

**Social locations: class, gender and young people's alcohol consumption in a digital world.**

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## **PART II Youth drinking cultures in a digital world: Variations across social locations**

### **Chapter 4: *Social locations: Class, gender and young people's alcohol consumption in a digital world***

*Lin Bailey and Christine Griffin*

#### ***Introduction***

We provide an overview of how class and gender have been theorised in young people's drinking cultures across different countries. We consider how recent moral panics over young people's public drinking are often highly gendered and class-specific, problematizing certain social groups of young people as 'flawed consumers' and 'at risk' groups. At present there is a small yet growing body of research exploring the gendered nature of young people's drinking cultures, but there is very little work exploring how gender intersects with social class. Even fewer studies have explored how gender and class play out in young people's online drinking cultures. We show that recent research is beginning to investigate the classed and gendered dimensions of youth drinking cultures on- and offline.

#### ***Theorising class (and gender) in neoliberal times***

The concept of class is multifaceted and is generally understood as a means of positioning and classifying (young) people (Furlong and Cartmel, 1997). Youth researchers have drawn on theorists from Marx to Bourdieu to argue that young peoples' lived experiences and cultural practices in many national contexts are shaped by social class, framing their access to both economic and cultural resources (Willis, 1977; Reay, 1998; McCulloch et al., 2006). With the emergence of neoliberalism and debates over globalization, social class has increasingly been understood as involving more than a system of stratification. Writers such as Skeggs, Tyler, Lawler, Ringrose and Walkerdine have posited a new cultural perspective, theorising class as profoundly constitutive in the neoliberal order. They see young people's lives as shaped through a process that is simultaneously classed, gendered and racialised, taking different forms in different local and national contexts (Skeggs, 2004; Tyler, 2015; Lawler, 2005; Ringrose and Walkerdine, 2008).

Neoliberalism is generally understood as a form of political and economic rationality characterised by privatisation, deregulation and attempts to 'roll back the state' from many

areas of social provision (Hall, 2011). A key element of neoliberalism is the attempt to constitute new forms of subjectivity, especially around a particular form of individualism that has been viewed as a powerful (and new) form of governance (Rose, 1989). In the leisure sphere, it is argued that the neoliberal project involves an obligation to express one's 'true' self, to display oneself as a free and autonomous being, as if unfettered by the constraints of waged work and traditional social expectations (Ringrose and Walkerdine, 2008). Public displays of (bounded) pleasure, (calculated) hedonism and (managed) risk operate as evidence of one's freedom, especially in the context of young people's drinking practices (Griffin et al., 2009a; Szmigin et al., 2008). Behind this mirage of unfettered individualistic hedonism and 'free choice', long-standing patterns of inequality and social exclusion based around class, gender and race remain in force for young people in many parts of the world (Furlong and Cartmel, 1997; Harris, 2004; Nayak and Kehily, 2013; Reay, 1998; Sansone, 1995).

The neoliberal order exhorts subjects to act with moderation as active, rational individuals who are likely to be held responsible and accountable for their actions (Steinberg and Johnson, 2003). In relation to alcohol consumption, young people are called on to 'let go' and 'have fun' within a 'culture of intoxication' in affluent societies across the world (Measham and Brain, 2005). The conditions in which this heavy drinking culture of 'determined drunkenness' has emerged varies in different national and local contexts (Measham, 2006), but it tends to operate through opposing and simultaneous forces of seduction and repression, such that young people are seduced into a culture of normalised heavy drinking, whilst simultaneously being pathologized as disordered and disorderly 'binge drinkers' (Szmigin et al., 2008). McCreanor and colleagues have argued that the marketing of alcohol to young people within this culture of intoxication encourages 'intoxigenic identities' (McCreanor et al., 2005).

Alcohol consumption that is deemed 'inappropriate' in popular media and policy discourses constitutes individuals as 'flawed consumers' in need of regulation (Skeggs, 2004; Griffin et al., 2009b). The ways in which young drinkers are subject to social sanctions and state regulation is also shaped by class, race and gender. Tyler (2008) argues that certain 'social types' become publicly imagined as excessive and caricatured figures that are produced as representative of the working classes. These imagined figures are represented in emotive ways that (re)produce forms of (gendered and racialized) class disgust (Tyler, 2008). Such

processes pathologise the alcohol consumption practices of working-class young people, which is most apparent in the ways working-class young women drinkers are frequently represented as excessive, immoral and out of control (Skeggs, 2005).

