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Abstract

Door supervision work is traditionally seen as a working-class, male-dominated trade. In addition, it is deemed to be one that is physically risky, where violence is seen as a 'tool of the trade' and where 'bodily capital' and 'fighting ability' are paramount to the competent performance of the job. This paper is a timely analysis on the manner in which the increasing numbers of women who work in door supervision negotiate their occupational identity and construct their work practices. The analysis focused on the way in which discursive constructions of both violence and workplace identities are variably taken up, reworked and resisted through the intersection of gender and class. This resulted in the identification of two main discourses; 'playing the hero' and the 'hard matriarch'. These findings allow us to theorize that multiple, gendered and classed occupational identities exist beyond normative expectations and can be seen to be both emancipatory for working-women, while simultaneously bolstering exploitation, workplace harassment and violent practices.

Keywords: violence, social class, femininity, occupational identity, door supervision

Introduction

With the notable exception of Hobbs et al. (2007), there has been little or no academic interest in

women working in door supervision work. However, door supervision is a rapidly growing area of work for women within the fast expanding night-time economy. In the UK, door supervisors are responsible for the safety and security of customers and staff in organizational settings such as pubs, bars, nightclubs, other licensed premises or at public events. Often referred to as being a 'bouncer' (US) or a 'crowd controller' (Australia), door supervision work is one of the main jobs within the security industry. In Western countries, the number of people working in 'door supervision' is increasing year on year. In the UK, there are currently 209,475 door supervisors with valid licences (Security Industry Authority, 2012). Over the past decade, despite having been historically an occupation for male employees, we have seen increasing numbers of women joining and working in the industry, and these numbers are rising each year. There are currently 14,943 female door supervisors (just over 7% of the total door supervisor workforce).

Despite the lack of research dedicated to women working in door supervision, we do have a reasonable amount of research which: examines the stories of men working in the profession; explores women working in male-dominated spaces more generally; or focuses on women labouring in violent workspaces. We will now examine all three of these broad research areas to argue that door supervision work may be complex and fraught with difficulties for women who labour in it. Given these concerns and the vastly expanding nature of the workforce of interest, there may be a practical and timely need to engage with the voices of these women. In addition, we argue that researching the stories from this sample of women may provide much needed theoretical developments to enable an understanding of working-class, male-dominated workspaces and the way women's identities and practices are filtered through an intersection of gender and class within these organizational spaces. We feel this would be a welcome addition to both feminist research and organization studies in general.

We do know that door supervision work is male-dominated, traditional working class and violent in its social terrain. Indeed, Winlow et al. (2001) suggest that representations of door supervisors are 'ground deep within the masculine working-class culture' (p. 541), where discourses around status, respect and acceptance are highly valued. This 'masculinist work' is seen to be a physically risky occupation in Britain's fast expanding night-time economy, where violence is seen as a 'tool of the trade' (Monaghan, 2002). Hobbs et al. (2002) discuss how 'bodily capital' and 'fighting ability' are paramount to competent performance of the job. Therefore, given the 'masculinist' nature of this work, it is perhaps unsurprising that the small body of research on door supervision has the

negotiation of masculinity at its core. For example, Monaghan (2002) has argued that the job of a doorman is heavily bound up in differing notions of being a man. Monaghan also argued that the way the job of 'bouncing' is constructed, rests within the context of the potentially violent workspaces it belongs in. He goes on to powerfully argue that traditionally masculine constructions such as physicality, 'hard men, shop boys and nutters', are central to the negotiation of the practicalities of doing door work (2002, p. 352).

In addition, we do have quite a wealth of research focusing on women working in other examples of male-dominated work more generally. This research (e.g. Cohen et al., 1998; Leijon et al., 2004; Morgan and Martin, 2006; Reskin and McBrier, 2000; Schneider et al., 2000; Tsui et al., 1992) has shed light on the less than trouble-free manner in which women take up and maintain employment in most male-dominated organizations. However, we follow Salzinger's arguments (2003) that some of this previous research may have 'stopped at the gates' (p. 13), by relying on quantitative data and by failing to question the category of woman, and the social and political realm in which gendered work practices exist.

However, research that has examined the social realm by centring on the discursive construction of organizational femininities in other non-traditional work has tended to focus on professional occupations. This research, looking at women working as academics, pilots, doctors, for example, has provided us with rich, challenging findings (e.g., Gremmen and Benschop, 2009; Holmes and Schnurr, 2006; Merilainen et al., 2004; Priola, 2004). We feel the pursuit of the voices of the professional women has meant the voices of the working-class women are often unheard. As Connell (1987) argues, what is 'hidden from history' (p. 188) are the experiences of these women. We also argue, along with Walkerdine (1996), that to ignore social class not only makes invisible the experiences and voices of working-class women, but also leaves unexamined middle-class voices, from which most academic work derives.

