OCCUPATIONAL MASCULINITY
AND
BOUNCERS

by

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Occupational Masculinity and Bouncers

Introduction

This thesis focuses on the occupational masculinity of bouncers and how bouncers, owners, managers, and police perceive and construct masculinity in the entertainment industry. It will explore how a manifestation of occupational masculinity in security guards shapes their work in licensed entertainment venues on the Hobart waterfront.

On Friday and Saturday night, many people gather in pubs and clubs on the Hobart waterfront to socialise, have fun, and relax. To attract and ensure people have an enjoyable time, many licensed venue owners and managers supply entertainment in the form of live music or discos. The owners are also in the business of making a profit from their enterprise and to ensure that this is achieved promote their venue as being better than any others are in the area. This is usually by advertising that at some stage of the night "happy hours" (drinks at half price or less) will be held and some form of entertainment will be on offer.

However, owners and managers also have a responsibility to ensure the safety of their patrons. Owners and managers usually achieve this by employing security guards or bouncers to ensure the safety of patrons. Bouncers are generally physically large males and are the first point of contact when people enter many licensed premises on the Hobart waterfront. There are normally two bouncers located at the entrance of the entertainment venues, with the task of screening patrons wishing to enter. Recent changes to legislation that controls the service of alcohol and security guards in Tasmania have had significant implications for the entertainment industry. These changes have included licensing and regulation of security guards and restrictions on serving alcohol to patrons who appear to be intoxicated. However, given the nature of the licensed entertainment industry and the types of patrons who frequent many of the venues on the Hobart waterfront interpersonal violence does occasionally occur.

Manifestations of interpersonal violence in many licensed venues are mainly due to conflict between young males (Briscoe and Donnelly, 2001). The first
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intervention into eruptions of interpersonal violence between patrons is the security guard or bouncer. The intervention of bouncers coupled with the gathering of diverse groups of males from different backgrounds within licensed entertainment venues raises two important issues,

1. How are occupational masculinities within the private security industry constructed given the prevalence of concerns about safety and violence and;

2. How does occupational masculinity influence how bouncers react to violence in the licensed venues?

In chapter one, a general discussion on the social forces that shape the construction of masculine roles will be followed by exploring the way in which masculinity is internalised and how the aspects of hegemonic masculinity are utilised by bouncers. Chapter two will discuss the way in which the nighttime economy has developed and how the changes have brought challenges to traditional policing roles of the state. This will be followed by a discussion on the growth of private policing in the entertainment industry and how this has affected both commercial and state interests. In chapter three, the methods and methodologies used in this study will be described followed by a description of the Hobart waterfront and how bouncers work in this area. The description of the waterfront and the patrons that frequent this area is based on unobtrusive observation used by the author on Friday and Saturday nights. Chapter four will explore qualitative data gathered in the interviews with bouncers, police, owners and managers of entertainment venues on the waterfront. This chapter will also review the statistical data supplied by the police department on the number, the location, and the nature of the offences responded to by police. In the final chapter, the issues and finding will be brought together to suggest that male bouncers tend to construct a masculine image that creates and inflates the incidence of violence on the waterfront.