Working class young people's drinking practices have been argued to epitomise the fears and fascinations of the middle-class. In stark contrast, the middle class are constituted as moral, self-regulating and as ardent yet appropriately restrained consumers, accruing value as 'ideal' neoliberal subjects (Skeggs, 2004). Middle class culture is constituted as 'right' and 'normal' whereas working class culture is frequently pathologised as excessive, irresponsible and/or inadequate in comparison. As Lawler has argued in the British context: "Class is being configured in terms of culture and identity, and 'damaged' or 'faulty' identities are conferred on working class people by middle class observers" (Lawler, 2005, p.803).

Gender, class, religion and race feature in highly uneven, complex and contradictory ways in post-Fordist economies across the world. Reviewing the operation of social relations around youth and gender in relation to social inequalities across a range of countries, Nayak and Kehily (2013) argue that social inequalities are becoming reconfigured within affluent countries in late modernity and enmeshed with gender regulation and gender identities. They consider the ways in which the Western ideas of 'global community' and cosmopolitan citizenship are ambivalent and fragmented, suggesting that "cultural flows are incorporated into local practices and given new meaning" (2013, p.160). Thus within the reconfigurations of the local and the cosmopolitan, marginalised young people rework localized identities through global consumption practices. The proliferation of online social networking sites has facilitated the growth of global consumer culture. Social networking sites such as Facebook provide a global system of networked interacting publics, providing tools that shape identities and normative consumption practices (Boyd, 2012; van Dijck, 2013).

Griffiths and Casswell have argued that the widespread and increased marketing of alcohol to young people via social media produces 'intoxigenic digital spaces' which reinforce the pervasive culture of intoxication (Griffiths and Casswell, 2010). Social media platforms now play a central role in many young people's drinking practices and drinking cultures (McCreanor et al., 2013). Many young adults in Western societies regularly engage in heavy drinking episodes with friends and share these practices via digital images and ongoing interactions on social media (Niland et al., 2014). Both alcohol consumption and social media

use are valued sites of leisure and pleasure for young people, tied to the formation of identities and the maintenance of sociability (Lyons et al., 2015). Such practices are also gendered and classed, since gendered and classed identities are (re)enacted and (re)created through both alcohol consumption (Griffin et al., 2013) and social media practices (Niland et al., 2014; Cook and Hasmath, 2014). As drinking events and sociability have become routinely mediated through social networking sites, displaying, sharing and commenting on drinking practices between young people has produced novel, evolving negotiations around ‘appropriate’ and ‘inappropriate’ masculinities and femininities (Hutton et al., 2016). Relatively few studies have examined the ways in which young people themselves produce and make sense of online portrayals of alcohol consumption, the values and affective dimensions that are involved, and how these are gendered. The ways in which such social media practices are classed, and how they might differ for young people from different social class groups, has scarcely been explored at all, beyond overarching discussions of the ‘digital divide’ (Norris, 2011).

### ***Moral panics and the problematization of young drinkers***

#### *‘Binge drinking’: Framing working-class youth as excessive drinkers in policy discourses and public health campaigns*

Young people are hailed by the alcohol industry through increasingly sophisticated marketing techniques, yet at the same time they are constituted as a problematic group of alcohol consumers, especially in popular media representations, alcohol policies, and health and safety campaigns. Young drinkers are frequently vilified in popular media culture, or portrayed as a grotesque spectacle, fuelling moral panics around ‘binge drinking’ (Griffin et al., 2009a; Hackley et al., 2008; Hayward and Hobbs, 2007). Media representations of young people’s drinking practices are frequently characterised by shock, outrage and intense concern across a range of international contexts (Brown and Gregg, 2012; Fry, 2010; Hackley et al., 2008; Hutton et al., 2013; Peralta et al., 2010). These include voyeuristic TV documentaries, newspaper ‘scare stories’ and social media sites that focus on representations of young people as excessive and irresponsible ‘binge drinkers’ (Griffin et al., 2009a).

