and when they arise. In this section, I illustrate the preventative dimension to harm reduction at festivals, in which festivals attempt to identify emergent trends in drug-related harm and take measures to respond. At a management level, multi-agency work is facilitated through regular Events Liaison Team (ELT) meetings with agency representatives. In these meetings, harm reduction services each provide summaries of what they have been dealing with in hours since the previous ELT meeting, in order to identify trends of concern regarding health and safety of the audience, and to formulate a multi-agency response to mitigate the source of risk. For example, reported cases of diarrhoea and vomiting are investigated and carefully monitored as indications of food hygiene regulations being violated by on-site catering. At Dancevillage, welfare reported treating several wasp stings which led to the identification of wasps nests in one of the footpaths by security. Patients who receive treatment following drug use are grouped according to the suspected source of harm (e.g. ‘*We’ve had 3 in for ketamine, 10 for MDMA*’). These records help festivals make assessments of drug-related risks at their event, which shapes future resourcing and policy.

My research suggests that the regular ELT information sharing process is essential for identifying emergent trends in drug-related harm, helping events to formulate a preventative response to risk. On the Saturday night of Dancevillage, I observed the decision making behind a multi-agency response to a worrying emergent drug trend that was raised in an ELT meeting by the medics. This incident, which I refer to as ‘Fentanylgate’ illustrates some of the complexities behind how potential trends are identified and responded to.⁵⁰

Fieldnote: Fentanylgate (part 1). Saturday, Dancevillage, 2018

⁵⁰ Fentanyl is a potent, synthetic opioid which has been linked to many opiate-user fatalities, particularly in the US.

The 6pm ELT meeting started off as usual, with Dan (the ‘safety bloke’) leading the meeting, going round to each agency rep in turn to provide an update from the previous 6 hours. After the police spoke, the rep from the medical team interrupted the usual turn taking and said he wanted to speak. I sensed that there was something wrong or urgent from his expression. “*We have one person in a critical condition who has taken a mixture of ketamine and Fentanyl, and we’ve treated five more people this evening who have taken this*”, he told the meeting. He spoke fast and with a shaky voice and was sweating from his forehead. He quickly excused himself, saying he had to go back to the medical unit. Francesca, the operations manager, looked extremely worried. She disbanded the meeting to discuss the situation with Dan and Ellen from SC1.

The medic’s report that there were *several* people in their care in critical condition who had reported using ketamine and fentanyl together, was taken to indicate that a high-risk drug-related trend was emerging on-site. Initially, Francesca suggested the festival could respond with an information campaign warning festivalgoers about the substance being in circulation, but she was hesitant about sharing inaccurate or incredible information to their ‘drug savvy’ audience, in case this reflected badly on the event. “*I don’t want to put out signs and seem stupid if the info is wrong*” she explained. She was additionally concerned that encouraging people to seek medical assistance could make drug users worry unnecessarily, potentially overburdening the medical facilities and ‘blocking beds’ for individuals most in need. The information provided in the meeting was so vague that Francesca felt it was impossible for the festival to respond based on that information alone. Consequently, this ELT meeting kickstarted a two-hour long fact-finding mission between Francesca, Dan, the health and safety manager, the medics and security.

Fieldnote: Fentanylgate (part 2). Saturday, Dancevillage, 2018

Francesca disbanded the ELT and Dan went to the medical tent to gather more information from the medical team. In Event Control, we pooled expert contacts to find out as much about Fentanyl as possible and assess the likelihood of the claim. I explained to Francesca what I knew about Fentanyl: that it was an extremely strong and dangerous synthetic opioid and had become increasingly common in the US. I said I'd heard of it being bought on the dark web in the UK, but wouldn't consider it to be a 'party drug' and I'd never heard of it being mixed with ketamine before. Francesca phoned her friend, a doctor, who told her that mixing fentanyl and ketamine, a sedative and depressant, was very dangerous and could stop the heart. She would expect anyone mixing these substances to be extremely unwell. She phoned a further two people – Jacob from Testing NGO and Clive, her colleague from other events. Jacob confirmed the service hadn't tested it before, and asked how it was being taken, how it was being sold (whether as a paste, powder, or as a capsule), and whether the ketamine and fentanyl were being bought together or mixed. If the users did not intentionally mix the two, how did they know it was those substances mixed together? They both recommended naloxone as a treatment. Armed with these questions, Francesca left the portacabin to go find Dan at the medical tent and speak to the medics.

She returned later, and called for a 'mini-ELT' in Event Control. In this meeting, Dan revealed that, from his further investigations, there were only 3 people unwell as opposed to 5, and only 2 of them were still in the medical tent. 'Patient 1' thought he was buying ketamine and, according to the medics, he said the dealer had sold him ketamine and fentanyl mixed in a tablet form. Francesca added, "*When we went down there, we spoke to three medics and no-one could explain what had happened – they all had different stories... I asked how do you know it was ketamine and fentanyl – and they said the patient had told them. I said did he offer this information or did you say 'have you taken X and Y' – they couldn't tell me, so I asked whether they had bought it separately or mixed together already and they didn't know. There's just so many contradictory stories between medics. I think they've got*

overexcited. This has potential to be a storm in a tea-cup and a waste of time. I told them I wanted a clear report of what happened from the doctor as soon as possible". Dan suggested that the state of the patients could have indicated there was something more than ketamine, but it could just be poly-drug use of other drugs. The doctor came to Event Control after a short while with some answers to Francesca's questions. He told us that Patient 1 volunteered the information about it being ketamine and fentanyl, and he bought it on-site, in the form of a paste mixed together. They didn't know if ketamine and fentanyl mixed was requested from the dealer, and they only know about Patient 1 to be unwell from this. The other patients were there for MDMA related reasons. When the doctor left, Francesca said that given the evidence from the factfinding mission, she was "99% sure" there was no concerning drug trend.

This incident demonstrates that drug-related experience is paramount in the provision of welfare and medical services at festivals with anticipated high rates of drug use. Inexperience can lead to the misinterpretation of drug-related trends, wasting time and resources for all agencies tasked with responding. While the false alarm was welcome relief, the '*storm in a teacup*' generated by the medics was source of irritation for management, who had spent over two hours gathering information and planning a response. Francesca mentioned she was embarrassed that the police had been there to observe the incident and the incompetency of the medics. The police officer who had been present told us the next day that he thought that the information was unlikely to be credible. While he was impressed with the management of the event, he considered the medics to be the "*weak link in the chain*" in the partnership.

The incident had the effect of reducing the credibility of the medics' drug expertise from Francesca's perspective. When the doctor returned later on, he mentioned he was worried about the '*horrific*' MDMA on-site, to which he attributed the aggressive behaviour of a patient who had to be restrained by five security operatives. Francesca told me she didn't think he had much experience with drug use at festivals and "*what's horrific to him is probably less horrific to us*".

The doctor's concerns about MDMA were supported by anecdotal reports of strong pills on-site from Max, from the management team. Max suggested that it might be worth putting signs up near water points and bars, to show that the festival responded to the doctor's concerns "*in case something does go wrong*", despite their potentially limited reach. The signs could not identify a particular pill that was causing harm, so they were drafted to contain vague information warning about 'strong pills' in circulation.

The 'Fentanylgate' incident shows that in the macro-context of drug prohibition, the absence of information, consistency and quality control concerning the substances in circulation within illegal festival drug markets can be a source of harm for drug users, and a barrier to the timely and effective provision of treatment by harm reduction services. Without credible or accurate information, management are inhibited from making a meaningful response to the source of risk. It was noted by Francesca during the 'Fentanylgate' saga that the issue may have been resolved much more quickly if drug checking facilities were present on-site. It would have enabled the substance of concern to be tested in the first instance through a 'loose BoH' system, and an appropriate policy response to be formulated, without having to consult external experts to assess the likelihood of the medics' claims.

Francesca's consultation of off-site colleagues and experts also exemplifies how information relating to drug risks is circulated amongst interpersonal and informal networks and clusters between events and event professionals. My findings here indicate that the festival industry gives rise to 'emergent communities of practice' (Juriado & Gustafsson, 2007). These are 'fluid and dynamic' clusters and networks of people 'who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly' (Crawford & L'Hoiry, 2017: p.639-40). The fluid, event-based, freelance structure of the festival industry helps facilitate informal information sharing. A benefit of this circulation is that it helps events which take place later in the festival season to prepare for drug related risks, based on drug market

trends and incidents which occur at other events. A drawback, as Dan explained in interview, is the potential for this to lead to the circulation of misinformation: *“It’s a pretty tight knit community, word gets around. That can be a good thing and a bad thing. There’s rumours and ‘Chinese whispers’. Last season with the deaths at [another festival], there was a lot of ‘it was blue punishers, it was green Heinekens, pink Donald trumps’ [referring to pill press and colour] – there’s a lot of misinformation off the back of stuff like that. You do share info with other organisers’.*

What Dan highlights here is the importance of accurate information in enabling festivals to prepare effectively, and formulate an appropriate preventative response against ‘dodgy’ drugs in circulation. The importance of accurate information helps to explain why information concerning festival drugs, circulated by the police in the NEIU bulletin, was held in such low regard by event organisers such as Clive. The bulletin just collated ‘pictures of drugs’, without any additional information, which was of little use to anyone for risk reduction purposes.

