

# Roles of Alcohol in Intimate Partner Abuse

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## Executive summary

There is little available evidence relating to the measurement of alcohol use in IPV relationships (McMurrin & Gilchrist, 2008). This mixed-method, multi-phase project aimed to unpick some of the complicated roles that alcohol appears to have in intimate partner abuse. The study did not set out to focus on male to female abuse but the data available resulted in this being the focus.

The mixed-method design comprised three phases:

Phase 1 involved secondary data, incorporating statistical analysis of cases from Strathclyde Police's databases which provided details of almost a quarter of a million police call-outs to domestic incidents.

Phase 2 involved 80 quantitative interviews with three groups who were termed as follows; the 'convicted' (male prisoners - including both those convicted of domestic offence and general offenders'), the 'conflicted' (mainly female clients of agencies dealing with domestic issues – comprising those who might be considered as 'victims'/survivors of domestic problems), and the 'contented' (male community football players – envisaged to be experiencing general population levels of relationship conflict). All three groups received the same questionnaire pack which included three validated screening tools that assess alcohol and/or violence risk, specifically

The Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT),  
The Alcohol Related Aggression Questionnaire (ARAQ)  
The revised Conflict Tactics Inventory (CTS2) (Phase2); (Phase3).

Phase 3 involved semi-structured one-to-one digitally recorded qualitative interviews with a subset of the prisoner group who had completed the questionnaire pack from Phase2.

The police records phase indicated that most domestic call-outs involved alcohol use in some way (usually with the accused being recorded as 'under the influence'), with alcohol often being noted at more serious cases (those resulting in a crime being recorded, or physical violence).

In the questionnaire phase, screening tool scores indicated high levels of risky alcohol use, alcohol-related aggression, and partner conflict among prisoners. Partner conflict, but not alcohol use, was also high amongst the agency clients.

The qualitative interview phase indicated a high rate of problematic alcohol use in prisoners' family backgrounds, and conscious awareness of the effects of alcohol use in enabling violent behaviour and criminality. Also that participants considered alcohol to have a direct effect on their behaviour and did present alcohol as an exculpatory factor, sometimes. However multiple roles by which alcohol use may influence partner conflict were reported (not just intoxicated violence) including male entitlement to drink and alcohol spend harming limited family budgets.

There were clear indications that cultural, sub-cultural, familial and contextual influences on gender and alcohol use were intertwined, for example that when women were drinking they were held more accountable for any relationship conflict (victim blaming), whilst if men were drinking they were held to be less accountable (accused excusing).

We conclude that alcohol is a correlate of domestic abuse and thus does need to be addressed. The high levels of alcohol consumption in our convicted sample, and relationship conflict in our conflicted and convicted samples suggests that joint intervention might be appropriate for those experiencing relationship conflicts.

However the strong beliefs in a direct causal effect of alcohol, and strong culturally shaped and gendered beliefs about men and women's drinking also demands that alcohol is addressed not as an individual risk factor but in terms of alcohol expectancies, related beliefs and as a gendered issue.

## Introduction

There is a consistent link between violence and alcohol consumption. Alcohol was reported to be involved in just over 900,000 violent incidents in 2011/12, and has been noted in between 40 and 50% of all violent crimes in England and Wales, (IAS, 2013). Whilst official figures lack specific named offences of intimate partner violence (IPV), alcohol is linked at an even higher rate in offences of intimate partner violence (an estimated figure for Northern Ireland is 59% for domestic violent incidents and 54 % for non-domestic (IAS, 2013). Given that intimate partner abuse is seen to account for almost one quarter of all violent incidents (e.g. British Crime Survey: Home Office, 2002), it is likely that alcohol is implicated in up to 300,000 cases of alcohol-related intimate partner violent incidents per year.

## Background

Despite the numbers and the controversies surrounding the links between intimate partner violence and alcohol use, and potentially due to the dominance of one model to account for IPV which has tended to be linked with dismissing alcohol as an inappropriate excuse for behaviour that has to be explained at a different level (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Pence & Paymar, 1993), relatively little work has been conducted in the UK to measure the nature and extent of problem drinking among either perpetrators or victims of IPV (Finney, 2004; McMurren & Gilchrist, 2008).

The findings of recent international research investigating the relationship between alcohol and IPV have consistently shown similarities to those concerning alcohol and violence more generally. For example although (heavy episodic) drinking correlates to violence, the relationship cannot be said to be causal. As with other forms of violence there is better evidence that alcohol use by the assailant, victim or both, makes the extent and consequences of violence more severe (Graham et al 2011; Connor et al 2011) and that these events are influenced by drinking context (Zhan et al, 2011). Also that alcohol can be used in a systemic way to excuse aggression or provide mitigation in legal proceedings (Graham et al, 2011).

### *Nature of association*

There has been a prevalent view in the IPV field that alcohol is 'only an excuse', used as a post hoc explanation for IPV (McMurren & Gilchrist, 2008). However this argument is not a straightforward one between attributing blame, and attributing no blame, to alcohol. For example, as one leading Women's Aid campaigner noted.

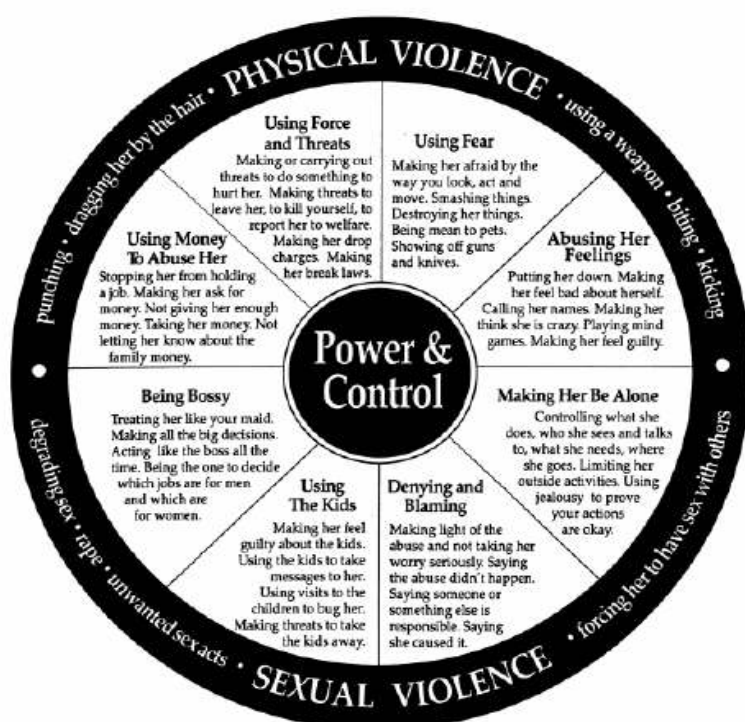
*"These old excuses keep getting trotted out... I would ask why it should be the case that if a man has a problem with anger, it is saved for when he is at home with his partner rather than dealt with by taking on a man his own size in the pub. Alcohol can certainly be a factor in domestic abuse, but it is actually the coercive control of every aspect of a person's life and we need to look at issues of sexual, financial and emotional control occurring day in, day out."* (quoted in Ross, 2008)

This is different in many ways from the way in which alcohol is linked to general violence in an explanatory manner, in which intoxication with subsequent impact on thinking skills, interpretation of social context and cues, and skill of response being accepted in relation to general violence. These direct effects are seen as less relevant in the context of the main theoretical explanations for IPV. This, plus the scale of IPV related incidents and the consistency of the co-occurrence of alcohol and IPV, demands a detailed exploration.

### *IPV theories and heterogeneity: Why the different approach?*

Over the past 30 years the difference between *general violence*, and *IPV*, has been emphasised. Explanations of general violence tend to make reference to factors like lack of control, and heightened anger, poor emotional regulation impulsivity (Novaco, 1994). Explanations of IPV have more often cited beliefs of entitlement within intimate relationships, or endorsement of rigid gender sex roles as relevant factors. IPV theorists have also highlighted the selectivity of the location and victims involved in IPV to emphasise the difference between the purposeful and calculated use of a range of abusive behaviours to maintain control of a partners (Pence & Paymar, 1993) and impulsive out of control anger fuelled violence implicated in general violence. The 'Power and Control Wheel' (Pence and Paymar 1991) (see below) identifies the range of abuses within this definition of IPV and emphasises the centrality of power and control.

Figure 1:1 Adapted version of the Duluth power and Control Wheel (Pence and Paymar, 1993)



\* Adapted from: Ellen Pence and Michael Paymar, Power and Control: Tactics of Men Who Batter, Minnesota Program Development, Inc. Duluth, 1986  
Adapted by: Status of Women Council of NWT, From Dark to Light: Regaining a Caring Community (1993)

More recent work by Evan Stark (2009) has highlighted the core role played by control in IPV, and expanded this to focus on *coercive control* within relationships as fundamental to understanding IPV. The focus on controlled use of aggressive tactics to achieve a goal has challenged the role of alcohol as a causal feature, and alcohol has been generally referred to as being either a correlate of IPV or an excuse better avoided.

However, the focus only on controlling aggression as the primary issue in IPV, has also been challenged, based on the identified gender symmetry in IPV based on general population research, but lack of symmetry in victim and offender based studies. This has led to a further stratification of the area and the development of sub-groupings seeking to reconcile these findings (Johnson, 1995; Johnson & Ferraro, 2000).

Johnson and Ferraro (2000) primarily separate out types of IPV where a control element is *present* (*coercive controlling violence, mutual violent control and violent resistance*) and relationship violence which is less controlling (*situational couple violence*). These two broad groups would vary by the intention behind the violence and the intentionality of the violence, with the first group being identified as being primarily more instrumental (purposive) than the situationally driven violence which is presented as being more expressive. The first group would tend to involve IPV where in most cases the man is the aggressor with different responses from the woman, whilst the situationally violent could have either men or women as perpetrator. Alcohol is seen as potentially having more of a role in the situationally driven, reactive and expressive violence than in the other more planned, purposive or responsive sub-types.

To further complicate the question as to the role of alcohol in IPV, there are further sub-groupings identified within the predominantly male perpetrated types of IPV (Gilchrist et al 2003, Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart 1994; Jacobson & Gottman et al, 1998). The male perpetrator typologies separate IPV by instrumental or expressive violence and along dimensions of generality of violence, severity of violence and psychopathology. Holtzworth-Munroe identified 3 groups: *family only* (FO) where lower level violence would only be directed at an intimate partner and there would be a lack of other problematic behaviours; *generally violent*, where violence might be perpetrated against family members and others accompanied by higher levels of criminality, interpersonal difficulties, problematic substance misuse and criminality; and *dysphoric/borderline* where the violence would occur primarily in intimate relationships but accompanied by other pathologies including sexual jealousy, substance misuse, and attachment issues.

In a UK study, Gilchrist et al (2003) found similar patterns of *anti-social/generally violent* and *emotionally volatile* offenders to Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart (1994), who varied on dimensions of target and generality of violence, nature of the violence (e.g. instrumental v expressive), and attachment style (e.g. dismissive v fearful), but with high levels of alcohol use in both groups. None of the convicted IPV offenders in that study fitted the FO label (Gilchrist et al, 2003). Other researchers have identified two 'batterer' groups, again varying on dimensions of



generality of violence and the meaning of the violence ('batterer' being the traditional controlling perpetrator, similar to Johnson and Ferraro's intimate terrorist). Jacobson and Gottman (1998) identified *Cobras*, whose abuse was linked to a desire for immediate gratification and whose heart rate dropped during violence and *Pit bulls*, whose abuse was linked to a fear of being left and whose heart rate raised during abuse but also a further lower level group 'low level violent couple' where intermittent poor conflict resolution might result in some minor violence, but who did not merit the label 'batterer'. *Cobras* have been described as being similar to the Holtzworth- Munroe and Stuart's (1994) generally violent group and *Pit bulls* as resembling the borderline/dysphoric group. The lower level violent couple would seem to resemble both the family only group of Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart (1994) and possibly also the situational couple group identified by Johnson and Ferraro (1998).

Taken together, research in this area does appear to identify one group of lower level use of violence in relationships where control may not be a primary driver, and two groups where control of an intimate partner does seem to be a driver, one driven to a great extent by antisocial attitudes and one more by relationship need and dependency. It is suggested that alcohol could serve different functions in these different types of IPV, moderating the impact of other factors, and could be used both to enhance tactics of control and to explain loss of control. It is suggested that alcohol could feature differently in situationally based violence but potentially acting as a mediating factor.

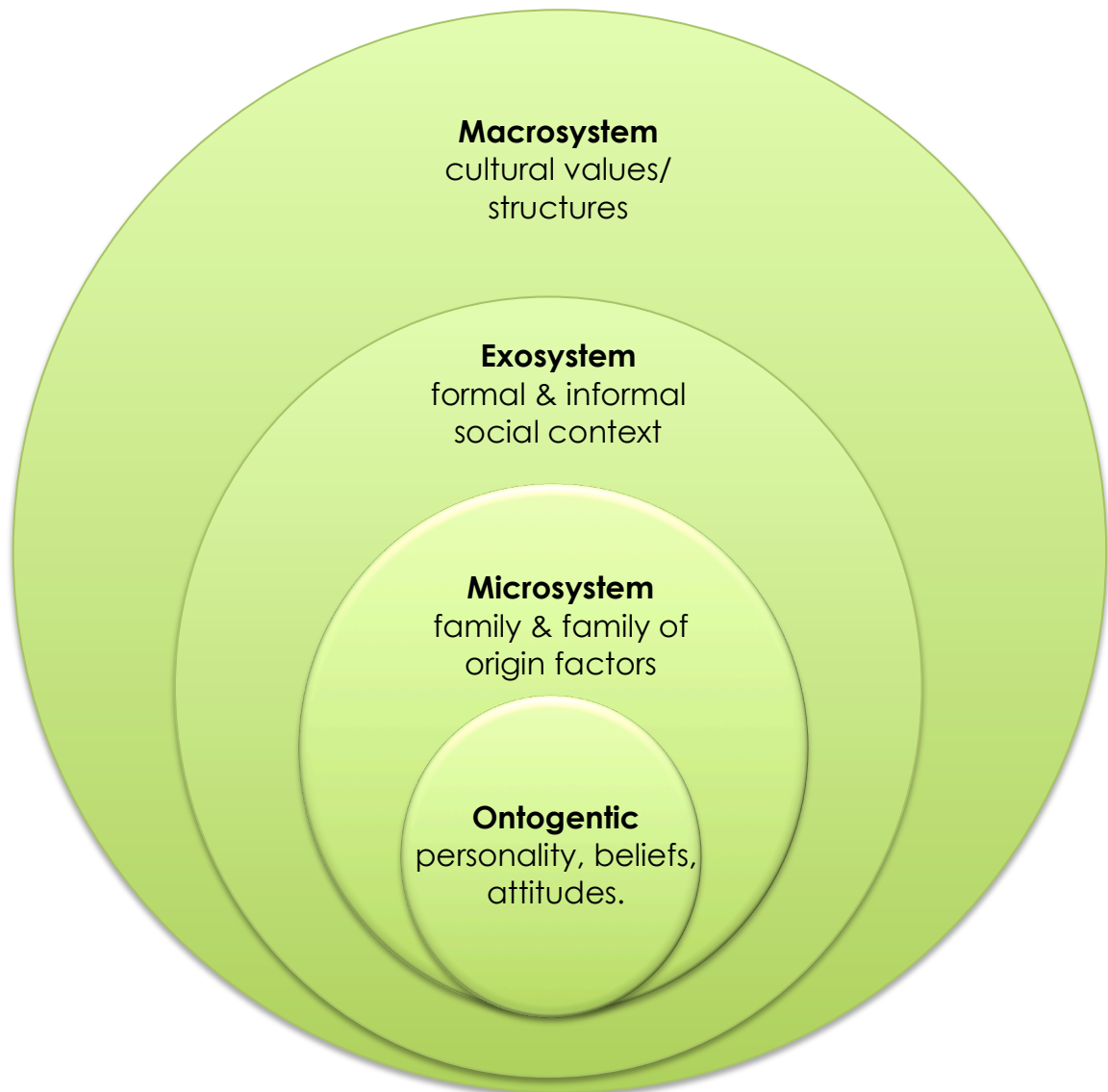
### *Multi-level factors associated with IPV*

In addition to identifying heterogeneity across IPV in terms of sub types, previous research has identified that multi-factor and multi-level explanations are required to explain IPV. For example, IPV is linked to a number of interacting factors, at various levels, from wide overarching cultural values and structures to sub-cultural values and norms, microsystem factors such as family dynamics and developmental experiences and individual factors including anger, hostility, impulsivity, personality, attitudes, values and drugs alcohol use. One of the most helpful ways of conceptualising this in the 'nested' ecological model' developed by Dutton (1995) (see simplified version of the model below).