This focus on problematic ‘binge drinkers’ is not a neutral process as far as class, gender and race is concerned. The anxieties (re)produced in government alcohol policy documents and

health education campaigns are counter-balanced by the widespread representation of drunken working class youth in structured reality TV shows and documentaries such as *Ibiza Uncovered*, first aired in the UK in the late 1990s portraying British youth drinking heavily and engaging in hedonistic sexual behaviour on holidays abroad. More recent versions in the USA, such as *The Jersey Shore* which aired from 2009 to 2012, portray young men and women drinking heavily, participating in frequent sexual encounters and physical altercations. Currently on air in Britain is *The Only Way is Marbs*, portraying young people from Essex in South East England holidaying in Marbella in Spain. These shows draw viewers into voyeuristic positions as spectators to scenes of drunken excess and chaos, with predominantly heterosexual, white working class young people operating as a source of entertainment to be ridiculed, derided and scorned (Wood and Skeggs, 2007).

Such discourses of panic about youth alcohol consumption tend to constitute young working-class people as particularly abject, disordered consumers (Tyler, 2013). As Lawler (2005) argues, this avoids troubling the investments made in middle class young people as future 'ideal' neoliberal subjects. Kolind (2011) studied youth intoxication amongst 66 young people aged 15-16 years in Denmark and found that middle class teenagers deliberately drink towards drunkenness in controlled settings where they can safely experiment with drinking. Whereas young people from working class families engage in risk taking behaviour within unbounded consumption, a form of consumption engaged in by young people who do not feel included in mainstream society (Kolind, 2011) or who are excluded and prohibited from mainstream consumption (Nayak, 2006). Engaging in unbounded risk taking and valuing excessive unbounded alcohol consumption can create a sense of agency and competence for young people who are in disempowered circumstances. However, the usual outcome is being labelled as an 'at risk' group which only serves to further marginalise these young people (Kolind, 2011).

Working class cultural practices are constituted as a problem, and rather than considering such activities as products of the pressures of working class existence, working class people are criticised for the way they live their lives (Lawler, 2005). Desirable forms of alcohol consumption are linked to being a valuable citizen, and 'irresponsible' drinking constitutes individuals as problematic subjects (Haydock, 2014). Working class young people's drinking is cast as especially irresponsible, so panics over young people's 'binge drinking' operate to

reinforce the view of working class youth (especially young women) as particularly difficult subjects (Tyler, 2008; Skeggs, 2004, 2005).

British Alcohol Strategy policy documents of 2004 and 2007 and the more recent 'Responsibility Deal' of 2012 oriented government policies around a neoliberal discourse of responsibility. This built on the panic over youthful 'binge drinkers' identified as a particular focus of concern by the then New Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair (Cabinet Office, 2004, 2007). The 2007 Alcohol Strategy policy document '*Safe, Sensible, Social*' broadened this discourse of responsibility to include families, schools and other community representatives, such that individuals' drinking behaviour could be attributed to personal responsibility and community obligation (Hackley et al., 2008; Lavery et al., 2015). This obscured the responsibility of the state and of alcohol producers, marketers and retailers, who make considerable financial gain from young people's alcohol consumption. Locating families and community representatives as responsible for young people's drinking constructed those lacking resources as failures, constituting young people and communities in difficult circumstances as the primary perpetrators of problematic drinking.

In the UK context, Haydock has argued that government drinking policies are a key way in which class is constituted (Haydock, 2014). Within the British Government's 2012 Alcohol Strategy document, a certain type of drinker is constituted as a 'binge drinker'. Even though 'binge drinking' is discussed as a pervasive problem, it is constituted in classed terms as an activity engaged in by particular social groups. In the case of alcohol regulation different forms of inequality become implicated in 'binge drinking' and drunken behaviour in a way that condemns young working class people as particularly problematic and irresponsible drinkers (Haydock, 2014). This has striking similarities with National Alcohol Strategies in Australia and New Zealand, where considerable attention is paid to young people as 'excessive' drinkers, focussing on their presumed lack of personal responsibility (Brown and Gregg, 2012; Hutton et al., 2013; Waite et al., 2011).

The constitution of young people as irresponsible drinkers is also clearly displayed in health education campaigns. For example the National Binge Drinking Campaign (2008) in Australia represented young people between the ages of 15 to 25 as potentially irresponsible drinkers. The campaign title '*Don't turn a night out into a nightmare*' exhorted young people to be responsible consumers, including a series of posters portraying highly intoxicated

young people in a variety of disastrous predicaments entitled ‘*What are you doing to yourself?*’. Haydock (2014) points out that these campaigns do not so much focus on crime and risk management or even health risks but are designed to engender a sense of reflection and disgust in young drinkers. The intention is to improve young people’s self-discipline and reduce their alcohol consumption by drawing on neoliberal discourses of individual self-regulation.