Drug checking: sharing information and emergency response

A key contribution of Front of House (FoH) drug checking services to the mixed economy of festival harm reduction is that it provides an opportunity for preventative risk reduction, rather than responsive harm reduction, through encouraging less risky behavioural changes amongst service users (Maghsoudi et al., 2021; Measham & Turnbull, 2021; Measham, 2018). Perhaps an understated contribution is that the information provided by drug checking services can help agencies in responding to drug-related problems on-site, through earlier presentation amongst drug users to medics and welfare, and increased confidence in treatment decisions by paramedics (Measham et al., 2020). While I have insufficient observational data to ascertain whether this was the case at my fieldwork sites, I observed some of the fragmentations and tensions which hindered collaborative working practices between drug checking and other agencies, potentially limiting this contribution.

Crawford and L’Hoiry’s (2017) work on ‘emergent communities of practice’ in novel sites and teams of multi-agency collaboration highlights the challenges of establishing and fostering relations of trust between agencies who are linked horizontally. They observe that different working patterns can hinder stable relationships being formed. I found that the mismatched working patterns between Testing NGO and the medics gave rise to working tensions at Allsorts. Whereas Testing NGO primarily operated a day-time service at the anticipated preference of service users, this was out-of-step with the night-time peaks in demand for welfare and medics. For the ‘loose BoH’ system to work in spite of this, it was arranged that Testing NGO chemists would be ‘on-call’ each night in case of an ‘emergency’. During fieldwork in 2018, at around midnight on the Friday, Jacob received an emergency text from the medics to which he responded. On arrival at the facility, he found it was not a “*real emergency*” and he was not qualified to answer the medic’s question, to his irritation. To resolve this tension, it is important that the parameters of multi-agency collaboration are clearly defined and agreed. The following year, I observed the senior chemists discussing what should count as a ‘real emergency’ for the medics to wake one of them up. For Jacob, this was “*if someone was in serious medical danger and testing would help with diagnosis, prevent serious harm or save a life*”.

Research on multi-agency partnership work emphasises the importance of co-location for trust building between agencies (Crawford & L’Hoiry, 2017; O’Malley & Grace, 2021). Although all contracted festival harm reduction agencies are approximately co-located within the event footprint, event management must decide where particular agencies are situated around the festival site. There can be trade-offs in these decisions, with implications for multi-agency collaboration. For example, at Allsorts in 2018, when Testing NGO operated a FoH and BoH service, the testing portacabin was co-located with the medics and welfare and FoH tent, positioned behind these tents.⁵¹ Easy accessibility to the testing portacabin was considered

⁵¹ The FoH tent was the facility space in which service users could bring a sample of substances for analysis and feedback.

to be important by the medics, for the 'loose BOH' system to work efficiently. As one medic explained, this allowed them to "*just stick it [substances] in a glove and run it over*" to the testing cabin, if they needed to. However in 2019, with a BoH-only service, the testing cabin was relocated near to Event Control, a ten minute walk away from the medics and welfare. The move raised concerns amongst the medics about their ability to transport substances across the site to the testing cabin in an emergency.

I speculate that the move was, in part, a result of interpersonal fragmentation and lack of respect for difference between drug checking and welfare that was intensified by co-location. George mentioned he had noticed a divide and tension between them, which he called '*charity politics*'. As the welfare service was more 'family oriented', he speculated that Testing NGO perceived them to be '*drug naïve*' and lacking the relevant expertise to manage the audience demographic. This lack of respect for difference stifled communication between them concerning drugs in circulation and drug presentations in welfare. For example, in an ELT meeting on Sunday in 2018, the welfare representative said they were unaware of the drug alerts which had been put out already in the event. It was suggested by welfare manager, Ben, in interview that this type of '*charity politics*' is an inevitable product of scarcity and competition for finite resources of the 'welfare budget', which is allocated in advance and divided between harm reduction services, creating pressure to win contracts by providing the best value service possible. While co-location is seen as a mechanism for interpersonal trust building in public sector '*emergent communities of practice*', festival agencies are in direct competition for limited space and resources, which can increase tensions (Crawford & L'Hoiry). Relocating the Testing NGO portacabin away from the welfare and medics provided them with more space behind their facilities and appeared to relieve this tension.

Drug checking: working with the police

The available research on drug checking suggests that collaborative work between drug checking and the police extends to the police adopting a discretionary ‘tolerance zone’ in the area surrounding the services (Measham, 2018). My findings concerning the restricted spatiality of the police in festivals, explored in Chapter Six, suggests this is a distortion. My ethnographic observations of drug checking in practice enhances our understanding of the nature of collaborative working between these agencies.

I observed that the police and Testing NGO appeared to have a close working relationship at Allsorts and Daypicnic, evidenced by their regular interaction, interpersonal familiarity, and openness to information sharing. In part, this regular interaction arises from the police playing an active role in facilitating the drug checking service delivery, through collecting samples from amnesty bins around the site and delivering them to the testing portacabin. There is a reciprocity to their facilitation which enhances the close working relationship: the BoH system enables the police to take evidence seized in supply operations under *Pursue* to be tested, which helps the police in ‘making cases’ and bolsters their drug market intelligence. The system also creates the opportunity for the agencies to collaboratively engage in harm reduction through ‘market regulation’, to inform drug ‘alerts’ (Ritter, 2010). For example, while I was conducting observations in the testing portacabin alongside Testing NGO on the Saturday afternoon of Allsorts in 2018, one of the chemists, Grace, was testing substances from a transparent ‘Evidence Bag’, which the police had brought in to be tested for evidential purposes, as it contained substances seized during a supply arrest on-site. The seizures from the supply case were found to contain a dangerous NPS, which then became the subject of a ‘drug alert’ which warned the audience to avoid specific substances in circulation on-site. In this example, interagency collaboration in the BoH system had a clearly observable harm reduction impact. Observing the harm reduction value of this reciprocal system ‘in action’ is likely to chime with the police cultural orientation towards pragmatism (Bacon, 2021; O’Neill and

McCarthy, 2012). This may have been encouraged further by the ‘open door’ policy of Testing NGO in which police were frequently and enthusiastically welcomed into the testing portacabin in order to observe the drug checking process.

Through inter-agency openness, I consider the presence of drug checking services within the policing and harm reduction network to be a facilitator of inter-organisational learning. Crawford and L’Hoiry (2017: p.637) argue that where the police engage in ‘boundary work’ in multi-agency collaborations, it can prompt ‘critical self-reflection, ongoing reassessment of assumptions and questioning of terminology’. An illustration of this was evident in 2018, where the Gold Commander of the regional constabulary visited Allsorts to observe drug checking in action, and to consider whether the service could be adopted in another part of region county. Privately, police officers who worked with Testing NGO expressed their dissatisfaction with ‘outdated’ British drug laws, and support for the Portuguese decriminalisation model as an alternative drug policy approach. Whether these positions were a symptom of familiarity with drug checking and ‘doing things differently’, or helped to facilitate the adoption of drug checking at the event in the first place, it marks a change from Bacon’s (2016) findings of low support for drug policy reform amongst drug detectives.

By way of comparison, the police implemented and operated a ‘Back of House’ model of drug checking at Teenparty which was far less integrated in the harm reduction network. I understood that its scope was limited to conducting on-site laboratory analysis of drug seizures at the gate. Although restrictive access permissions meant that I did not observe it or speak to people conducting testing, I was party to the scarce and unclear information received concerning two substances via WhatsApp message by the welfare team. A key difference was that the service was conducted by the police, primarily for the police, rather than with the aim of improving information within the harm reduction service network. Without sufficient drug

market expertise, interpretation and contextualisation of the checking results, information generated by drug checking is of little practical utility.

Drug ‘alerts’ and market regulation

An important contribution of this thesis is to emphasise the role of drug checking in improving real-time information concerning the internal drug market, and the capacity of event organisers to formulate an informed and specific response to reducing drug-related risks. Where substances of concern are tested on-site, festivals can proactively respond by sharing drug ‘alerts’ on social media, containing information, advice and images relating to the substance of concern. It is in this capacity that Ritter (2010) sees drug checking as an economic regulatory strategy ‘aimed at product control and increasing the consumer’s ability to choose good from bad products’ which can remove particularly dangerous substances from the market altogether, where there is sufficient attention paid to them (p.267). Not only do alerts, in theory, reduce risk through influencing behavioural change amongst drug users, they make it more difficult for dealers to distribute substances if they are alert subjects.

There is substantial precedent for festival drug alerts as a form of drug harm reduction: famously at Woodstock festival in 1969 there was an announcement from the main stage warning festivalgoers to avoid the ‘Brown Acid’ in circulation (Buckszpan, 2019: p.88). While Brunt (2017) and Spruit (2001) credit drug alerts in the Netherlands with reducing the amount of mis-selling of dangerous substances in the Dutch market, beyond their speculation, there is little research evidence concerning their regulatory impact on the market. Two of my interview participants anecdotally supported these impacts. As Joel, a police officer from Teenparty described in interview: *“In 2015 we had a tablet called ‘Blue Ghost’ which killed about 5 people around the country.... We found them on Thursday, told the festival, put alerts out and the next day 27 people handed in ‘Blue Ghosts’. Say they bought them, saw the alert, can you get rid of them. Amnestied. I see that as a success.*

An intervention from the police". Gareth, the medical manager of Greenfields, described a similar instance of substances being handed in for disposal, after a public alert was issued at another festival. Although evidence concerning these impacts is clearly important for substantiating the harm reduction evidence base of drug checking, and outside the scope of my research, an important contribution of my study is to elucidate the decision making and negotiation process behind drug 'alerts'.

