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PLEASURE, AGENCY, SPACE AND PLACE: AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF YOUTH DRINKING CULTURES IN A SOUTH WEST LONDON COMMUNITY

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ABSTRACT

Media, government and public discourse in the UK associate young drinkers as mindless, hedonistic consumers of alcohol, resulting in young people epitomising 'Binge Britain'. This preoccupation with 'binge' drinking amplifies moral panics surrounding youth alcohol consumption whereby consideration of the social and cultural nuances of pleasure that give meaning to young people's excessive drinking practices and values has been given little priority. This sociological study explores how young drinkers regulate their drinking practices through levels of agency which is informed by values linked to the pursuit of pleasurable intoxication alongside friendship groups in a variety of drinking settings. Data informing this study comes from contextualised ethnographic fieldwork alongside heterogeneous groups of young people and community members in an area of South West London. Whilst encountering hundreds of participants in fieldwork, data informing this research stems from ninety main protagonists. Following a qualitative grounded theoretical approach, the study prioritises the voice and everyday experience of young drinkers and local community members to present theoretical descriptions of youth drinking cultures embedded in a historical, social, cultural and spatial context. Through the ethnographic data, this thesis argues that young drinkers show levels of agency in their pursuit of pleasurable drinking experiences through conscious forms of self-governance and regulation which are informed by learned experiences and interactions such as gender. Moreover, youth drinking is both enabled and restricted by constraints and complexities such as space and place; which form central points of analysis in this thesis. It is concluded that accounts derived directly from young people are not only central to understanding how and why young people engage in forms of excessive drinking, but can better inform national and local alcohol-related policies and strategies, as opposed to discourse preoccupied with UK 'binge' drinking that young people rarely identify with.

LIST OF TABLES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to three very important people in my life. Firstly, I dedicate this work in memory of my late mother Mary Margaret Duggan. Her life inspired me to pursue research in the field of alcohol studies and helped me to challenge conventional perceptions about society's relationship with alcohol. I also dedicate this thesis to my father John Patrick Doherty, who has always had faith in me, has shown relentless love and supported me in this endeavour. I could not have done this without you. Finally, I dedicate this thesis to my husband, Greg-Joe Barnett, your patience and love have helped me make it through to the finish line.

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INTRODUCTION

1.1. Biographical context and inspiration of the research

This Doctoral research of youth drinking cultures is located within the disciplines of sociology, media and cultural studies and alcohol studies. Research in both historical and contemporary contexts across these disciplines suggest that young people's alcohol consumption practices and values in the UK have been heavily sensationalised, moralised and problematized through government, media and public discourse. This has led to young people epitomising 'Binge Britain' (Plant and Plant, 2006) which focuses on voyeuristic and stereotypical representations of young people's excessive drinking practices in urban public spaces and city centres (Griffin et al., 2009). In turn, this has caused cycles of 'moral panics' (Cohen, 1972) surrounding youth alcohol consumption. Although the serious personal and social consequences resulting from youth alcohol consumption practices should not be underplayed, this discourse has resulted in a lack of critical assessment of the pleasurable dimensions that young drinkers experience as well as a demonization of young drinkers. There is, however, a growing body of interdisciplinary research in the field of alcohol studies, explored extensively in Chapter One of this thesis, which is beginning to examine the pleasurable aspects of young people's engagement in the 'contemporary culture of intoxication' (Measham and Brain, 2005). This thesis builds upon this research by prioritising the voice and experiences of youth drinking cultures and explores notions of pleasure in young people's everyday drinking contexts and spaces. This moves beyond the problematizing of youth alcohol consumption and contributes empirical evidence which offers insight into how and why young people engage in excessive alcohol consumption from the perspectives of young drinker's themselves. This empirical evidence could assist in bridging the current 'credibility gap' between young drinker's practices and values and current government strategies and policies which focus on the individual and notions of 'responsible' and 'sensible' drinking recommendations (Measham, 2006:262).

It is not just the problematic nature of young people's excessive alcohol consumption that is depicted in government, media and public discourse, there is also an underlying assumption that young people's drinking practices and values are homogeneous, mindless acts of hedonism; underpinned by the basic formula of drinking to get drunk. This highlights a lack of acknowledgment of the diversity of practices and values in youth drinking, as well as a denial of levels of agency and autonomy expressed by young drinkers. Therefore, the social and cultural nuances of youth drinking and the ways in which young people self-regulate their own engagement in the contemporary 'culture of intoxication' is underexplored. This thesis aims to address this issue by prioritising the drinking practices and values of young people from their

own perspectives, whilst capturing expressions of agency against the backdrop of a neoliberal context in the UK which encourages excessive consumption whilst at the same time, attempts to govern youth drinking (Hobbs et al., 2005).

A growing body of literature in the field of alcohol studies argues that the settings in which young people drink should not be taken for granted, nor regarded as a passive backdrop in which alcohol is consumed (Holloway, Valentine and Jayne 2008). Young people intentionally occupy different spaces because their drinking practices and values vary according to different social contexts and settings (Szmigin et al., 2008). This study, which is spatially contingent and prioritises the socioeconomic, historical and cultural context of a South West London community, will examine how young people experience the drinking spaces in which they occupy, and explore how these spaces shape their drinking cultures (Valentine et al., 2007).

Coinciding with the spirit of honesty, openness and story-telling accounts deriving from the participants in this study, I will outline the personal inspiration and emergent ideas that underpin the rationale for undertaking this research into the dimensions of pleasure, agency, space and place in youth drinking cultures. Providing this initial auto/biographical perspective allows for a critical embracement of the 'I'/researcher from the outset of the study, which cannot be avoided or separated from the researched (Merrill and West, 2009).