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<sup>1</sup> This identifies 4 levels of influence macrosystem: overarching societal structures and values, exosystem: social structures such as work, peer groups, microsystem: family unit and the immediate context of interactions and the ontogenetic level: individual characteristics and internal factors

Figure 1:2 Pictorial representation of Dutton's (1995) Nested Ecological Model of IPV



Previous research has located alcohol use at the ontogenetic (individual/developmental)<sup>2</sup> level but interacting with factors at the three other levels (Stith, et al, 2004). It is suggested that a full exploration of the sub-groups of IPV behaviours and types of perpetrator, may identify use of alcohol as impacting on IPV at a number of levels via cultural beliefs, sub-cultural norms, family interactions as well as operating as an individual risk factor.

### *Conceptual models linking IPV and alcohol*

Previous research exploring the links between alcohol and IPV has certainly suggested that there are a variety of ways in which alcohol and IPV can be related. Klostermann and Fals-Stewart (2006) provide a helpful structure to understand the main theories and identify three conceptual models:

- 1) Alcohol and IPV co vary, but are related via a third variable the 'spurious' model
- 2) Alcohol has an indirect causal role in IPV, the 'indirect effects model' and
- 3) Alcohol has a direct causal role in IPV the 'proximal effects' model.

To expand, the 'spurious effects' model would suggest that alcohol use and IPV would be explained by a third variable, for example age: young men drink and young men are violent. Klostermann and Fals-Stewart (2006) suggest that the evidence for the 'spurious effects model is limited as when the variables that might be expected to account for both are partialled out, a relationship between alcohol and IPV remains.

In terms of the 'indirect effects model' Klostermann and Fals-Stewart (2006) suggest that alcohol use may create an environment which is conducive to IPV but not directly cause it. Low marital satisfaction and relationship conflict in the context of heavy drinking are proposed as examples of how alcohol could have an indirect effect on IPV. Again they report that if research which has partialled out these variables is considered, an alcohol/IPV relationship remains.

The third suggested link is that of a direct link between alcohol and IPV, the 'proximal effects model'. Klostermann and Fals-Stewart (2006) suggest that psychopharmacological effects, alcohol-related expectancies, impaired information processing and poorer interpretation of social cues might be considered for direct transmission of alcohol to IPV, but also state that for a causal link to be established there has to be a temporal link between alcohol use and IPV. Thus IPV should follow drinking. They suggest that there is evidence in a number of studies reporting a temporal link between alcohol use, and in some cases intoxication, and the occurrence of IPV. However there are also moderating factors.

Klostermann and Fals-Stewart (2006) identify the context of drinking, individual hostility and antisocial personality as being possible moderating variables. For example alcohol is linked with IPV only in hostile or maritally discordant couples. Alcohol use only links with IPV in lower level non-antisocial offenders, suggesting

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<sup>2</sup> Relating to the origin and development of an individual organism from embryo to adult (online thesaurus <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Ontogenetic> accessed 14<sup>th</sup> November 2014)

that high antisocial higher level violence offenders have no need of intoxication or emboldening in order to enact violence. They offer a 'multiple threshold model' to explain this variation identifying alcohol as being the mechanism of lowering the threshold at which a provocation will lead to IPV in non-antisocial men, but being unnecessary for high antisocial men.

For clarity, it is suggested that a number of the factors and relationships identified above might in fact be mediating factors rather than moderating factors. To explain, a moderating factor changes the strength of a relationship that would exist anyway and a mediating factor stands between one variable and another, and is the transmission mechanism. Alcohol might feature as either a moderator or a mediator for different variables and for different types of IPV. For example the relationship between hostility and IPV may be mediated by alcohol, such that without alcohol hostility may not translate into violence. Conversely, perhaps antisocial personality has a direct relationship with IPV but the relationship is moderated by alcohol such that violence by antisocial offenders is more severe when alcohol is present. The current research seeks to explore these issues with reference back to these models and concepts.

### *Linking alcohol with heterogeneity in IPV*

These initial links between alcohol and IPV are helpful but all have been proposed without full reference to the heterogeneity identified by recent work in IPV research. Given there are at least three types of IPV emerging from the literature: situational violence, controlling instrumental violence and controlling expressive violence, and the previous findings of a differential impact of alcohol for lower and higher level offenders, it follows that alcohol may well function differently across these groupings.

It is possible that some IPV, possibly situational couple violence, might occur as a direct consequence of alcohol consumption. Mirroring wider debates concerning drinking and aggression and victimisation (Wells et al, 2011; Quigley & Leonard, 2006; Tremblay et al 2007), alcohol use may either have a role to play in triggering an IPV event or in affecting the severity of its consequences.

Also there are several ways in which loss of control through alcohol use can be seen as affecting the perpetrators of controlling expressive IPV (Pit bulls), the first being a 'proximal effects' argument and the second being an 'indirect effects' argument. Thus both might apply to two of the types of IPV.

- Alcohol's pharmacological effects, such as disinhibition (i.e. failure to think through the consequences by acting on impulse while intoxicated) or alcohol-related expectations (alcohol makes me/people violent) may either release suppressed aggression or create a new conflict / IPV event.
- Alcohol use may indirectly lead to IPV through its consumption in certain contexts associated with aggression, including triggers such as aggressive drinking settings (e.g. football match-days, or during stressful family events e.g. the festive season)
- Both directly and indirectly by a combination of the above factors.

For controlling antisocial aggression (Cobras) it is proposed that alcohol may function differently. It is suggested that there are at least three separate ways in which alcohol can be used in a controlling way by the perpetrators of (instrumental) IPV, all of which appear to fit the 'indirect effects' model, the first two appearing to be more moderating variables (affecting the amount of violence, not the occurrence) but the third potentially acting as a mediator, affecting the transmission of the IPV

- Attributing IPV to alcohol use may make an event seem more acceptable to others (i.e. drinking is viewed as mitigation)
- Concurrent alcohol use may reduce personal attributions of responsibility (i.e. maintain the perpetrator's self-image and justification actions),
- Alcohol may be used as 'rational disinhibition' to embolden the perpetrator of IPV (i.e. 'Dutch courage')

Further to the above, the IPV victim's alcohol-using behaviour may also be used to justify the perpetrator's action by making them appear a more deserving victim (e.g. via 'dehumanisation', projection of blame or as provocation in mitigation) or indeed by presenting the perpetrator as the powerless partner in a relationship where the conflict is driven by her problems.

Klostermann and Fals-Stewart (2006) identify that intoxication in perpetrators has been found to increase blame assigned, decrease blame assigned and have no effect but generally to be associated with greater response by criminal justice officials, which they interpret as debunking the 'alcohol as an excuse for IPV' myth. However they also report that victim drinking or intoxication is found to increase the blame apportioned to her (Klostermann-Fals Stewart, 2006). Recent research in the USA (Baldwin, 2014) has found that alcohol use/intoxication serves to reduce blame attributed to perpetrators of date rape and to increase the blame attributed to victims of date rape: an interesting differential interpretation of the impact of alcohol use on responsibility by gender which appears also to apply in IPV.

It is unclear where this explanation might fit the different models: 'spurious effects' (e.g. both occur due to hypermasculinity), 'indirect effect' (his judgement of her drinking causes conflict and this leads to IPV) and 'proximal effect' (her drinking triggers an IPV episode) as all could apply<sup>3</sup>. Additionally, some victims may use alcohol as a coping mechanism for IPV-related stress (as may some perpetrators) with all the obvious extra risks that using alcohol in this way entails, both in relation to future IPV and other health, welfare consequences (e.g. likelihood of receiving help, types of agency intervention involved) or socio-economic harms (e.g. an increase in spend, or the price, of alcohol may intensify poverty in such drinkers families, stressors which of themselves may be an underlying or aggravating factor in the nature of IPV), fitting a 'spurious effect model' but with implications for risk management and intervention.

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<sup>3</sup> Gendered language is used here as the majority of research focuses on male perpetrated IPV. As stated earlier our study did not set out to focus only on male to female IPV, but the data collected shaped the focus of the study to this phenomenon.

## *The Context of Alcohol-related IPV: football*

A further factor which may link alcohol and IPV is the context of the incidents. There is a phenomenon which in the US has been termed the 'Super Bowl effect' (e.g. Gantz et al, 2006), whereby it is noted that IPV incidents occur with greater frequency when co-occurring with high profile sporting fixtures. Given that there is no clear relationship between winning and losing and increased rates of IPV, there are a number of explanations put forward. Card and Dahl (2011) suggest that close games, or games where the outcome is as predicted have little impact on IPV, but identify 'upset losses' as having a significant effect and 'upset wins' as having some effect. Factors such as frustration associated with losing, or euphoria or a desire to emulate domination associated with winning (triumphalism) have been presented as potential mechanisms for the noted impact (Wiehe, 1998). The success or failure of a team appears to have a differential effect depending on how the individual conceptualises their sport supporter identity - however, with those named as high-identifiers', for whom their sporting related identity is important and who align particularly strongly with a particular team, experiencing the greatest emotional response (Mental Health Foundation, 2014).

In Glasgow, the occurrence of domestic violence has been linked to a controversial local football derby (Dickson, 2012; Jack, 2011; Williams et al 2003). There is good evidence that loyalties to the football clubs concerned (Celtic and Rangers) are divided along religious sectarian and national identity lines, thus highly salient features of self-identity (Bradley, 1995; Crawford, 2001; Hughes, 2007). Glasgow is a city which in UK terms displays greatly elevated levels of alcohol (and other substance use) problems and violence (McCartney et al, 2011; NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde, 2011; Walsh, 2010). The direct impact of observing sport is hypothesised to be exacerbated by, amongst other factors, alcohol use in this culture and specifically on match-day. Previous research has been unable so far to fully explore the links and, whilst identifying masculinity and alcohol consumption as potentially important features, call for mixed-methods research in order to further explore this area (Williams et al, 2013).

## *Summary*

There is clearly a gap in our knowledge as to the extent of alcohol consumption amongst the UK's IPV population (Finney, 2004; McMurrin & Gilchrist, 2008). There is an assumption that there is a great deal of overlap between the two, however the nature of this link is anecdotal or at best based on either self-reports from victims and perpetrators (which may be unreliable) or correlational evidence from police reports or surveys (Foran & O'Leary, 2008). The use of a hazardous drinking screening tool such as AUDIT in this population would, in the first instance, provide more objective evidence of this linkage, as would collecting data on standardised tools that explores level of conflict and alcohol-related beliefs. The application of mixed-methods data collection and analysis, particularly using data from the West of Scotland, will allow a thorough exploration of the many roles of alcohol in IPV incidents and an exploration of individual, social and cultural factors identified as important by the individuals involved in such incidents.

## Aims and objectives

This study seeks to tease out the various potential relationships between alcohol and IPV, across the types of IPV and across different levels of conflict and abuse exploring those in abusive relationships, those in conflictual relationships and those in harmonious relationships, aiming to increase our theoretical understanding of the links generally, to consider the issue as to whether alcohol may serve different functions by sub-types of IPV and from this to develop a better understanding of the implications for interventions for IPV.

The objective of this research was to quantify and qualify experiences of the roles of alcohol in relationship conflict and domestic abuse in a UK context. The research aimed to provide deeper understanding of any links between alcohol use and relationship conflict/domestic abuse. A key driver of the research was to explore the differential roles of alcohol in domestic abuse linked to alcohol expectancies and social context.

## Research Approach

A recent review of alcohol-focussed IPV interventions concluded:

*“Mixed methodology research is needed to better understand the relationship between alcohol related IPV and drinking location ... including the extent to which this association is affected by cultural, social and individual factors not just availability” (Wilson et al, 2014)*

This research adopted a mixed-methods approach, to investigate the roles of alcohol in intimate partner violence, with the particular focus being on cultural, social and individual factors. Firstly (Phase1) examined a large secondary quantitative data set, consisting of information on the circumstances of nearly a quarter of a million police-call outs to domestic incidents. Secondly (Phase2) validated research instruments (measuring hazardous drinking, alcohol-related aggression, and IPV) were employed to generate a small sample of primary quantitative data (n=80) which included both known IPV offenders and a variety of controls. Thirdly (Phase3) qualitative interviews were conducted with known IPV offenders and their fellow prisoners who were not known IPV offenders (n=21).

## Participant Groups

One aim of the research was to explore the roles of alcohol in IPV events. Thus in Phase1 we used data of IPV incidents to get an overview of any link between alcohol and IPV. This phase used data related to incidents not participants.

A main aim of the research was to collect data from individuals who had experienced different levels of conflict within their relationships. We sought to do this by recruiting three different groups. Previous UK research (Gilchrist et al, 2003) has suggested that the ‘family only’ group of IPV offenders identified in the USA may not appear in our offender population (Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994), with



the implication that UK research focussing only on convicted offenders may miss an important group, who may perhaps develop into convicted offenders, or who may perpetrate lower levels of abuse, or display less criminality, and so not come to the attention of the authorities yet be of great import when seeking to understand causal pathways and different risk factors, including possibly alcohol, for different types and levels of IPV. Additionally, given our interest in cultural norms and the need for comparison groups, we also aimed to collect data from a group for whom there were no indicators of either problematic relationships or drinking. Thus in Phase 2 and Phase 3 we collected data from 3 groups: 'convicted', 'conflicted' and 'contented'.

For the convicted sample we were looking to recruit individuals who are generally studied as domestic violence offenders: those who have been prosecuted for violence in their relationship / a domestic setting. For the conflicted group we were seeking to recruit the lower level abusers/victims or those from groups where criminal prosecution may not follow abuse (e.g. those from higher socio-economic groups) or with access to different resources, i.e. civil remedies rather than the police, or voluntary counselling rather than mandated intervention, to address their situation. For the contented group, we wanted to access a general population sample to allow exploration of cultural values and beliefs and behavioural patterns for comparative purposes.

The conflicted group were participants recruited from couple counselling and victim support services, where they had accessed services linked to problematic relationships or alcohol use but where they had not been convicted of any violent offence.

The 'contented' group were participants who were recruited via sports clubs (football in particular) where there was no indication of problematic relationship or alcohol use, and no indication of need for support or intervention, and who could be most closely equated to a general population sample, albeit skewed by their interest in sport.

### *Ethics*

All aspects of the research were submitted for formal consideration to GCU PSWAHS ethics committee and approved. The research was conducted in adherence with the BPS ethical standards (BPS, 2009). The main ethical issues raised by this research were ensuring informed consent, the need to limit confidentiality in case of issues of risk and minimising risk of harm or distress to any participant. These issues were dealt with by working closely with partner groups, the police, victim support and advocacy services and prison staff to ensure that we addressed all issues that could be predicted and that we provided clear and accessible information to participants prior to the research, we collected the data appropriately, and that where there were issues of having to limit confidentiality (e.g. in prison where disclosure of previously unknown offending would require action) that this was clearly understood by participants. All participants were signposted to appropriate support services at the end of the study and provided with routes to withdraw data if desired (see Appendix 2).



## Research Questions

We sought to address a number of questions using the three phases to access different types of data. The first three questions were primarily related to the quantitative phases and the last two to the qualitative phase.

1. Is alcohol associated with IPV incidents as recorded by the police?
2. Do fluctuations in numbers of IPV incidents, and in particular alcohol-related IPV incidents, appear to link with significant social events (particularly culturally significant football matches)?
3. Do convicted, conflicted and contented participants differ by reported alcohol use, level of relationship conflict or alcohol-related expectancies?
4. How do participants construct the relationship between alcohol and IPV?
5. What support is there for the previously proposed theoretical links between alcohol and IPV: spurious link, direct effects, indirect effect? Alcohol as a mediator or alcohol as a moderator?

## Police database Phase (1): Patterns of alcohol-related incidents

Before collecting primary data from the perpetrators of intimate partner violence, this chapter sets out to quantify the extent and nature of known domestic offences by using a large secondary data set of call-outs to such incidents recorded by, and obtained from, a major UK police force.

### Methods & analysis

An anonymous data set containing information on 220,847 cases from police call-outs to reported domestic offences was obtained from the then Strathclyde Police's vulnerable persons database. That is information concerning the circumstances (including alcohol status) of over 200,000 domestic incidents (call-out cases, not individual persons), as logged by the police, was made available for the purposes of this project.