Deciding 'alert' subjects

Throughout my fieldwork period, I observed that the subjects of drug alerts generally fell into two categories: high-strength ecstasy pills and, to a lesser extent, NPS with likely unpleasant effects. Given that a number of deaths in party settings were linked to high-strength ecstasy pills over the fieldwork period, potentially this influenced the prioritisation of testing pills over other substances, especially during busy periods. For example, while observing Testing NGO on the Sunday morning of Daypicnic in 2019, chemists were instructed to test "*what looks interesting*", which for one chemist translated to pills which were not yet on the online testing database. A second reason for a testing-bias towards pills is that they are well suited to the alert format because of their physical properties, such as 'branding', colour and shape. These properties make them easier for users to identify compared to generic white powders, although white powders which were found to be unusual NPS also formed alert subjects, where the substance was suspected to have been missold (or confirmed to have been missold through FoH testing). NPS substances which are missold as established party drugs can be a significant source of risk, especially where users re-dose after not experiencing intended effects, and it can be difficult and dangerous for medics to treat them (Ruane, 2017). This emphasises that an important piece of information provided by FoH testing is in identifying discrepancies between what drug users think they have bought and what they actually bought, which is absent from BoH testing (Barratt & Ezard, 2017).

Once substances of concern are identified through testing, a decision has to be made over whether to make an alert. Concerns were raised by Testing NGO that issuing too many alerts could backfire if drug users were to experience ‘alert fatigue’ and stop paying attention. They considered more than three alerts per festival to be too many. This means that some identified substances of concern have to be prioritised over others, contingent on contextual factors relating to the festival, including how many alerts have already been made over the course of the event, the average strength of pills being tested in the event, and the level of anticipated (or actual) risk of harm associated with the substance. Consequently, although identifying ‘high-strength’ pills was a drug checking harm reduction priority, the bar for what constituted ‘alert worthy’ MDMA content within pills varies considerably between events. At Daypicnic in 2018, Testing NGO used an indicative threshold concerning the MDMA content of pills to guide alert decisions, in order to reduce the number of alerts per event. Pills containing upwards of 300mg of MDMA were considered ‘very strong’, and therefore strongly recommended for an alert, while pills which were found to contain in the range of 250-300mg were ‘flagged’ to event management. On the Sunday of Daypicnic in 2018, two pills containing the range of 270-280mg of MDMA were ‘flagged’, and alerts were formulated and ‘queued’ for each of these pills. This meant that, in the event they were found to be causing illness on-site, an alert could quickly be issued. This demonstrates that a more preventative approach is taken when ‘very strong’ pills were found, whereas the approach to ‘flagged’ pills is more responsive to evidence of harm after the fact.

In comparison, at Allsorts, the bar for ‘high strength’ pills was much lower, with pills containing 180mg and 130mg of MDMA recommended at for an alert in 2019. Potentially, the lower bar relates to the police’s *‘one pill can kill’* perception of drug-related risk. During an ELT meeting on the Sunday of Allsorts 2019, a police officer declared “*We have a responsibility to let people know that these are circulating on site, before people start presenting in medical’ the police officer*

continued. 'They've got 130+mg of MDMA in them – its dangerously high levels'. Later in the day, George suggested that it would be helpful to have more of a consistent understanding across agencies of what counted as a 'strong' or 'standard' dosage of MDMA. These negotiations demonstrate how the assessed risk of substances are context bound to the festival in question, and alert decisions are influenced by the risk perceptions of the agencies within a particular event context.

Assessments of the risk level associated with a substance are also informed by close multi-agency work and information sharing. Under the 'loose BoH' arrangement, medics who are made aware of particular substances causing harm can fast-track the substance in the testing process. Evidence of actual harm, rather than risk, occurring from a substance increases the likelihood of an alert being made. For example, at Daypicnic in 2019, an alert was issued concerning a 'very strong' pill which had been involved in the hospitalisation of a festivalgoer. Similarly, assessments of risk factor in whether the substance is likely to be 'in circulation' within the internal drug market, thereby exposing multiple festivalgoers to risk. Where there was a FoH system in place, this information could be easily ascertained through information collected in the 'brief intervention' consultation process. Where there was BoH testing, it could be ascertained through drug checking services working with the police to test supply evidence seized under *Pursue*. In 2018 at Allsorts, this system led to an NPS called N-ethylpentylone identified as being in circulation on-site, which was thought to have been missold as MDMA. Similarly, at Allsorts in 2019, an alert was issued after pills seized from an on-site supplier were tested and found to contain a high dose of MDMA. Through police and drug checking services working together in this way, alert decisions can factor in the potential harm of a substance that is already in circulation. In comparison, there was another instance at Allsorts where Testing NGO identified a strong pill, but did not recommend it for an alert, as it was a singular pill in a press that was common several years ago. This made it more likely be a to 'sock drawer' pill,

and therefore less likely to cause a trend of drug-related harm or be in circulation on the internal drug market.⁵²

These examples illustrate that substances are prioritised for alerts where there is greater scope for reducing harm at the festival in question. They also demonstrate the value of specialist drug checking and drug market expertise in effectively making assessments of likely harm. Where NPS are identified, the decision to make an alert requires expertise on what the substance is likely to be mislabeled as, and the anticipated harm to drug users. The importance of expertise was highlighted where instances where ‘copycat’ pills were tested. For example, in 2018, an alert concerning strong ‘Blue Punisher’ pills was issued early in the festival season. At Allsorts in 2018, one of the testers, Grace, told me that they had tested ‘Blue Punisher’ pills, but they were weaker ‘copycats’ of those tested earlier in the festival season. Grace thought the initial alert had the effect of turning them into a desirable ‘brand’ of pill, and offered drug users a guise of quality control in the illegal drug market, which prompted ‘copycats’ to be made. While weaker copycats were less dangerous, a downside was the information and advice previously issued on alerts was not applicable to these weaker pills. Jacob was concerned that if people were to take these pills and they were a ‘dud’, then it would affect the credibility of alerts, and drug users might ignore alerts in the future.

To make matters more complicated, ‘copycats’ are not always lower strength, as anticipated. At Daypicnic in 2019, Testing NGO tested a ‘copycat’ of a popular 2016 pill which was surprisingly strong, containing 270mg of MDMA. In the ELT, the Testing NGO representative made the case that an alert should be re-issued on this basis, reasoning that “*We would expect a copycat pill to be lower in strength than the previous pill – but these aren’t, so people might be surprised by how strong it is*”. These instances demonstrate that decisions on alerts need to be made with relevant expertise and understanding of drug markets and of drug trends. It also

⁵² A ‘sock drawer’ pill is one from a previous year that might be kept for a long time, rather than being a bought in the recent drug market

demonstrates that the ‘market regulatory’ role of alerts is not entirely predictable (Ritter, 2010). The presence of ‘copycats’ indicates that alerts over high-strength may be used by drug manufacturers to provide a guise of quality reassurance, and a ‘stamp of approval’. Drug checking, therefore, needs to take place throughout the festival season to monitor changes in the drug market over time, as ‘copycat’ pills enter circulation.

Negotiating ‘alert’ content

I found that once it is agreed by event management that an alert should be made, the process of creating the alert requires multi-agency negotiation. For both visual impact and utility in helping drug users to identify the substances of concern, alerts usually contain an image of the substance, alongside some text relating to the image. To this end, image resolution, clarity and colour accuracy were considered important by Jess, the operations manager for Allsorts. From her perspective, it was essential that the images looked “*professional, rather than amateur*”, if they were going to be shared through social media channels, and potentially the national news.

Alert text often contains information about the substance contents and risks, alongside harm reduction messaging, advising users how to mitigate the risk of harm to themselves. I found that the messaging element was a source of tension between agencies. At Allsorts in 2018, I encountered Jacob in the testing cabin, emailing operations manager Jess with a draft of a tweet concerning a strong pill that had been tested. He wanted to add some hashtags to the tweet such as *#StartWithAQuarter* and *#StartLowGoSlow*, but said that Jess was unhappy with the hashtags because she saw them as condoning drug use. Jacob understood her point, but thought the advice was the ‘*most useful*’ part of the whole alert, because it was something practical and specific that drug users could follow. He considered the image and text specifying the MDMA content alone to be insufficient for users who might not understand dosage, or how to effectively use this information. He attempted to rephrase the message without losing the messaging. When I spoke to Jess about it, she was clear that the hashtags “*obviously condone use*” so were

unacceptable. The back-and-forth on this messaging added a delay to the alert being made. The following year at Allsorts, alert messaging was agreed early on in the event in advance of substances of concern being found, which enabled a rapid response when high strength pills were tested, with an alert being put out shortly after it was identified.

This negotiation demonstrates how the parameters of festival harm reduction are constrained by the positions and interests of festival multi-agency partnerships. As both Allsorts and Daypicnic adopted drug checking services in the event with the support of the police, this required sensitivity to and alignment with the police's position on messaging. This position was articulated by one police officer in Allsorts in 2019 in a post-ELT meeting to discuss alerts, who told the meeting. *"If you have messaging that has 'take a lesser amount' in it, we can't retweet it, because our line has to be zero-tolerance. We can't be seen to encourage use. We can do it if it says something like 'avoid this pill'"*. This perspective was echoed by a police Bronze commander at Daypicnic who described alert messaging as *"a tricky line"* and the police *"don't want to be seen to be encouraging use"*.