Personal life experiences have taught me that both an individual's and society's relationships with alcohol are complex, whereby no one person's relationship with alcohol is straightforward or the same. My own personal interest, understanding, and relationship with alcohol consumption stem from growing up with my mother who was alcohol dependent. As a child and young adult, I received a great deal of support from my family and friends regarding her drinking; support of which has continued since her passing in 2006. However, the most prominent issue that has remained with me, which I have witnessed first-hand through experiences with my mother, is how prone members of society are in stigmatising people who do not conform to the so-called 'norms' of alcohol consumption. The ways in which my mother drank, which were far removed from the norms of drinking, resulted in her simply being labelled as an 'alchy' [alcoholic] or 'drunk'. Aside from a close network of family and close friends, my mother's identity to others often became 'the alcoholic', and other dimensions of her identity including a loving partner and mother were either secondary or at times, lost. Despite growing up with such challenges, I have maintained a positive and healthy relationship with alcohol and developed a resilient attitude, which together has enabled me to foster empathy and an openness towards people's varied relationships with alcohol. Together, these circumstances have partly inspired the motivation for this study, whereby I seek to challenge stereotypical and sensationalised images that are portrayed about youth alcohol consumption;

because in a similar manner to the labelling experienced by mother, young people's consumption is problematically and often uncritically defined as 'binge' drinking. Thus, following Charles Wright Mills (1959:216), I embraced learning to use my life experiences to inform my intellectual work.

As a young adult and consumer of alcohol myself, I would fall into the category of 'binge' drinker, and yet I would certainly not classify myself in such a way. Friends, peers, acquaintances and other young people share a similar belief, in which they view their alcohol consumption practices and values as a pleasurable; not necessarily as a problematic experience. However, young people, and those will lesser degrees of social power and 'capital' (Bourdieu, 1984) often lack a 'voice' or are marginalised, and therefore cannot always defend labels applied to them (Hadfield and Haw, 2001). This is why this research privileges the pleasurable drinking practices and values explicitly from the everyday experiences of young drinkers.

1.2. Research Aims

The research aims of the study are:

- To explore how and why young people associate their drinking practices and values with notions of pleasure.
- To identify ways in which young people demonstrate agency through their engagement in alcohol consumption and what governs their levels of autonomy.
- Investigate how local community members, and drinking spaces and places shape the drinking cultures of young people.

The first research aim seeks to generate empirical data from the voices and experiences of young people themselves as to what they define as pleasurable in their regards to their drinking cultures. This will contribute towards a closer understanding of the social and cultural nuances of how and why young people engage in excessive drinking activities against a strong backdrop of moral condemnation regarding 'binge' drinking. Despite a growing body of research in the field of alcohol studies exploring youth alcohol consumption, there is still a need to explore the nuances of youth drinking cultures to further "…policy which connects with the role that alcohol plays in consumers lived experiences" (Hackley et al., 2013:935). The second research aim will identify ways in which young people display agency in their drinking practices and values; whilst acknowledging broader social structures, particularly within a neoliberal context of seduction and regulation of youth alcohol consumption (Hobbs et al.,

2005), which impacts on their participation in the 'contemporary culture of intoxication'. This will further illuminate the complexities relating to pleasure and give a stronger sense of agency to youth drinking cultures that young people are so commonly denied through government, media and social discourse (Blackman, Doherty and McPherson, 2015). The final research aim will investigate the extent to which local community members and the active constituents of 'space', a realm without meaning, and 'place', a space imbued with personal meaning, shape youth drinking cultures in Sutton (Cresswell, 2004).

1.3. Thesis Structure

Chapter One, 'A social and cultural history of young people's excessive consumption in the UK' begins with a historical social and cultural review of youth drinking cultures and offers a critique of contemporary perspectives of 'binge' drinking in the UK. Through this same literature, it is argued that there is a lack of acceptance regarding young people's pleasurable drinking, and of the social and cultural nuances that contribute towards understandings of how and why young people engage in excessive drinking. Here I put forward that there is a need to acknowledge levels of agency to youth drinking cultures.

Chapter Two is the 'Methodology' which presents the methodological and theoretical underpinning for the thesis, whilst providing further contextualisation of the research participants and settings. Here research design is justified and an account of the grounded-theoretical approaches to fieldwork and data analysis is provided. This chapter also outlines the developments encountered during fieldwork alongside young drinkers in the London Borough of Sutton.

Chapter Three, 'Overcoming ephemerality in alcohol and drug community educational strategies' explores ethnographic data from educational community within Sutton to explore relationships between young drinkers and local community members. Critiques of educational interventions upon youth drinking cultures are offered and the extent to which these shape young people's practices and values towards intoxication are explored.

Chapter Four, 'Pursuing pleasurable drinking through 'calculated-intoxication'' draws upon fieldwork experiences alongside young drinkers in a variety of drinking spaces to explore the relationship between pleasure and excessive drinking. Through exploring the social and cultural nuances of alcohol consumption, I focus upon how and why young people drink to excess. It is argued that sociality and friendship are central to pleasurable drinking

experiences and that together young drinkers display levels of agency to regulate their engagement in intoxication.

Chapter Five, 'Contesting the 'convergence' of young men and women's drinking cultures' delves further into the social and cultural nuances of youth drinking cultures through an exploration of gendered drinking experiences. It is argued that young men and women experience and approach drinking in distinct ways, showing that youth drinking cultures are heavily informed by gender relations. The role of the local community in shaping young people's gendered experiences and participation of alcohol consumption within the community is a central point of focus.

Chapter Six syntheses the main findings to present the 'Thesis conclusion'. Firstly, the findings that contribute knowledge to the themes of pleasure, agency, space and place in contemporary youth drinking cultures are summarised. Following this, the key methodological contributions that this thesis offers to the field of alcohol studies are outlined, followed by discussions for future academic research and alcohol policy implications regarding youth drinking cultures.