This was done prior to Strathclyde becoming part of a new unitary national Scottish police force, called Police Scotland, which was formed on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013. Strathclyde's area was centred on the City of Glasgow and covered an area with a population of approximately 2.3 million persons. The extracted database comprised information recorded by the police concerning the circumstances of all domestic call-outs logged over the period from the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2004 to the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2012.

Although the final year of the database did not encompass the whole of the 2012 calendar, it was useful to include this partial year because it covered the whole of the football season 2011-2012, which was the last to include the 'auld firm' football fixture between Glasgow Rangers and Celtic, which had been controversially associated with domestic violence in Scotland (see Introduction). This fixture effectively ended during June 2012 when Glasgow Rangers went into liquidation (since replaced by a new Rangers football club playing in Scotland's lower divisions at the time of this research).

These police data were extracted as a Microsoft Office Excel file, and were placed on an encrypted password protected portable drive, which was kept at a secure place at the university. This data set was then converted to, and analysed in, IBM SPSS@statistics version 19.0.0 format. Note that the terminology used throughout this chapter reflects that recorded within the police's database, and does not imply any sociological, psychological or criminological usage of terms such as 'gender', 'victim' or 'accused'.

### Results

#### *Place of incidents*

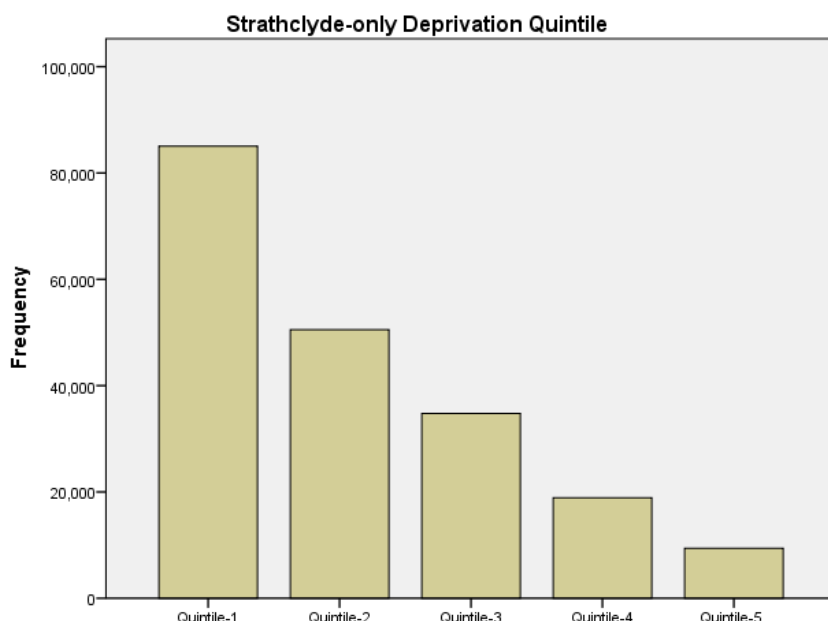
The Strathclyde Police domestic incidents data were then compared against the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2012 (SIMD2012) database. The SIMD2012 is calculated from seven domains; "income", "employment", "health", "education", "geographic access", "crime" and "housing". From these domains, an overall total

deprivation score is calculated for each of 6,505 geographical areas called Data Zones which together cover the whole of Scotland. These Data Zones are then each allocated to a deprivation quintile, with Quintile-1 being the most deprived 5<sup>th</sup> of Scotland, and Quintile-5 the least deprived. However, because the police data set covered only part of Scotland (and Strathclyde contained a disproportionately large overrepresentation of the most deprived Quintile-1 areas) new quintiles for the former Strathclyde area only were employed in our analyses. That is, for the purposes of this research, we calculated new deprivation quintiles based only on SIMD2012 data from the 12 local authority areas which had made up the Strathclyde Police region (i.e. Quintiles-1 to 5, constructed to cover the combined area of local authorities called; Argyll & Bute, City of Glasgow, East Ayrshire, East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, South Ayrshire, South Lanarkshire and West Dunbartonshire only) .

When these two data sets were combined, a relationship between domestic incidents known to the police and deprivation (in the Strathclyde region) was found. Ninety per cent (n=198,665) of the police's domestic incidents had a full post-code address available, which could then be allocated an SIMD2012 score. By using the total SIMD2012 score for the location of each call-out, each case (domestic incident) in the police data set could be allocated to a Strathclyde-only deprivation quintile. From this procedure, it was found that 85,040 (42.8%) domestic call-outs were made to an address in Quintile-1 areas (i.e. the most deprived 5<sup>th</sup> of the region). The figures for the other Strathclyde-only quintiles were respectively; call-outs to addresses in Quintile-2 (the 2<sup>nd</sup> most deprived areas) 50,542 (25.4%), to addresses in Quintile-3 34,777 (17.5%), to Quintile-4 18,899 (9.5%) and to Quintile-5 (i.e. the least-deprived 5<sup>th</sup> of the Strathclyde region) only 9,407 (4.7%). Thus call-outs to domestic incidents (i.e. those known to the authorities) were skewed towards the most deprived communities, with nine times as many incidents being recorded in the most deprived quintile as compared to the least deprived quintile. This pattern is illustrated graphically by the bar chart in Figure 3:1.

As might be expected, most police call-outs to a domestic incident were made to a dwelling house setting. Of the 220,847 incidents in the police data set, 192,280 (87.1%) were to a house (i.e. to a domestic setting), compared to only 24,293 (11.0%) incidents which were to a 'Public Place', with a further 4,274 being logged as being to 'Unknown or Other' setting. Of the call-outs made to a 'Dwelling House', around half (98,227, 51.1%) were logged as to the 'Victim's Home', compared to around one-third (66,774, 34.7%) to a 'Joint Home', with the remainder (27,297, 12.4%) logged as to the 'Accused / Other Home'.

Figure 3:1 Police call-outs to domestic incidents by area deprivation

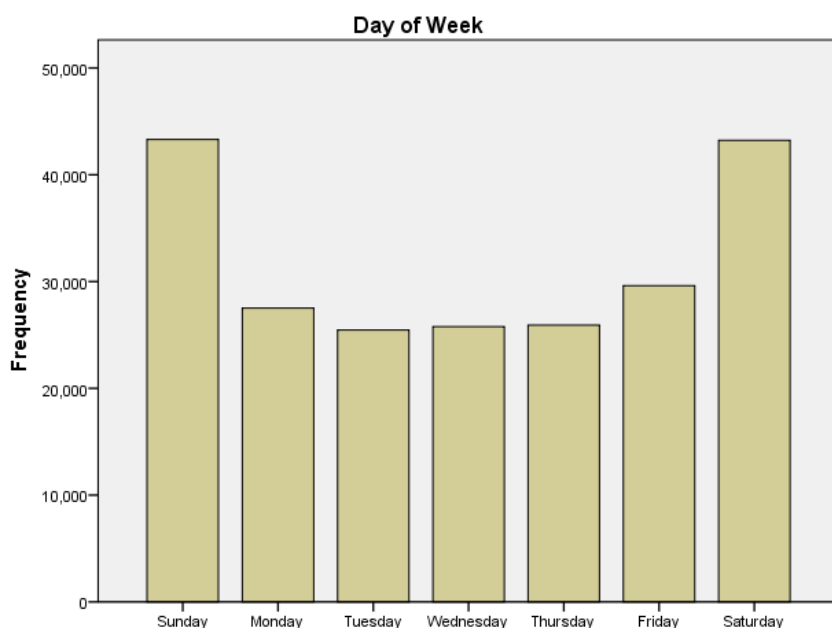


Of the domestic incident call-outs to settings other than someone's house (i.e. to non-domestic settings), 20,070 were recorded as to the 'Street / Public Place', 2,669 to a 'Shop / Business Premises' and only 1,554 to a 'Licensed Premises / Public House', with the remaining 4,274 being logged as to 'Other / Unknown' settings. The figure for domestic incident call-outs to alcohol licensed premises (n=1,554) is of particular interest to this projects, given that this represents only 0.7% of this police data set (i.e. according to the police, domestic incidents are relatively unlikely to take place in pubs and clubs, despite these being known 'hot-spots' for other forms of alcohol-related crime and disorder).

### Time of incident

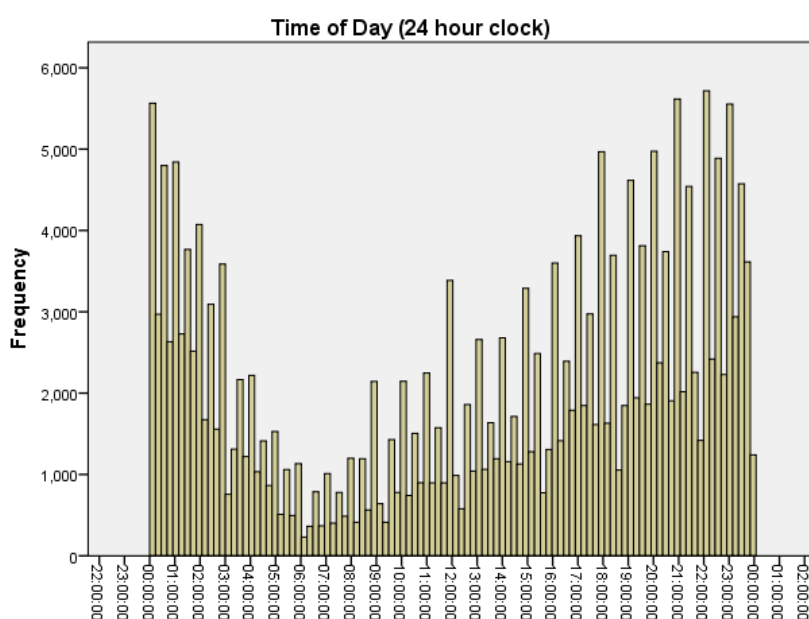
When the time police call-outs were made was examined it was found to vary by both day of the week and hour of the day. Firstly, proportionally more call-outs were recorded during the weekend than on weekdays, with 86,528 incidents occurring on a Saturday or Sunday (mean = 43,264/day) and 134,287 on the five weekdays combined (mean = 26,857/day). Thus the peak days for domestic incidents would seem to co-occur on days when alcohol consumption is greater (i.e. at the weekend). This distinction is shown by the bar chart in Figure 3:2.

Figure 3:2 Police call-outs to domestic incidents by day of week



Day of the week is a rather blunt measure (for both recorded crime and alcohol behaviour), and its limitations are revealed when the data concerning the time of day for each incident in the police call-out data was examined. Logged continuously across the 24-hour period, call-outs to domestic incidents peaked either side of midnight, and were least frequent just after 6am in the morning. In common with the days of the week, the hours of the day when domestic incidents were taking place would appear to be coincident with times of higher alcohol consumption and intoxicated behaviours (i.e. at night). This cycle of domestic call-out times is illustrated by the histogram in Figure 3:3.

Figure 3:3 Police call-outs to domestic incidents by time of day



### *Incident characteristics*

In almost three quarters of domestic call-outs the incident was logged as having been reported to the police by the 'Victim' (n=164,099, 74.3%: this percentage excludes 32 cases where who made the report is not known). Others who reported domestic incidents comprised; the 'Accused' (6,395, 2.9%), a 'Witness' (14,703, 6.7%), a 'Family [member], Friend and [i.e. or] Neighbour' (23,851, 10.8%), an 'Agency' (3,247, 1.5%) and 'Other (including the Police)' (n=8,520, 3.9%).

In a large majority of cases the 'Victim' was female (n=182,156, 83.1%: this percentage excludes 1,742 cases, comprising 0.9% of the total, where it the victim's gender was logged as 'Other / Not Known' n=1,034, plus cases logged as 'No Victim', n=708). Conversely, a similar sized large majority of the 'Accused' persons in these domestic incidents were male (n=181,411, 83.2%: this percentage excludes 2,806 cases, 0.9% of the total, where the accused's gender was logged as 'Other / Not Known' n=825, or the case was logged as 'No Accused', n=1,981).

Table 3:1 summaries the gender dynamics of the domestic incidents attended by the police, where both were known (n=216,792, 98.2% of call call-outs). As can be seen although there were some intra-gender incidents (n=4,037, 1.9%) and, more commonly, a number of occasions where the victim was male and the accused female (34,485, 15.9%), in the majority of cases the incident involved a female victim and male accused (178,270, 82.8%).

*Table 3:1 Police data on Sex of those involved in domestic incidents*

	Male Accused	Female Accused	All Accused
Male Victim	2,107 (1.0%)	34,485 (15.9%)	36,592
Female Victim	178,270 (82.2%)	1,930 (0.9%)	180,200
All Victims	180,377	36,415	216,792

The mean age of victims was 33.8 years, and for the accused this was 35.3 years. Though this difference is slight in terms of number of years of age, given the large sample size, it is highly statistically significant (by paired t-test,  $t=102.000$ ,  $df=217,759$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). The mean age for female victims was 33.2 years, with male victims being slightly older, at a mean of 36.7 years (by independent t-test,  $t=55.265$ ,  $df=218,976$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). Conversely the mean age for female accused was younger, at 33.8 years, than for male accused at 35.6 years (independent t-test,  $t=29.141$ ,  $df=52,819$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). Thus the younger age of victims would appear to reflect the greater number of females in that category, with the mean age for males, whether victims or accused, tending to be slightly older.

As already stated, these data refer to 220,847 police call-outs, and not to 220,847 persons or couples. It was however possible to use the police's anonymous individual ID codes to calculate rates of 'repeat victims' and 'repeat accused'. In over half of cases (124,172, 56.2%) both the victim and offender were 'repeats'. A further 9,152 (4.1%) cases involved a repeat victim but a non-repeat accused, and 9,050 cases (also 4.1%) involved a repeat accused but non-repeat victim (13 victims and 12 accused appeared in the data more than 50 times, with maximum values of 139 and 138 call-outs involving the same individual victim or offender respectively). In the remaining 76,174 (34.5%) cases neither party was a 'repeat' (these percentages exclude 2,229 cases, 1.0% of the total, where there was insufficient information about the parties involved).

### *Intoxication status at incident*

Next the alcohol status of those involved in these incidents was examined. Again it should be stressed that the terminology used in this chapter reflects that recorded by the police in the field (not clinically-assessed definitions). The intoxication status of both the victim and the accused was recorded according to whether either, or both, parties were 'under the influence' of alcohol and/or other drugs. A separate variable recorded whether each incident had 'Alcohol or Drugs Involved'. These data are limited in that the degree to which these persons were 'under the influence' is not measured, and also because the other drugs (or combinations of drugs) involved is not specified.

When examining the 'Alcohol or Drugs Involved', it was initially found that a majority of domestic incidents were recorded as being 'Alcohol Related' (n=122,830, 55.6%). Just over a quarter were recorded as 'No' (58,212, 26.4%: i.e. no 'Alcohol or Drugs Involved'). Much smaller numbers were recorded as being either 'Drug Related' (n=2,574, 1.2%) or 'Drug and Alcohol Related' (7,450, 3.4%). When the 24,924 (11.3% of total) cases where this information was 'Not Known' plus the 4,857 (2.2%) cases where this information was 'Not recorded' were excluded, the valid percentages for 'Alcohol or Drugs Involved' rise to 'Alcohol Related' 64.3%, 'No' 30.5%, 'Drug Related' 1.3% and 'Drug and Alcohol Related' 3.9% cases respectively. Combining the 'Alcohol Related' and 'Drug and Alcohol Related' cases produced a total of 130,280 (68.2%) cases which had involved alcohol in any way.