#### *Dimensions of class and gender in contemporary moral panics*

The gendered dimensions of contemporary moral panics over youthful drinking are enmeshed with class in manifold ways, since drinking and drunkenness retains its traditional association with hegemonic masculinity, and female drinking, especially to excess, is still constructed as unfeminine (Griffin et al., 2009a; Willott and Lyons, 2012). Women’s heavy drinking is linked with working class femininity, whilst traditional ‘hard-drinking’ remains associated with working class masculinity (Bell, 2008; Day et al., 2003; 2004; Griffin et al., 2013; Skeggs, 2005).

The 1990s saw the emergence of the reviled figure of the ‘ladette’ in British popular culture (Jackson and Tinkler, 2007). These young women were represented as drinking to excess, as (too) independent and distinctly unfeminine, as well as inappropriately masculine. Redden and Brown (2010) have pointed to the classed dimension of this derided figure in their analysis of the UK TV series *Ladette to Lady*. UK newspaper articles have frequently associated young women’s drinking with criminal activities, reckless behaviour and a wide range of health problems associated with normative femininity reinforcing the construction of women’s drinking as irresponsible and distasteful (Day et al., 2004; Jackson and Tinkler, 2007).

More recently, young women have been expected to adopt a particular ‘look’ for going out drinking in the night time economy (hereafter NTE), involving a form of hyper-sexual femininity, including short revealing outfits, heavy makeup and high-heeled shoes (Bailey, 2012; Bailey et al., 2015; Bell, 2008). Working class women have generally been associated with such displays of hyper-sexual femininity, which are further condemned when linked with their heavy drinking. Working class women’s femininities are constructed as lacking, abject, and as ‘what not to be’, set against the feminine ‘ideal’ embodied by the normative image of ‘respectable’ white middle class femininity (Redden and Brown, 2010; Ringrose



and Walkerdine, 2008). Skeggs (1997; 2005) has argued that white and black working-class women have long been constituted as sexual objects, as sexually available and lacking the respectability associated with white middle-class femininity.

Watts et al. (2015) have demonstrated how UK health campaign advertisements blame and shame young women drinkers in particular, exhibiting gendered double standards. The 2008 'Know Your Limits' campaign, funded by the UK Home Office, had the strap line: '*You wouldn't start a night like this...so why end it that way?*' (BBC News Online, 2008). A dominant narrative portrayed a dishevelled young woman covered in vomit, with ripped clothes and smudged makeup (Hackley et al., 2011; Watts et al., 2015). Such images construct drunken young women as transgressing normative femininity, and although not explicitly classed, they resonate with wider circulating discourses in which young white working class heterosexual women are represented as what Skeggs has termed "the constitutive limit" of excess (Skeggs, 2004). Likewise gendered double standards are embedded in cautionary tales in Australian campaigns where depictions of drunken young women are often linked to victimized sex insinuating women's drunkenness is constituted as responsible for actions performed by men (Brown and Gregg, 2012).

Considerable public attention is focussed on the activities of young women's 'excessive' alcohol consumption, especially online (Shields Dobson, 2014). Websites and social media platforms devoted to representations of drunken celebrities and non-celebrities alike display disproportionately more images of young women compared to young men (Bell, 2008). Young working class female celebrities such as Kerry Katatona and the late Amy Winehouse appear as scapegoats in moral panics surrounding young women's drinking more generally (Bell, 2008). Perceived lack of morality is inherent in the pathologisation of working class young women's behaviour and this can be seen clearly in moral judgements concerning young working class female celebrities whose 'wild excessive' behaviour is frequently constituted as symptomatic of 'mental illness' beyond the bounds of normative, respectable femininity (Bell, 2008). Such representations frequently constitute working class women who have become celebrities as exemplars of female 'bad behaviour'. Thus "binge-drinking, vulgarity, sexual excess and single motherhood predominate in the construction of both celebrity and 'real life' women as 'offensive'" (Tyler and Bennett, 2010, p.388).