CHAPTER ONE: A SOCIAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S EXCESSIVE DRINKING IN THE UK

1.1. Introduction

This chapter begins with a social and cultural review of youth intoxication to draw historical and contemporary parallels of a long-standing history of fears of and fears for young people regarding alcohol consumption. Drawing upon literature from a UK and European context, the chapter argues that these fears mirror contemporary perceptions of youth 'binge' drinking. Whilst concerns about young people's excessive consumption patterns are legitimate, their drinking is problematised through homogenous depictions of young drinkers as mindless and hedonistic in government and media discourse of 'binge' drinking (Hackley et al., 2013; Plant and Plant, 2006). However, this discourse fails to acknowledge the siren call to the 'culture of intoxication' (Measham and Brain, 2005). Consequently, there is little consideration of the social and cultural nuances of youth drinking cultures and how and why young people are engaging in a culture of excessive consumption informed by notions of pleasure and the display of varying levels of agency.

1.2. A longstanding history of fears of and fears for young drinkers

To enhance understandings of contemporary debates of youth 'binge' drinking in its wider context, it can be helpful to draw upon historical parallels regarding youth, alcohol and leisure (Borsay, 2007). This literature review is important because it reflects continuity and change in values and practices towards drinking which are shaped by and can be symbolic of anxieties towards marginalised, repressed or problematic groups including young drinkers (Measham, 2008:14). This section of the chapter will offer a concise historical social and cultural account of youth intoxication using a critical selection of literature from the Carnivalesque in the Middle Ages through to depictions of 'Lager Louts' and 'Ladettes' in the 1990s to illuminate contemporary accounts of youth 'binge' drinking that informs this thesis.

The Carnivalesque and youth intoxication

Fears of young people and their capacity to disrupt social order linked to intoxication can be as far back as the Middle Ages through Mikhail Bakhtin's seminal text Rabelais and His World

(originally published 1965 and translated in 1984) which offers a literary reading of François Rabelais and analysis of the Carnivalesque. Bakhtin (1984:7) suggested that, "While carnival lasts, there is no other life outside it. During carnival time life is subject only to its laws, that is, the laws of its own freedom." Here young people expressed levels of agency through symbolic inversion, disruption and transgression of official culture; favouring excitement, uncontrolled emotion, humour and vulgar grotesque bodily pleasures including fattening food, intoxicating drink and sexual promiscuity (Featherstone, 1991). Moreover, through the debasing effect of carnival laughter, satire, parody and the grotesque image of the body, young people were freed from dogmatism and ecclesiastical restraints of the time.

Fears regarding young people during the Carnivalesque were not a result of alcohol consumption per say, but that intoxication facilitated opposition to the social and cultural norms of the time; showing young people's capacity to disrupt power relations and generate political and social struggle (Haydock, 2014). Research in the field of alcohol studies have applied Bakhtin's work to draw contemporary parallels of youth drinking cultures and UK alcohol policy (Hackley et al., 2013; Haydock, 2014). Parallels to Bakhtin's work suggest that young people engage in transgressive activities as forms of escapism which oppose discourse around 'sensible' and 'responsible' drinking. This is achieved through excessive intoxication in the Night Time Economy (NTE) reserved for the weekend. Historical and contemporary depictions of the Carnivalesque highlight fears about youth drinking based upon young people's display of countercultural activities linked to intoxication which resist adult authority.

Rituals of Misrule, Charivaris and Rough Music linked to youth intoxication

Natalie Davis' (1971) analysis of sixteenth century youth, carnivals and festivals of 'Misrule' provide further insight of youth alcohol consumption following the Carnivalesque. As urban festivals sponsored by the church were banished, they were taken up by confraternities and laymen throughout Europe, England and Scotland described as "fool societies", "play societies" or "Abbeys of Misrule" (Davis, 1971:43). The Abbeys, mainly consisting of young male youths, led festivals or performed the custom of "Charivaris" to humiliate and penalise wrong-doers within the community such as adulterers. Charivaris entailed Abbeys dressing in costume and making raucous noise at the homes of wrong doers, until they settled a fine; a favourable payment being the reward of alcohol. Whilst these rituals were permitted by the adult community as "magical customs" that served community order and longevity (Davis, 1971); for the targets of Charivaris, this custom linked to intoxication caused fears of youth. Accounts of Rituals of Misrule and Charivaris offer sixteenth century examples of how youth

intoxication can reflect political social consciousness linked to community values; but can also promote fears of youth linked to alcohol consumption practices and values.

"Rough Music", coined in England during the seventeenth century is, "a rude cacophony, with or without more elaborate ritual, which usually directed mockery or hostility against certain community norms" (Thompson, 1991:467). Mirroring similarities to the Carnivalesque and Charivaris, Rough Music varied from good natured, humorous mocking, including satirical boozy jocular rows at games in festivals, initiations into trades, rough mime or parading; to brutal and hostile expressions including 'riding the stang[1],' burning of effigies, ritual 'hunts,' and presenting fake funerals. These activities were seen as ritualistic expressions of "Street Theatre" which offered community self-regulation enacted by youth (Thompson, 1991:478).

Rough Music was linked to intoxication because young people often initiated activities whilst intoxicated or held individuals ransom in exchange for alcohol. On the one hand, Thompson notes that Rough Music acted as an excuse for drunken orgies or blackmail, legitimising youth aggression with hostile implications and symbolic violence; paralleling contemporary fears of the "binge and brawl phenomenon" (Measham and Brain, 2005:263). One the other hand, Thompson acknowledged the complexities of those who enacted Rough Music, "They may not have read Mythologiques, but they had their own notions as to what they were turning out about. This 'folk' was not perfect nor pretty nor was it empty of all norms. They employed and inherited vocabulary, selectively for their own reasons" (1991:510). Accounts of Rough Music reveal levels of youth agency through social and cultural meaning and political awareness linked to intoxication expressed by young people attempting to support their community. However, Rough Music linked to intoxication also produced fears amongst community members because of young people's ability to exercise modes of social control through real and symbolic violence. The latter, was enacted through a displacement of violence upon victims and utilised "psychic terrorism, like the burning of effigies" alongside alcohol consumption to instil fear (Thompson, 1991: 530).