We do have a very small, but fruitful, reserve of research that has served to address these concerns. This research has identified a number of discursive patterns that reproduce unequal gender relations within traditionally working-class and male-dominated organizations. Many of those identified are said to draw upon the idea of 'traditional role as our biological heritage' (Riley, 2003, p. 102), that posits gender to have a biological basis resulting in men being the only ones able to carry out 'real work'. Unfortunately, the definition of 'real work' seems to convert to work which carries with it power and status. For example, Carey (1994) reports a need for women heavy goods vehicle (HGV) workers to construct their skills and performance as being superior to their male counterparts in order for them to maintain any resemblance of status as a competent worker. As one HGV driver states 'you

can't afford to make mistakes 'cos you're noticed more than a man ... let's face it, if it take some two shunts to get on a boat and it takes a man ten, they are going to criticise me more'. Furthermore, in research interviewing female sea cadets, Raisborough (2006) argues that one certain consequence of these gendered, superhuman requirements is that if women are not seen to live up to these ideals, they can be regarded as inauthentic workers who only support and service the 'real' work of others. Over the past few years, researchers have also begun to identify other discursive practices at play in traditionally working-class, male-dominated workspaces. These have included: the othering of 'feminine' tasks; an acute surveillance of women's bodies (Davey and Davidson, 2000); the operation of a 'masculine sex-drive discourse'; and what Hollway (1984) calls the 'female have/, all of which may result in a requirement for women to discursively 'level their femininity' (Carey, 1994) while occupying these spaces.

Outside of this small body of valuable research, we do feel the omission of the working-class women's voices has left us with a poor theoretical accounting of the intersection between class and gender in organizations. Despite understandings around intersectionality becoming a key feature in wider 'gender' interested research, and some authors (e.g. Acker, 2006, 2011) arguing that organizations are not only gendered they are also classed, sexualized and raced, these explanations are strikingly lacking in the main bulk of work on organization research. This has led key authors, such as Holvino (2010), to argue that we must 'forcefully and intentionally' (p. 250) theorize the simultaneity of class, gender and race to reveal 'hidden stories' that lie at the intersection of these identities (p. 263).

To allow this present research to begin to reveal these stories through the theorization of class and gender, we will adhere to the understanding and analysis of intersectionality that coincides with post-structuralist argument (Butler, 1999), and follows Foucauldian understandings of power (see Knudsen, 2007). Drawing on this work, we will focus on how social categories articulate with one another, with a particular focus on how gender is classed. Here, the exploration of intersections of class and gender is seen to be through the deconstruction of multi-layered meaning around identities that are conceived to be multiple, shifting and often contradictory. Following this we will view female subjectivities as being engaged in a network of articulating social categories such as class and gender while being subjected to conditions surrounding their contextualization within these. We hope this viewing will aid the theorizing of workplace identities whilst simultaneously providing a solution to minimizing the complexity in the intersection of multiple positions and allowing a consideration of the politicized nature of the terrain of these two different social categories (Butler, 1999).

Therefore, our first aim is to use a post-structuralist feminist discourse analysis as a tool to focus on gender and class identities in traditionally male, working-class work. This will enable access to the

overlooked female, working-class voice and aid a clear theoretical account of the intersection of class and gender in organizations.

In addition, we are also interested in how our sample of female door supervisors contest meanings and produce counter-discourses. We argue that Foucauldian-influenced post-structuralism has enabled feminist work to go beyond what critics have seen as constraining and oppressive functions of women's roles and constructions of femininity (e.g., Humm, 1992; Millett, 1970; Wetherell, 1995; White and Kowalski, 1994; Wittig, 1992) to explore women's agency within various sites (see, e.g., Currie, 2004 and Raisborough, 2006). However, as previous researchers have argued (e.g., Day et al., 2010), despite this renewed emphasis on discourses as transient and constantly under threat from active resistance, many problematic ideologies of gender do seem to prevail. As Raisborough and Bhatti (2007) argue, it may be oversimplistic to view reproduction/conformity and resistance as polarized and discrete.

Several positions of resistance and agency have been identified within the aforementioned small body of literature that samples women labouring in working-class occupations. These positions have resided in both a discourse that contests the traditional meaning around 'feminine sense' versus 'masculine brutality' and presents an alternative reading. This alternative reading serves as a means of arguing for the superiority of performance of women in some work tasks (Carey, 1994) and in a contesting of hegemonic femininities by incorporating 'bravery, strength, success and sexual freedom' into the understanding of female gender identities in male-dominated workspaces (Sasson Levy, 2003). Indeed, in the case of Eveline and Booth's (2002) article on female miners, there is the explicit signal of the active resistance of the female miners, not only by seeking work in such a traditionally male domain, but also in women's highly politicized discursive resistance in the face of intense hostility from their male colleagues.