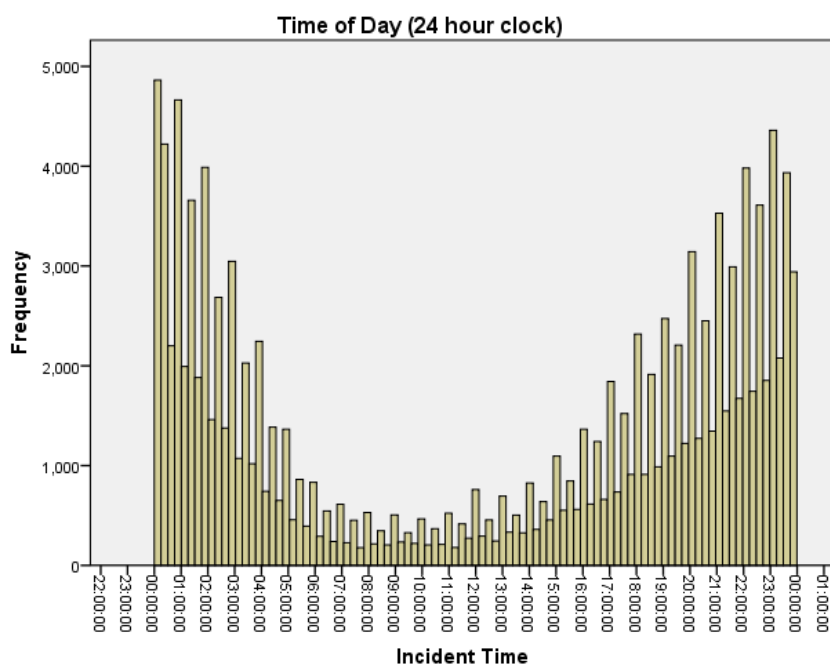
When cases involving alcohol in any way were broken down by area deprivation (according to SIMD2012), a statistically significant pattern was apparent, in that alcohol was more likely to be recorded as a factor by the police attending call-outs to domestic incidents reported in more deprived areas (chi-square=10008.737, df=4, p=0.000). Of call-outs to Quintile-1 (the most deprived 5<sup>th</sup>), 52,752 (71.2%) involved alcohol in any way, compared with 30,398 (69.3%) of call-outs to Quintile-2, 20,440 (68.0%) to Quintile-3, 10,614 (65.0%) to Quintile-4 and only 4,380 (55.1%) of call-outs to Quintile-5 (the least deprived areas). That is, call-outs to domestic incidents recorded as alcohol-related were more than 12 times as likely to be to locations within the most deprived 5<sup>th</sup> of areas as compared to the least deprived 5<sup>th</sup>.

As might be expected, when considering day of the week, alcohol was more commonly recorded as a factor in domestic incident call-outs made during

weekend (Saturday or Sunday), as compared with the rest of the week (n=58,783, 76.3% and 71,497, 62.7% respectively: chi-square=3927.717, df=1, p=0.000).

The pattern for call-outs to domestic incidents by time of day was very different between those which were recorded as involving alcohol in any way and those which were not. As is shown by Figure 3:4, call-outs to domestic incidents recorded as involving alcohol in any way tended to be made at night (peaking just after midnight), while as shown by Figure 3:5 those which were recorded as not involving alcohol tended to be made during the day time (peaking around meal times).

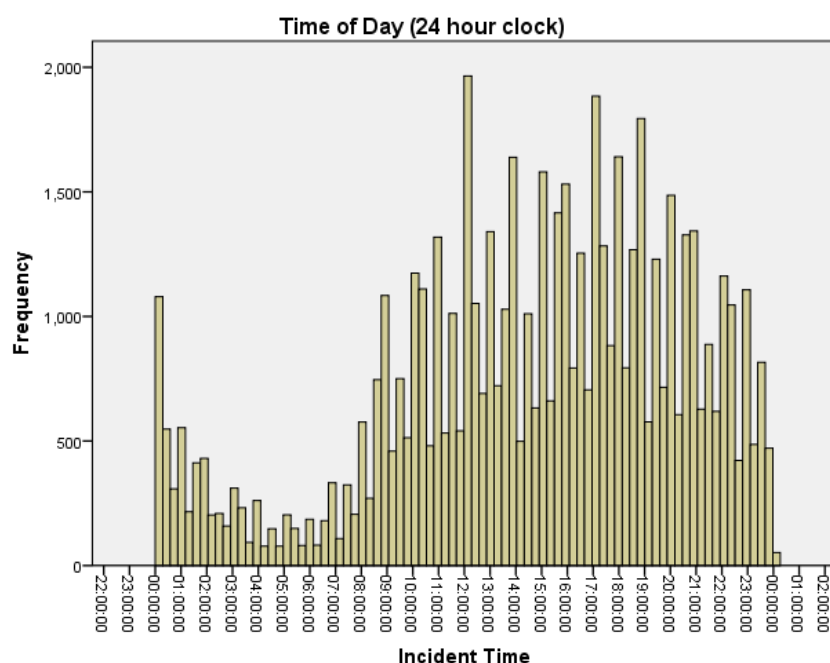
Figure 3:4 Police call-outs to domestic incidents involving alcohol in any way by time of day



A majority of victims (n=133,218, 63.5%) were recorded as not being 'under the influence' at the time of the incident. This left around one-third (74,013, 35.3%) of victims who were recorded as being under the influence of 'Alcohol Only', plus a further 2,435 (1.2%) recorded as being under the influence of 'Alcohol & Drugs' (i.e. a total of 76,448, 36.4%, victims were recorded as being under the influence of alcohol in any way). Another 1,239 (0.6%) victims were recorded as being under the influence of 'Drugs Only' (these percentages exclude 3,487 cases, 1.6% of the total, where this information was logged as 'Not Recorded' for the victim, 6,747 cases, 3.1% of the total where this information was 'Not Known' and 708, 0.3% as involving 'No Primary Victim').



Figure 3:5, Police call-outs to domestic incidents not involving alcohol by time of day



In contrast to victims, a minority of the accused were recorded as not being under the influence at the time of the police incident (n=68,735, 37.4%). A majority of accused were recorded as being under the influence of alcohol (n=112,930, 61.4%), either by itself (as 'Alcohol Only', n=107,793, 58.6%) or, less commonly, in combination with other drugs (5,137, 2.8%). As with victims, the number of accused recorded as being under the influence of 'Drugs Only' was very small in comparison to alcohol (n=2,280, 1.2%). (These percentages for accused under the influence exclude 5,404 cases, 2.4% of the total, where this information was 'Not Recorded' for the accused, 29,499 cases, 13.4% of the total where this information was 'Not Known' and 1,981, 0.3%, logged as involving 'No Primary Victim').

Table 3:2 cross-tabulates the intoxication status of the victims and accused where known, and Table 3:3 condenses this information to those persons who were under the influence of alcohol in any way (i.e. with or without concurrent drug use, and with cases involving only 'Drugs Only' being classed as not being under the influence of alcohol).

Table 3:2: Police data on intoxication status of those involved in domestic incidents

Victim intoxication status	Accused intoxication status					
		'Not under influence'	'Drugs Only'	'Drugs & Alcohol'	'Alcohol Only'	All
	'Not under influence'	57,545	1,576	2,584	46,444	108,148
	'Drugs Only'	395	255	64	311	989
	'Drugs & Alcohol'	391	49	802	885	2,127
	'Alcohol Only'	8,919	278	1,434	56,870	67,501
	All	67,214	2,158	4,884	10,4510	178,766

Table 3:3, Police data on whether those involved in domestic incidents were 'under the influence' of alcohol

	Accused not 'under influence' of alcohol	Accused 'under influence' of alcohol	All
Victim not 'under influence' of alcohol	<b>59,735</b> (33.4%)	49,403 (27.6%)	109,138
Victim 'under influence of alcohol'	9,637 (5.4%)	<b>59,991</b> (33.6%)	69,628
All	69,372	109,394	178,766

Table 3:2 illustrates how, despite the timing of call-outs, in the bulk of cases persons involved in domestic call-outs, whether victims or accused, were unlikely to be under the influence of illegal drugs (and that in most of the cases where a person was recorded as using drugs, alcohol was also involved). Instead the bulk of cases of domestic incident call-outs involved either persons who were not under the influence of any substances at the time or who were under the influence of alcohol in some way. This is illustrated by Table 3:3 which shows that in around one-third of cases (where this information was known about both parties) neither party was under the influence of alcohol (n=59,735). The number of cases where both parties were under the influence of alcohol was similar (n=59,991, 33.6%, i.e. also around one third of the sample). Thus the number of cases where only one party was under the influence of alcohol was also around one third of known cases (n=59,040, 33.0%), though in most of these the intoxicated party was the accused rather than the victim (49,403 and 9,637 respectively).

Accused were more likely to be under the influence of alcohol regardless of gender, with a majority accused men (n= 94,073, 62.3%) and women (18,483, 57.1%) being intoxicated. In contrast, a minority of victims, whether women (n=59,717, 34.4%) or men (16,399, 46.5%), were recorded as being under the influence of alcohol.

### *Alcohol and severity of incident*

To get some insight into whether alcohol impacted on the severity of domestic incidents, it was possible to cross-tabulate the alcohol status of each case with two additional variables recorded by the police. Firstly, whether or not the call-out resulted in a crime being recorded was considered a marker of severity (i.e. if the call-out resulted in a crime, then this might be regarded as a more serious domestic incident). Secondly, another indicator of severity was derived from whether or not each incident involved any physical violence, including the presence of weapons (with physical incidents being regarded as more severe).

A majority of police call-outs to domestic incidents did result in crime being recorded (n=126,110, 57.1%). A greater proportion of incidents resulted in a crime when alcohol was involved in any way (n=77,383, 59.4%) as opposed to where no alcohol involvement was recorded (30,641, 50.4%: chi-square=1363.057, df=1,  $p < 0.001$ ). Similarly, more incidents were recorded as a crime when the accused was under influence of alcohol (n=68,335, 60.5%) than when the accused was sober (35,648, 50.2%: chi-square=1891.928, df=1,  $p < 0.001$ ). The corresponding figures for victims who were under influence of alcohol also reflected this pattern, and although a much lesser difference, incidents were more likely to be recorded as a crime when the victim was under the influence of alcohol (n=44,015, 57.6%) as opposed to when sober (n=75,840, 56.8%: chi-square=11.096, df=1,  $p = 0.001$ ).

A variable recording the presence of weapons was logged by the police as follows 'No weapon' n=152,609 (69.1%) cases, 'Firearm' n=45 (0.0%), 'Knife' n=2,116 (1.0%), 'Sharp Instrument' n=549 (0.2%), 'Blunt Instrument' n=2,710 (1.2%), 'Other Weapon' n=2,952 (1.3%), 'Multiple Weapons' n=2,386 (1.1%) and 'Physical Contact' n=57,480 (26.0%) cases. These categories were collapsed into a binary variable measuring whether each incident was physically violent or not (i.e. more severe incidents being regarded as those involving either physical contact or any weapons present), so that a total of 68,238 (30.9%) cases involved physical violence.

Incidents of physical violence were more likely to involve alcohol (n=47,661, 36.6%) compared to those which did not involve alcohol in any way (n=14,229, 23.6%: chi-square=3192.716, df=1,  $p < 0.0001$ ). This greater likelihood of physical violence was also apparent in cases where the accused was under the influence of alcohol (n=41,117, 36.5%) as compared to sober (n=17,862, 25.1%: chi-square=2561.532, df=1,  $p = 0.001$ ) and also where the victim was under the influence (n=32,510, 42.5%) or not (n=32,407 24.3%: chi-square=7572.304, df=1,  $p < 0.001$ ).

These findings could be replicated when a variable for any weapon present was created (i.e. as compared against the cases marked as either 'No Weapon' or

'Physical Contact' combined). Despite their relative infrequent occurrence in the data set (only  $n=10,758$ , 4.9% cases), the presence of weapons was positively associated with alcohol. Weapons were more likely to present in cases which involved alcohol ( $n=7,594$ , 5.8%) as compared to those which did not involve alcohol in any way ( $n=2,139$ , 3.7%:  $\chi^2=445.221$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p,0.001$ ). Weapons were more likely to be present in cases where the accused was under the influence of alcohol ( $n=6,621$ , 5.9%) as compared to where sober ( $n=2,645$ , 3.7%:  $\chi^2=417.221$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p,0.001$ ) and also where the victim was under the influence ( $n=4,880$ , 6.4%) as compared to sober ( $n=5,228$ , 3.9%:  $\chi^2=7572$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p,0.001$ ).

Taken together with the information on whether the call-out resulted in a crime, the information concerning physical violence would seem to support the view that alcohol was present at more severe domestic incidents. This of course does not mean alcohol aggravates (or causes) more severe incidents, simply that it is more likely to be logged by the police as being present at these. Finally we used this police data set to look at another potentially aggravating or co-occurring factor, that is whether there was a relationship between domestic incidents and sporting fixtures, specifically the controversial 'auld firm' football match between Glasgow Celtic and Glasgow Rangers.

#### *Football, alcohol and domestic incidents*

Each of the police incidents were allocated a Julian calendar date. That is continuous numeral from dating from day 2453,006 (January 1<sup>st</sup> 2004) to day 2456,201 (September 30<sup>th</sup> 2012). These were then matched against the dates of all 'auld firm' games held over this time period. The alcohol statuses of incidents occurring on these football derby days were then compared with all other dates in the police data set.

There were 4,164 call-outs made on derby days over the time period covered by the data set and 179,799 on all other days. Alcohol was more likely to be a factor in call-outs made during match days ( $n=3,069$  73.7%) compared to non-match days ( $n=109,861$ , 61.1%:  $\chi^2=272.692$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p,0.001$ ). The accused was more likely to be under the influence of alcohol on match days ( $n=3,506$ , 79.8%) as compared to non-match days ( $n=126,774$ , 3.7%:  $\chi^2=281.637$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p,0.001$ ) and the victim was also more likely to under the influence on match day ( $n=2,026$ , 43.8%) as compared to non-match days ( $n=74,422$ , 36.3%:  $\chi^2=111.650$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p<0.001$ ).

Plotting match days graphically over the course a year revealed that it was only during some of these local derby game dates that the number of police call-outs to domestic incidents 'spiked' (were of a much greater incidence than might otherwise be expected). This illustrated by Figures 3:6 and 3:7, which show the number of domestic incident call-outs received by the police on each Sunday for the years 2011 and 2012 respectively. (Sunday was when Scottish Premier League derbies were held, typically involving a lunchtime kick-off, although some, arguably less competitive, cup games were held on Saturdays or weekday evenings).

On Figures 3:6 and 3:7 each bar represents successive Sundays throughout the course of the year concerned. The height of each bar represents the number domestic incident call-outs made to the police on that day (midnight to midnight). These are bars subdivided by the number of call-outs logged as being alcohol-related in any way (the upper portion) or not involving alcohol (the lower portion). Sundays with 'auld firm' derby matches are annotated with an arrow pointing to the bar representing that fixture's date (regardless of whether this represented a 'spike' in domestic incidents), as are any other significant events/dates which coincided with an apparent 'spike' in the number domestic incident call-outs.