Linking the older figure of the 'ladette' with more recent concerns over 'hyper sexy girls', Shields Dobson has argued that moral panics in contemporary popular media discourses about young womanhood are frequently organised in a "binary-oppositional fashion" (2014, p. 253). That is, femininity is increasingly constructed around "notions of (hyper, hetero-normative) 'sexiness' ... aspects of masculinity, namely sexual hedonism and social, drinking-centred hedonism [that] have conditionally opened up to young women" (2014, p.253). Shields Dobson argues that while both the figure of the 'sexy girl' and the 'laddish girl' are "to some extent deplored and constructed as 'excessive' and 'transgressive' in recent media discourses, they are also both normalised and publicly imag(in)ed through such discourses as central post-feminist paradigms of young womanhood" (2014, p.253). Her point is important here, since Shields Dobson shows how these two linked representations of unacceptable and inappropriate femininity can be simultaneously derided and operate as normative figures. Alcohol consumption, class and gender form central elements of both the 'sexy girl' and the 'ladette'.

While young working class women drinkers are frequently represented as a threat to the gender order through exhibiting 'wild' unfeminine behaviour in a perceived masculine domain, young working class male drinkers have also figured in contemporary moral panics. Drinking to excess is still associated with traditional and working-class forms of masculinity (de Visser and Smith, 2007; Tomsen, 1997) and concerns over working-class young men's drunkenness are linked to wider fears about the state of contemporary society (Thurnell-Read, 2013). As an example, the 'lager lout' emerged from earlier media discourses of anxiety and disgust reflected in moral panics over 'football hooliganism' in the UK during the 1970s and '80s (Cohen, 2011). Thomas Thurnell-Read has argued that moral panics centred on the feared figure of the 'lager lout' have shifted to focus on young male 'binge drinkers' (Thurnell-Read, 2013).

Such discourses of moral panic have seldom focussed on the heavy drinking practices of upper and upper middle class young men such as the public school Oxbridge educated members of the current British Conservative government. Although there is a long history of ritualised drinking to excess amongst upper-class young men, this often takes place in the more secluded spaces of university colleges or private school grounds. In the event of more public displays of drunken excess, this elite group have the money to buy themselves out of trouble (Ronay, 2008). The upper class as a whole is seldom subject to

the same level of horrified moral outrage and disgust that has been directed at the drinking practices of white working-class youth (Nayak, 2006).

Violence is frequently represented as an inevitable outcome of rowdy groups of young working class men out drinking in the NTE. The contribution of those involved in the production, policing and marketing of the NTE remains largely invisible (Hackley et al., 2008; Hobbs et al., 2005). Anxieties around crime and economic displacement have operated to marginalise some young working class men from mainstream consumption (Nayak, 2006). Young men who engage in excessive drinking within 'street culture' as an alternative to mainstream consumption are aware of their stigmatization and counteract this by exhibiting localised forms of hegemonic masculinity (McKenzie, 2015; Nayak, 2006). Discourses of fear and anxiety centred around marginalized white and black working class young men rest on a misrecognition by white middle class culture of how respect and value are accrued from the exhibition of 'tough', 'street' masculinities (McKenzie, 2015).

### ***Classed and gendered young consumers***

#### *Drinking and young femininities and masculinities*

Rural pubs have been identified as masculine spaces in which traditional forms of masculinity can be enacted and where young women are particularly unwelcome, as demonstrated by two studies in the UK and New Zealand (Leyshon, 2005; Campbell, 2000). The recent emergence of a metropolitan urban NTE in many affluent societies around the world alongside the widespread culture of drinking to intoxication has been linked to the feminisation of such traditional drinking spaces (Jayne et al., 2008).

There are some local, regional and national variations in the culture of intoxication as a normative form of youth drinking practice. For example, Beccaria and colleagues (2015) demonstrate that drinking to get drunk is not a pervasive norm amongst young drinkers in contemporary Italian society, unlike in many Northern European countries, and in New Zealand, Australia and the USA (Beccaria et al., 2015). Drunkenness is seen as negative, as spoiling one's fun, indicating that young Italians have some resistance to the influence of a global drinking culture. Young Italians see 'binge drinking' as only being 'tipsy', which is viewed as an acceptable form of drinking while maintaining a fairly good level of awareness and control. These terms are used in different ways by their Nordic peers who use the term

‘binge drinking’ as a synonym for heavier and less acceptable forms of drunkenness.

Unfortunately, this study pays little attention to gender or class.