There may be a number of reasons that the police advocate maintaining a *'zero tolerance'* line. Firstly, messages which could be interpreted as condoning drug use may be perceived as contradictory to the visible displays of drug intolerance at the gates under *Prevent*, thereby undermining these norm-enforcement efforts. Secondly, it reduces scope for any public criticism that drug checking encourages and condones drug use, or that it represents the police going *'soft on drugs'* by engaging in harm reduction (Spyt et al., 2019). In spite of its widespread endorsement in the media and bodies such as the Royal Society of Public Health (see RSPH, 2017), at the time of fieldwork, drug checking was conducted on uncertain legal grounds without a suitable Home Office licence. Adhering to *'zero-tolerance'* messaging therefore can be seen as a tactical avoidance of additional scrutiny. These concerns were shared by Greg, who in principle agreed with drug checking, yet had decided to not contract the service at Greenfields. For Greg, entering negotiations with the police and local authority to contract the

service risked the event “[*raising*] our head above the parapet”, by drawing the Licensing Authority’s attention to the issue of drug use at the event. He considered the festival’s welfare statistics to indicate that drug use was sufficiently low risk at Greenfields, so it was not worthwhile to take this risk.

This negotiation exemplifies the difficulties and tensions faced by festivals in managing the public face, or ‘front stage’, of festival drug policy while attempting to engage in harm reduction (Goffman, 1959). On the one hand, the efficacy of harm reduction messaging is contingent on being useful to festivalgoers and widely shared in order to reach as many festivalgoers as possible. Yet, on the other, drug-related messaging in ‘alerts’ transgresses the ‘two pronged’ public relations strategy commonly adopted by events to publicly maintain distance between the event and anything that might be interpreted as condoning drug use (Ruane, 2017). As social media can be seen by external stakeholders, such as the parents of teenage festivalgoers who allow their children to attend the event, upholding this strategy by maintaining zero-tolerance messaging while issuing drug alerts may be interpreted as the product of an uneasy balancing act, which aligns with commercial interests, police interests, and harm reduction objectives.

Through examining the drug alert formulation and negotiation process, I highlight that a significant harm reduction value of on-site drug checking is to enable events to take a preventative response to drug-related risk, based on accurate, reliable and expert information concerning dangerous drugs in circulation. Yet the harm reduction potential of drug checking lies beyond the immediate festivalspace and festival audience. Drug alerts which were put out during Daypicnic in 2019 were picked up by national news and a local health warning was distributed. When information generated by drug checking is shared within event professional networks, it improves the information on drug-related risks over the festival season, putting events in a better position to respond. My findings reveal that, as drug alerts which arise from

festival drug checking are the product of multi-agency negotiation and the dynamics of the immediate festival context, the harm reduction information in circulation can be diluted in the process.

Discussion and conclusions

In this chapter, I argue that the objective of drug policing approaches under *Protect* is to identify and manage instances of harm arising from drug use and intoxication, in order to prevent more serious health-related harms unfolding, to facilitate recovery and minimise vulnerability. For individual festivalgoers, medics provide first aid, and welfare services take a ‘non-medicalisation’ approach to everything ‘that falls between the cracks’ which allows festivalgoers to return to the event after seeking help if they want to. Festivals are fertile ground for drug harm reduction approaches because of their risk-reduction orientation. Given the flaws and inevitably fallibility of enforcement approaches under *Prevent* and *Pursue*, harm reduction approaches are a necessary backstop for harm and risk reduction. As they attempt to mitigate *imminent* risks of serious harm unfolding, *Protect* approaches may even be considered the most important pillar in the security pursuit. Yet *Protect* activities take place within the contexts of drug prohibition, commercial concerns and finite resources, which influences their implementation and efficacy.

My findings make a contribution to the literature on the relationships between drug-related harm, enforcement and drug use settings. I found that the omnipresence of security operatives within festivals makes them an important channel through which services are accessed, helping festivalgoers overcome micro level physical barriers to treatment in the ‘risk environment’ (Rhodes, 2002). My findings in this chapter identify incompatibilities between harm reduction objectives and the macro prohibition policy environment, and its implementation at the micro level under *Prevent* and *Pursue*. The demands on security operatives

to support harm reduction services under *Protect* results in a security presence in and around welfare, but their dual enforcement role may contribute to the ‘contamination’ of these spaces, delays in treatment and, potentially, the unknown ‘dark figure of drug related harm’ (Ruane, 2017: p.232). The ‘dark figure of drug related harm’ not only increases risk to drug users, but it hinders the ability of festivals to enact harm reduction preventatively through predicting and preparing for trends of drug-related risks, as indicated by data collected by medics and welfare. My findings illustrate that formulating an effective response is difficult without accurate, verifiable information concerning the source of risk. My findings emphasise the importance of experience, resources and specialist expertise concerning party drugs amongst medics and welfare in order to identify, and assess the likelihood, of ‘trends’ in drug-related risks, in order for events to respond appropriately.

My in-situ observations of drug checking in practice make an important contribution to the evidence. I demonstrate that, far beyond a passive ‘tolerance zone’, the police play an active role in facilitating drug checking services. I argue that by generating accurate, timely information on the drug market, the presence of drug checking creates scope for events to better understand drug related risks and to respond to them preventatively through issuing drug alerts. In order to capitalise on this, it is critical for events to think carefully about the facilitators and barriers to information sharing and effective working relationships when implementing drug checking. Through my analysis of alert negotiation, I illustrate that a tension of festival drug checking takes place between risk reduction at the micro and meso context. I show that drug alert decisions are influenced by the immediate risk concerns and commercial interests of the event. Alert messaging is negotiated in order to minimise commercial risks to the festival, and to be palatable to the police, aligning with a ‘frontstage’ zero-tolerance policy. Additionally, judgements concerning the necessity of an alert over a particular substance are made in light of the risk to the particular festival. This means that the potential of drug alerts as a ‘regulatory

tool' for the UK drug market over the festival 'season' as a whole is essentially diluted (Ritter, 2010).

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

Understanding drug security in commercialised festivalspace

Introduction

This thesis set out to critically examine the policing approaches used by agencies involved in responding to illegal drugs at English festivals. My findings are informed by in-depth ethnographic research conducted across eight different festivals over two summers between 2018 - 2019. As the first empirical academic study to analyse festival policing in Britain, my study makes an original contribution to the fields of drug policy and policing in licensed leisure.

To meet my aim, I devised four research questions:

1. What approaches and tools are used by festivals in policing drugs?
2. What rationales and interests shape the drug policing activities of agencies, and what are their implications?
3. How is discretion exercised in relation to drug law infringements and what influences it?
4. How do agencies from work together partnership, and what tensions arise from this?

I discussed my findings within my analysis chapters, structured by the ‘3Ps’; *Prevent*, *Pursue* and *Protect*, as informed by research suggesting festivals had moved away from ‘zero-tolerance’ drug policies (Fisher & Measham, 2018). Each ‘P’ centres on a cluster of policing approaches which are primarily concerned with mitigating certain types of drug-related risk, through law enforcement, security and harm reduction. In Chapter Five, I argued that ‘hard’ *Prevent* approaches, which emphasise high-visibility law enforcement, primarily have symbolic value. They are a trojan horse through which events communicate the strength of their security in

order to repel potential threats, and to ‘tone down’ the behaviour of the audience. Moreover, drug policing is concerned with being seen to be ‘doing something’ to counter drug-related crime, in order to mitigate the legal, financial and reputational risks of being perceived to not be ‘doing enough’. Investment in precautionary law enforcement under *Prevent* provides festivals with a defence within accountability processes, as a form of loss prevention, in the event of serious drug-related harm occurring.

In Chapter Six, under *Pursue*, I argued that drug supply policing within the event is strongly aligned with wider festival security objectives to protect the safety of the audience. Policing distinguishes *certain types* of festival drug dealers by their anticipated level of risk: the priority is to identify, inhibit and remove the most dangerous, potentially violent, ‘open’ market drug suppliers from the festival. While surveillance is embedded within events, time demands inherent in the fleeting drug market means surveillance is concentrated on people who look out-of-place, and at the perimeter to inhibit fence-jumpers. While implicit in the prioritisation of suppliers is the deprioritisation of drug possession, possession may still be policed where doing so is in the security and commercial interests of the event. For example, I explored the interaction of variables which coalesce to influence security discretion in response to ‘open’ drug use, and demonstrate that decisions are influenced by contextual variables which affect the line between acceptability and unacceptability.

Chapter Seven demonstrates that under *Protect* festivals adopt harm reduction approaches to respond reactively to emergency health risks and vulnerabilities arising from intoxication, in order to mitigate the risk of additional, severe harm occurring. I demonstrate that private security, and sometimes the police, play an critical role in facilitating the harm reduction network. In this chapter, I illustrated how events monitor trends in drug-related harm occurring on-site in order to initiate a preventative response where possible. I argued that a significant harm reduction contribution of drug checking arises from improving information

about the drug market, which permits festivals to take a more preventative approach to reducing drug use risks.

My research shows that the approaches to drug policing within the 3Ps are broadly concerned with the mitigation of certain types of drug-related risk. Yet, when considered as a set of approaches it is evident that they interdependently feed into one another to shape the security pursuit: in times of high demand at the gate, *Prevent* efforts are more concerned with identifying drug suppliers; high visibility raids adopted in *Pursue* aim to have a deterrent effect on drug supply in future events; detected suppliers under *Pursue* influence the following year's *Prevent* approach; policing under both *Prevent* and *Pursue* overlap in their focus on securing the perimeter, albeit at different times in the day; drug checking under *Protect* serves a dual role of improving police intelligence for supply policing under *Pursue*; and drug seizures which take place under *Prevent* may be tested under *Protect*. This connectivity suggests the three pillars are not discreet policies, but a set of changeable and dynamic security approaches which function together in practice. What's more, implementation of drug policies and in-situ decision making are shaped by the commercialised and chaotic festival environment. In this conclusionary chapter, I reflect on the '3Ps' as a set of approaches and I draw together the key themes and findings raised throughout my analysis chapters. In this process, I highlight the core contributions of my research to the wider field and emphasise the novelty of my study. I signpost future directions for research in the field based on my findings.