An additional aim, therefore, is to focus on any multiple, and/or contradictory discourse around gender, class and violence that may allow women who work as door supervisors to contest meanings and produce counter-discourses while sometimes simultaneously reproducing/conforming other more oppressive discourse. Lastly, given the violent nature of door supervision, we are very much interested in how constructions of violence are filtered and shaped through the intersection of gender and class. It is argued here, along with others (Day et al., 2003; Ringrose, 2006), that violence can be understood as playing an important role in the construction of classed femininities and these do appear to remain carefully regulated through specific categories of womanhood. Feminists researching constructions of violence in wider work and professions (e.g., sport; Gill, 2007) persuasively argue that understandings of violence serve to police 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable'

feminine identities. But women who are employed in violent workspaces do not passively accept the presence of violence but, instead, attempt to manage it by manipulating, separating, controlling and resisting the spaces they inhabit (Rickett, 2010; Sanders, 2004). Certainly, the one valuable example of research looking at female door supervisors, an ethnographic study examining the experiences of women door supervisors (Hobbs et al., 2007), does reflect these arguments by beginning to tell the story of the complex nature of women attempting the 'doing of gender' in potentially complex, fraught and violent occupations such as door supervision.

In sum, our aims are to use a post-structural and feminist-informed discourse analysis (e.g., Gavey, 1989; Malson, 1998; Willott and Griffin, 1997) to collect data that allows us to highlight key discourses on gender, and the intersection these may have with class, not simply to explore how they are reproduced, but also how they are negotiated, contested and performed within the work of door supervision. In addition, we aim to gain an understanding of violence in door supervision work by examining how women's work practices are both controlled and regulated through a gendered and classed construction of workplace violence.

Details of the study

To address these main aims, we selected a small sample of women who worked across a range of premises in several regional areas. This small sample size allowed us to conduct in-depth interviews, enabling the generation of a wealth of in-depth data consistent with discourse analysis methodology. As Sandelowski (1995) posits, a small sample size is not an issue in discourse analysis as the interest is in the variety of ways the language is used (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). However, while we note it is possible to use a single person's narrative (e.g., Smith et al., 2009; Starks and Brown Trinidad, 2007) within qualitative research, given our aims, we followed Smith et al.'s (2009) suggestion of between four and ten participants for a substantial piece of research.

Workers such as door supervisors are often seen as 'difficult to reach' for a number of reasons: databases are not available due to security and privacy issues; the work is mobile (workers often work around a number of premises); and there are a limited number of workers in the target sample (as previously noted, female workers represent only a small proportion of door supervisors in the UK). Therefore, the selection of participants involved varied strategies, including approaching a female door worker, and using snowballing techniques. Our selection criterion was to recruit women who worked as door security workers, and that the sample should be from multiple premises/main places of work.

Our final group comprised eight women, aged between 20 and 35, who described themselves as white, British, from a working-class background and as being heterosexual. One participant lived and worked in Cambridgeshire, four lived and worked in West Yorkshire and three lived in South Yorkshire but worked throughout the North of England. They had worked in door supervision work between 6 months and 10 years. All participants worked in different premises from each other, although three did know of each other. These premises included pubs, bars and nightclubs.

In this research, participants were interviewed using a semi-structured format on a 'one-to-one' basis. The interview schedule consisted of 14 questions constructed around research aims in order to extract narrative accounts of the participants' experiences. For example, one item was, 'Are certain situations easier to deal with than others; if so, can you give me any examples?'. The interviews took place in a group study room at Leeds Metropolitan University and at working premises in South Yorkshire. All interviews were audio-taped and transcribed into Microsoft Word and lasted anything between 20 and 90 minutes. The interviews were carried out by one of two interviewers: a 25-year-old white, British man who describes himself as working class and heterosexual; and a 40-year-old white, British woman who describes herself as heterosexual and working class.

Analysis

Following our aims and theoretical approach, the transcripts were analysed using a Foucauldian style of discourse analysis (e.g., Willott and Griffin, 1997) informed by feminist post-structuralist theory (Gavey, 1989; Weedon, 1987). Consistent with this form of discourse analysis, we saw knowledge as a social construct that is unstable and fluid and that cannot make claims to truth (Gavey, 1989).

In addition, we adhered to a Foucauldian style of discourse analysis that implies questions around power relations inherent in different discourses and that asks whose interests these best serve. In keeping with a feminist focus (see Day et al., 2003; Willott and Griffin, 1997; Woolhouse et al., 2012), we were particularly interested by the manner in which gendered power relations resided in discourse and what potential implications these had for aiding/hindering equal power relations in the workplace, and for further feminist and organizational scholarship around the intersection of gender and class. More specifically, we aimed to identify overarching discourses deployed by the speakers around gender identities, class and violence in door supervision work. We were particularly interested in the speaker's positioning within these discourses, the possible implications for subjectivity and practice, and what such discourses might tell us about the wider social conditions within which these (and other) women door supervisors are situated.