Despite the recent feminisation of the NTE, public spaces are still predominantly masculine domains. Nayak’s (2006) study in Newcastle, UK, elucidates how working class masculine excess is celebrated among working class young men, especially through circuit drinking as a conspicuous form of consumption in the NTE. de Visser and McDonnell (2012) conducted a mixed methods study with 731 English university students aged 18-25. Across both sets of data, gendered stereotypes for drinking and drunkenness persisted and young men and young women were judgemental of women’s ‘binge drinking’ and drunkenness. Likewise, in a study of young men’s drinking in Scotland a gendered double standard was mobilised to stigmatise female ‘binge drinkers’ and young men also made a specific distinction between their drinking practices and the ways young women drink. (Mullen et al., 2007). Furthermore, in Clayton and Humberside’s (2006) study of university football player’s talk, young women drinkers were frequently disparaged in particularly negative and sometimes alarmingly derogatory ways.

Research on young women’s drinking in South West England found that young white middle class women construct women drinkers as a heterogeneous group based around classed distinctions (Bailey, 2012; Bailey et al., 2015; Rudolfsdottir and Morgan, 2009). Young women represented as ‘problem’ drinkers and disparaged for displaying ‘excessive’ heterosexuality are positioned via coded terms as working class (Bailey, 2012; Bailey et al., 2015; Rudolfsdottir and Morgan, 2009). However, Watts et al. (2015) report that research indicates that young professional women drink more alcohol than working class young women – and yet working class young women drinkers are the focus of more intense moral condemnation and concern. In Bailey’s (2012) discourse analytic study 24 women aged 19-24 participated in friendship group discussions. Middle class young women in this study expressed anxieties over being viewed and treated as working class young women when out at night drinking whereas the working class young women expressed anxieties concerning an awareness of the judgements of others when out drinking in the NTE. Middle class young women apportioned blame towards working class young women’s drinking practices, deriding their ‘unfeminine’ behaviour and ‘inappropriate’ displays of heterosexuality. The ways in which blame was attributed to young working class women drinkers for men’s

behaviour towards young middle class women exonerated men as the perpetrators of disrespectful behaviour.

Attempting to negotiate respectable femininity whilst engaging in heavy drinking in the NTE appears to be creating stronger classed differences among young women (Bailey, 2012). This is linked to the ways in which the high levels of alcohol consumption associated with hedonistic, reckless participation in the NTE situates young women's drinking within postfeminist discourses. Postfeminist discourses of empowerment and liberation are located within a neoliberal ideology of autonomous, compulsory individual consumption (Gill, 2008; McRobbie, 2007). International qualitative research for example in Canada (Kovac and Trussell, 2015), Ireland (MacNeela and Bredin, 2010), Australia (Waitt et al., 2011) and the UK (Stepney, 2015) indicates that young women seek to create a desirable self through alcohol consumption, often constituting drunkenness as enabling confidence and boldness. However, this is confounded by the ways in which normative restrained, respectable femininities (Skeggs, 1997) are still constituted as desirable (Kovac and Trussell, 2015; Stepney, 2015). The latter are set in conflict with 'up for it' hypersexual postfeminist femininities. As Griffin and colleagues have argued: "young women are called on to 'have fun' *as if* they are 'free' and 'liberated' subjects, and *as if* pervasive sexual double standards have faded away" (Griffin et al., 2013, p.198, original emphases). Within postfeminist discourse young women are called on to engage in heavy drinking while being hyper-(hetero)sexual, yet still adhere to the norms of respectable femininity. This draws young women into an impossible dilemma in which they risk being condemned whatever they do, as either 'boring' or 'sluttish' (Bailey et al., 2015; Griffin et al., 2013). Ironically alcohol is often used as a tool to attempt to navigate these dilemmas and contradictions (Stepney, 2015).

A recent qualitative study involving 12 young professional women in London aged 21 to 35 found that they viewed drinking high levels of alcohol in relatively positive - and gendered - terms (Watts et al., 2015). Drinking was associated with giving them confidence, strengthening friendships and perceiving oneself as attractive and glamorous. To abstain or drink very little alcohol was represented in negative terms as being 'boring' and 'weak'. Conversely these young women also reported feeling shame about their drinking, and were aware of criticism towards young women's drinking, especially by the media. These young white, middle class professional women were caught between conflicting media representations, such that alcohol was advertised to women as enabling a desirable self, in

contrast to health campaigns that shame women over their drinking. Heavy drinking was seen as a way to attain a form of masculinised power and status. This was located within the culture of intoxication, associated with pressures to drink heavily, reinforcing the notion of drinking as a masculine practice (Watts et al., 2015).