Key findings

Drug security balances interests and risk perceptions

My findings suggest that the pursuit of security and risk mitigation in festival drug policing is the product of negotiation between festival agencies and stakeholders. They are 'communities of interest', with variable and value-laden understandings of the risks posed, and interests behind minimising them in particular ways (Barton & James, 2005). Drug policing through the

'3:Ps' is how festivals attempt to balance these interests and risk perceptions with their own commercial interests, allowing the event to succeed commercially. This dynamic is most evident in the adoption of precautionary 'hard' gate policies under *Prevent*, utilised at some events.

My findings demonstrate that not all festivals invest in *Prevent* to the same degree. For Dancevillage, sniffer dogs were a worthwhile investment as a 'PR exercise' to demonstrate drugs were 'taken seriously' by the event. Festivals which used 'hard' *Prevent* approaches did so in order to keep their event licence by satisfying value-laden risk perceptions and concerns of the police and local authority. Importantly, my findings reveal that 'responsibilising' the audience serves the interests of the police and the festival in the unfortunate circumstances of a drug-related fatality occurring on-site, by providing both parties with a 'defence' if called to account by the Coroner. Responsibilisation, therefore, frames the issue of drug-related harm as the result of personal choice, which deflects scrutiny from the festival and police's efforts (or negligence) to reduce drug-related risk in other ways, such as through investment into harm reduction services.

The adoption of a 'hard' *Prevent* process may be seen as an uneasy compromise which enables a more extensive harm reduction approach inside. As Fisher and Measham (2018) note, where the '3Ps' have been adopted as official policy by festivals in order to facilitate drug checking in the licensing process, it has also led to a stronger emphasis on *Prevent* enforcement. These dynamics are reflective of Garland's (1996) analysis, wherein punitive crime control strategies are used to counter perceptions of the police and event being 'soft' on drugs by engaging 'adaptive' strategies which 'define down' deviance and aim to reduce harm instead. Although Greenfields appeared to be an anomaly in terms of its 'soft' approach to gate policing, this had its own constraints for the event. In light of the festival's 'zero tolerance' drug policy, management felt reluctant to draw attention to drugs at a licensing level by engaging drug checking services.

My findings lend support to Boyle and Haggerty's (2009) analysis of 'mega-event' security, wherein they observe that 'spectacular' forms of security are engaged 'in concert with discipline and surveillance' (p.259). They argue that event security must appear to be strong enough to repel threats, but there is a 'strong incentive to keep security as invisible as possible so that the affective dimensions of overt security do not disrupt the circuits of capital and consumption' (p.264). In a similar vein, *Prevent, Pursue and Protect* may also be seen as a compromise: gate policing is an external 'spectacle' which helps events to provide their audience with the *perception* of a relaxed, low-visibility policing experience once inside, in order to facilitate hedonistic consumption. It would likely 'kill the vibe' of the carnivalesque space if possession was to be proactively policed inside events, or if sniffer dogs were used for supply policing in the arena, as a security consultant participant once suggested to me that they could be.

Drug security is insatiable

My findings illustrate that there is an insatiable demand on festival drug security to mitigate risks, and there are finite (and often stretched) resources available to meet it. In its aim to mitigate several drug-related risks at once, and to satisfy value-laden risk perceptions of festival between partner agencies, 'risk trade offs' have to be made in the security pursuit. This 'trade off' is most vividly illustrated in the tensions between *Prevent* and *Protect*. As a likely consequence of *Prevent*, I observed the spatial and temporal displacement of drug use and drug supply to outside the event perimeter at Allsorts and Daypicnic, which meant that resources had to be diverted from elsewhere in the event. While security operatives play an active role in facilitating the provision of emergency care for drug users, their enforcement role under *Prevent* and *Pursue* may contribute to the 'risk environment' through encouraging late presentation of medical emergencies (Rhodes, 2002; Ruane, 2017). I consider that actively communicating zero-

tolerance and abstinence objectives to the audience throughout the ingress process is incompatible with the harm reduction priority for rapid and effective emergency care provision to drug users under *Protect*.

Given the insatiability of security demands, my findings support that the realisation of drug security is unattainable. It can never be ‘absolute’, nor can the pursuit ever be ‘over’. As Zedner (2003) reminds us, ‘just as the capabilities and intentions of potential adversaries are unknowable, so there may be unknown vulnerabilities, revealed only when they are exploited’ (p. 158). A paradoxical product of drug security investment is that novel threats, potential hazards and weaknesses in the security system are identified. Event security must adapt the following year which, as my findings indicate, is likely to spur innovation and adaptation in resilient drug markets. A consequence of this dynamic between investment and new threats is a security ‘ratchet effect’, where the level of security only ever increases (Loader, 1997b). The ratchet effect is sustained by the interests of security firms to identify new threats and draw attention to existing ones, however remote or unpredictable the threat might be (Zedner, 2009). This is what Loader (1997b) refers to as the ‘vested interest in fear’ of private security, which generates ‘demand for their products by stimulating and channelling people's anxieties and desires in particular ways’ (p.153). The remote and unpredictable threat of dangerous ‘OCG’ drug suppliers targeting an event sustains a level of investment into security, to mitigate the risk of the event getting a reputation for having ‘weak’ security.

I found that drug security investment which increase drug seizures and draw attention to the festival’s ‘drug problem’ may be interpreted as an indication of security weakness rather than strength. This paradox helps us understand that the inaccuracy and inefficacy of drug detection technologies such as sniffer dogs may be part of their virtue. Using sniffer dogs is a compromise which satisfies police and licensing interests without being too detrimental to the experience of festivalgoers or drawing attention to the ‘drug problem’.

Drug security necessitates the prioritisation of risk

Given the infinite demand of potential threats and risks compared to resources to manage them, festival policing must prioritise some risks over others. As I have illustrated throughout this thesis, festivals can be challenging, unpredictable, and sometimes chaotic working environments, in which drug-related risks represent just some of many potential hazards to audience security that may arise over the event. In some instances, drug policing itself may be a source of risk to the health and safety of the audience. In these circumstances, policing actors make assessments of their 'preferred risk', and may use their discretion to abstain from implementing drug policies as intended (Horlick-Jones, 2005). At the gate under *Prevent*, queue-related health and safety concerns led to lighter searching. Under *Pursue*, a group of identified NOS suppliers were left alone after the risks of intervention were balanced with resource concerns. Under *Protect*, security operatives allowed some intoxicated festivalgoers to remain in the event be looked after by their friends, rather than helping them to access harm reduction facilities. In all of these cases, the risks associated with inaction were preferable when balanced with the immediacy and severity of the anticipated risks of taking action, and the available resources to manage them. Furthermore, I found that risk and resource prioritisation were shaped by the demands of the localised risk context and anticipated level of drug-related risk amongst the particular audience demographic. This accounts for inconsistencies in policing approaches between festivals. While day events must contend with concentrated ingress periods and rowdy crowds, events with insecure perimeters invest in technology to secure them throughout the night.

For drug supply policing, the necessity of prioritisation translates into the policing objective to target the most 'noxious' elements of the internal drug market. In particular, festival policing prioritises 'open' market drug suppliers who might sell 'dodgy' drugs and carry

additional security risks to the audience. An important contribution of this thesis is the finding that festival drug possession is deprioritised, and therefore it is (generally) not proactively policed within festivalspace. The prioritisation of certain drug-related risks over others is strongly consistent with ‘harm reduction policing’ principles, which see enforcement as a tool for shaping drug markets into less harmful forms (Stevens, 2013; Bacon, 2016). It is the necessity of risk prioritisation which makes festivals especially fertile ground for innovative harm reduction approaches, such as the adoption of drug checking, especially as harm arising from drug use is the most *imminent* and severe risk compared to other drug-related security risks.

If festivals are considered to be a real-world example of harm reduction policing, they highlight some of its challenges in practice. In particular, the value-laden risk perceptions within varied ‘communities of interest’ within commercialised space makes an ‘objective’ assessment and ranking of harms difficult (Barton & James, 2005). Satisfying police risk perceptions accounts for the use of SCP at festival gates, but may give rise more risky drug using behaviour (Hughes et al., 2017). There are sometimes inconsistencies between the pursuit of subjective security and objective security which means, for example, that responding effectively to audience reporting skews the use of policing resources in an event. This highlights that the pursuit of drug security takes place within a more general risk reduction and customer satisfaction context: for some events, such as Greenfields, the more significant security aim was to ensure the audience trust the event to respond in order to maintain customer satisfaction, and to ensure the continued flow of intelligence. There is perhaps an incompatibility between security systems of intensive surveillance and prioritisation of certain, risky suppliers, as the ‘unremitting watch’ of security operatives, CCTV and ‘communicative surveillance’ in sporadic foot patrol means that many low-level suppliers are inevitably caught in the wide net of surveillance.

Drug-related deviance is ‘defined down’ in festivalspace

Responding to the call by Stevens et al. (2019) for research on the mechanisms and contexts which can shape depenalisation in its various iterations, my findings make an important contribution to understanding the operation of drug discretion in private, commercialised space. Notably, throughout this thesis I observe that drug possession is ‘defined down’ (Garland, 1996) at the discretion of policing actors. I found that the use of specified ‘thresholds’ allowed drug possession to be responded to informally by security operatives, without coming to the attention of police. As such, I argue that festivals may be seen as spatially bounded, temporary, ad-hoc ‘bubbles’ of *de facto* depenalisation (Rigakos & Greener, 2000; Stevens et al., 2019). As a form of ‘desistance from criminalisation’, my findings indicate that drug prohibition in Britain may be more ‘unsettled’ than previously anticipated (Bacon, 2021).