Social control of youth intoxication in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries

Communal festivities declined during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries due to adult hostility towards such youth cultural activities (Wrightson, 1984), alongside an increasing socioeconomic decline and apparent perception of youth disorder to adult authority in Early

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[1] According to Thompson (1991:472) 'riding the stang' entailed carrying an individual on a pole, attended by youth enacting Rough Music. Often filth was thrown at the individual, and they were thrown into dirty water or a pond.

Modern England (Griffiths, 1996). To tackle the "dark age" of youth (Griffiths, 1996:45), young people experienced increasing subordination by adults through values of piety and conformity, and attempts to delay their participation into the adult world (Borsay, 2006). This subordination was initiated through apprenticeships (Springhall, 1986), factory working and compulsory schooling (Griffiths, 1996).

To counteract and break away from the monotony of domestic and working life, alehouses and taverns consequently became sites of recreation for young people, particularly for working class young people to participate in conviviality and play that was limited to them (Borsay, 2006). These spaces allowed young people to enact rites of passage, including for young unmarried men to understand and construct their social identities, and gain insight into adult experiences. However, these movements towards the alehouse as a site of recreation resulted in moralists preoccupied with social order, depicting lurid, sensationalised and exaggerated accounts of youth drunkenness, particularly amongst the working classes (Wrightson, 1984). Accounts of youth intoxication in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries reveal negative and moralistic fears about youth recreation linked to intoxication which is mirrored in contemporary portrayals of young drinkers.

Moral tensions of youth drinking in the eighteenth century

Eighteenth century England marked considerable societal change through industrialisation, the evolution of modern school systems aiming to civilise the working classes, and the (re)-assertion of class control Johnson (1976); all of which prioritised moralism, genteel life and dignified behaviour (Malcolmson, 1973). Whilst working class leisure has historically caused concern amongst the middle classes (Bailey, 1978), from the mid-eighteenth century, young people became an increasing visible population which enhanced tensions and anxiety regarding youth leisure activities (Gillis, 1974).

A specific tension regarding youth in the eighteenth century was connected to young people's autonomous leisure practices and spending power (Gillis, 1974). Whilst leisure pursuits diminished under heavy work conditions of the Industrial Revolution (Bailey, 1978), when young people could participate in recreation, their favoured site was often the alehouse (Malcolmson, 1973). Here "young people, who now had pocket money from their own labors, [to] indulge[d] themselves in drink and dress in ways that horrified their elders" (Gillis, 1974:46). Like previous centuries, popular youth recreation was problematized by moralists and reformers because they believed youth recreation promoted idleness that was detrimental

to individual character, which also led them away from the church, work and school (Malcolmson, 1973). Consequently, these fears regarding youth leisure and consumption led to adult control including temperance reform schemes and education prioritising abstinence and edification (Bailey, 1978).

Sexuality also caused tensions regarding youth in the eighteenth century. Pivotal literature including Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Emilie (1962) increased understandings of puberty and sexuality of youth that enhanced fears concerning youth respectability particularly in regard to festivities and celebrations including dances, wakes and procession ceremonies where youth courtship practices and alcohol consumption occurred (Springhall, 1986). These "popular diversions were not simply ephemera in a play world of little consequence; they were fundamental social activities which were inseparable from the full range of social reality" and served important social and cultural functions for young people (Malcolmson, 1973:88). However, for adults, such activities linked to intoxication were viewed as a threat to genteel tranquillity particularly that of young women, showing early accounts of fears regarding respectability and youth alcohol consumption.

Fear regarding intoxication and youth also stemmed from the 'Gin Epidemic' between 1720 and 1751, an era most associated with the 'evils' of alcohol (Abel, 2001:401). The fears, aimed at 'out of control' mothers, (Berridge et al., 2007), sexually and morally 'depraved' women (Measham and Martinic, 2008) and youth are encapsulated in William Hogarth's Gin Lane (1975). Borsay (2007) considers this image as possible one of the first drink-related moral panics generating a media driven crisis. The impact of the gin epidemic was that it was seen as a "debaucher of youth" built on maternal neglect (Abel, 2001:405). In turn, this led to youth subjection to Temperance Movements in schools, churches, societies and youth groups promoting abstinence (Plant and Plant, 2006).

Respectable drinking in the nineteenth century

Working class youth leisure transformed through restrictions of urban life and industrialisation of the nineteenth century, including poor wages making leisure inaccessible and a loss of green spaces leading to the street becoming an increasing site for recreation (Gillis, 1974). Consequently, working class youth were drawn to and driven towards the streets where trading and labouring took place (e.g. sweeping, shoe-polishing) and activities like street music took place, as well as frequenting public houses, alehouses and gin palaces as few possible sites of recreation (Malcolmson, 1973; Bailey, 1978).

Regarding the street, football was a form of cheap and available recreation for working class youth linked to the public house and drinking. However, football generated fears about out of control youth and so middle-class attempts "to erase or transform working class popular culture" like football ensued (Delves, 1984:94). Similarly, few opportunities for youth courtship practices were available to young people aside from the 'monkey parade'[2] (Springhall, 1986:145) and 'promenading'[3] (Gillis, 1974:119); however, these practices linked to alcohol consumption causing groups of youth to occupy the streets late at night raised concerns about young women's respectability and sexual promiscuity.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, a range of new popular and commercial recreational opportunities emerged for young people, including: music halls, pubs, cinemas, spectator sports and seaside holidays (Gillis, 1974; Bailey, 1978). Specifically, Penny theatres or 'gaffs' emerged as more 'private' sites of leisure for youth to escape the monotony of urban life and industrialisation and engage in courtship (Springhall, 1986; Pearson, 1983). However, the theatres became associated with deviance and intoxication leading to police governance of the activities that took place in and around them (Storch, 1976).