The ability to ‘hold’ one’s drink and retain signs of bodily composure while drunk are associated with traditional hegemonic masculinity (Peralta, 2007; Hunt et al., 2005; 2015). However, for young men drinking within the culture of intoxication, and especially in relation to initiation or hazing rituals or ‘stag tourism’, the ties between drinking and maintaining a bounded, controlled male body are not so clear cut (Thurnell-Read, 2013). The ability to ‘hold your drink’ is often ambiguous within the culture of intoxication, where, in gendered ways, visible displays of drunkenness are accepted as expected behaviour for young women and men on a night out (Mullen et al., 2007). Furthermore, for many young men and women, the loss of control and loss of memory associated with heavy drinking offers a highly valued means of bonding with close friends and a sense of collective identity and belonging (Griffin et al., 2009a).

#### *Class, youth, drinking and sexualisation: a ‘spectacle’ at home and abroad*

Within affluent countries, young people living in constrained economic circumstances and engaging in unbounded drinking are often construed as a threat to civilised society, held up as ‘the shame of the nation’ and as convenient scapegoats to deflect blame away from government policies and practices that perpetuate inequalities (McKenzie, 2015). The ‘shame of the nation’ discourse is mobilised in media representations of young people abroad who engage in reckless drinking practices. In the UK, such youth groups are frequently referred to as ‘Brits abroad’: a term associated with images of predominantly white working class British youth engaging in heavy drinking, drug use, promiscuity and other risky behaviours, especially whilst on holiday in the Balearic Islands (Briggs and Turner, 2012). Danish party package agencies at Sunny Beach, Bulgaria promote the same type of excessive behaviour that young people engage in when holidaying in Ibiza (Hesse et al., 2008; Tutenges and Sandberg, 2013).

Young people who have the means to afford a holiday abroad represent their hedonistic activities as enabling them to ‘be who they want to be’ (Briggs and Turner, 2012). They also tend to repackage negative consequences of their activities as exciting adventurous holiday

experiences to be displayed and shared on social media and for retrospective retelling when they return home (Briggs and Turner, 2012). According to Tutenges and Sandberg (2013), young Danish holiday makers treat heavy drinking as common place but it is the acts of transgression whilst drinking that become retold as spectacular drinking stories. Tutenges and Sandberg (2013; 2014) argue that drinking stories are no longer male dominated, since young women also engage in retelling stories of drunken abandonment and excess. However, others have countered that it is imperative to consider the gendered and sexualised dimensions within drinking stories of transgression (Griffin, 2014).

Sexual double standards and misogynous practices appear to be taken for granted by young people in the narratives reproduced in Briggs and Turner's (2012) and Tutenges and Sandberg's (2013) studies of British and Danish young people's drinking practices on holiday. This has much in common with recent debates in the UK about so-called 'lad culture'. The latter is associated with 'retro-sexist' behaviours which have been identified in UK student social and sexual life, especially within the student drinking culture. Within this young and predominantly white and middle class culture, male students compete to achieve the highest levels of alcohol consumption, to recount the wildest drinking stories and to notch up the highest sexual conquests, whilst representing women as sexually available in highly insulting ways (Phipps and Young, 2015). 'Lad culture' intersects with neoliberal postfeminist femininities in problematic ways, especially as young women are called on to be sexually assertive and hypersexual whilst young men are engaging in misogynist behaviours, mobilising sexual double standards (Phipps and Young, 2015).

The sexualised British NTE, where lap dancing clubs are often located alongside young people's bars and clubs, has been exported to holiday resorts that attract young people thus calling into question the extent to which young women may exercise 'freedom' in these resorts (Measham and Radcliffe, 2014). In Ibiza cheap easily accessible drugs, heavy drinking and sex, including female prostitution, are aggressively promoted and wild transgressive behaviour is condoned (Briggs and Turner, 2012). However, women's transgressive behaviour is treated differently within the accounts in Briggs and Turner's (2012) and Tutenges and Sandberg's (2013) studies. Here women were referred to in terms of sexual body parts while women's sexual behaviour was discussed in highly offensive ways. Women's own accounts pointed towards experiences of sexual groping and abusive behaviour by men.