What is clear from my findings is that depenalisation is primarily a policy response to the excessive, even infinite, demands on security resources in festivalspace. These demands are bolstered by ‘hard’ *Prevent* approaches at the gate. When the ‘net’ of security is tightened, there are simply not enough policing resources to issue formal punishment to everyone caught in it. Commercialised space permits drug policing actors access to a wider ‘sanction catalogue’ wherein civil penalties can be applied in lieu of instead of criminal penalties (Bjelland & Vestby, 2017). I found that the police considered confiscation and exclusion to be a sufficient and proportionate reprimand for drug offenders carrying ‘obvious’ possession quantities, and this was flexibly extended to low level suppliers on a case-by-case basis, such as at Daypicnic where the police administered ejections and refusals (‘Restorative Justice’) in these cases in lieu of arrest. That depenalisation of low-level drug offences is, in part, influenced by the objective of conserving police resources for ‘higher risk’ suppliers lends support to the ‘hybridity in mentalities and practices’ between police and security, under which the police adopt risk-based thinking and security adopt a punishment mentality (Lewis and Wood, 2006: p.225; Søgaard

et al., 2016). Yet my finding also suggest that the wider ‘sanction catalogue’ enables police arrest decisions to factor in proportionality, public interest and mitigating factors into the balance of ‘individual risk factors’ and resource concerns. It may be deduced that festival policing applies harm reduction principles in recognition that a criminal record may incur disproportionate harm to the offender (Stevens, 2013).

A critique of police-led depenalisation concerns its implementation through the vehicle of police discretion, which means it is necessarily shaped by police perspectives of the deserving from the undeserving. As McAra and Mcvie (2007) argue, greater discretion means that the police ‘are allowed to create a permanent suspect population and left free to decide who should belong to it’, and this suspect population is often defined along the lines of race and class (p.27). This is supported by recent research by Sandøy et al.(2021) which found that police-led depenalisation can result in people from higher socio-economic backgrounds having greater access to alternative sanctions. My findings highlight that the flexibility of festival depenalisation under both *Prevent* and *Pursue*, when adopted with a specific focus on ‘offender variables’ creates an uneven application of the law, where ‘nice lads’ with ‘no priors’ are treated more favourably with civil sanctions while others are arrested for essentially the same offence. This finding is consistent with the ‘bifurcation’ of control, identified by Innes (2003) wherein ‘reintegrative’ forms of control are made available to the socially included, and people from ‘economically and politically marginalised groups’ and treated in ways that ‘reinforce their exclusion’ (p.11). In order to mitigate the harms of drug law enforcement, depenalisation should be extended to individuals based on a judgement of the offence at hand, rather than past offences. An indicative ‘supply threshold’ may improve consistency in arrest decision making for low level supply.

My research illustrates that depenalisation is a limited, discretionary response to detected drug criminality. In spite of the threshold system, the *de jure* criminalisation of drug

possession and supply retains its utility as a ‘tool’ for security operatives (Greer et al., 2022). My research demonstrates that drug law infringements facilitate and bolster the coercive authority of security in their dealings with troublemakers, through a background threat of police involvement. Drug laws facilitate the control, exclusion and arrest of individuals perceived to be threats to security. Drug laws facilitate the adoption of ‘hard’ *Prevent* approaches, with a police presence, sniffer dogs and enhanced searches, to deter potential threats and influence audience behaviour. Drug-related deviance is ‘defined down’ (Garland, 1996) only in situations where it is in the risk and resource interests of the event, security and the police to do so.

Drug security is shaped by the perspectives and risk perceptions of policing actors

My immersion in the field and ‘bottom up’ perspective of festival policy on the ground reveals that its implementation is heavily shaped by festival security operatives, and their occupational demands. Importantly, drug-related security decisions are informed by the experientially generated risk perceptions of security operatives, along the lines of race, class and gender. I argue that with experience in the festival environment, festival security cultivate a ‘craft’, or a way of doing things, that helps them to understanding how to respond to risks and situations that arise in a way that is mindful of the event’s finite resources (Herbert, 1996). Key examples of these decisions arise in their encounters with ‘open’ drug use, and in responding to intoxicated drug users. This means that less experienced security operatives may respond less ‘pragmatically’ than those with more festival experience.

In Chapter Six, I demonstrate that under *Pursue*, part of the ‘craft’ involves intelligence gathering to identify drug suppliers. While ‘OCG’ suppliers who enter the event over the fence are the managerial priority, I observed that security operatives must work within time pressures and risk-reduction imperatives to identify drug suppliers as quickly as possible in the event. These demands affect how security operatives find suppliers: security operatives draw on their

cultural capital, experiential knowledge of the festival setting and festival audiences to create ‘shortcuts’ to identifying ‘dodgy’ suppliers who are not ‘real’ festivalgoers. The security operative ‘nose’ demarcates people whose appearance suggests they are ‘out-of-place’ amongst the audience. My findings suggest that, in the context of majority white and middle-class festival audiences, this means that people of ethnic minority heritage, and those whose appearance or regionality may have ‘working class’ associations, are subject to more intensive surveillance. My research highlights how informal ‘othering’ processes within dance cultures (Bhardwa, 2014) are mirrored by the systems of control in these spaces, as part of the ‘ethnic governance’ process which helps to reproduce festivals as exclusive ‘play spaces’ for the white middle-classes (Chowdhury, 2019).

My findings suggest that catching suppliers under *Pursue* is an exciting part of the security operative role which fosters a collective sense of purpose, especially against a backdrop of mundanity and the ‘dirty’ demands of the role (Löftstrand et al., 2016). Together these factors help to foster a ‘crime-fighting orientation’ amongst some security operatives, alongside a normative ‘anti-drugs’ sentiment. My research indicates that an anti-drugs sentiment fostered under *Pursue* may seep into and inhibit the performance of harm reduction under *Prevent*, and lead to the ‘contamination’ of these spaces (Ruane, 2017).

Drug security is unevenly distributed across time and space

My findings illustrate that the excess of demand from drug security threats means that the securitisation process plays out inconsistently across time and space in the festival. The perimeter is a significant foci of policing resources under both *Prevent* and *Pursue*, albeit in different ways at different times. Protecting the event perimeter, in order to restrict access to space is integral to risk reduction in the security pursuit. However, securitisation is not uniform across different events because their specific temporal properties affects the allocation of

security resources and the roles undertaken within spaces. For example, day festivals must be able to manage the risks of ingress and egress each day, and this shapes the nature and priorities of policing under *Prevent*. During the peak periods of intoxication in an event, security operatives must dually facilitate and gatekeep access to these services.

While I found that a security operative presence is embedded in high and low visibility forms throughout events, I found that the police role at festivals is defined and spatially restricted. For some events, the gate is seen an appropriate place for a visible police presence, to harness their ‘symbolic authority’ (Loader, 1997a), in pursuit of reassurance, deterrence and drug detection. Within the pluralised ‘patchwork’ of policing provision (Wakefield, 2003), the police role at festivals may be thought of as a layered ‘appliqué’, selectively embraced in certain spaces to symbolically embellish event security with coercive authority, where this suits the risk reduction and customer satisfaction interests of an event. Yet, as Loader (1997a: p.8) reinforces, ‘we must be careful... not to present the symbolic power of the police as a static phenomenon, unchanging over time and through space’. Negotiations over the ‘look and feel’ (Whelan & Molnar, 2018) of gate policing illustrate that events attempt to balance the threatening and reassuring dimensions of a police presence, and how this balance is achieved may be contingent on security threats within the wider social context. In other events, the police do not play a role at the gate and they are mostly confined to backstage for ‘contingency’ and making arrest decisions.

The changeable perception of a police presence is particularly stark when comparing the gate presence within inside event arenas. My findings support festival research from the audience perspective that observes significant differences between the policing inside of events and their perimeter (Bhardwa, 2014; Turner, 2017). In explaining this distinction, I argue that rather than it being a one-directional process wherein enforcement shapes the space, there is a symbiosis between the nature of dance spaces as sites of drug consumption and enforcement

within them. Inside events, a visible police presence is carefully managed and negotiated in order to protect the interests of the event, the police, and the audience's carnivalesque festival experience. Festival management are wary of giving the impression that festival space is too controlled, or subjecting their audience to a more threatening than reassuring police presence. The police manage festival drug markets 'around the edges' by necessity, to facilitate pleasurable intoxication within commercialised, 'bounded play spaces' (Turner, 2018; Bacon, 2016).

Drug security evolves and is continuously (re)negotiated

This thesis demonstrates that festival drug policies are flexible and subject to ongoing multi-agency negotiation throughout an event. Negotiation may be prompted by the evolving and changeable risk context, as festival agencies draw on their competencies, resources, and expertise to make decisions together in response to emergent risks. It is within this process that 'sites of contest' emerge in which participants with different interests, aims, and risk perceptions, seek to promote their objectives and way of doing things (Shearing, 2001: p. 213). In the context of unanticipated unfolding risk, sometimes drug policies must be devised dynamically, extemporaneously, pragmatically and reactively, based on the best available information. To borrow the phrasing of the European Court of Human Rights, I consider that written or pre-agreed festival drug policies are essentially a 'living instrument' (Letsas, 2012) to be implemented within the developing risk and resource conditions in the event, based on the collective expertise and interpretations of decision makers.