Accounts about youth leisure linked to intoxication show that such places served important social and cultural functions of working class leisure. However, as each new form of youth recreation emerged they were deemed to encourage drunkenness, uproar and sexual promiscuity (Malcolmson, 1973), which represented threats to the cultural hegemony of the middle and upper classes (Springhall 1986). Therefore, recreational opportunities for young people were regulated by adults and authorities resulting from moralistic fears of youth in relation to their respectability and virtue (Humphries, 1981; Shore, 1999). These nineteenth century preoccupations of youth drinking associated with lower socioeconomic groups as hedonistic and immoral pleasure seekers mirror contemporary perceptions of young 'binge' drinkers (Measham and Martinic, 2008).

As well as concerns about youth recreation in the nineteenth century, there were also moral panics about youth 'gangs', 'artful dodgers', 'juvenile delinquents' (Gillis, 1974), 'hooligans' (Pearson, 1983); 'scuttlers', 'peaky blinders' and 'high rippers' (Davies, 1999), groups of whom were linked to deviance and intoxication. Whilst concerns about gang violence during this period was mostly a masculine concern, young women were also active perpetrators and victims in these activities (Davies, 1999). With these labels and increasing fears about out of control youth, attitudes towards young people changed considerably (Springhall, 1986).

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[2] The monkey parade was a socialising function carried out within the working class-community, with the street as a meeting place where young people gathered and converged (Springhall, 1986)

[3] A form of courtship similar to monkey parading (Gillis, 1974)

Where young people had been "previously labelled as naughty, unruly or mischievous, [they] were now seen as defiant, insubordinate, refractory and as potential juvenile criminals" (Shore, 1999:8). Whilst youth delinquency like petty theft, drinking and gambling were linked to poverty and enjoyment; often these young people were subjected to reformation and punishment as criminals by being "brought before the courts for disorderly behaviour, drunkenness, assaults on police, street robberies and fighting" (Pearson, 1983:74). As a result of these increasing moral panics, more efforts to socially control youth emerged which saw the result of mass schooling and educational systems develop considerably during this century as a mechanism to promote a ruling class identity and ameliorate working class issues relating to apparent juvenile crime, gang violence and drunkenness (Springhall, 1986). A rise in Temperance Movements also emerged to govern the recreational activities of youth (Bailey, 1978) and increased policing activity to tackle youth leisure and recreation, often linked to alcohol consumption (Storch, 1976).

The pathologizing of adolescence and intoxication in the twentieth century

The discovery of 'adolescence' emerged from the mid-nineteenth century, where the middle classes endorsed that young people were subordinate and dependent in an attempt to maintain control of youth (Gillis, 1974). During this period, understandings about youth instability and vulnerability emerged alongside social and psychological theories which encapsulated, "if the model of adolescent stood for everything pure and stable in a period of internal and external tension, the juvenile delinquent embodied everything to be feared and resented, making him an indispensable part of the social world of the child savers" (Gillis, 1974:140-141). All adolescents then, were viewed as being vulnerable to delinquency, not just youth from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, promoting wider concerns about youth.

Cyril Burt's The Young Delinquent (1945) and John Bowlby's Forty-Four Juvenile Thieves (1946) were key texts that contributed to understandings that youth delinquency was linked to defective morals, having pathological tendencies to deviance and inadequate socialisation (Blackman, 2004). Regarding drinking and intoxication, Burt's (1945) work cites multiple examples of youth pathology towards drinking. Firstly, it is suggested that the family drinking contexts can result in hereditary effects leading youth towards alcohol consumption. Secondly, environmental conditions (like pubs and gin palaces) could allure young people to drinking. Lastly, Burt (1945:188) suggests that a lack of positive activities and recreation could make young "susceptible minds" and traits of dullness, backwardness, defects, emotional instability, inner weakness and developmental conditions prone to sinful or deviant activities such as

drinking. When psychological theories regarding youth propensity to deviance were accepted, young people were subjected to close governance and regulation of activities such as drinking due to fears underpinned by understandings of the juvenile delinquent.

Moral panics of youth subculture and intoxication (1950-1970)

"After the Second World War youth culture was considered a destination in its own right, a self-contained domain that functioned according to its own generational laws at odds with the adult establishment" (Borsay, 2006:130). However, the growth of self-consciously constructed and anti-establishment youth subcultural groups with increasing spending power in the 1950s to the 1970s increased anxieties about youth, particularly regarding intoxication.

British subcultural theory initially relied upon psychology and psychoanalysis to explain the social, whereby a number of studies emerging in the 1950s suggesting that young people who entered into subcultural groups possessed defective morals and pathological traits (Blackman, 2004). However, from the late 1960s the British National Deviance Conference criticised these analyses, arguing that subculture was linked to social class relations and social change; marking a change from pathological studies to understandings of class conscious (Blackman, 2004; 2005). Contributions to these understandings came from the systematic study of youth conducted by the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. Specifically, the seminal text Resistance through Rituals (Hall and Jefferson, 1975) works on the assumption that "subcultural activity is interpreted as a form of symbolic politics to particular class and cultural experiences" (Blackman, 2004:112).