Figure 3:6 Police call-outs to domestic incidents on 'auld firm' derby days (Sunday matches) in 2011

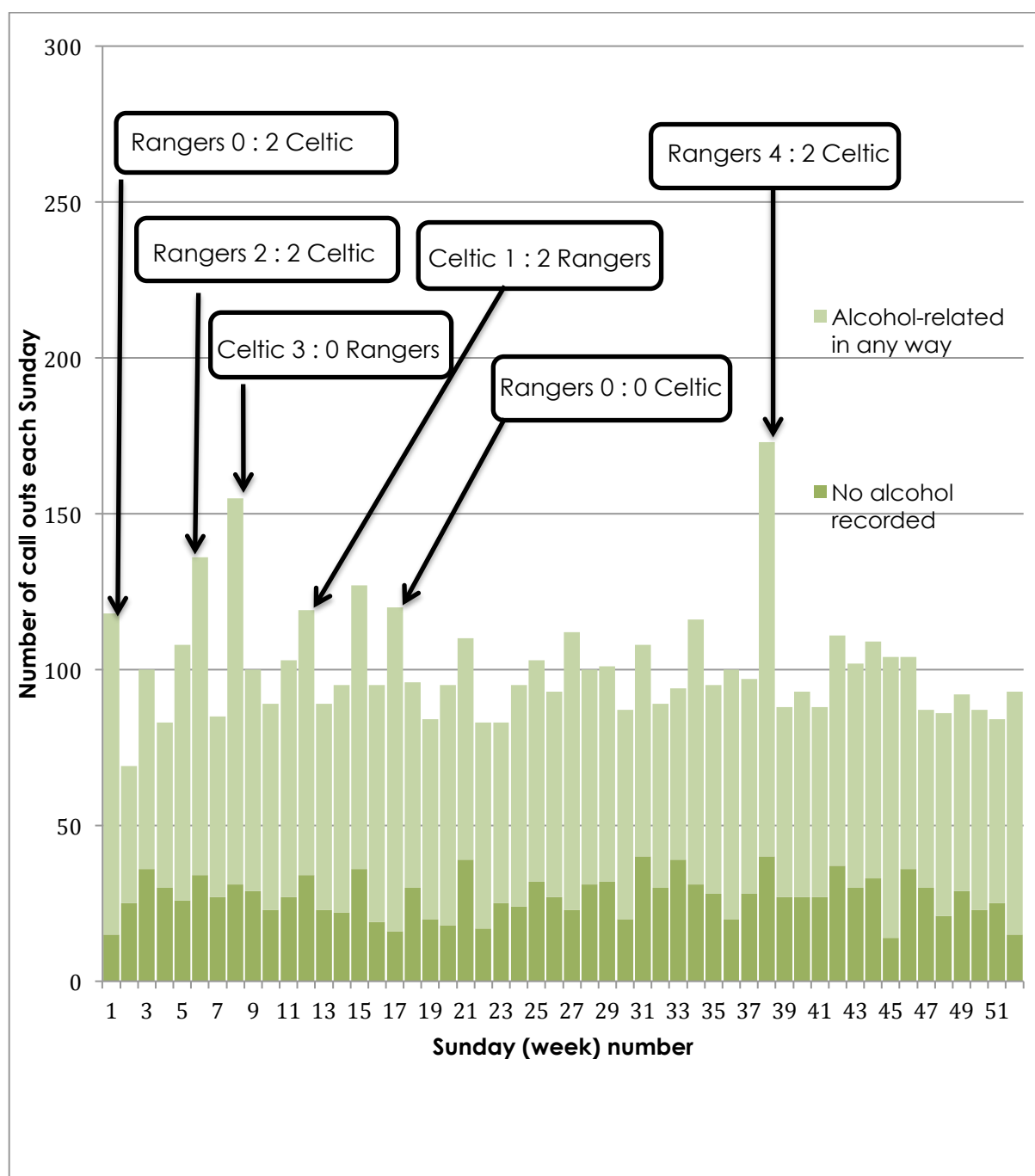


Figure 3:7 Police call-outs to domestic incidents on 'auld firm' derby days (Sunday matches) in 2012

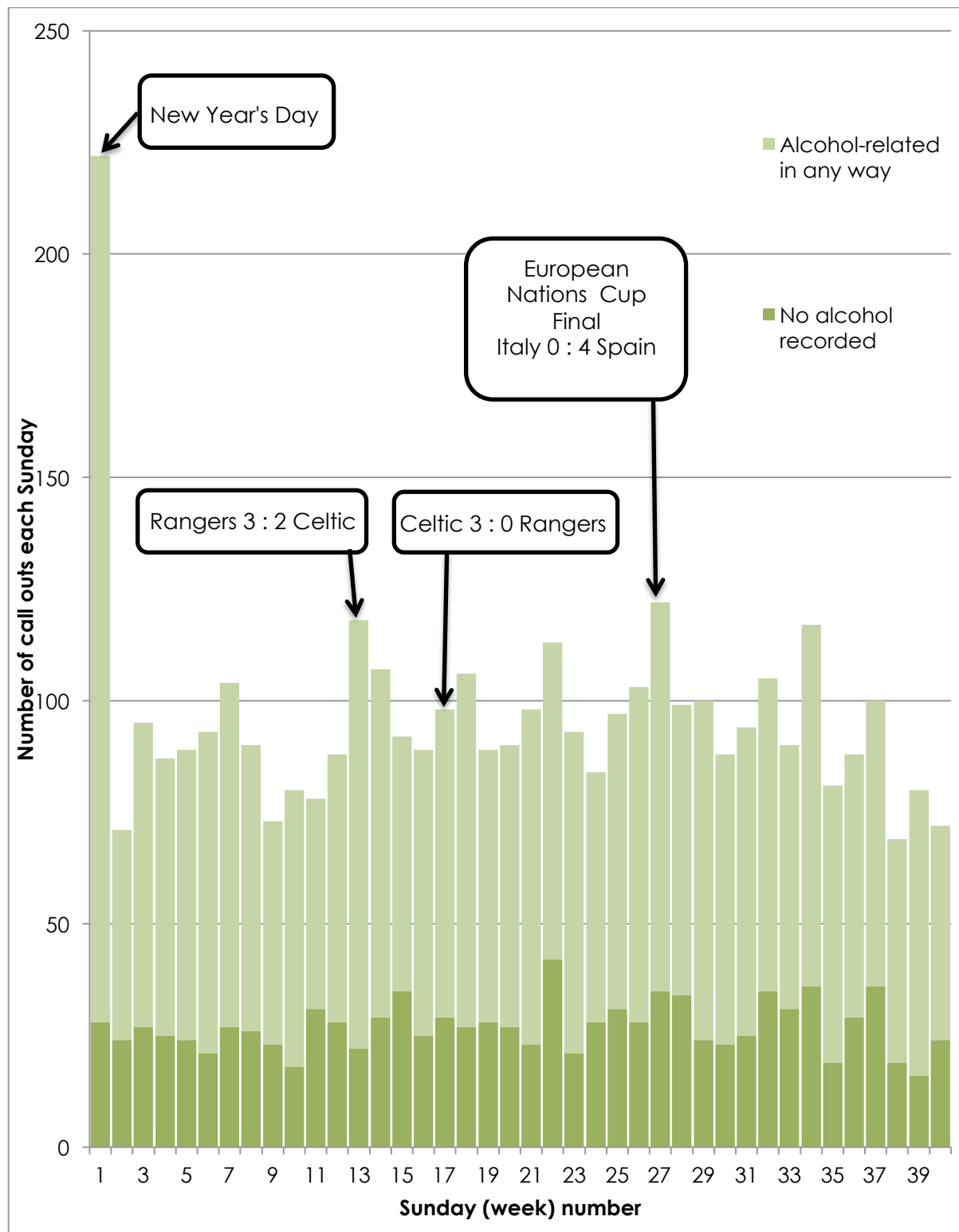


Figure 3:6 covers the whole of the calendar year for 2011 (every successive Sunday numbered 1 to 52), a year when there was much controversy about these games apparent association with domestic violence. In 2011 six 'auld firm' games were held on a Sunday. From Figure 3:6, it can be seen that several 'spikes' in the number of call-outs to domestic incidents received by the police in Strathclyde did

coincide with 'auld firm' football fixtures. The highest bars on this chart (i.e. days with the most call-outs) were all on match days, the greatest number being on the 38<sup>th</sup> Sunday that year. As can be seen for Figure 3:6, these 'spikes' were a function of more cases where the police had noted that alcohol was involved in any some way, as opposed to cases where no alcohol was mentioned.

Figure 3:7 (which comprised Sunday's 1 to 37 for the year 2012) also has 'spikes' on certain dates, which also tended to involve a disproportionate number of cases where alcohol was involved. This was the last year in which the 'auld firm' fixture was held (at the time of writing). However the two derby match fixture dates were not days of greatly elevated levels of domestic incident call-outs. Instead, this graph is dominated by the number of call-outs made on New Year's Day, which also fell on a Sunday in 2012. Indeed, it should be noted that throughout the data set New Year's Day (1<sup>st</sup> January) and 'Hogmanay'/New Year's Eve (31<sup>st</sup> December) always had a greater number of call-outs than other days (this is a time when much alcohol is consumed in Scotland). In 2012, other than New Year's Day, the Sunday with the most domestic incident call-outs happened in the mid-summer (i.e. outwith the Scottish football season), however this was on the date of the European Nations football final (Euro2012) which was between Italy and Spain, an evening kick-off (GMT) held in Kiev, Ukraine.

These findings might suggest that the relationship between domestic violence, alcohol and football in Scotland is not restricted to the controversial 'auld firm' fixture, and indeed any special occasion or sporting event where increased drinking takes place may coincide with times or dates of increased risk of domestic violence, regardless of whether or not there is a causal link between domestic violence and with alcohol.

## Summary

This large data set revealed a pattern where police call-outs to domestic incidents were more likely to be to locations in socio-economically disadvantaged communities. These incidents typically involved a female victim and male accused. The incidents took place at times when alcohol is often consumed, and therefore unsurprisingly, alcohol was present at a majority of incidents in some way. However, relatively few domestic call-outs were made to alcohol licensed premises. It should be stressed that these data only refer to persons the policed noted as 'under influence' of alcohol at the time of an incident, and therefore the findings here are not indicative of any other roles that alcohol may have played either before, during or after any domestic event, or what roles alcohol may play in fostering any form of on-going abuse. These other possible roles of alcohol are explored in later sections, particularly in qualitative interviews with offenders (Phase3).

The next section will begin to explore the relationship between alcohol and domestic abuse from primary data which contrasts questionnaire responses obtained from convicted domestic offenders with corresponding responses from a variety of control groups (including other convicted prisoners).



## Questionnaire phase (2): alcohol use across convicted, conflicted and content groups

### *Questionnaire samples*

The section will compare the scores from questionnaires measuring levels of alcohol use and aggression recorded by men convicted of domestic offences against a range of control groups, including 'victims/survivors' of domestic problems, men in the community and other male offenders. These comparisons were undertaken as part of a process designed to recruit a sample of convicted 'domestic offenders' for qualitative interviews investigating the roles of alcohol in intimate partner abuse.

## Methods & analysis

### *Methodology*

All these groups of participants were given the same questionnaire pack to complete, which comprised a brief demographic section and three validated research instruments, specifically:

- The Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT)
- The Alcohol Related Aggression Questionnaire (ARAQ)
- The revised Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS2)

The AUDIT is a 10-item screening questionnaire designed to determine whether a person's alcohol consumption may be harmful. The first three AUDIT items (questions 1-3) deal with level of alcohol consumption. The next three items (questions 4-6) deal with alcohol dependence. The final four AUDIT items (questions 7-10) consider alcohol-related problems. Total AUDIT scores (i.e. from all 10 items) can be grouped into four zones indicating level of risk, from Zone I (an AUDIT score of 7 or less) which is considered the least risky level, through Zone II (scores of 8-15), Zone III (scores of 16-19) to Zone IV (scores of 20 or more) which is considered the highest level of risk. Babor and colleagues (2001: P22) recommend the following interventions for each AUDIT zone: Zone I "Alcohol education", Zone II Simple advice", Zone III "Simple advice plus brief counselling and continued monitoring" and Zone IV "Referral to specialist for diagnostic evaluation and treatment".

The Alcohol Related Aggression Questionnaire (ARAQ-28) is a 28-item questionnaire designed to measure the extent to which individuals engage in alcohol-related violence (McMurran et al 2006). The ARAQ-28 includes subscales that account for; Trait Aggression (TA, 4 items), Alcohol-aggression Expectancies (AE, 18 items), sensitivity to Pain and Anxiety (PA, 3 items) and Drinking Contexts (DC, 3 items), with higher scores indicating greater levels of involvement in alcohol-related aggression.

The CTS2 is a 78-item questionnaire (39 pairs of questions) which measures the occurrence and frequency of a variety of conflict tactics used within relationships. This comprises six subscales, specifically; the 'Negotiation' subscale (6 pairs of questions concerning positive conflict resolution tactics), the 'Psychological



Aggression' subscale (8 pairs of questions), the 'Physical Assault' subscale (12 pairs of questions), the 'Injury' subscale (6 pairs of questions) and the 'Sexual Coercion' subscale (7 pairs of questions). Each of the 39 questions in the CTS2 is essentially asked twice, ordered in a format intended to measure whether the participant has used a certain conflict tactic in a domestic setting (e.g. a negotiation technique, or a type of physical assault) against their partner or whether their partner has used this tactic against them. Each paired question (by self or by partner) is then recorded according to whether this tactic had ever been employed by either party during in their relationship, if so whether this was only in the past (i.e. more than one year ago), and if within the past year, how frequently this conflict tactic was used.

At the suggestion of one of the experts we consulted in relation to this study, both for access to suitable participants and advice, we asked an additional paired question, in the same format as the CTS2, in relation to social media: specifically "I checked up on my partner's mobile phone or social media account" and "My partner checked up on my mobile phone or social media account".

### *Recruitment*

An initial sample of 40 male participants was recruited from a Scottish prison. The main aim of this prisoner sample was to identify and recruit males who had been convicted of a domestic offence, and who could take part in qualitative interviews designed to investigate the role of alcohol in their offences against an intimate partner (see Chapter 5). However, for operational (prison security) reasons, in order that these individuals would not be identified as such to others within the establishment, a range of prisoners was invited to participate, including both known 'domestic offenders' and those not known to offend in such a way, hereafter termed 'general offenders'.

All those recruited completed the same questionnaire pack. After each prisoner had taken part, the research team were informed whether they were a 'domestic offender' (or 'general offender') by the prison staff, making it possible to compare questionnaire responses between these two subgroups. From information provided by the prison staff it was also possible to identify those participants who were known to the prison service as having an alcohol problem, as they would have been asked whether they required detoxification during induction (this could apply to both 'domestic' and 'general offenders').

Forty prisoners completed the questionnaire pack and 21 of these provided a qualitative interview (see Chapter 5). The forty comprised 25 'domestic offenders' and 15 'general offenders'. In this chapter we use the shorthand 'convicted' to describe the whole of this prisoner group. These 'convicted' were then compared against two comparison groups, referred to by the shorthand terms 'conflicted' and 'contented'.

The 'conflicted' comprised persons recruited from two agencies that help persons who have domestic problems. Firstly, nine individuals were obtained from a relationship counselling service, five of whom were female. Secondly, eight more

female participants were recruited from Women's Aid. Thus a total of 17 individuals (including 13 females), who could be described as 'victims/survivors' of domestic problems, completed the same questionnaire pack as the prisoners.

Another aim of this recruitment strategy was to interview a small sample of between 6 and 12 'victims/survivors' of domestic problems. Although their experiences were not central to the research aims, it was felt that it would be beneficial to give a voice to 'victims/survivors' (i.e. so as not to just allow perpetrators of IPV this opportunity). However, in the event none of these 'conflicted' participants were willing to take part in a qualitative interview into the roles of alcohol in domestic abuse (and other agencies approached were also unforthcoming). Why this might be will be explored in our discussion section (Chapter 6).

The third group, to complete the questionnaire pack, the 'contented', was intended purely as a control group to get some background level of domestic problems (from their responses to the questionnaire pack), and did not include anyone who was invited to participate in a qualitative interview. The 'contented' group comprised males who were recruited from within the community. Given the football element of this project, it was decided to recruit from two adult community football teams. Twenty-three valid questionnaire packs were completed by the footballers (those whose questionnaire responses subsequently revealed that they had never been in an intimate relationship were excluded from the analysis).

Thus a total of 80 valid questionnaire packs were completed, and the final group sizes were; 'convicted' (n=40), 'conflicted' (n=17) and 'contented' (n=23). Participant's in the 'conflicted' and 'contented' were provided a shopping voucher (value £10.00, for a non-alcohol licensed chain-store) as recompense for their time (the convicted did not receive a voucher).

## Results

### *Three Groups compared*

The obvious difference between our three groups was that the 'convicted' and 'contented' groups were exclusively male, while the 'conflicted' group was predominantly female (13/17). All bar two participants described their sexual-orientation as 'straight' (one 'convicted' and one 'contented' described themselves as bisexual). Table 4:1 summarises these three groups.

Table 4:1 Three questionnaire pack groups compared

	'Convicted' (total n=40)	'Conflicted' (total n=17)	'Contented' (total n=23)	All (80)
<b>Age</b> (mean years)	<b>34.8</b>	<b>36.8</b>	<b>33.8</b>	34.9
Currently <b>single</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	31
Has <b>children</b>	30	13	8	51
<b>Qualifications</b>				
None	16	3	1	20
Standard grades	17	1	1	19
Highers	2	2	6	10
Diploma	3	2	6	11
Degree	1	3	5	9
Higher Degree	1	6	2	11
<b>Football Supporter</b>				
Any team	35	9	22	66
Auld firm team	32	2	6	40
<b>AUDIT</b> score (0-40)	24.3	4.9	8.7	15.7
Zone I (0-7)	5	12	9	26
Zone II (8-15)	8	5	10	23
Zone III (16-19)	2	0	3	5
Zone IV (20+)	25	0	0	25
<b>ARAQ-28</b> score (0-84)	31.0	8.3	13.4	21.8
Expectancies	24.3	6.7	10.6	17.2
Trait Agression	1.7	0.6	0.6	1.2
Pain & Anxiety	2.3	0.6	1.1	1.6
Drinking Context	2.6	0.4	1.1	1.8

From Table 4:1 it can be seen that all three groups were approximately the same age (i.e. mid-30s: a non-significant difference by one way-ANOVA,  $F=0.349$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p=0.707$ ). At the time they completed the questionnaire pack, less than half of each group described themselves as currently being single ('convicted' 15/40, 'conflicted' 7/17 and 'contented' 9/23). However this does not mean that those describing themselves as other than single were in a stable relationship, with just 12 being currently married ('convicted'  $n=1$ , 'conflicted'  $n=4$  'contented'  $n=7$ ) and 13 currently describing themselves as co-habiting ('convicted'  $n=7$ , 'conflicted'  $n=3$  'contented'  $n=3$ ). The remaining 24 described relationship statuses between single and married/co-habiting (e.g. 'separated'  $n=6$ , engaged  $n=4$ ). Three-quarters (30/40) of the 'convicted' had children of their own, as did a similar proportion of the 'conflicted' (13/17), but fewer than half the 'contented' had any children (8/23).