This dynamic highlights that a key advantage of drug checking is that it improves information on the drug market in real time, which facilitates better decision making. To capitalise on this advantage, drug checking must be implemented with the necessary expertise to understand the nature and extent of any developing drug-related risks. Incidentally, my

findings suggest that harm reduction is a ‘site of contest’ wherein policy negotiation and stakeholder interests constrain its impact (Shearing, 2001). This is illustrated by drug alert decisions, which are filtered by the imminency of risk within the event at hand, and in the negotiation of alert content which has to be diluted to protect the event’s ‘frontstage’ zero-tolerance policy (Goffman, 1959).

Festival drug policing de-centres the police

Relative to policing in external drug markets, my findings make the case that festival drug policing de-centres the police organisation. That is not to say there was no regulatory influence or ‘steering’ by the police: I observed instances at Dancevillage and Familyfest where a police presence acted as a lever on festival searching by providing an element of oversight. The police role was more extensive at Allsorts and Daypicnic, however, their contribution was mostly confined to deterrence at the gate, and to backstage in making arrests. In this thesis, I demonstrate that the pursuit and governance of drug security is much wider in scope than this, and must be continuously renegotiated.

As drug and security policies evolve through negotiation, information relating to risk is key to decision making. An important finding of this study concerns the way that information circulates between festivals and people. I found that event professionals who work at numerous events throughout the festival season accumulate specialist expertise on drug-related risks. In particular, information relating to particular risky substances of concern is distributed quickly within interpersonal and professional networks of event professionals, as their paths intertwine in different formations over the festival season, giving rise to ‘emergent communities of practice’ (Juriado & Gustafsson, 2007; Crawford & L’Hoiry, 2017). The distribution of information in these networks mean the harm reduction potential of festival drug checking extends far beyond the boundaries of the event in which it takes place. Despite the police’s attempt to be ‘knowledge

brokers' about matters related to festivals and drugs through the NEIU, I found the information shared was not particularly useful for festival security (Ericson & Haggerty, 1997). Information sharing blockages combined with the unpredictable, temporary and ad-hoc nature of festival drug markets present a challenge for festival drug policing to be offender-centred prior to an event.

Festival partnerships extend the reach of the police and security

Throughout this thesis I have critically explored how festival agencies work together and highlight some tensions and challenges they experienced in doing so. What is clear from my findings is that working together mutually extended the reach of both security and the police. Under *Pursue*, helping the police to make evidentially sound 'good collars' against determined dealers extended their exclusionary reach beyond the festival footprint. Festival partnership arrangements gave the police access to systems of festival security surveillance and intelligence, which was fed upwards through the NEIU each week. In Chapter Five, I illustrate that a police presence under *Prevent* significantly enhanced the level of police contact and coercive interaction with the public, while the 'symbolic authority' of a uniformed police gate presence helped security operatives coerce festivalgoers to surrender their illegal substances (Loader, 1997a).

This mutual exchange demonstrates how a police presence helps to secure outcomes that align with security and risk reduction interests, as a 'tactical resource for private governance' (Crawford & Lister, 2004: p.427). However, I found instances where the police's objective to 'make cases' interfered with security objectives, for example, at the Daypicnic gate during ingress. For the most part, security operatives were a policing 'buffer' which delimited the police reach inside the event. They exercised discretion in alignment with commercial interests, which protected the majority of rule breaking festivalgoers from police attention, with the exception of festivalgoers who were perceived to be a threat to security objectives.

Future directions

Models of drug checking

My findings raise matters to be considered for the wider adoption of drug checking in Britain. There are important distinctions to be made between services which offer a combined FoH and BoH service, or BoH only. These distinctions are shaped by which agency conducts the testing and their relationship to other agencies. My findings suggest that, through improving market information, BoH checking plays a preventative harm reduction role even where FoH testing is absent. Adopting a BoH drug checking service may be a more palatable option for events with smaller budgets, and for events with concerns surrounding the negotiation of FoH checking at a licensing level. Yet the use of BoH-only drug checking is not without critique, for example, in Australia where BoH drug checking has been disparaged for being too cooperative with the police, at the risk of marring the credibility and reputation of drug alerts amongst drug users (Pitt, 2019). Furthermore, it may be seen as a compromise which reduces the impetus and incentive for wider take up of FoH checking. In my study, I found evidence that the presence of BoH drug checking fosters collaborative working with the police. Therefore, the BoH model may be considered to be an important stepping stone in trust building between festival partner agencies, laying foundations for FoH service provision in subsequent years. Yet as this service is facilitated through a close working relationship between the police and service provider, festivals need to carefully consider their existing relationship with the police when considering whether to contract a drug checking service. Greater police involvement in an event may have cost implications and give police enhanced oversight of the festival's 'drug problem', which might be undesirable for licensing purposes.

As BoH drug checking only tests seizures and amnestied substances, the decision to contract this service must also take account of the festival's *Prevent* approach. It makes sense to test amnestied and seized substances under *Prevent*, where the gate approach generates adequate

quantities to justify the cost of drug checking. Arguably, for events whose *Prevent* approach is ‘soft’ rather than ‘hard’, there is a risk that using a BoH drug checking service would incentivise more proactive drug possession policing under *Pursue* by security operatives instead. In comparison, BoH checking which is conducted by the police, primarily for the police, relies on the police to decide whether and when to share information arising from the service. This model risks the police prioritising the aim of generating drug market intelligence, with harm reduction as a subsidiary goal. Additionally, my findings suggest that police-led drug checking may lack the specific party drug market expertise which, as I have illustrated, is vitally important for understanding the risks associated with the substances of concern.

The expansion of drug checking into city centre locations raises questions over where drug checking should be located and who should pay for it (see Measham, 2019). I identify that a key benefit of festival drug checking is that it can generate real-time information concerning the festival drug market at hand, and can identify particular substances that have been causing harm. This supports the importance of drug checking being located on-site at festivals, in close proximity to harm reduction services and drug users at the point of use. Its drawbacks, as I argue, are the commercialised concerns which dilute alerts. In order to mitigate these drawbacks while maintaining its benefits, I consider that city-centre drug checking should be adopted as a complimentary service to festival drug checking, rather than a substitution. City centre drug checking alleviates the contextual, commercial concerns inherent in the decision to make an alert. It means the service is not a privilege exclusively afforded to the white middle-classes who can afford to purchase festival tickets (Chowdhury, 2019). City centre drug checking throughout the year would allow more events to be better informed of drug-related risks earlier in the festival season. In terms of risk reduction, this is preferable to identifying risky substances at the point of consumption and ‘shutting the door after the horse has bolted’. Yet in order for

festivals to benefit from a wider provision of city centre drug checking, they may have to reconfigure their *Prevent* approaches, to make using the service worthwhile for drug users.

Drug markets

My analysis reveals important aspects about the nature, shape and ‘players’ of ephemeral festival drug markets, and their relationship with enforcement practices. In terms of drug market ‘players’, my findings indicate that festivals are comprised of many very low-level ‘social’ and ‘minimally commercial’ suppliers, who are likely to be involved in ‘open’ or ‘closed’ distribution systems, or both (Coomber, Moyle & South, 2016; Coomber and Moyle, 2014). Although violent and risky ‘OCG’ suppliers are an ever-looming but atypical threat to security, in light of a growing UK policy discourse which attempts to link ‘middle class cocaine users’ to fuelling organised crime and violence (Spicer, 2021), further interrogation into the nature, extent and framing of the festival ‘OCG’ threat may be a useful direction for future research. In the Danish context, Søgaard and Nielsen (2021) raise apprehensions that the political and media discursive framing of young drug users as drivers of organised crime may be used as a basis for more intensive policing and disciplinary efforts. The presence of ‘semi-open’ festival distribution systems is an empirical question for future research (May & Hough, 2004). Although I was party to rumours and speculation about security operatives with direct or indirect involvement in the drug market, I did not observe this, potentially as a result of my overt researcher presence and lack of insider status. Covert research, therefore, may be integral to this undertaking, as it has been for nightlife context (see, for example, Sanders, 2005; Calvey, 2019).

My findings raise key considerations for future researchers of festival drug markets. Firstly, my findings suggest that festival drug markets have a temporal pattern and dimension wherein the bulk of market activity (in a multi-day event) is likely to be front-ended. Secondly,

in terms of defining the festival ‘market’ parameters, my findings indicate drug transactions and use may be displaced to spaces outside the event perimeter. I suggest that researchers of festival drug markets should adopt a definition which accounts for transactions within the event audience, rather than delimiting the market to the place of transaction. Thirdly, given the ‘relational’ and adaptive properties of drug security, my findings suggest that festival drug markets, like their external counterparts, are resilient and innovative. Anderton (2019) posits that festivals are ‘cyclic places’ which are produced with sufficient continuity each year to be recognisable to the audience, but modified enough to provide novelty in the audience experience. Reflecting this, my findings suggest that some festival drug markets may have ‘cyclic’ properties, with a degree of continuity and regeneration between each event year.

Security culture

I found that security operatives are tasked with undertaking a challenging, low status, sometimes degrading and ‘dirty’ role which demands both physical and psychological resilience (Hughes, 1951). The role involves a great deal of mundanity, sometimes involving standing for 12 hours a day in the rain. Security operatives may be required to camp for days at a time, and then board a bus straight to the next festival to do it all again. They must routinely deal with rude, aggressive and difficult festivalgoers who are often unclean and intoxicated. They are disliked by festivalgoers for being the visible face of authority and control (Ruane, 2017). These are challenges which contribute to the high staff turnover and ongoing recruitment difficulties faced by security firms. Amongst these challenges, I noted how ‘banter’ and pranks appeared to be coping mechanisms to provide comic relief during down time. In light of this, I suggest that ‘insider’ research amongst festival security operatives would provide an enhanced picture of festival security culture, and how women who undertake festival security roles ‘do gender’

by navigating and negotiating the demands of the role and the masculine elements of its culture (Hobbs, O'Brien & Westmarland, 2007; Winlow et al., 2001).