To this end, we followed guidelines provided by Willott and Griffin (1997) where, firstly, the text is read through several times and then 'chunked'. A chunk is seen to be a section of text that centres on a particular topic/issue, for example, if there is a switch in topic of conversation, different parts of a story are told, or a different person speaks. All chunks are coded using in-vivo themes (simply meaning 'the text'), where each chunk is labelled as a theme that reflects the words or phrases used repeatedly in them or that best represent what is being described, for example, 'male colleagues' or 'customers'.

We then identified ways in which these themes were being discussed, for example, within 'male colleagues' some ways in which male colleagues were being discussed were: 'male colleagues act brave'; and 'male colleagues make jokes', 'male colleagues have a heart of gold', 'males are only after one thing'. Finally, we looked for similar 'types' of ways of talking, first within each theme, then across the different themes, examining different ways that femininity, masculinity and class were being constructed, the discourses at play. This resulted in four main discourses: 'playing the hero'; 'being the hard matriarch'; and the less dominant themes: 'ladies and trailer trash'; and 'good men and bad men'.

For the purposes of this paper, we will focus on the two former and more dominant discourses around the organizationally situated identities of: 'playing the hero' and 'being the hard matriarch'.

Results

Playing the hero

The first discourse presented is 'playing the hero'. This was an overwhelmingly dominant discourse throughout the data. Within this discourse, door supervisor masculinities were narrated by drawing on the normative ideology, which constitutes masculinity through a 'hero position'. This is a position centred on a hegemonic masculinity which positions men in a particularly autonomous and agentic manner (see Wetherell and Edley, 1999). In this study, this position is employed by our participants to largely resist and parody gendered ideals by constructing masculinity as a performance.

Extract 1

> Angela: 'Well, some of it's what they've been through, and some of it's just a load of bullshit. You get a lot of bullshit stories, like hero stories you know sort of "back in the day" or "this happened last week". It's a load of bollocks (both laugh). You know someone's giving a load of bullshit trying
>
> to impress ya.'

In this illuminating extract, 'Angela' tells us about how her male colleagues perform 'the hero' position. Here, 'the hero' is suggested to reside in and be reiterated by stories told. In these narratives, the male bouncer is the central character. However, 'Angela's' main argument is that the stories are exaggerated or even largely fabricated. We feel this may be an attempt to counter any regulatory function of the telling of such stories. Exaggerated masculinized and heterosexual posturing of in this nature, constructed from dominant gendered ideals, in this case the role of the 'hero', can either exclude women (Dejung, 2010) or serve to force them and low-status men to adapt to the 'comradeship of men' (Eastman and Schrock, 2008). Therefore, it could be that a questioning of the authenticity of such performances by directly challenging the 'truth value' may enable women working alongside these men to frame themselves as free from the potentially coercive and disempowering function of such posturing.

What is also interesting is how the motivation for such 'posturing' is constructed.

Extract 2

Jo: 'Doormen feel they have to prove themselves, "yeah we are big and hard".'

This short yet succinct extract illustrates that there is an understanding that the performance of the hero is motivated by a need to be seen to be 'hard'. It is the ability to be seen to be 'hard' that is central to achieving status and power in door supervision work. Indeed, 'Jo' is arguing that 'feel(ing) they have to prove' this ability is necessary to the successful enactment of being a male door supervisor.

Here, 'big and 'hard' equals claiming the capacity for violence. Willis (1977, 1979) and Connell (1987) note how crucial the performance of violence is to claim and maintain heterosexual male space. However, as with the construction of the fraudulent hero, this discourse may serve to disrupt any claims over space. In this particular working-class space, where violence is seen as a 'tool of the trade' (Monaghan, 2002), masculinity is being reconstructed. What is being rejected here is dominant and essentialist discourse that often functions to position women as separate and incompatible with male-dominated work (e.g., within the British army; Woodward and Winter, 2006). Rather, masculinity is firmly presented as a performance, 'playing the hero', and one which is not embodied but socially facilitated by a need to fit in through demonstrating status and power. Here the employment of 'playing the hero' as a discourse could also be seen as a means to liberate female door supervisors from constraining gender ideals around violence and power, by parodying traditional and essentialist

notions of masculinity that lay claim to space (Butler, 1999). In particular, as Curry (1991) argued, questioning the 'truth status' of gendered claims to power that rest on essentialist notions of gender, allows for a questioning of the association of the 'naturalized' commodities that go with the enactment of masculinity on a day-to-day basis.

However, the next extract (3) suggests there could be an alternative interpretation that illustrates we may need to be careful not to romanticize the potential for emancipation through this discourse. What is being presented as 'playing the hero' also draws upon binary constructions of gender, told through a classed lens. In doing so, it could be that notions of a powerful, heterosexual masculinity are privileged, while hyper-heterosexual working-class femininities that require regulation and protection (Skeggs, 1997) are simultaneously subjugated.