Regarding subculture and intoxication, Blackman (2004:133) suggests that, "The CCCS subcultural theory identifies drugs as a normal practice of subcultural groupings […which] enabled the CCCS theorists to describe drugs as an intentional recreational practice which promoted resistance and refusal." Such understandings are evidenced in key cultural studies of youth subcultural groups including: Beats (Hebdige, 1979); female subcultures (McRobbie and Garber, 1975; McRobbie, 1991); Hippies (Willis, 1972); Hipsters (Hebdige, 1979); Mods (Cohen, 1972; Hebdige, 1975a; 1979); Punks (Hebdige, 1979); Reggae, Rastas and Rudies (Hebdige, 1975a; 1979); Rockers (Cohen 1972; Hebdige, 1979); Skinheads (Clarke, 1975); and Teds (Jefferson, 1975; Hebdige, 1979). However, despite this body of theoretically informed and empirical studies evidencing that youth subcultural intoxication is informed by social and cultural values linked to agentic recreational practice promoting resistance and refusal, youth intoxication was often attributed to pathological deviance that promoted 'moral

panics' in the mass media about youth subcultural groups (Cohen, 1972). This is because young people were seen as being at risk, but moreover, they were seen as a source of risk because they represented a decline in the moral condition of youth, perceived through the enactment of 'anti-social' and 'undisciplined' behaviours which were a threat to the social order of the time (Cohen, 1972; Thompson, 1998). Moral panics about young people and their relationship with alcohol/drugs have also perpetuated further through propaganda films in the USA such as Reefer Madness (1936) and Desperate Lives (1982) films about youth subcultures including Quadrophenia (1979). Subsequently, young people and subcultural groups have been subjected to increased punitive action and governance produced by perceived uncertain threats about these subcultures linked to intoxication (Springhall, 1986; Cohen, 1972).

'Lager Louts' of the 1980s and 'Ladettes' of the 1990s

The term 'lager lout' was coined in a report in 1988 by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) on drunken disorder, suggesting that drunken violence in urban areas was proliferating in rural areas (Nicholls, 2009a). This transformed 'lager louts' into a contemporary media phenomenon around youth-related drinking disorder (Nicholls, 2009a; Measham and Brain, 2005). Reminiscent of issues relating to respectability and hooliganism during the nineteenth century, 'lager louts' brought the issue of social disorder back into the centre of public discourse. Thurnell-Read (2013) notes that it is difficult to ascertain if 'lager louts' were based upon empirical reality or media-led moral panic. Nonetheless, fears of young male drinkers were generated due to their perceived relationship with drunkenness and violence which caused concerns for public safety. Consequently, they symbolised national shame, partly attributed to an inability to uphold past traditional disciplined drinking styles (Thurnell-Read, 2013). Consequently, legislation was designed to tackle problems of alcohol-related disorder and anti-social behaviour through exclusion orders associated with 'lager louts', and sales of alcohol on trains was restricted to address football hooliganism (Nicholls, 2009a). This highlights a repressive force upon youth recreation not necessarily underpinned by sound evidence, but by sensationalised accounts and negative perceptions of 'anti-social behaviour of youth' linked to moral panics (Rogers, 2010).

The term 'lad' first emerged in Arena magazine set out by O'Hagan (2001), and once lad culture had been set out, this paved the way for the term 'Ladette' to emerge (Blackman, Doherty and McPherson, 2015). BBC News (2001) reported that the term 'Ladette' entered the Oxford English Dictionary, defined as: "young women who behave in a boisterously

assertive or crude manner and engage in heavy drinking sessions." Jackson and Tinkler (2007:251) argue that the 'Ladette' is a media construct of the late twentieth/early twenty-first century referring to young women who are diverse in age and unethnicized century who are a product of women's increased equality with men in late modern society. 'Ladettes' are portrayed as hedonistic, pleasure seeking and driven by an ambition to party and have fun, often through the facilitation of heavy alcohol consumption (see: Daily Mail, 2009). Consequently, the 'Ladette' is repackaged as a modern day 'lager lout' (Mackiewicz, 2015; Jackson and Tinkler, 2007).

'Ladettes' caused moral panic as they began to occupy a public position outside of traditional domestic realms like the home, and entered masculine drinking spaces such as the pub, as well as emulating male drinking practices. Moreover, 'Ladettes' were seen to be engaged in the 'least respectable' elements of working-class culture: "the excessive (drinking, smoking, sex), disruptive (social order), crude (swearing, rudeness), aggressive (verbal and physical), 'open' (sexual) behaviours" (Jackson and Tinkler, 2007:255). McRobbie (2004) argues that such practices of "hard drinking mark[ed] the corrosion of feminist values" (McRobbie, 2004). Moreover, Skeggs (1997) suggests that women who engage in behaviours that do not conform to the archetype of the caring working-class female is regarded as in need of governance and regulation.

Women have been particularly subjected to media regulation and governance, whereby negative stereotypes have been drawn upon to discourage 'Ladette' behaviour. For example, the British reality TV show From Ladette to Lady, which aired on ITV in the UK from 2005-2010, trained young women to eradicate unfeminine qualities such certain drinking practices. Additionally, the national UK press negatively represented the 'Ladette', attempting to govern women's alcohol consumption by drawing upon discourse regarding health, social disorder and gender disorder (Jackson and Tinkler, 2007).

Much like 'lager louts', 'Ladettes' are a product of the mass media based upon unsubstantiated, exaggerated and sensationalised images (Jackson and Tinkler, 2007). The consequence of such representations is that they result in moral panics about youth alcohol consumption that results in governance of pleasurable leisure activities through increased surveillance, governance and criminalisation of youth drinking.

In sum, this social and cultural review of youth, alcohol and leisure traces a long-standing history of fears of and fears for young people regarding intoxication, which map consistent parallels between historical and contemporary perceptions of youth drinking cultures (Measham and Martinic, 2008). Whilst concerns regarding youth alcohol are legitimate, this literature review has shown that fears about youth intoxication are clearly underpinned by

cycles of moral panic which has led to the social control, governance and regulation of social and cultural functions that underpin youth leisure and recreation (Cohen, 1972).

1.3. Binge Britain: young people as homogenous, mindless and hedonistic consumers

In a contemporary context, 'binge' drinking is the latest term to be applied to youth drinking in a long-standing history of concerns about youth alcohol consumption. The term 'binge' drinking has a long-term confused history due to multiple definitions of the term used in various health, government, social and media discourse which change regularly (Berridge, Herring and Thom, 2009). In the 1940s and 1950s 'binge' drinking was associated with clinical definitions and disease models relating to alcoholism, often referring to individuals who drank excessively for days and giving up on social activities; regarded by psychiatrists as being on a "bender" (Plant and Plant, 2006:IV). From the 1990s onwards, 'binge' drinking came to be understood as "heavy drinking (with different numbers of drinks specified) on one occasion" (Berridge, Herring and Thom, 2009:598). Plant and Plant (2006) add that 'binge' drinking definitions began to encompass an understanding that it was a form of drinking that entailed a deliberate intention to get drunk, or drinking that results in unintended intoxication as a consequence of excessive consumption on one drinking occasion.

