

PARALLEL SESSION 3A

Safety, security and smoking

Dope on plastic: the impact of contemporaneously banning smoking and glassware from nightclubs in Glasgow, Scotland - an observational study of violent disorder

Alasdair Forsyth

Glasgow Centre for the Study of Violence, Scotland

On February 2nd 2006, in an attempt to reduce the seriousness of injuries resulting from alcohol-related violence, Glasgow's licensing authority introduced a bye-law banning the use of glass vessels from all the city's nightclubs. Soon afterwards, on March 26th, the Scottish Parliament banned smoking from all enclosed public spaces, including all of the nation's licensed premises, in order to safeguard the health of those working in such environments.

This presentation will describe some findings from an observational study of alcohol-related disorder conducted within Glasgow's nightclubs over this turbulent time period. The observational research involved two teams of trained fieldworkers visiting a sample of eight of Glasgow's 70 nightclubs for three hours, twice, once on a Friday and once on a Saturday night (midnight to 3.00AM – which approximates to 100 hours observation taking into account 'drinking up time'). These interviews were supplemented by 32 in-depth interviews with Glasgow nightclub patrons conducted by the author.

The research was funded by the Alcohol Education Research Council (AERC) and builds upon a recent similar project conducted by the author for the local health authority (Greater Glasgow NHS Board) which observed alcohol-related disorder within the city's pubs (Forsyth et al, 2005), and also upon the author's PhD thesis which examined drug use within Glasgow's nightclubs in 1993-94 (Forsyth, 1997). In this presentation the impacts, both positive and negative, that these two policies have for club health will be described.

The first thing apparent to the author in conducting this research was how radically the nightclub scene in Glasgow had changed since he conducted the fieldwork for his PhD thesis in 1993-94. In short, a culture characterised by 'loved-up', dancing on ecstasy had been replaced by one of overt sexualised behaviour and violence under the influence of alcohol (although some of the observed venues were common to both the 1993-94 and 2006 research, only one had retained a non-violent 'rave' ethos – this was the one with by far the lowest levels of disorder in the current research). This change in club culture clearly presents new challenges for both nightlife management and substance use harm reduction.

In Scotland, and particularly in the city of Glasgow, in light of the burgeoning night-time economy and perceived problem of 'binge drinking', many initiatives have been introduced with the aim of creating safer clubbing. These have included polices encouraging the training of bar staff (see Forsyth et al, 2005), security staff, the creation of night zones (with taxi marshals) to improve transport links, CCTV, the

banning of 'happy hours' (and other 'irresponsible' drinks marketing), social marketing to discourage immoderate consumption and the establishment of a night-radio network. One such policy in Glasgow was the introduction of a bye-law to remove glassware from all venues in the city holding an entertainment (3.00 AM) license, mainly nightclubs.

The glassware policy aimed at the phased elimination of glass, other than toughened or tempered glass, with an objective of achieving 80% plastic or aluminium during 2006. The sole exception to this policy was made for champagne/wine glasses, for which individual premises could apply for an exemption. However concerns have been raised that toughened glass (or other special glass) is also dangerous and that a one hundred percent plastic policy would have been more effective. Such concerns were borne out during this observational research. Not only did fieldworkers witness serious acts of violence involving apparently toughened glassware, but they also witnessed aggressive incidents involving plastic vessels which would have had much more serious consequences had glass still been present. Indeed they stated that they themselves felt safer observing in all plastic environments, regardless of the number of fights etc. they witnessed. This finding was corroborated by the interviews with nightclub patrons. Indeed these patrons were unanimous in their approval of the switch to plastic, particularly younger patrons (who may be less accustomed to glass and) who seemed oblivious to the controversy surrounding this policy.

The nightclub patrons interviewed were also very positive about the smoking ban, which was introduced exactly halfway through field-observations, regardless of whether or not they were smokers themselves. This would appear to chime with field observations which indicated an almost one hundred percent compliance with the ban. This level of compliance is noteworthy as, unlike say pubs or restaurants, patrons who have paid to enter a nightclub cannot simply leave for a few minutes to smoke and then re-enter. Three of the eight nightclubs observed had solved this problem by creating outdoor smoking areas, however in the other five this was not physically possible and their patrons had to smoke on the street. This created considerable management problems for these nightclubs' operators, which was resolved with hand-stamping or wristband pass-out systems. However this had a negative impact on disorder control as many security staff, especially the limited number of female security staff, were now tied up with door searches for the whole night.