As can be seen from Table 4:1, the 'convicted' had a lower level of educational attainment than the other groups, in that the prisoners tended to either only have basic qualifications (i.e. Scottish Standard Grades) or had no qualifications at all, while most participants in the other two groups had attained some level of higher qualification. Though not shown in Table 4:1, of those who could provide a full-postcode, a majority (21/28) of the 'convicted' gave an address in the most deprived quintile of Scotland according to the SIMD2012, as compared to minorities of the 'conflicted' (1/11) and 'contented' (8/22).

We asked participants which football team, if any, they supported. Perhaps unsurprisingly the 'contented' (recruited from active footballers) were the most likely to support a particular team (only one was a non-supporter). However, as can be seen from Table 4:1, it was the 'convicted' who were most likely to support one of the 'auld firm' teams, with 32/35 prisoners who supported any team supporting either Celtic or Rangers.

### *Questionnaire responses compared*

Table 4:1 also provides the AUDIT and ARAQ scores for the three groups. Total AUDIT scores varied greatly, being far higher among the 'convicted' (mean=24.3) compared to the 'conflicted' and 'contented' (means of 4.9 and 8.7 respectively: one way-ANOVA,  $F=32.569$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Indeed a majority (25/40) of participants in the 'convicted' had AUDIT scores that reached Zone IV, the highest level of screening risk (scores in excess of 20). By contrast, no participants in either of the 'conflicted' or the 'contented' had AUDIT scores in Zone IV (only 3 in either of these groups, all in the 'contented', reached Zone III).

Responses to the Alcohol Related Aggression Questionnaire varied according to the same pattern as AUDIT across the three groups, with a much higher ARAQ-28 mean score being recorded by the 'convicted' (mean=31.0), than by the 'conflicted' or the 'contented' (mean ARAQ-28 scores of 8.3 and 13.4 respectively: one way-ANOVA,  $F=12.830$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). These scores indicate that the prisoners were more likely to engage in alcohol-related violence than the other two groups. This pattern of differences between the three groups was consistent over each the ARAQ subscales.

When responses to the Conflict Tactics (CTS2) were compared, these were also found to vary greatly across the three groups, however on this occasion both the 'convicted' and 'conflicted' had equally elevated scores as compared to the 'contented' group. This variance is summarised by Table 4:2 which gives the raw scores for each of the CTS2's six subscales cross-tabulated by the three groups of participants (subdivided between whether this tactic had been employed by 'self' and / or by their 'partner'). As can be seen the 'contented' group scored much lower on these than did the 'convicted' or 'conflicted' (the exception being to the 'Sexual Coercion' which was seldom reported by any group).

Table 4:2, Three groups Conflict Tactics Inventory (CTS-2) raw scores (means) compared

(n items)		'Convicted' (total n=40)	'Conflicted' (total n=17)	'Contented' (total n=23)	All
CTS2: negotiation (6)	self	56.5	85.3	34.5	55.5
	partner	51.7	39.4	33.0	43.8
CTS2: psychological (8)	self	46.3	17.8	6.0	43.8
	partner	39.5	61.5	8.2	28.8
CTS2: physical (12)	self	5.8	1.4	1.2	3.5
	partner	14.7	36.1	1.7	15.5
CTS2: injury (6)	self	2.8	6.6	0.6	2.9
	partner	3.3	1.8	0.3	1.3
CTS2: sexual (7)	self	0.5	0.7	1.8	0.9
	partner	0.9	10.8	1.4	3.1

The CTS2 also groups responses to certain items (all questions other than those in the 'negotiation' tactics subscale) as either 'Minor' or 'Severe', depending on their potential to produce injury, and with the inclusion of a 'No' (i.e. zero) category, these form a three-point severity scale. Table 4:3 compares the number of participants in each of the three groups whose scores reached 'Minor' or 'Severe' level of this scale. As can be seen from Table 4:3, a majority cases in both the 'convicted' and 'conflicted' could be classed as 'Severe' (regardless of whether this was according to conflict tactics used by the participant concerned on their partner or by their partner on the participant) compared with only a minority of the 'contented'. For example, 35/40 in the 'convicted' stated their partner had used a 'Severe' tactic on them, while 11/17 in the 'conflicted' had used a 'Severe' tactic on their partner.

Table 4:3, Three groups Conflict Tactics Inventory (CTS2), Severity level cases compared

Severity Level		'Convicted'	'Conflicted'	'Contented'	All
Zero	self	1	1	9	11
	partner	2	1	8	11
Minor	self	9	5	9	23
	partner	3	2	10	15
Severe	self	30	11	5	46
	partner	35	14	5	54

In regard to the additional question asked in the CTS2's paired format, concerning mobile phones and social media, half of the 'convicted' (20/40) and most of the 'conflicted' (10/16) reported having checked up on their partner in this way at some point, although only one of the 'contented' ever had. Similarly most of the 'convicted' (31/40) and 'conflicted' (10/16) reported that their partner had used social media to check up on them, but only two in the 'contented' group felt this. That is, this extra item was one of the most discriminating questions we asked in terms identifying of those who were 'contented'.

Thus, despite relatively small numbers in each of these groups of participants, a clear set of differences between them is apparent. Overall the 'convicted' group were from more disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. in terms of educational qualifications), and they scored higher on both the AUDIT and ARAQ questionnaires (implying greater levels of involvement in both alcohol use and violence as compared to the others). Most participants in the 'convicted' (offender) group could also be classified as being at 'Severe' risk of injury according to the CTS2, as could also most of the participants within the 'conflicted' (victim/survivor) group.

Before describing the qualitative interviews conducted with a subset of the prisoners recruited, the final section of this chapter will look for differences within this 'convicted' group. That is, how do known 'domestic offenders' and 'general offenders' compare in terms of alcohol use and conflict tactics.

### *Comparing domestic offenders with general offenders*

The comparisons made between the three groups ('convicted', 'conflicted' and 'contented') summarised by Tables 4:1 to 4:3, were repeated between the two types of prisoners, 'domestic offenders' and 'general offenders', who together made up the 'convicted group'. As can be seen from Table 4:4, the main difference between these two types of prisoner was in their age, in that the 'domestic offenders' tended to be older than the 'general offenders' (mean ages of 37.7 and 29.9 years respectively:  $t=2.644$ ,  $df=31.595$ ,  $p=0.013$ ).

Both prisoner types, 'domestic offenders' and 'general offenders', had high AUDIT scores (means of 23.8 and 25.0 respectively). A majority of both the 'domestic offenders' (15/25) and the 'general offenders' (10/15) scored in the most at risk AUDIT zone (Zone IV). Both the 'domestic offenders' and the 'general offenders' also had high ARAQ scores (e.g. ARAQ-28 means of 33.2 and 27.2 respectively). There were no statistically significant differences between the two prisoner types' scores on either of these instruments. Not shown on Table 4:4, but perhaps important to note, only 5 of the 25 'domestic offenders' were known to have an alcohol problem by the prison service, compared to 9 of the 15 'general offenders'. Why this should be is unclear, given their similarly elevated AUDIT scores.

Table 4:4 Domestic offender and General offenders compared

	Domestic offender (n=25)	General offender (n=15)	P
<b>Age (mean)</b>	37.7	29.9	<b>0.013</b>
Currently <b>Single</b>	11	4	0.254
Has <b>Children</b>	5	5	0.346
<b>Qualifications</b>			0.256
None	13	3	
Standard grades	8	9	
Highers	1	1	
Diploma	2	1	
Degree	0	1	
Higher Degree	1	0	
<b>Football Supporter</b>			
Any team	21	14	0.369
Auld firm team	19	13	0.350
<b>AUDIT</b> score (0-40)	23.8	25.0	0.778
Zone I (0-7)	3	2	
Zone II (8-15)	5	3	
Zone III (16-19)	2	0	
Zone IV (20+)	15	10	
<b>ARAQ-28</b> score (0-84)	33.2	27.2	0.332
Expectancies	25.4	22.3	
Trait Aggression	2.2	1.1	
Pain & Anxiety	3.0	2.1	
Drinking Context	2.6	1.7	

Both prisoner types also scored highly on the CTS2, in terms of their raw score on each of the subscales (there were no statistically significant differences on any of these) as is summarised by Table 4:5.

Table 4:5 Domestic offender and General offenders Conflict Tactics Inventory (CTS2), raw scores (means) compared

	(n items)	Domestic offender (total n=25)	General offender (total n=15)	All
CTS2: negotiation (6)	self	57.7	54.5	56.5
	partner	49.0	56.1	51.7
CTS2: psychological (8)	self	50.9	38.7	46.3
	partner	41.8	35.7	39.5
CT2: physical (12)	self	6.2	4.9	5.8
	partner	18.2	8.8	14.7
CTS2: injury (6)	self	3.7	1.1	2.8
	partner	3.9	1.8	3.3
CTS2: sexual (7)	self	0.8	0.1	0.5
	partner	0.4	1.8	0.9

As shown by Table 4:6, according to their CTS2 responses all of both groups of prisoners were at some risk of injury to either themselves or their partners. Most in



both groups were classified as being in the 'Severe' level of risk for both themselves (20/25 'domestic offenders' and 10/15 'general offenders') and /or their partner (22/25 'domestic offenders' and 13/15 'general offenders').

*Table 4:6 Domestic offender and General offenders Conflict Tactics Inventory (CTS2), severity level cases compared*

Severity Level		Domestic offender (total n=25)	General offender (total n=15)	All
Zero	self	0	1	1
	partner	1	1	2
Minor	self	5	4	9
	partner	2	1	3
Severe	self	20	10	30
	partner	22	13	35

Thus both of these types of prisoner can be seen to be at high risk according to the CTS2, regardless of whether or not they were currently known to be a 'domestic offender'. Indeed during subsequent qualitative interviews it was not possible to tell from responses who was likely to be a 'domestic offender' and who was not. Given the main difference between the two prisoner types was their ages, it is possible that in time more of the younger 'general offender' group will become known 'domestic offenders' themselves.

When we compared responses to our additional question, which used the CTS2 paired question format, in regard to checking-up on social media, no statistically significant differences were found in the likelihood of having done so between 'domestic offenders' and 'general offenders'. This is the case whether it was in relation to participants checking-up on their partners (11/25 'domestic' and 9/15 'general offenders' had done so) or reporting that their partners had checked up on them (18/25 'domestic' and 13/15 'general offenders'). However we suspect this finding may be compromised if the younger 'general offenders' are more involved in social media.

#### *Final qualitative interviewee recruits*

Table 4:7 summaries the 21 prisoners who agreed to undergo a qualitative interview. Sixteen interviewees were known 'domestic offenders' (i.e. 16/25 known 'domestic offenders' agreed to be interviewed as opposed to only 5/15 'general offenders'). It was to be expected that those known as 'domestic offenders' would be more motivated to participate in a research interview investigating the roles of alcohol in IPV, however, as will be reported in the next chapter, the five 'general offenders' interviewed often experienced similar issues. The 21 interviewees had a mean age of 38.1 years, were heavy drinkers with a mean AUDIT score of 22.6 and a mean ARAQ-28 of 31.1. Most were classified as being at severe level of risk to injury (for both self and partner) according to the CTS2, including all but one of those known only as 'general offenders'. Seventeen interviewees followed a football team, all but two supporting one of the 'auld firm' clubs.



Table 4:7: Characteristics of qualitative Interviewees

Interviewee (question- naire)	Age	Offender type	Known Alcohol problem	AUDIT score (zone I-IV)	ARAQ score	CTS2 severity level: to self / to partner	Football team
#1 (1)	53	domestic	no	9 (II)	1	minor / minor	Rangers
#2 (2)	38	domestic	no	26 (IV)	59	severe / severe	Rangers
#3 (3)	33	domestic	no	2 (I)	1	minor / severe	none
#4 (4)	41	domestic	no	5 (I)	24	minor / severe	Aberdeen
#5 (5)	38	domestic	no	16 (III)	31	severe / severe	Rangers
#6 (6)	22	domestic	yes	38 (IV)	53	severe / severe	St Mirren
#7 (7)	25	general	no	30 (IV)	40	severe / severe	Rangers
#8 (9)	24	general	yes	25 (IV)	29	severe / severe	Rangers
#9 (10)	44	domestic	no	38 (IV)	33	severe / severe	Celtic
#10 (11)	42	domestic	no	37 (IV)	56	severe / severe	Celtic
#11 (20)	34	domestic	no	34 (IV)	31	severe / severe	none
#12 (21)	33	domestic	no	13 (II)	43	severe / severe	none
#13 (22)	29	general	yes	31 (IV)	52	severe / severe	Celtic
#14 (23)	42	domestic	yes	25 (IV)	36	severe / severe	Celtic
#15 (24)	26	general	yes	9 (II)	14	severe / severe	Rangers
#16 (25)	52	domestic	no	17 (III)	26	severe / severe	Rangers
#17 (35)	48	general	no	3 (I)	3	minor / minor	Celtic
#18 (36)	44	domestic	yes	30 (IV)	15	severe / severe	none
#19 (37)	41	domestic	no	22 (IV)	25	severe / severe	Celtic
#20 (38)	41	domestic	yes	32 (IV)	11	severe / severe	Rangers
#21 (40)	51	domestic	yes	33 (IV)	71	severe / severe	Rangers

## Summary

This chapter has described the characteristics of a group of male offenders who we recruited in prison to take part in qualitative interviews into the roles of alcohol in intimate partner abuse. These men differed from two control groups (one comprising 'victims/survivors' of domestic problems, the other members of community football teams). However, those recruited for interview displayed similar demographic characteristics to those 'Accused' of domestic offences in the police data set (detailed in the previous chapter) and most of these men were supporters of the 'auld firm' football teams, rivalry between which had been linked via alcohol consumption to domestic violence.

## Interview phase (3) prisoners' experiences of alcohol and ipv

Semi-structured individual interviews with 21 prisoners who had also completed our questionnaire pack (see previous chapter) including both those known to have committed a domestic offence and general offenders (noting that both groups scored as at similarly high risk on the alcohol and aggression/IPV screening tools we administered).

### Methods & analysis

The interviews were analysed by two researchers (LG and LA). Thematic analysis involved repeated readings, coding, reduction of codes, emergent of themes, reducing redundancy, triangulation and analysis at both manifest and latent levels.

### Conceptual framework and results

Thematic analysis of interviews with prisoners drew two overarching themes, namely that situational context was pervasive in subjective understandings of alcohol misuse, and that alcohol had multiple, distinct roles in intimate relationship conflict.

The most relevant themes are initially discussed in relation to the range of 'abuses and excuses' that have been identified in previous models of IPV (Pence & Paymar, 1993).

The recurrent themes within the data are then further explored with a focus on cultural norms for alcohol and IPV, alcohol-related expectancies, and the role of sporting events in IPV incidents.

Gender expectations in relation to drinking are then discussed and the differential role alcohol is given for victims and perpetrators highlighted.

#### *Range of Abuses and Excuses*

Previous research identifies a range of abuses in addition to physical and sexual violence that are common in IPV: isolation, fear, threat intimidation, emotional abuse, economic abuse, using the children and minimising and blaming. Minimising can include denial, making light of the level of abuse, making out that it is the victim who is exaggerating, and blaming can be identifying the victim as to blame, or someone (e.g. the victim's previous partner) or something else, including alcohol and drugs (Pence & Paymar, 1993). Power, control, entitlement, self-focus, sexual jealousy and dependent/fearful attachment are also identified as typical of perpetrators and features of IPV incidents. Cultural and sub-cultural factors are also identified as influential (Dutton, 1998).