In the current twenty-first century context, 'binge' drinking from a government alcohol policy and strategy perspective is still an ill-defined term without a strict definition of what the term really means. As Plant and Plant (2006:XI) explain past alcohol policy documents such as the "UK Prime Minister's Strategy Unit (2003) defined a 'binge' as drinking over twice the UK recommended daily guidelines for low risk drinking in one day" whereas a "Home Office report by Mathews and Richardson (2005) employed an alternative way of defining binge. These authors defined binge drinkers as people who reported having felt 'very drunk' once or more in the past 12 months." Safe. Sensible. Social (Department of Health et al., 2007:3) vaguely defines 'binge' drinking as, "…essentially drinking too much alcohol over a short period of time, e.g. over the course of an evening, and it is typically drinking that leads to drunkenness. It has immediate and short-term risks to the drinker and to those around them." Some government health policies and strategies like Healthy Lives, Healthy People (HM Government, 2010a) completely avoid discussions about 'binge' drinking altogether. In the latest alcohol policy, strategy and consultation documents like *The Government's Alcohol Strategy* (HM Government, 2012) and Home Office (2013) reports like Next steps following the consultation *on delivering the Government's alcohol strategy*, there is no attempt to define 'binge' drinking; however, the documents make reference to 'binge' drinking when outlining concerns about

youth drinking. This highlights how alcohol policy and strategy is underpinned by a confused and unclear label associated with youth drinking that feeds into the public sphere.

Similarly, the UK national press apply the term 'binge' drinking and subsequent discourse to represent youth drinking cultures which appears to be based on assertions about young people's excessive consumption practices, rather than sound evidence. The term 'binge' drinking was predominant in the press during early 2000s (Nicholls, 2009b; 2010), but continues to re-emerge in contemporary press articles, stirring up anxieties and moral panics about 'binge' drinking. For example, Daily Mail (2015) headlines include, "Binge drinking by young people is increasing." Such articles continue to reassert that young people are 'binge' drinkers, who's drinking is depicted as homogenous, mindless and hedonistic.

Firstly, youth drinking is depicted as homogenous because there is an assumption put forward that youth drinking practices and values all conform to conventions of 'binge' drinking that entail getting deliberately drunk in city centres in attempts to "live for the weekend" (Measham, 2006). Secondly, youth 'binge' drinking is depicted as mindless through assertions that young people lack consciousness of how much they are drinking, why they are drinking to excess, or the negative outcomes that may occur. To show this, the press often refers to sensational examples of young people engaging in excessive consumption resulting in negative social and health outcomes. For example, when the phenomenon 'Neknominate'[4] emerged, the press became fixated upon notions of senselessness; implying that young people are unaware of the social and health consequences of excessive alcohol consumption. Whilst I assert that the harmful consequences of extreme drinking practices like 'Neknominate' should not be underplayed, the press were preoccupied with fatalities and further asserted ideas of youth mindlessness that that feed into wider understandings and moral panics about youth 'binge' drinking. Lastly, youth 'binge' drinking is presented as hedonistic through reports such as, "Selfish partygoers getting 'blotto' are putting intolerable strain on NHS, says its boss" (Donnelly, 2016). Such press depictions imply that young people purely seek the self-gratifying and dis-inhibitory effects of alcohol without thinking about negative outcomes associated with excessive consumption.

Popular media including television documentaries and soap operas also apply the term 'binge' drinking and associated discourse relating to homogeneity, mindlessness and hedonism. This is apparent in a number of 'fly on the wall' programmes like Booze Britain; Booze Britain 2:

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[4] Neknominate is a social media drinking game. An individual is filmed consuming ('necking') an alcoholic drink in one attempt. The drink is typically a concoction of a number of different alcoholic drinks. After completing this challenge the individual then uploads their video to a social media website and nominates another individual to complete a similar challenge.

Binge Nation; Sex, Sun and Suspicious Parents; Festivals, Sex and Suspicious Parents and 24 Hours in A&E which claim to objectively document the lives of young adult drinkers. However, arguably such programmes are presenting "voyeuristic degradation ceremonies" about youth 'binge' drinking by presenting edited sensationalised depictions of young people experiencing negative outcomes associated with excess consumption including vomiting, passing out, sexual promiscuity and violence (Hayward and Hobbs, 2007:449). Ideas of homogenous, mindless and hedonistic 'binge' drinking is framed in repetitious statements of young people "getting laid/fucked/shit-faced"; which in turn reinforce negative images of young drinkers and reproduce moral panics that shape wider understandings about youth intoxication. Similarly, documentaries like Binge Drinking (part of BBC Three's My Big Decision series) (2009) and Ready Steady Drink (2011) focus on excessive 'binge' drinking practices including shot drinking culture, drinking games and pre-loading; these are then linked to extreme negative outcomes including alcohol addiction and long-term health conditions like liver cirrhosis. Whilst these documentaries can be useful in health awareness raising of alcohol consumption; such programmes often fall back on the same voyeuristic presentations similar to that of 'fly on the wall' documentaries.