In summary the example of Glasgow would appear to illustrate the future of safer clubbing, towards the creation of smoke-free and glass-free environments.

Footnote

The benefits of glass-free clubbing were borne out at the Club Health 2006 social event held in a Portoroz nightclub (22nd September), when a group of delegates accidentally dropped an entire tray of drinks (the second such incident of the evening). As the event had been advertised as a beach party, many delegates were wearing flip-flops which were damaged by the broken glass on the dancefloor (though on this occasion no injuries were observed).

References

Forsyth AJM (forthcoming) "Assessing the relationships between late-night drinks marketing and alcohol-related disorder in public space" funded by Alcohol Education Research Council (AERC). *Alcohol Insights*:
<http://www.aerc.org.uk/publicationsInsights.htm>

Forsyth, AJM, Cloonan, M & Barr J. (2005) *Factors associated with alcohol-related problems within licensed premises*. A Report to the Greater Glasgow NHS Board:
http://www.nhsgg.org.uk/content/assetList.asp?aType=15&aSType=184&page=s16_2

Forsyth, AJM (1997) *A Quantitative Exploration of Dance Drug Use: The new pattern of drug use in the 1990s*. (University of Glasgow, Department of Sociology, PhD thesis).

The impact of contemporaneously banning smoking and glassware from nightclubs in Glasgow (Scotland)

Dr Alasdair Forsyth,
Glasgow Centre for the Study of Violence,
Glasgow Caledonian University

Background: Glass

- On the 2nd February 2006 the City of Glasgow introduced a bye-law banning glassware (other than toughened or tempered glass) from all venues holding an entertainment license within the city centre, with the aim of achieving 80% plastic or aluminium by the end of the year (exemptions for wine & champagne).
- In June this was extended outwith the city centre, though a plan to extend this measure to all licensed premises (e.g. pubs and restaurants) has been successfully challenged by the licensed trade industry.

Background: Smoke

- At 6.00 AM on Sunday 27th March 2006 the Scottish Parliament banned smoking from all public places across the nation (originally the plan was to introduce this measure at midnight on Saturday the 26th, though this was changed because of the obvious impact that this would have on nightclubs at that time).
- This measure had greater implications for nightclubs' management than was the case for other sectors of the licensed trade industry, as patrons would not simply be able to 'nip outside for a smoke'.

Background Research

- The research presented today was funded by the Alcohol Education Research Council (AERC) in a project entitled: *Assessing the relationships between late night drinks marketing and alcohol related disorder in public space*. This was timed to coincide with the above policy changes
- The project is an observational study of alcohol-related violence, which builds upon a previous study, funded by the local health authority, examining alcohol-related disorder in Glasgow's pub sector.

Methods

- **Observations in 8 nightclubs**

- 2 teams (one male, one female member in each)
- Midnight, Fridays & Saturdays, till 3.00 AM
- Both teams observe each club twice
(once pre and once post smoking ban)
- Total of 32 nights (>100 hours)

- **Interviews with night club patrons**

Selection Procedure

- Premises holding an entertainment license (over 70 such venues in Glasgow)
- Venues offering mainstream regular dance nights (i.e. no niche clubs, non-dance clubs, private members clubs or venues with ticketed promotions)
- The premises represent a wide range of levels of recorded crime and incidents of disorder (as known to Strathclyde Police)
- Nightclubs located in one of two clusters associated with street crime within the city centre

The 8 nightclubs selected

	Crimes + Incidents of disorder (2005)	Location	Ownership
Xanadu	195	Cluster 2	Independent
Armageddon	152	Cluster 1	National chain
Rapture	112	Cluster 2	Independent
Tropicana	107	Cluster 2	National chain
Chocolate	94	Cluster 1	Local chain
Idols	81	Cluster 1	Local chain
Sinatra's	76	Cluster 2	National chain
Saturn	6	Cluster 1	Independent

Observational Procedure

- **Observer teams used 2 internationally validated risk assessment instruments (Graham, 2000) [amended for Scotland]:**
 - Form 1: Drinking Environments
 - Form 2: Disorderly Incidents (including 'street' incidents)
- **Field-notes were also made concerning both the nightclubs themselves and the streets outside.**