An international lens

My findings illustrate that festival policing in Britain is negotiated between agencies in light of specific contextual demands and interests. While I show that drug possession is *de facto* depenalised and deprioritised at festivals, festivals still operate within a macro prohibition policy context. Drug laws maintain their utility as a security tool for coercion and exclusion in festivalspace, and are a vehicle for a 'deterrent' police presence at the gate. An international lens on festival drug policing would be instructive for understanding how festive policing might work under a policy environment of *de jure* decriminalisation. Ruane's (2017) comparative observations between the UK and Portugal, where drug possession is *de jure* decriminalised, are helpful in understanding the perspective of audiences and the psychedelic support agencies. For example, she observed there was a more relaxed approach to drug supply in festival campsites in Portugal compared to the more heavily policed UK festivals. A more specific lens on the nature of 'policing' and the rationales and understandings within this context may be helpful future direction for research.

Policy recommendations

While acknowledging that idiosyncratic risk contexts necessitate variation in policing approach between festivals, the following recommendations are devised as suggestions for improving policy and practice.

- Festivals should avoid implementing sniffer dogs where they are not yet used. Sniffer dogs are acknowledged by policing actors to be ineffective at detecting

and deterring drug use and possession and, once implemented, they contribute to a drug seizures ‘ratchet effect’ which makes them difficult to remove.

- Adopting a ‘hard’ gate process will increase the likelihood of many low-level suppliers being caught. Overburdening police resources leads to inconsistencies in how similar, low-level supply offences are treated. Mirroring the use of drug possession thresholds, the adoption of supply ‘thresholds’ may increase consistency in how drug supply offences are treated at first instance.
- ‘Hard’ gate policies under *Prevent* symbolically communicate abstinence and drug intolerance, which may be incompatible with harm reduction objectives under *Protect* where it results in drug use displacement to outside of events and late presentation to medical services.
- Security surveillance efforts under *Pursue* may target non-white festivalgoers within majority white audiences. Security operatives may benefit from implicit-bias training to avoid discriminatory policing practices.
- As key gatekeepers for festivalgoers to access welfare and medical services, security operatives may benefit from intoxication response training.
- Welfare services which cater to a mixed audience demographic must be expressly non-judgemental and experienced in meeting the welfare demands of drug users too.
- I highlight that a significant harm reduction value of on-site drug checking is to enable events to take a preventative response to drug-related risk, based on accurate, reliable and expert information concerning dangerous drugs in circulation. My findings emphasise the importance of experience, resources and specialist expertise concerning party drugs amongst medics and welfare in order

to identify, and assess the likelihood, of ‘trends’ in drug-related risks, in order for events to respond appropriately via drug alerts.

- The adoption of on-site drug checking services provides an important opportunity for multi-agency collaboration and learning. Tensions in partnership work arise between agencies where there are differences in their familiarity and experience with drug use and competition for finite resources, which can break down communication.
- City-centre drug checking would remove some financial and political barriers faced by festivals in adopting on-site drug checking. In cities where this is implemented, festivals should avoid using a ‘hard’ *Prevent* approach.

Conclusion

I conducted this research in a pre-global pandemic world which, now two years on, feels like a lifetime ago. Every festival was cancelled in the summer following my second year of fieldwork, and the ones that went ahead in 2021 faced significant challenges, uncertainties and minimal government support. It would be fair to say that under COVID-19, the risk context transformed dramatically. At the same time the drug market in Britain experienced transformation in this period, with drug checking revealing significant adulteration in the MDMA market (Tidy, 2021). Looking ahead, I hope that rupture allows for recalibration, a window for events to ‘do things differently’ with the prioritisation of harm reduction, in the interests of the industry as a whole.

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Appendix: Executive Summary

Background and rationale

Music festivals have become a staple summertime leisure pursuit for millions of people in Britain. Like other dance settings and spheres of licensed leisure, festivals have strong and longstanding drug use associations, yet they are drastically under-researched spaces in the field of criminology. In this study, I make a novel and significant contribution to the fields of drug policy, policing and licensed leisure by critically exploring how the ‘policing’ of illegal drugs at commercial English music festivals takes place and the rationales behind it.

Aims

This research aims to *critically explore the policing approaches used by agencies towards and in response to illegal drugs at English music festivals*. To meet this aim I devised 4 research questions:

1. What approaches and tools are used by festivals in policing drugs?
2. What rationales and interests shape the drug policing activities of agencies, and what are their implications?
3. How is discretion exercised in relation to drug law infringements and what influences it?
4. How do agencies from work together partnership, and what tensions arise from this?

Methodology

I undertook an extensive multi-sited ethnographic inquiry conducted over the summer months of 2018 and 2019. My findings are informed by 250 hours of in-situ observational and interview data, collected alongside security operatives, police, event management, drug checking and welfare services at eight music festivals, in addition to 11 semi-structured interviews with key industry stakeholders.

Key findings

Festival drug policy can be understood as comprising of three core strategies which target different types of drug-related risk: ‘3: Ps’ (‘Prevent’ ‘Protect’ and ‘Pursue’). The 3: Ps structure the analysis of this research and the findings from each chapter are summarised below.

Prevent encompasses policing tools which are adopted at entrance spaces, such as amnesty areas, targeted searching and sniffer dogs, which purport to deter and detect drugs in possession of festivalgoers. Prevent approaches range from ‘hard’ with a high visibility police presence and

sniffer dogs, to 'soft' with a security-led search. In the risk context of ensuring a safe ingress, *Prevent* efforts generate additional pressure on policing resources. This necessitates the depenalisation of drug possession and some cases of low-level drug supply. While festival gates shared some commonalities in their gate approaches, variation between festivals is linked to the audience risk-profile and the necessity for festivals to symbolically communicate to local authorities and the police that they are attempting to reduce drug use. This provides an insurance policy in the event of a drug-related death.

Pursue policing efforts take place during the event to inhibit profit-motivated, potentially violent, drug suppliers from accessing the event and operating on-site. Security operatives conduct both overt and covert surveillance on festivalgoers throughout the campsites, area and the perimeter to catch fence jumpers at night. I demonstrate how the time constraints of festival drug markets structures the use of discretion, the actions and omissions taken by security operatives. This means festivalgoers who look 'out-of-place' within white, middle-class environments are more heavily targeted. Although drug possession is selectively 'deprioritised' within the festival, as influenced by contextual and resource concerns, drug laws are a useful resource for meeting security objectives by ensuring the exclusion of risky individuals.

Protect is concerned with how festivals respond to risks arising from drug use during the event, in order to prevent further vulnerabilities and serious harm occurring. I emphasise that security operatives are often gatekeepers of festival harm reduction services, and must make difficult decisions on how to respond to intoxicated individuals. With my 'behind the scenes' view of drug checking implementation, I illustrate that drug checking allows festivals to enact harm reduction preventatively as well as responsively, through 'alerts' sharing drug market information about substances of concern. Yet the parameters of this are constrained by commercial and multi-agency interests, which means that alerts align with zero-tolerance messaging.

Recommendations

While acknowledging that idiosyncratic risk contexts necessitate variation in policing approach between festivals, the following recommendations are devised as suggestions for improving policy and practice.

- Festivals should avoid implementing sniffer dogs where they are not yet used. Sniffer dogs are acknowledged by policing actors to be ineffective at detecting and deterring

drug use and possession and, once implemented, they contribute to a drug seizures ‘ratchet effect’ which makes them difficult to remove.

- Adopting a ‘hard’ gate process will increase the likelihood of many low-level suppliers being caught. Overburdening police resources leads to inconsistencies in how similar, low-level supply offences are treated. Mirroring the use of drug possession thresholds, the adoption of supply ‘thresholds’ may increase consistency in how drug supply offences are treated at first instance.
- ‘Hard’ gate policies under *Prevent* symbolically communicate abstinence and drug intolerance, which may be incompatible with harm reduction objectives under *Protect* where it results in drug use displacement to outside of events and late presentation to medical services.
- Security surveillance efforts under Pursue may target non-white festivalgoers within majority white audiences. Security operatives may benefit from implicit-bias training to avoid discriminatory policing practices.
- As key gatekeepers for festivalgoers to access welfare and medical services, security operatives may benefit from intoxication response training.
- Welfare services which cater to a mixed audience demographic must be expressly non-judgemental and experienced in meeting the welfare demands of drug users too.
- I highlight that a significant harm reduction value of on-site drug checking is to enable events to take a preventative response to drug-related risk, based on accurate, reliable and expert information concerning dangerous drugs in circulation. My findings emphasise the importance of experience, resources and specialist expertise concerning party drugs amongst medics and welfare in order to identify, and assess the likelihood, of ‘trends’ in drug-related risks, in order for events to respond appropriately via drug alerts.
- The adoption of on-site drug checking services provides an important opportunity for multi-agency collaboration and learning. Tensions in partnership work arise between agencies where there are differences in their familiarity and experience with drug use and competition for finite resources, which can break down communication.
- City-centre drug checking would remove some financial and political barriers faced by festivals in adopting on-site drug checking. In cities where this is implemented, festivals should avoid using a ‘hard’ *Prevent* approach.