Our participant accounts reflect a similar range of abuses, and a spread of multi-level features associated with IPV, including cultural tolerance of alcohol and violence and individual difficulties in interpersonal and intimate relationships and strong gendered beliefs.

Our participants reported beliefs supporting male entitlement in relation to their partner's behaviours (e.g. contact with others) and demonstrated some of the checking behaviours, hinting at issues linked to isolating partners common in this population.

#### Male Entitlement:

*"I says to her 'do you want to go to bed sweetheart?' and 'nah I'll just have another drink' ... it's 3 o'clock in the morning ya know and that's what started the argument eh and obviously that neighbours heard it and phoned the police ya know, cause I start screaming and shouting...Because I thought in the right I thought I was in the right, I mean I think I'm quite entitled, asking her to come to bed that time in the morning." [#16 'domestic']*

#### Monitoring:

*"I walked right into a room and eh she was on the phone and put it down dead quick and just jokingly I said was that your boyfriend and I grab her phone you know kidding on, but I didn't even look at it and she was like that eh, give ma phone give ma phone she was adamant that she was getting this phone back, I was like 'What's wrang? What's on it?' ... I threw it on the bed and walked out the room into the living room then she said I phone the polis and said what you do that for and then the polis came and they said right you're getting done for a domestic breach, then that was it." [#20, 'domestic']*

There was a theme of loss of control due to previous IPV within the data, and an attendant sense of resentment.

#### Control:

*"I've hit her and that a few times and got charged with it and 'aw, my wife's more in control of me than I am with her. I havenae got any control, my wife's the boss of her hoose, it took her long enough, but she's the boss of her hoose noo." [#21, 'domestic']*

A recurrent minority theme was the expectation that alcohol would lead to loss of personal control. One participant, convicted for domestic abuse, and displaying controlling attitudes around his wife's drinking, was quite clear that he did not drink himself because drinking would stop him from functioning effectively. Another avoided drinking to maintain control and located his inability to maintain alcohol avoidance with his partner and her problematic drinking.

*"See when I drink, even when if I have one bottle of ale...I can't... afterwards I cannot read, I cannot play playstation, I cannot watch the movies so the only thing that is left for me is to go to sleep, that's probably why I don't drink" [#3, "domestic"]*

*"I dinnae drink to get drunk, I like to be in control...there's been times when I didnae want to drink and she did...I kent [knew] if she'd get drunk it'd start ye know? So I'd try to avoid but after a week or two of no drinking you think well one night'll no hurt, you know what I mean?"* [#12, 'domestic']

#### Alcohol and Sexual Jealousy:

Sexual jealousy and infidelity, his as well as hers, was a theme running through the accounts, with alcohol exacerbating this issue.

*"...things like jealousy and that have come in tae it when we drink, you know what ah mean, ah think that sparks that demon up...And ah think that's a problem ah need to deal wi, you ken what ah'm saying...it's something ah need tae work on probably, ah think maybe drinks responsible for that and that causes a bit of conflict or it has done, you know what ah mean?"* [#4, 'domestic']

#### Sexual infidelity:

*"See when I'm drinking, I'll kinda argue a wee bit, I'm no usually wan fur arguing...and she just sits there and gives it...like fae me being a twat wae other lassies [i.e. unfaithful], know what I mean? Basically it's just a guy being a diddy."* [#15, 'general']

Similar to much other research in this area, a strong theme running through the perpetrator accounts was one of minimising, denying and blaming. The participants used a range of factors to minimise their responsibility, including minimising the level of abuse, denying it happened, blaming others for the abuse and blaming alcohol.

#### Minimise abuse:

*"We're always best pals the next day but it's never got physical until the time a came in here [prison] but even then a didn't, a only, a grabbed her ... I'm saying only, I grabbed her hair an' I slapped her one."* [#8, 'general']

#### Blame others:

*"Ah've only ever been physical and aggressive because ah've been scudded or they've been in ma face or they've tried tae claw me...Ah call it defending mase [myself] but other people may see it as being ah bit mental...Cos naebody could keep the last word in it, when sumbdy's always wantin' the last word whether it be me or her or whatever the situation is ah jus cannae keep ma gob shut sometimes"* [#5, 'domestic']

#### Blame alcohol:

*It just was coz I was drinking, me I was drinking and the missus was sober, I asked her coz I had a wee black out a couple of weeks before, and I was*

*near death, and I asked her to look after me, and then I woke up, next minute we're both arguing and that, and I walked oot."* [#6, 'domestic']

Overall the range of accounts provided reflect what we know from previous studies with similar groups. As with previous accounts, many of the responses can be interpreted as merely presenting excuses for abusive behaviour and as feeding into the 'alcohol as an excuse' understanding of this link.

However, further analysis presents a more complex picture. And the fact that these accounts reflect typical explanations in having an exculpatory aspect to them may allow us to tentatively suggest that these complexities may also be present in other IPV groups.

### *Cultural norms*

The 'nested ecological model' suggests that at a macrosystem level, cultural values greatly affect the occurrence of IPV. It was widely reported that alcohol misuse was normal in a Scottish context; that alcohol was a part of everyday experience, as was conflict.

*"Nothing else to do, if ma girlfriend, if me an' ma girlfriend'd planned something or we kept her wee girl that weekend she didn't go tae her gran's then we wouldn't drink or if we had money to go an' do something rather than sit in the house...but if it came to sitting in the house, we'd always drink...It's only £15 for a bottle of vodka so..."* [#8, 'general']

*"But it would be the weekends we would explode an' we'd always end up having too much tae drink. We would always have an argument, every weekend an' every weekend a would jus' phone ma Dad"* [#11, 'domestic']

The cultural acceptance of high levels of alcohol consumption was perhaps best observed from the perspective of a Polish participant.

*"...from what I saw over here [Scotland], that was the first thing that kind of struck me, that a lot of people are going to pub just after work you know and a lot of people well, I say a lot of people, at the weekend, in mid-afternoon, absolutely drunk like, proper drunk, will try to get up off streets... I'm not saying everybody does it. But you know, eh, I don't think you would see that in Poland"* [#3, 'domestic']

Our participants also reported strong cultural norms accepting both heavy alcohol use and use of violence with reference to their family of origin experiences.

*"...my Dad used to get a bit'a drink in him...My Dad used to batter us aw the time, hit my Ma"* [#2, 'domestic']

*"...my dad he was a drinker he was quite aggressive...I became quite nervous, I used to wet the bed and that, and I used to get hit for that as well ... I was full of fear... Skipping school and running away from the house and*

*that, mostly feart [frightened] of my da'... it wasnae just a slap... he'd pick up the nearest thing to him, like sticks or ashtrays ya know, so it was quite bad."* [#14, domestic]

Of interest in terms of a gendered social learning theory perspective, female parents' alcohol misuse was often cited as being a coping response to mistreatment from the male parent. This would support the view that boys growing up in homes where adult males consume alcohol and perpetrate abuse and adult females are victims of IPV and consume alcohol, learn different roles for men and women, different scripts for male and female adult intimate relationships, and different understandings of alcohol consumption by gender.

*"After her an' ma Dad split up when a was younger, a can always remember seeing ma mum drinking quite a lot a gin an' whisky an' stuff like that... aye, but ma Dad, he was a real eh, he was a right demon on the drink though."* [#11, 'domestic']

The physical setting for drinking alcohol was discussed by participants. There was evidence of a shift away from drinking in pubs and of a move to drinking more in domestic settings, often for reasons of expense and in response to the smoking ban.

*"See because like you used to go out to the pub and that and have a pint and now that's it's all changed now with the cigarettes ya cannae smoke in the pubs and it's quite dear as well drinking in a pub now, so I'll just go and buy like a case of lager from the supermarket or wherever its cheaper."* [#14, 'domestic']

*"Naebody goes tae the pub anymair [anymore] 'cause everybody's skint... auld jakes [alcoholics] and naebody there...obviously because everybody's skint. You cannae smoke in a pub anymair and it's jus' mair expensive noo"* [#5, 'domestic']

This relocation of leisure drinking has implications for the alcohol and IPV link. The observed link in our police data phase between domestic location, IPV and alcohol suggest some level of direct, proximal link between alcohol and IPV events. The participants' accounts of changes in behaviour may have interesting implications for policy makers in terms of unintended consequences of health related initiatives that increase price or otherwise restrict access to alcohol.

### *Alcohol Expectancies*

There were a number of individual and family factors, possibly linked to Dutton's 'Microsystem' and 'Ontogenic' levels of influence, reported by participants as relevant to IPV. Alcohol expectancies were highlighted in the Introduction as potentially having more of an influence on alcohol-related IPV than intoxication, and example of the 'indirect effects' model of the link.

Our participants identified alcohol as a positive option for relief of stress and as a social lubricant.

*"It [alcohol] relieves stress...Mental stuff and physical stuff...Financial stuff... Tae relieve stress and jus' tae chill an' have fun" [#7, 'general']*

However, they equally had strong expectancies of outcomes linked to intoxication.

*"Aye, ah reckon we all start oot to drink to be sociable and have a good time...But unfortunately, some people handle drink differently than others, some people can drink aw day and aw night and they're happy go lucky and other people can drink jus one drink too many an' all hell breaks loose" [#5, 'domestic']*

Mental ill-health was tied up with alcohol misuse; depression in particular, which is noted as a risk factor for IPV directly, perhaps suggesting a 'spurious effects' link, was described as both a precursor to, and a consequence of, alcohol intoxication. Consensus existed around the idea of alcohol blocking pain temporarily, but also the belief that, in lowering their inhibitions, alcohol allowed them to express their inner turmoil.

*"Once ah'm drinking it starts...it changes...Ah jus sit... sit n' greit [sob] know what ah mean, depression...But ah'm no wantin' to go down that road again and explaining what happened to me when ah was a kid... Ah was fae the age ae 12 ah got taken away from ma Mum an' ma Dad...In tae care, ah don't want tae go back down the road a what happened tae me but eh, ah will go down it right enough. I was sexually abused from ma family... I block things off through drink so..." [#2, 'domestic']*

*"I'm not a social drinker I tend to drink because I get depressed, it gives temporary... it alleviates it..." [#18, 'domestic']*

Even more so our participants reported clear beliefs that different people and different types of alcohol resulted in different outcomes.

### *Alcohol Type and Related Behaviours*

Participants reported strong beliefs that different alcohols had a different impact on behaviour. There was a clear rhetoric of a 'direct effect' set of beliefs, but given these are post-hoc accounts or even justifications of behaviour, and in the context of strong cultural beliefs about the impact of intoxication on behaviour, this may be more evidence of an 'indirect effects' link. The changes were not attributed to differing percentage levels of alcohol by volume but rather directly ascribed to the specific type of alcohol. Spirits and fortified wines in particular were identified as resulting in aggression in violence.

*"Ah never used tae drink wine ever, it was sort'ae mair like eh, ken like bottles a Grolsch and tins ae lager and Jack Daniels whisky, the dreaded whisky...Ah think the whisky sort'ae brung ma temper oot a wee bit...Aye well ah recall it bringing ma temper out a few times wi spirits eh? Ah've hud, ah've hud eh*

*anything that's ever sort'ae happened tae me wi temper or something like that has mostly been wi spirits..."* [#4, 'domestic']

*"[I drink] beer mostly, pints that is but I take occasional vodkas which makes me just, I dunno, it kinda changes your personality doesn't it? Bravado kinda way, I've finished wae vodka, that's the reason I broke my bail, vodka. I broke my bail to see my weans [children], I couldnae see my weans so..."* [#1, 'domestic']

Whilst spirits were discussed as invoking aggression, *Buckfast*, a tonic (caffeinated) wine, was overwhelmingly referred to as an emboldener, as well as a cause of aggression. Again there is strong reporting of belief in a 'direct effect' of alcohol, but perhaps more evidence of culturally formed 'indirect effects' link.

*"Bucky... it's got me into a couple of fights, aye, it gives ya dutch courage it gives ya a set of gahoolies."* [#15, 'general']

*"I think Buckfast brings oot the worst side ae me, well according to friends family partner stuff like that...just I get aggressive, my behaviour changes, I see red, stuff like that."* [#13, 'general']

Other attributions directly ascribed to intoxication were also identified. Alcohol was believed to result in lower social interaction skills, an inflated sense of self, emotional dysregulation, lowered moral standards and compromised decision-making relating to sexual behaviours. All of these independently are identified as risk factors in IPV events, potentially suggesting a 'spurious effects' model or at least suggesting that alcohol may moderate the impact of other factors such as poor conflict resolution skills rather than having a direct effect.

Moderator:

*"But ah'm mair abrupt when ah'm drunk obviously"* [#5, 'domestic']

*"I think I'm a genius when I'm drunk, I think I know everything, you know, I can be very patronising."* [#18, 'domestic']

*"It changes me a lot, when I've been drinking get a bit hyper and aw that, when I'm sober I'm quiet, wee shy wee boy."* [#6, 'domestic']

*"I've got morals and priorities when I'm sober; when I'm drunk...I'll just have a carry on"* [#7 'general']

*"Wakin' up next tae about an 18 stone woman who was obese ... it was scary. Nae disrespect tae the woman but that's just not ma thing...An' that's when ah stopped drinkin vodka"* [#5, 'domestic']

However, when considering the issue as to whether alcohol was seen as mediating or moderating factor in IPV, there was equivocal evidence. For example, whilst the accounts above may suggest that IPV might occur anyway due to the presence of



other risk factors, the account below, echoing the 'multiple thresholds model' described in the introduction', suggests that for some participants, IPV would not occur without the presence of alcohol.

Mediator:

*"...somebody says something like a snide remark I obviously I'd react on that, whereas sober I wouldnae react on it... If I was sober I would say ach away ya go chase yersel [go away], whereas drunk I wouldnae, I just obviously go all cards out, ya know what I mean" [#13, 'general']*

*".....efter a couple of cans you start to open up mair or ... she's had a couple of vodkas and you jus' start talking away, ah don't know, jus' one thing leads to another and something gets mentioned and it jus' sparks, know what ah mean?... an' either of us, it could be her or it could be me, it jus' triggers it, the alcohol's like a trigger, know what ah mean?... It triggers it aff and then away you go, one ae' us goes in to a rant and it starts getting louder but then...it jus' abates an' it jus' quiets down again...and what we arguing for?" [#1, 'domestic']*

### *Moderator and Mediator*

For some alcohol was referred to in such a way that it could be interpreted as both moderator, so making what would happen anyway worse, but also as mediator, so potentially leading to IPV where, if sober, this abuse would not occur.

*"...when ah'm drunk...calling her everything, know what a mean? An' a know she's no that, but a'll end up callin' her bad, really bad names." [#10 'domestic']*

*"...ah would say it [alcohol] helps tae make it a bit mair sort'ae, a bit mair aggro [conflict] in yer aen [own] mind [re jealousy] than it should be you know what ah mean?" [#4, 'domestic']*

Our participants also reported an awareness that alcohol misuse resulted in poor impulse control, compromised cognitions, and lack of attention to consequences.

*"You don't think about the trouble you're gonna get into you don't think a the consequences when you're drunk you just go and do it." [#8, 'general']*

Despite this high level of reported understanding of the cognitive, behavioural and interpersonal changes linked to alcohol intoxication, or possibly due to the strongly-held beliefs linking alcohol to IPV as a causal factor, alcohol-related offending was very high across participants, and ranged from relatively minor offending to extremely serious offending.

*"Every time I go drinking I'll end up out on the streets at night time, wrang [wrong] place at the wrang time, I'd end up shouting in the streets, getting done for breach of the peace...my mind just goes blank, coz I'm cooped up*

*in a house all morning, all night, and then I end up wanting to go out for a shout, and end up just goin' out."* [#6, 'domestic']

*"Well my murder involved alcohol... by the age of 17 and half I was quite a heavy drinker... we wanted more drink"* [#16, 'domestic']

Across the sample, there was an interesting contradiction where, in their own words, the men reported excessive alcohol consumption as leading to aggression and conflict but they would frequently excuse and justify such aggression as being a consequence of the alcohol itself, and far less discussion of their decision to imbibe. Instead of taking ownership of their decisions to knowingly achieve this inebriated state, many relied on alcohol as an excuse factor in their subsequent offending.

### *Football, Alcohol and Masculinities*

Considering Dutton's 'Exosystem' level of social context and subcultural values, football was centrally important to a large section of our participants. Some of the participants did not consider that football outcomes were or should be related to relationship conflict.