Nightclub Styles

Xanadu	Happy Hardcore / R & B (<i>Pussycat Dolls, Kanye West</i>)
Armageddon	Happy Hardcore (<i>DJ mixes e.g. Westlife or Bros, Pussycat Dolls</i>)
Rapture	R & B (down) & Rock (upstairs) (<i>Kanye West, Usher, Proclaimers</i>)
Tropicana	Cheesy Classics / Live PA (<i>Dolly Parton, Pussycat Dolls</i>)
Chocolate	R & B (<i>Pussycat Dolls, Kanye West, Usher</i>)
Idols	R & B (<i>Kanye West, Nelly, Snoop Dog</i>)
Sinatra's	Cheesy Classics / R & B (<i>Kanye West, Dolly Parton, Queen</i>)
Saturn	Rave / Ambient (<i>unknown artists</i>)

Nightclub Clientele

	<i>n</i> of Patrons	% Female	Age % U-18	Age % 30+	Middle Class	% Non-white
Xanadu	241	58.5	33.8 **	5.0	18.8	4.9
Armageddon	246	50.6	46.9 ***	4.4	17.7 **	1.9 *
Rapture	251	52.5	8.6	4.4 *	43.8	47.4 ***
Tropicana	252	60.6	4.6	34.8 ***	25.0	1.8 *
Chocolate	197	57.6	11.3	11.9	50.0	35.6 ***
Idols	258	60.6	12.5	7.5	50.0	22.1
Sinatra's	248	58.8	1.9 *	35.6 ***	12.5 *	1.1 *
Saturn	154 ***	45.0 **	0 **	16.3	68.7 **	6.8
ALL	231	55.5	14.9	15.1	34.4	15.2

* $p > 0.05$, ** $p > 0.01$, *** $p > 0.001$

Nightclub Behaviours

	% Drunk	% on Drugs	% Eating Nothing	% Smoking Before/After ban		Violent Incidents (rated severe)
Xanadu	78.5 *	28.1	99.9	12.0	15.4	8 (1)
Armageddon	78.1 ***	41.3 *	97.5	20.8	15.0	11 (0)
Rapture	58.1	4.4	99.4	18.1	14.3	0 (-)
Tropicana	57.5	0.3 *	100.0 *	11.3	4.0	4/5 (0)
Chocolate	63.1	2.9	100.0 *	16.9	12.5	2 (0)
Idols	68.8	8.1 *	100.0 *	10.6	27.5	5 (2)
Sinatra's	69.4	5.6	97.1 *	15.9	15.6	4 (2)
Saturn	38.8 ***	50.0 ***	100.0 *	23.1	17.4	0 (-)
ALL	64.0	17.8	99.2	16.1	15.8	

* $p > 0.05$, ** $p > 0.01$, *** $p > 0.001$

Glassware ban: Observations

Ordinary Glass (OG), Special Glass (SG) and Plastic (P)

	Vodka			Lager			Alcopops			Total		
	OG	SG	P	OG	SG	P	OG	SG	P	OG	SG	P
Xanadu	0	0	7	0	0	7	0	0	8	0	0	22
Armageddon	0	0	8	0	0	7	0	0	8	0	0	22
Rapture	0	0	8	0	0	7	0	0	6	0	0	21
Tropicana	2	6	0	2	6	0	0	1	2	4	13	2
Chocolate	0	0	8	0	0	8	0	0	4	0	0	20
Idols	0	0	8	0	0	8	0	0	6	0	0	22
Sinatra's	2	5	1	6	2	0	0	0	7	8	7	7
Saturn *	3	5	0	2	2	0	-	-	-	5	7	0
ANY	7	16	40	10	10	37	0	1	41	17	27	116

* Saturn did not sell alcopops and served lager in aluminium cans by 3rd and 4th visits

Glassware ban: Field-note I

(first visit)

- “Think it was toughened glass as they were all pouring lager from bottles into glasses. There was still big glass ashtrays out though.”
(‘Tropicana’, Jemma)

Glassware ban: Field-note II

(second visit)

- “I ordered a vodka and Andy got a bottle of Budweiser. My glass didn’t look like toughened glass and the barman poured Andy’s bottle of Bud into the same type of glass. I asked the barman why he poured the bottle into the glass. He said it was due to Glasgow bye-laws. I asked if the glasses were a special type of glass and he said no. I wanted to be sure so I said “I know you can get special toughened glass, is this not it?”. He said no and it was pointless and stupid putting the contents of the bottles into glasses and was a pain in the arse for bar staff. So there you go, ‘Tropicana’ in glass ban shocker.” (‘Tropicana’, Jemma)