Extract 3

> Jo: 'You'll get girls who will throw themselves at the male door staff because girls, women, see ... male door staff as the hero, the big macho guy that will look after them and all the rest of it, and urm so they will actually throw themselves at the male door staff ... they see the women as their property and the more drunk men you get the less women there is to share around the doorstaff.'

'Jo' is clear here, referring to both dominant labels of femininity ('girls' and 'women'), that she is alluding to all categories of womanhood are vulnerable to the power of the hero performance. So, 'playing the hero' is depicted as a powerful means of gaining sexual success through a heterosexual, hegemonic masculinity whose 'hero' status is gained through the assumed capacity to protect women. Women, in turn, are presented as being helpless in the face of such displays, turning from sensible womanhood, to 'throwing themselves' at 'the hero'. This is an unruly and hyper-sexual femininity that draws on heavily gendered, classed and morally-imbued understandings of acceptable and unacceptable sexual practice (Skeggs, 1997). This discursive strategy could bolster powerful ideals around masculinity and heterosexuality that position men and women in firmly divided roles.

As Collinson (1988, 2003) argues, it is through heterosexuality that working-class masculinities can be invested with notions of strength and bravery. We argue that it is the use of 'playing the hero' that reiterates ideology around 'the hero' as being knowing, strong, powerful, physically and sexually agentic, and in control of the space he inhabits and the occupants of that space. As Dryden et al. (2010) have argued in their work on the use of the heroic position in the stories of domestic violence, cultural signifiers of the hero position appear to rest on ideas around phallic potency and capacity for violence. However, the latter research lacked an analysis of class in use of the hero position. We, alongside

Bolam and Gleeson (2004) and Holt and Thompson (2004), feel that since such identities are understood through social positioning, the hero position is always crafted through a gendered and classed lens. As other writers have argued, working-class masculinities are often defined by the ownership of resources such as physical capital and the capacity to be the breadwinner (Willis, 1977, 1979). Indeed, it is through the endorsement of these same resources that working-class men are expected to overcome the social exclusion and material inequities associated with being inscribed as a working-class man (Holt and Thompson, 2004). On the other hand, normative expectations of femininities being presented within the construction of the female customer include a lack of autonomy and agency, having potentially ungovernable sexual practices, and being vulnerable to physical harm. Any social and political inequalities, therefore, can only be overcome by securing a heterosexual relationship with a man who embodies the hero position. As other thinkers such as

Willott and Griffin (1997) have argued, such discourse serves only to maintain the status quo that depicts men and women in gendered and unequal terms. The use of the 'playing the hero' discourse does present the female door supervisor with a dilemma: if she is to assign herself to the category of womanhood, she may also be positioned and position herself in such unequal terms. But if she assigns herself outside the category of womanhood, she may risk social exclusion by her colleagues. This may be overcome by othering female customers as different kinds of women. A careful reading of extracts 1 and 3 reveals the stark contrast in which female customers and the female worker are constructed. In extract 3, the customer is helpless 'property', seduced by the power invoked by the playing out of the hero position. While in extract 1, the female door supervisor is the one who, unlike other women, can detect the 'bullshit' and is impervious to any associated power 'playing the hero' may have over them.

Here, again, we think we can persuasively argue that a refusal to accept the legitimacy of the identity of the 'hero', by presenting male colleagues as performing, rather than embodying, the hero position, ensures a resistance to potentially constraining normative ideals. In sum, first, it humanizes male colleagues and positions them as undeserving of any mythical status a hero position may bestow upon them. And, second, it ensures the identity of the female door supervisor is one that is granted a status distanced from less powerful femininities (e.g., female customers who require the hero).

Extract 4

Jo: 'It's all "when you gonna come and shag us and when you gonna show us your tits" ... you know ... "my cock's bigger than his cock" it's funny, it is really funny ... all doormen talk about is oral sex, anal sex and sex.'

Extract 5

Sally: ‘Erm so how about, they’re going to drug my boyfriend and gang bang me is quite a good one. You just take it as a load of fun.’