### *Young people's classed, gendered drinking and online subjectivities*

Youth drinking cultures are now increasingly played out online, in addition to the public spaces of the NTE and the private sphere of the home (McCreanor et al., 2013). Online social networking sites such as Facebook play a powerful role in shaping normative behaviour and providing tools for displaying 'connected' identities (van Dijck, 2013). Relatively few studies have explored the role of young people's drinking practices on social media, but there are some exceptions (eg. Brown and Gregg, 2012; Ridout et al., 2012; Lyons et al., 2015). The growth of the culture of intoxication has coincided with the rise in the use of social networking sites which have altered traditional patterns of identity construction (Ridout et al., 2012). Promoting and branding the self has also become a normalized, accepted phenomenon (van Dijck, 2013). Drinking identities are carefully displayed and portrayed online by young people (Niland et al., 2014). Thus portraying oneself as a drinker on social networking sites is considered to be important and socially desirable for many young people, contributing to the normalisation of heavy drinking (Ridout et al., 2012). Social networking sites also provide a way for alcohol marketing to infiltrate youth cultures and shape youth identities. Furthermore while young people are enhancing their drinking identities online, they are often unaware that they are being targeted by alcohol companies (Lyons et al., 2015).

Facebook profiles publicly display created selves and lifestyles. On Facebook, tagging is adding a friend's profile name to a photo or status update and young people regularly 'untag' themselves if they do not like how they are depicted in visual and textual alcohol-related content posted by others. This demonstrates an implicit sanctioning of alcohol-related identity placements by others in tagged photos that remain linked to their profile (Ridout et al., 2012). Lyons et al. (2015) found that in terms of drinking practices Facebook photos were carefully managed to portray drinking selves in a positive way. Thus, photos of drunken images are carefully selected to portray drunkenness as sociable and fun, instead of displaying images of unattractive drunkenness. However, these 'airbrushed' images normalise and reinforce drinking as always pleasurable without harmful consequences (Lyons et al., 2015; Niland et al., 2014). This is also a highly gendered, racialised and classed practice (Hutton et al., in press; Dobson, 2014; Goodwin et al., 2016). However, there is a dearth of research exploring these variations in the social locations of users in online drinking cultures.



Brown and Gregg (2012) contribute to addressing the lack of research exploring gendered ways of using online drinking cultures in their exploration of young women's Facebook use. In particular, young women used Facebook for accounts of mock regret about the previous night's drinking activities, as well as for displaying friendship, belonging, fun and adventurous drinking identities. Facebook also provides a space for engaging with the anticipatory pleasures of the drinking event and the young women routinely used status updates to begin to share the excitement of a night out via anticipatory intent (Brown and Gregg, 2012).

Part of the pleasure of sharing the before, during and after of drinking events online may be concerned with being part of a wider drinking culture, but Brown and Gregg point out that the gendered social and cultural contexts are also key. It may be that young women respond to circumstances affecting their participation in other sectors of the public sphere through heavy public drinking (Brown and Gregg, 2012). Within postfeminist consumer culture, sharing drinking stories and drinking escapades on Facebook is a means for self-marketing using available cultural resources (Goodwin et al., 2016).

Young women's participation in public drinking and their apparent freedom to do so has arisen at the same time as their participation in the paid labour market. However, as Brown and Gregg (2012) argue, young women who are especially targeted as cause for concern are those with the least financial capital or chances to succeed, hence displaying drinking on Facebook as a lifestyle choice may be an alternative way of expressing hopes and aspirations. It may be possible that the pleasure working class young women gain from dramatic and funny drinking episodes and the extended pleasure in re-telling these drinking stories are embedded in a desire to escape from the lack of opportunities and the boredom of their everyday lives (Waite et al., 2013).

Social networking sites offer ways to extend young people's pleasures around drinking, elucidating the ways in which drinking is far more meaningful for young people than simply as a means of experiencing altered states of intoxication. We have shown that young people make sense of their own drinking practices and the drinking practices of others in classed and gendered ways. The double standards inherent within these understandings are situated within socio-cultural reconfigurations of gender and class and globalised neoliberal ideologies, where young people's drinking is subject to social judgements and moral panic shaped by

dimensions of class and gender. Young people's drinking practices take place in a public arena and in the last few years social networking sites have significantly increased the scope of this public arena. The nexus of drinking cultures and social networking use is a vital area for research. However, we have also shown that there is scant research exploring the intersections of gender and class in relation to young people's drinking and online social networking practices.

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