Glassware ban: Incident 1

- “DJ said something over the microphone to the effect “fight in front of the DJ box”... [We] Went round to the back of the DJ box and found S1, S2 and S3 [stewards] tending to P1 [male] who was bleeding badly from his neck/shoulder area... When Andy and I walked back to O1 we saw lots of broken glass on the floor. It might have been toughened glass as it seemed to be broken into little squares but might just been smashed down by people walking on it. I’ve never seen toughened glass before so I couldn’t say for sure.” (#8, ‘Sinatra’s’, Jemma)

Glassware ban: Incident 2

(minutes after Incident 1)

- “Then two males (P1 and P2) started fighting at table next to us. P1 lunged over at P2 and the two began brawling on to the floor in front of us. Both were tumbling about trying to get each other in headlocks and swinging punches. Both were red in the face and their faces were contorted in anger. They were like this for a good couple of minutes with no intervention from stewards despite patrons chanting “fight fight fight”. Then P2 threw a glass at P1 which missed P1 and hit the wall showering the people sitting there with glass...” (#9, ‘Sinatra’s’, Jemma)

Glassware ban: Incident 2

(continued)

- "...I didn't see any scarrings on P1 as he was taken past me and Jemma to the fire exit. However a guy who had been sitting near the incident had blood on his shirt. Don't know how badly P1 was injured or if anyone had been hurt by the shattered glass from the glass hitting the wall." (#9, 'Sinatra's', Andy)

Glassware ban: Incident 3

- As I saw it P1 [male in leather jacket] was punching P2 [male with ponytail] really hard. P2 was punching back and about three of his friends were attempting to fight back with punches. P1 even picked up a plastic bottle (by chance it was the new Vodka Ctrl bottle) and was hitting out with it. After two calls from the DJ that a fight was occurring S1 ran behind P2 and his friends holding them back with his arms around them." (#30, 'Xanadu', Andy)

Observers' Disorder Risk Field-note

- “Even though there was more trouble in ‘Armageddon’, I felt safer there in comparison [to ‘Sinatra’s] because; A: it was minor scuffles not glassings, B: you couldn’t look around Armageddon without seeing a security staff member monitoring various parts of the club, C: the security staff looked a lot more organised and not fannying about collecting glasses, which ironically was the very thing causing extreme violence in ‘Sinatra’s” (‘Sinatra’s’, Andy)

Patron's Views on Glass ban I

- “I know when we’re out drinking it’s always like there’s a cheap kind of [feeling] about it, the clubs are so cheap they don’t buy glass, but I guess it’s a good safety thing. Kind of like as a foreigner sometimes you think oh what kind of a city am I in, I mean the thought has crossed my mind, I don’t know how serious it was, but it’s just like, why is it plastic and not glass, does it have that much potential for [violence?]” (Male, Canadian exchange student)

Patron's Views on Glass ban II

- "...I did actually see one of my glass collectors getting glassed by a guy. ... They were arguing over the Rolling Stones these two guys. And the guy just picked up a glass to hit the other guy and hit the glass collector. " ... "That's somebody somewhere once saying glass is better and you're all believing that. " ... "It [glass] smashes and its so much harder to clean up. At least with plastics you just go along with a bin bag and plonk them all in, you know " (Male, Trainee nightclub manager)

Patron's Views on Glass ban III

- Aye, much better, I was recently in a club in Dundee actually, and like there was glass bottles all over the floor and smashing everywhere and I couldn't understand it. I was like why is there glass everywhere people. Do they not have plastic cups. And everyone's like, what are you talking about, but yeah, there was glass everywhere and it was horrible because I felt I couldn't dance because I was gonna stand on it and cut myself and everyone else around me was gonna do it as well. They weren't, they weren't noticing it either. (Female, Student / Waitress)

Smoking ban: Observations

	Pre-ban	Post-ban	<i>p</i>
<i>'Unhealthy Ambiance'</i>			
Smokiness (0-9)	5.1	4.3	0.062
Ventilation (0-9)	4.2	4.1	0.951
Noise (0-9)	6.0	6.0	1.000
Movement (0-9)	6.3	5.6	0.079
Crowdedness (0-9)	6.1	4.9	0.003
<i>'Dirtiness'</i>			
Bar wiping (0-9)	3.9	4.1	0.693
Table clearing (0-9)	4.7	4.4	0.477
Spillage (0-9)	5.3	5.0	0.575
Toilet order (0-9)	3.2	3.1	0.886
Numbers attending	252	210	0.013
Aggressive Incidents	22 (2 severe)	12/13 (3 severe)	