However, as these two extracts (4 and 5) illustrate, the business of the negotiation of the alternative, knowing woman is a fraught one. As Skeggs (1997) suggests, working-class women have to develop strategies that deal with being firmly positioned as sexual and as an object for heterosexual male ownership. It may be that contesting the linkage between working-class female subjectivities and (hyper)heterosexuality (Taylor, 2006) appears to be possible only through positioning themselves as special women, therefore subverting the only other form of womanhood available to them. But, while the female door supervisor may categorize herself as being exempt from objectification through heterosexual notions of masculinity and power, it is also made clear that male colleagues are intent on acting out the hero performance and this includes attempting to possess and objectify all women, including them. Here, then, the category of all womanhood is inscribed on the door supervisor while she simultaneously strives to avoid the perilous and morally problematic label of it. To achieve this while maintaining a powerful identity status is a complex and dangerous process. In this instance, it may be achieved by doubting the validity of threats made to her, by categorizing them as jokes. As we can see in extract 5, ‘you just take it as a load of fun’. But we, alongside other authors (e.g., Davey and Davidson, 2000) argue that such ‘fun’ could be read as bolstering sexist and derogatory practice, while at the same time, humour is constructed as a signifier of good relations. Arguably there is little discursive space available within the ideal of the door supervisor worker that permits an alternative interpretation of such comments and threats without stripping its protagonist of the status of an ideal worker who is good at social relations. As Kanter (1977) and Yount (1991) suggest, having the identity of someone who has a ‘thick skin’ and a sense of humour are prerequisites for the understanding of the ideal worker in a male-dominated environment. Eveline and Booth (2002) also argue that female miners who fell away from this ideal by complaining about such comments were constructed as women who inexplicably deviated from ‘sensible womanhood’. It does appear that there is a power function of acceptance of the joke that goes beyond a reading of the women being passive victim to gender oppression and harassment. In this organizational context, going along with the joke may allow the female door supervisor to position herself as other to the subjugated womanhood of the female customer, while ensuring she is still feminized enough to fall firmly within the category of woman.

However, the precarious pursuit of striving for status, while ensuring both a conformity to 'sensible womanhood' and an othering of more problematic femininities could permit and maintain the continuation of such crude and violent examples of work harassment as indicated in Extracts 4 and 5.

The 'hard' matriarch

A second dominant discourse surrounds the framing of the female door supervisor as a 'hard' matriarch. It is noteworthy that in this 'aggressive and egotistical' workspace (Winlow et al., 2001, p. 543), female participants largely accepted that while risk and danger through violence were unavoidable, these could be negotiated through being 'the hard matriarch'. Within this discourse, female subjectivities and understandings of masculinities are presented in a number of ways. Firstly, claims are made that the female bouncer is 'harder and bigger' than other men.

> Extract 6
>
> Jo: 'They (male customers) kind of look at women doormen as "oh dear", urm you know, "I better behave myself 'cos otherwise she's harder than me and bigger than me because she's a female bouncer".'

Here 'Jo' tells us about how she gains status and respect from male customers by being 'big and hard', and this respect is crucial to ensuring that customers 'behave' themselves and adhere to policy on customer conduct. It has been previously suggested that in working-class culture, being deemed by others to be hard or soft carries high importance and, 'it is certainly more desirable to be hard' (Day et al., 2003, p. 150). Whilst Davey and Davidson (2000) found there are no rites of passage for women working in male-dominated organizations, being the highest ranking in performance of tasks was the only means of securing status. Extract 6 tells us that capacity for violence is a tool of the trade and that being the highest ranking is to be 'harder' than the rest. Moreover, it is presented as a taken that female bouncers must be so much harder than the rest just to secure the position (see extract 6: 'because she's a female bouncer'). Therefore, through this discourse, the capacity for violence, traditionally associated with hegemonic masculinity (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005), is further privileged in status hierarchies when attributed to a woman and could be a means to assert a powerful feminine identity. This, we argue, flies in the face of dominant, middle-class ideologies around respectability and womanhood and could be seen as an expression of dominance and power (Skeggs, 1997). Along with previous authors (e.g., Day et al., 2003), we argue that a capacity for violence and femininity does not sit comfortably in middle-class understandings. It does, however, make sense in this local context. In addition, this presentation of the successful female door supervisor could also be

read as a strong resistance to the myth of the non-aggressive woman and the ideology of the gendered division of labour that proposes that 'male work' is physically demanding, while 'female work' is 'safe' (Newman, 1995).

A second reading of our data did lead us to consider an alternative interpretation, that the construct of the 'hard matriarch' may also reproduce dominant gendered identities that operate as an endorsement of some powerful masculinized ideals. Attention to the following extract (7) illustrates that embedded in the 'hard matriarch' discourse is a straightforward reproduction of dominant ideals around heterosexual relations. While male colleagues are presented as single-minded in their quest to have sexual relations with certain women, within this discourse and the previous 'playing the hero discourse', these certain women are positioned as being helpless in the face of such single-mindedness.

> Extract 7
>
> Angela: 'Well, I mean, on Monday night we had three door staff on, usually we would have five. Urm, we had two on the front door, both men. Me on the inside, and err the end of the night he turned round, "I've got 8 numbers [telephone numbers from female customers] what have you got?" "Oh, I've got two black eyes!" So it's like nice, thanks lads (laughs). You know they've had a great night chatting up all the girls and I've been inside sorting out all the problems.'