*"I used to support Rangers, fell out of it a bit now, em she support Celtic, Celtic would score she would nuts, if Rangers would score, but it doesnae mean just because eh Rangers and Celtic are playing your gonnae batter yer Mrs because your team got beat."* [#15, 'general']

*"I don't understand how people like they gae hame, you read about [about] it, they gae hame and kickin' fuck out their wives, no I don't understand that... at'aw, if their team get beat put their foot through the telly..."* [#1, 'domestic']

However, football was identified as a source of relationship conflict by others.

*"Cos it's always been football related between men and women, you know what ah mean, your wife's sittin in the house, know what ah mean...She starts it ...know what a mean? You've got tae finish it...She starts it with daft wee things around the hoose"* [#2, 'domestic']

And the known sectarian connotations of support for one or other of the auld firm were also widely discussed as a source of general conflict in the city. It seems that the stronger the identification with a football identity (of either partner), the greater the risk of alcohol-related IPV.

*"Well it's ['Auld Firm'] renound for a bit'ae the blood boiling in'it? See that, that's why ah chose Aberdeen [football club] when ah was a kid because the amount ae carry on that went on between ma mates about Celtic and Rangers,"* [#4, 'domestic']

*"Oh I can be, I can be a right bastard when Celtic get beat...I nearly smashed the hoose up...Ye just cannae talk to me, you've just got tae stay clear of me... 'Cause Celtic are better... I'd rather go and see Celtic playing than have sex wi Pamela Anderson or something, I being honest...The way I look at it wumin are always going to be there but the game's no." [#19, 'domestic']*

Different football affiliations and 'mixed-marriages' in terms of religion (Catholic and Protestant) were identified as problems also directly leading to relationship conflict, particularly around the time of specific matches or similarly affiliated cultural events and linked with alcohol.

*"She used to wind us up quite a lot when Rangers were winning all the time and usually got me quite upset, she would say quite, cause she was quite bitter and she was fae Ireland eh and she was in the walks an' that, the Orange Walk, eh and she was quite bitter and she used to wind me up quite a lot about the football, but I take it personally... 'cause she's bringing religion up and all that." [#14, 'domestic']*

*"...it's like Rangers and Celtic, St Mirren and Morton [other clubs], I don't see the point in like someone goin' wi, a Celtic fan going oot wi a Rangers fan, and a St Mirren fan goin' oot wi' [dating] a Morton fan, it always led tae trouble aw' the time, if they're drinking it always ends up bad." [#6, 'domestic']*

Tribal rivalry between opposing football fans was seen as being worsened by alcohol.

*"...when there's a game on you see them all before the game, you see them aw coming back from the shop wi crates a beer an' there's the lassies wi the bottle a wine an' that. Obviously when you've got that, aw that drink, there's going tae be trouble, it doesnae matter if it's a footbaw game or whether it's a concert or whatever." [#11, 'domestic']*

From our participant accounts it appeared that the particular context of football, the cultural expectation of violence linked to football, alcohol consumption associated with football and specific direct emotional responses to football wins and losses are all influential. In theoretical terms the importance of taking a multi-level approach, similar to the 'nested ecological model' to address this area is clear. Alcohol is referred to more as a moderator or as having an indirect effect via sub-cultural values, in this context than as a mediator or as having a 'direct effect'.

#### *Gendered view of Alcohol Consumption*

Also at the 'Exosystem' level but possibly also at a 'Macrosystem' level, as explained earlier, see footnote there were strongly expressed cultural and sub-cultural views about gender and alcohol. Across the participants there was a very strong sense that alcohol consumption was different, and should be different, for men and women.

*"...should both men and women drink in the same way?" [LI]*

*"Naw, ah dinnae think they should, ah think women should be mair [more] caring, know what I mean? ...mair conscious when they drink...especially with aw the wennis [children] an' aw that" [#1, 'domestic']*

*"I dinnae like it when women drink pints or that, it doesnae seem right, ken whit a mean, but a lot of them do nowadays ken...ken [know] what disgusts us is lassies talking horrible... I'm a wee bitty old fashioned that way." [#12, 'domestic']*

Drunken women were seen as a particular problem.

*"...they act different I think... they make a fool of themselves most times when ladies are drunk, they drink, they get drunk dead easy and they do bizarre things." [#14, 'domestic']*

*"Men can handle their drink, women cannae... Know what ah mean, we can handle it, you's [referring to researcher, LI] cannae. Ah mean so in a way it's different seeing a man and a woman, know what a mean? Men can handle their drink, women cannae dae it...mair alcohol you's get, the mair fights you's want tae cause" [#2, 'domestic']*

These gendered views of appropriate drinking were expressed as general views (as above) and also as relating specifically to their partners and particular incidents. There was a theme of blaming victim's drinking for being a cause of IPV or certainly of relationship conflict.

In both accounts below whilst the participants identify alcohol as problematic, there are clearly other factors present. In the first account our participant starts by discussing his partner's drinking but recognises he has an issue with jealousy, a risk factor for IPV. In the second account the participant's attempt to control his partner's drinking, her violence and his previous record is presented as the reason for his arrest.

Jealousy, blame victim drinking:

*"I start gettin' annoyed wi' her an' the things she does when she's drunk...She's not that bad, she dunt do anything wrong...It's just me...I jus' don't like the way she acts in front of people... an' there's nuthing wrong wi' what she's doing really...I jus' get jealous" [#8, 'general']*

Blame victim drinking:

*"A picked the bottle up went in tae the kitchen which was next door, started pouring the gin down the sink, ma missus came in, punched me tae stop me pouring the gin away, shoutin' at me, don't you pour ma fucking drink away, this is how important this bottle is tae her...no what a mean, the off-licences were shut, she knew that, she couldnae get any mair [more] so a was pouring the last of her drink down the sink...So anyway, she punched me,*

*wasnae the first time...the neighbour had heard me shoutin', the neighbour phoned the polis...the polis, walk in tae the hoose as ah'm still shoutin' at her about being punched, she's hit me quite a good whack...They didnae even listen tae what had happened...Because of ma previous at court, the judge remanded me, a got a six week remand for that, just for shoutin about being hit."* [#11, 'domestic']

Thus, whilst on the surface both could be taken as evidence of victim drinking as a problem, an element of desired 'control' is clear in both. Thus alcohol may be a trigger for IPV, victim drinking may be the context, but possibly, linking back to mainstream theories of IPV (Pence & Paymar, 1993) the more causal factor is the perpetrator desire for control.

### *Heterogeneity in IPV and different roles*

One major theme identified in the introduction is that current research recognises many types of domestic violence and IPV (Johnson and Ferraro's (2000); Gilchrist et al, 2003).

Whilst full psychological assessment was not possible within this research, for both practical and ethical reasons, the use of qualitative interviews was felt to offer the opportunity to explore the pattern and nature of our participants behaviours and the inclusion in our interview sample of both general offenders and domestic offenders, was felt to have given us the opportunity to compare the specifically generally violent men with IPV men.

However, similarly to the data collected in the second quantitative phase of our research, there were no differences identified. Throughout the report the participants have been identified as IPV or general and there were no thematic differences to separate these groups. Those identified as IPV appear to hold beliefs similar to those who commit general violence, and those marked as having committed general violence appear to hold beliefs supportive of IPV and indeed reported as high levels of relationship conflict as the specifically marked group.

This general offender expressed very similar views to others convicted of IPV.

*"Em, I was drinking a lot and she was, she didnae drink at the time and she was jus' sick'ie it, an' jus' everything in general an' it jus' all boiled up an' everything was shit at the time it was fawin' [falling] apart, em, then one of ma pals was in the hoose an' she started moaning in front of him an' shoutin' at me an' all that an' I was like that 'Shut Up' an' then she jus' kept going on an' on an' on an' I jus' shouted 'SHUT UP' an' I jus' flung the remote an' it hit off her heid [head], an' then she went in to the toilet greetin' [sobbing] an' then I went to say to her 'Sorry, I didnae actually mean tae hit you on the heid' because it was a pure belter o'a shot, like it wasnae meant at all the remote broke an' it was actually quite heavy the remote was one a' they all in one ones...Em, I said sorry an' that tae her an' then I fucked off with ma pal, five minutes later jus' tae get oot cos I was still, she was still bustin' ma nut even though I felt bad...an' I still had tae go away an' then I went away tae*

*ma pal's hoose, jus' sat had a drink an' then I said 'Look, listen ah'm going tae go an' went along to the hoose and I spoke to her and I says sorry an' that. Everything was getting out of hand, an' she jus' still started going on, she knows best an' aw that, an' then we came to a solution that I shouldnae drink! [laughs]. Because she was going like 'Ya fuckin' alchy bastard' an' aw that... 'All you care about is money for the booze'" [#7, 'general']*

### *Complex cases, alcohol multiple roles*

Overall our participants were keen to present their violence as out of control drunken mistakes fuelled by specific types of alcohol and driven by factors out of their control but within their accounts there were clear elements of entitlement, control, gendered beliefs and sexual jealousy.

The account below is a clear example of an incident where alcohol has a central role, but not as a disinhibitor, nor as a mediator or moderator, but as a chronic factor in a relationship; as a drain on family resources; as a co-occurring factor alongside high levels of selfishness, entitlement and manipulation.

*"Me and girlfriend were arguing, things were all boiled up because of ma behaviour and ma drinkin' and then she gave me money to go out and get a 'chinky [Chinese meal], I fucked off wi' the money and bought drink and met ma pal, took drugs an' then he had to go to work the next day so I got a bus in to the toon, and then I came hame, I pressed her buzzer an' she says 'Yer no gettin' in' [laughs]. An' I says 'C'mon, please, I've no money, let us in' and she didnae let us in...sum'dy else came oot the close and I went up and I says 'Gee'us ma bike an' I'll go tae ma Da's' an' she says 'Naw, because I'll open the door and you'll jus' come in and you'll cause shit and wake the wean [child] up an' aw that', I says 'I won't', she says 'Go down the stair and press the buzzer, an' I'll put the bike oot' so I went doon and I pressed the buzzer, an' she answered it an' she went 'Right, two seconds' an' then I ran up the back stairs an' when she opened the door an' I went in an' she got the wean and left an' went roon tae her neighbours and the polis came an' I barricaded the door an' told them, if they were going tae come in I was going tae slit ma throat...an' jump oot the windae [window] an' fuckin' hit them wi' a hammer and a knife...then, they were there for a wee while, an' I jus' end up putting mair [more] stuff behind the door an' they got a stihl saw and they hingmied the door down an' I looked roond and they sprayed me wi' the spray an' I was stondin' in the hall an' they all jus' came barging in wi' shields an' bats an' all that...that's how I ended up in jail" [7, 'general']*

The range of issues in this account highlights well known features of IPV, self-focus, narcissism, male preference and entitlement, dominance of male needs and desires, and manipulation of partner and child, use of threats, manipulation and shows very clearly the complexity of the relationships between IPV and alcohol in current UK society.

## Summary

This chapter has described the main themes from qualitative interviews into the roles of alcohol in intimate partner abuse. Our participants described their behaviour similarly to previous research citing a need for control, loss of control, entitlement and jealousy as factors linked to relationship conflict. They also used similar factors to account for their behaviour: minimising, denying and blaming (others, the victim, and alcohol). There was a strong belief in alcohol having a direct impact on behaviour, but perhaps more evidence of an indirect effect via alcohol expectancies, and strong cultural, sub-cultural and family beliefs relating to alcohol. Women were expected to drink differently from men, and women's drinking resulted in them being held more accountable for conflict whilst men's drinking reduced their responsibility.



## Discussion

Relating our data back to the research questions:

*Is alcohol associated with IPV incidents as recorded by the police?*

The quantitative data suggests that there is a link between alcohol and IPV, with around two-thirds of incidents known to the police involving at least one party (whether the victim and/or, more usually, the accused) being 'under the influence'.

*Do fluctuations in numbers of IPV incidents, and in particular alcohol-related IPV incidents, appear to link with significant social events (specifically culturally significant football matches)?*

There are fluctuations with football matches, but also a link to other significant cultural events such as New Year. Additionally some incidents appear to take place around mealtimes, thus the link between drinking times and IPV must be considered with caution as few would seek to explain IPV with reference to food. There appears to be an influence from the drinking context (e.g. sports, New Year). Perhaps cultural expectancies which influence both alcohol and masculinity/gender roles are implicated in that football, even when not linked to local identity, as indicated by the 'spike' in IPV linked to a Euro-football game, but perhaps not at the time of a Euro song contest (when alcohol sales may also increase)?

*Do convicted, conflicted and contented participants differ by reported alcohol use, level of relationship conflict or alcohol-related expectancies?*

Yes, our groups differed as the convicted were more risky drinkers (according to AUDIT scores) and associated their drinking with aggression more (according to ARAQ) than the conflicted, and both reported more conflict than the contented.

*How do participants construct the relationship between alcohol and IPV?*

From qualitative interviews, our participants considered alcohol to have a direct effect on their behaviour and did sometimes present alcohol as an exculpatory factor. There was a high level of alcohol-related expectancy, particularly a belief that alcohol caused violence and sexual jealousy. However, there were clear indications of cultural, sub-cultural, familial and contextual influences on the nature of the link between alcohol and IPV and our participants were aware of the role of those other factors. Gender and alcohol use were intertwined and had an interesting impact on beliefs about IPV in that when women were drinking they were held more accountable for conflict, whilst when men were drinking they were held to be less accountable.

*What support is there for the previously proposed theoretical links between alcohol and IPV: spurious link, direct effects and indirect effect? Alcohol as a mediator or alcohol as a moderator?*

There was a strong belief in 'direct effects' model, but more evidence of an indirect effect. For some, alcohol and IPV did appear only to be spuriously linked, and alcohol appeared to serve as both a mediator and a moderator in this group of participants. Alcohol as an excuse for IPV needs to be challenged in terms of the



justice system and service-providers, given that abusers are well aware that their alcohol use enables, emboldens, and socially justifies their actions.

Two findings worth highlighting were the interaction between gender and alcohol such that women are blamed if they consume alcohol and men are excused. The second, linked finding is that previously alcohol has been considered mostly at an individual level and often as an inappropriate excuse for IPV, our data suggests that alcohol is a factor which needs to be considered at a cultural, sub-cultural, familial and personal level for it to be fully understood. Alcohol does not need to be present for IPV to occur, but worsens outcomes and severity on a range of measures and alcohol interrelates to IPV in many more ways than drunkenness.

It is worth noting that alcohol's roles in partner abuse were not restricted to intoxication (loss of control / expressive aggression) but also issues surrounding to male entitlement to drink and the financial burden that this could place on household budgets (e.g. spend on his drinking instead of family meals).

Whilst we sought to conduct the best research we could, there were some unavoidable limitations to the research. Our police data is compromised by the reporting mechanisms available to different groups of people, for example, the high number of call-outs to deprived areas may in-part be due to neighbours being more able to hear conflict in these areas, whereas elsewhere the built environment may reduce this.

We were very successful in gathering data from all our groups and qualitative data from the perpetrator groups, but less successful in accessing qualitative data from those not involved in the criminal justice system or from victims/survivors. Victim recruitment has not been a problem with IPV studies<sup>4</sup> before and it is possible that the excuse paradigm had an impact on recruitment and perhaps victim/survivors were less willing to take part due to the possibility of supporting the 'excuse' paradigm. Indeed our conflicted group's low AUDIT scores may reflect a social desirability bias (e.g. it is possible that they feel disclosure of drinking could make them appear blameworthy). These are issues, along potential selection bias, which future research should seek to address.

## Conclusions

There is no distinction between DV offenders and general offenders in terms of reported drinking and conflict.

In accounts of drinking and violence:

- Alcohol is often cited as the cause of conflict
- Alcohol expectancies and cultural, sub-cultural and familial beliefs about alcohol appear to be more influential.

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<sup>4</sup> Robinson & Spilsbury (2008) identifies over 160 studies based on victims of IPV in 2005 indicating this group as being generally accessible

- Women's drinking is seen as a problem, to the extent that when women drink they are blamed more, whilst when men drink they are excused.

Alcohol is far more than a potential excuse for IPV. By paying close attention to how alcohol is used to explain or excuse IPV, we can develop a far better understanding of social and cultural constructions of alcohol, gender and alcohol-related expectancies. Alcohol appears to play various roles in IPV offending, we need to link this to different patterns of offending and risk to better understand the implications.

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