Smoking ban: Field-notes pre-ban I

The level of notice and information given to patrons about the likely impact of smoking ban varied greatly as the following field-notes illustrate:

- “No one really mentioned the smoking ban, there weren’t any signs up or announcements made. The tables all still had ashtrays on them and a lot of people were smoking.”
(‘Sinatra’s’, Tom – on the night of the ban, a night when unusually no aggressive incidents were witnessed)

Smoking ban: Field-notes pre-ban II

- “There were posters about the club informing patrons about the smoking ban and warning that patrons who smoked risked a fine as did the club. It stated that they intended to issue all patrons with a wristband so that they could leave to smoke outside the club entrance. It also stated due to the ban on drinking in public patrons should remember not to take their drinks outside with them. This was a notice made by ‘Saturn’ themselves rather than being provided by a company or the Scottish Executive. There was also a similar sign in the female toilets warning patrons about drink spiking and to avoid leaving drinks unattended or accepting drinks from strangers.” (‘Saturn’, Jemma – one week before ban)

Smoking ban: Field-notes post-ban I

Some clubs ($n = 3$) were fortunate enough to have back courts where designated smoking areas could be made, the rest had to devise pass-out systems allowing patrons to smoke on the street, as the following field-notes illustrate:

- About 40% were going out. Went to a wee decking style area with tables and ashtrays fenced off at back of club.” “...saw male smoking a joint in smoking area.” (‘Armageddon’ Jemma)

Smoking ban: Field-notes post-ban II

- “The pass out system here is a bit of a farce. You collect a wristband from the pay-in counter which allows you in and out the club. In theory this should work. Patrons enter club, pay, get wristband at same time and then come and go as they please. In reality, people pay and enter the club. After about an hour decide they want a cigarette so go back out to cash desk to collect a band and either barge into everyone still waiting to pay to get into the club in first place or have to queue up with people still to come in and then have to convince cash desk staff that they have already paid. Chaos ensues. Once you finally get your band and make it outside you are sent right across the road to mingle with beggars and parked cars. I guess this is so the club doesn't have to take responsibility for all the dropped fag ends. While outside I saw people from the club smoking who still had their drinks with them. On re-entering the club you have to undergo another search...” (‘Xanadu’, Jemma)

Patrons' Views on Smoking ban I

- “...it used to be really smoky and it just used to add to the effects, but now there's good things and bad things about it, erm, because I think the smoke before used to cover up smells but, like you never noticed before like people and er now it's away you smell a lot more different things, but like 'Legends' [a student orientated night-club] have covered that up because they've got [perfumes] and stuff now, so, but it's definitely good because the next day your clothes don't smell and your hair doesn't smell and stuff, and passive smoking. (Male, College student)

Patrons' Views on Smoking ban II

- “I’m not a smoker but I’ll go out to the little bit where they smoke. I just say to my friends I’m out for some fresh air but I just go out there anyway... maybe start chatting to some people or” [Interviewer – “But if your aim is to meet girls you don’t really want to be a smoker do you?”] “Aye that’s the problem when you’re in the club you don’t know who smokes and who doesn’t smoke sometimes.” (Male, Bar server)

Conclusions

Recent policy changes in Glasgow have made this a difficult time for nightclub operators, however:

- *The removal of all glassware from nightclubs is one measure which can bring clear public safety rewards*
- *Particular care needs to be applied in the application of smoking bans within the nightclub sector, although patrons were compliant and positive about this and how it had been managed*

Further Information

- Forsyth AJM (forthcoming) “Assessing the relationships between late-nights drinks marketing and alcohol-related disorder in public space” funded by Alcohol Education Research Council (AERC). *Alcohol Insights*:

<http://www.aerc.org.uk/publicationsInsights.htm>

- Forsyth, AJM, Cloonan, M & Barr J. (2005) *Factors associated with alcohol-related problems within licensed premises. A Report to the Greater Glasgow NHS Board*:

http://www.nhsgg.org.uk/content/assetList.asp?aType=15&aSType=184&page=s16_2