This extract alludes to a highly heterosexual workspace, where men are presented as fulfilling the role of 'playing the hero' and women as either the 'hard matriarch' who is doing the work or as the female customer who is being objectified through the enactment of 'playing the hero'. For the women who do the work, this practice requires commitment through self-sacrifice, whereby women complete duties under all conditions even to the detriment of themselves. Here, 'Angela' uses a brutal image of her getting 'two black eyes'. This phrase draws upon common ideas which are heavily classed and closely associated with working-class enactments of street and domestic violence (see, e.g., Day et al., 2003). Here, to give someone 'two black eyes' is to give them a physical signifier of being the loser in a tough and lengthy fight. We do feel that in drawing on such representations, 'Angela' has indicated to us a highly classed and gendered argument for the requirement of a level of self-sacrifice associated with her doing her job. Here, gendered understandings of agency are drawn upon: masculinity is associated with the agency and power to decide to have a 'great night', while femininity is associated with self-sacrifice through 'sorting out problems' (Devon, 2007; Rickett, 2010). Jane Ussher has argued the feminized construct of sacrifice is explicitly embedded in hegemonic constructions of idealized

femininity. These involve the positioning of women as emotional nurturers of others, necessitating 'self-renunciation', and being morally dichotomized between the 'good' and the 'bad' (Ussher, 2004).

This discourse could then function to further position female door supervisors in the gendered and morally superior position of the responsible, hard-working worker, who takes her role seriously and who sits higher in relation to her male colleagues and female customers. The former are simultaneously positioned as irresponsible workers who do not take their roles seriously, leaving her to do all the work, while the latter are dehumanized, reduced to 'numbers'.

As previous work (e.g., Rickett, 2010) has recognized, such a construction of the good worker is often bound up in normative ideology on ideal subject positions. Here we see in extract 7, and in the earlier extracts (3) from 'Jo', that gender norms, classed norms and normative sexuality are being simultaneously drawn upon to present a 'good worker' that is distinctive not only from fellow male colleagues, but from other women occupying the workspace.

The following extract (8) illustrates a further association between being a good worker and self-sacrifice through an idealized, almost iconic construction, of a 'matriarch'. This matriarchal figure, notably identified in research considering ideology around African femininities (Jordan-Zachery, 2009), and in work considering the depiction of working-class, older women in British TV soaps (Bashner, 2008), refers to a tough, mother figure that is relational in power positioning to both other, younger working-class women and other working-class men.

> Extract 8
>
> Jo: 'They're like children. All of them like little children. You know "for goodness sake children put him down" and they are like "what are you my mother or something?" '
>
> Extract 9
>
> Angela: 'If I'm dealing with males, you know I'll have a laugh and a joke "so I don't have to drag you out by your hair and embarrass you in front of your friends" etc. etc.'

In using the discourse of the hard matriarch, 'Angela' represents herself as a maternal subject, while the male customer is drawn in relation to this as an infantilized subject achieved through a maternalized discourse of caring, responsibility and duty. However, rather than a simple reproduction of notions of mothering, the discourse is reconstructed to undermine patriarchal notions of power.

Within working-class settings the idealized options for being a woman can be narrow, ranging from motherhood to being in a caring profession (Taylor, 2006). It may, therefore, be difficult for working class women to position themselves as successful women when their work sits so far outside of these

understandings. We argue that by re-writing normative ideology around the maternalized woman, in the guise of the 'hard matriarch', our participants present themselves in a higher status position than the male customer, disrupting ideals that may otherwise bind them. By parodying masculinity and using the re-written maternal discourse to infantilize, the powerful positioning of male colleagues and customers is subverted, leaving the female door supervisor empowered. However, while there has been little work around the ideology of such idealized and empowered femininities in classed work settings, some authors, for example Rubchak (2009), have noted how such representations of the patriarchical woman may be used to legitimize female subordination as a result of her alleged empowerment. We also share some of this concern. The maternal discourse not only essentializes womanhood, it can also serve to deny women an active sexuality, particularly in white working-class settings (see Skeggs, 1991). Maternalism has gendered, classed and indeed racialized readings; while in Skeggs' later work (1997), she suggests that black sexuality is empowered by a sexualized, maternalized femininity, we found this element of empowerment to be left undisturbed. In addition, as Rubchak (2009) has persuasively argued, notions of an empowered femininity can be used to justify violence and subordination against women. Indeed by drawing on assumptions that women are 'tough' and so can withstand abuse, women are left with little agency to protect themselves from such abuse.

Interestingly, the following extracts (10 and 11) allow us to argue that it may be through the 'hard matriarch' that markers of sexuality are required to be left behind, disguised or indeed rejected to secure success for women in door supervision.

> Extract 10
>
> Katie: 'Erm, you kind of think you don't go into this job if you've got fingernails to break or the model looks to mess up, you know you're not scared of being hit, you can't go, it's not nice being hit but you can't go in showing you're scared.'
>
> Extract 11
>
> Andrea: 'One thing I do is I always wear gloves when I'm working ... A you don't break your nails (both laugh) and B when you're coming across a situation like that (referring to an earlier story of a customer who required escort off the premises), you're not going to mark the person, not that you do anything to mark the person can I say, however, it's easier to get a hold on somebody with gloves on then.'

These two extracts present the 'hard matriarch' as being stripped of the cultural markers of heterosexualized womanhood. This rejection of idealized feminine markers, such as long fingernails

and model looks, appears to be operating in two main ways: first, as a strategy for both 'Andrea' and 'Katie' to present themselves as being protected from being involved in violence (indicated by presenting this as the prevention of, 'leav(ing) a mark' on customers or themselves); and second, as a way of reconciling themselves with the consequences of such harm by distancing themselves from, or actively disguising, traditional markers of working-class femininity (through wearing clothes or othering 'model looks').

As Bettie (2003) has argued, the painting of nails and the dressing of women's bodies to fit with ideals of beauty can create cultural capital representative of the neo-liberalist femininity, which, in turn, enables class mobility. However, the heavily gendered and classed marker of mobility (e.g., the painting of and ownership of longer fingernails) is depicted as disempowering in this context, as it leaves women unable to enact or protect themselves from violence. As such, neo-liberalist femininities are distanced in favour of working-class understandings of the 'hard matriarch' who is free to enact and protect herself from violence and is not shackled by the physical restrictions associated with the markers of idealized heterosexual femininity. This is an interesting positioning of accoutrements, or what McRobbie calls the 'post-feminist masquerade' (2007, p. 722). McRobbie argues that a masquerade of hyper-femininity, using fashion and beauty markers, serves to disguise femininity and does so via a discourse of choice which serves to mask her rivalry with men and the competition she may pose in male-dominated work. What we see here is a rejection of this masquerade, where hyper-feminine markers are a danger and a limiter to successful enactment of occupational identities.

This rejection could serve to contest ideology around the professional enactment of femininity that McRobbie argues can render feminist action a non-issue.

Conclusions

In view of these illuminating arguments, we suggest that in this 'aggressive and egotistical' (Winlow et al., 2001) workspace, female door staff may need to negotiate the task of maintaining identities that incorporate the much prized status, respect and acceptance from co-workers. Door supervision represents one of the many traditionally male-dominated occupations that women are entering in increasing numbers. Therefore, this pause for reflection on how women negotiate themselves within these spaces, how they can secure status and respect, and what tensions and difficulties they may face in this quest are timely and warranted. These rich accounts indicate this quest is less than trouble

free, with power relations shaping practices that are both gendered and classed in ways that potentially disempower, exploit and make fraught the identity of the female door supervisor.

For instance, the local norms around masculinity appear to shore up sexual division by operating as an endorsement of powerful masculinized ideals in the guise of an exemplary working-class masculine identity of the hero position, while also rejecting women who fall into more traditionally feminine ideals. In addition, morally imbued notions of the matriarch as the 'good worker' could serve to exploit the female worker, rendering her work dangerous by legitimizing risk-taking practices. This may, in turn, leave female workers with a lack of agency in protecting their physical health at work.

However, the analysis of both 'playing the hero' and 'hard matriarch' demonstrates that multiple femininities do extend beyond normative expectations. Our additional interest in how women

contest dominant meaning has allowed for a consideration of multiple points of resistance. The parodying of the hero position allows for a questioning of the status of hegemonic masculinity and its resultant claim for space. In addition, these local understandings of the hard matriarch could represent an active resistance to classed ideology around womanhood that serves to control and policewomen's position. Along with other feminist writers (e.g., Day et al., 2003), we sought to deconstruct the myth of the non-aggressive woman. Taking this previous work beyond women's leisure activities to women at work, we suggest that, depending on organizational context, to be seen to be hard can make sense. The ability of women at work to enact violence makes sense in this organizational space, as it allows for the re-writing of the maternalized woman to a 'hard matriarch' who has status and respect amongst colleagues and customers. As previous work has indicated, these markers of acceptance for women working in such spaces can be difficult, if not impossible, to come by. In addition, the ability to be violent also serves to disrupt several binding ideals around women at work, such as the problematizing of the expectation that successful women at work should be marked by the 'accoutrements of femininity'.

However, we indicate any avenues for emancipation with caution. While the female worker is presented as the worthy occupant of a traditionally male space, she is also identified as one who is exposed to, and forced to accept, work harassment of all forms to achieve status and respect as a co-worker. Through this process, she is objectified, potentially disempowered and reminded both of her position as a sexual object whose main function is to gratify, and of her precarious place in this 'unsafe' male environment (Davey and Davidson, 2000; Skeggs, 1999).

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