Television soap operas cyclically present storylines of young 'binge' drinkers, individuals of whom inevitably face negative short-term and long consequences of excessive consumption practices. Examples include the character of 'Billy Jackson', a character in EastEnders who died after 'binge' drinking at a party. 'Lauren Branning', also from EastEnders formed a long-term alcohol addiction after participating in frequent 'binge' drinking sessions in 2012 triggered by a breakdown in family and friendship ties. 'Belle Dingle', a young teenager in Emmerdale who was hospitalised after consuming contaminated vodka. Other soap operas including Hollyoaks and Coronation Street also regularly depict young people as 'binge' drinkers who encounter negative personal, social and health outcomes resulting from drinking. These portrayals of youth 'binge' drinking contribute to a normalisation of alcohol use in television which over-represents and incorporates exaggerated storylines of 'binge' drinking often linked to addiction and fatal outcomes to create drama, but does not reflect a balanced or accurate portrayal of real-life youth drinking (Atkinson et al., 2011). Similarly, UK films such as Eden Lake (2008) have contributed negative media portrayals and the demonization of young people, often linked to alcohol and drug consumption.

Perceptions of youth 'binge' drinking as homogenous, mindless and hedonistic is further reinforced through images and discourse regarding space and place. For example, the media repeatedly depict images of young 'binge' drinkers occupying pubs, bars, clubs and public settings in UK city centres whereby they lose control in the pursuit of ambitions to get drunk.

In this respect, the spaces that young drinkers occupy are seen as passive backdrops to drinking and drunkenness (Jayne and Valentine, 2015) because the drinking practices and values that are associated with these settings are ignored. This fits Cresswell's (2004) definition of 'space', which depicts space(s) as settings without having meaning imbued or attached to them. However, what is not represented is the diverse variety of domestic, public and private drinking settings that young people occupy "which people have made meaningful" which consequently become defined as a 'place' (Cresswell, 2004:7) to help young people pursue pleasurable and intentional drinking values and practices. Thus, what often goes unacknowledged is that where young people drink are valued cultural places which are often carved out by young drinkers through a sense of place making. According to Gieryn (2000), this can be achieved by seeking out and occupying unique geographic locations, interacting with material forms and investing meaning and value, which collectively contributes to constructing a sense of place.

This review of 'binge' drinking in contemporary government and media discourse shows that 'binge' drinking has become an emotive term in a long-standing history of fears about youth intoxication that has become synonymous with young people's disorderly consumption practices in public spaces (Measham and Brain, 2005; Hayward and Hobbs, 2007; Szmigin et al., 2008; Berridge et al., 2009; Griffin et al., 2009). Consequently, young people have come to represent 'Binge Britain' (Plant and Plant, 2006). Despite being poorly defined, 'binge' drinking is a socially and culturally constructed term that has become normalised by adults across the public sphere shaped by government and media discourse which inscribes youth drinking as homogenous, mindless and hedonistic (Szmigin et al., 2011). These perceptions of youth built upon ill definitions and often sensationalised accounts about 'binge' drinking brings into question whether or not the term actually corresponds with young people's real and everyday experiences of drinking (Szmigin et al., 2008). Therefore, "negative media portrayals of young people must, to some extent, be seen to be responsible for some of the current negative perceptions of young people" (Rogers, 2010:203). Whilst I contend that the negative outcomes associated with young people's excessive drinking practices should not be underplayed, I suggest that the term 'binge' drinking offers little insight as to how and why engage in excessive drinking, nor do these accounts reveal why young people find such practices desirable and pleasurable; this is a key consideration that this thesis seeks to empirically examine.

1.4. The siren call of youth to the contemporary 'culture of intoxication'

Researchers in the field of alcohol studies have begun to extensively question the culture of 'binge' drinking and how applicable it is to youth drinking cultures. Key contributions to this stem from Fiona Measham's work regarding the contemporary 'culture of intoxication'. According to Measham (2004a), historically alcohol has been the favourable drug in the UK, especially amongst young people. However, youth alcohol consumption reduced from the 1980s with the development of rave subculture, formed from the acid house movement, whereby drugs stimulating drugs like ecstasy became the favoured drug of choice over alcohol. Preference towards stimulating drugs during the 1980s and early 1990s rave scenes was attributed to the fact that such drugs allowed ravers to party through the night (Thornton, 1995). By the late 1990s Britain's rave culture became increasingly criminalised which resulted in rave cultures being contained, regulated and governed strictly within commercial settings (Measham, 2004a). Upon recognising the implications that the rave scene was having upon profits, the alcohol industry attempted to reclaim their position within the market of intoxication by recommodifying alcohol products and marketing strategies, and labelled young people as "psychoactive consumers" to reintroduce alcohol consumption amongst youth (Brain et al., 2000). These actions by the alcohol industry marked the growth of the alcohol industry and the development of the Night Time Economy (NTE).

Researchers have described the NTE as a new post-industrial urban social world transformed after dark consisting of a multitude of leisure and pleasure opportunities in the form of pubs, bars and nightclubs and other associated industries of hedonistic enablement present in town and city centres (Hobbs et al., 2005; Winlow and Hall, 2006). The NTE also consists of other economic provisions including takeaways and taxi-cabs which help facilitate the pursuit of consumerism, carnival and intoxication, "an environment diffuse with various forms of disorder, and its clientele, attracted […] by the promise of pleasure, excitement, and excess" (Hobbs et al., 2005:14). Whilst the NTE caters for a range of clientele, youth culture dominates the public and private spaces of the NTE. Thus, collectively the growth of the NTE and the emergence of Britain's contemporary 'culture of intoxication' has seen excessive alcohol consumption levels and practices, particularly amongst youth, becoming normalised in the UK.

Measham (2006) suggests that the contemporary culture of intoxication has been maintained in three core ways. Firstly, significant increase in the availability and accessibility of alcohol informed by deregulation and liberalisation within the Licensing Act (2003) created a twenty-four-hour drinking culture and extended participation in the NTE. This deregulation and liberalisation has allowed young people to purchase a wide range of alcoholic beverages at low cost, in large quantities, accessed day or night; which can be consumed at home or in

public. Secondly, the continued marketing and advertising of alcohol has steadily increased whereby the UK population is exposed to images, offers and promotions which encourage excessive consumption. Lastly, alcohol consumption is embedded in popular culture including television, film and music, whereby alcohol is frequently and excessively consumed.

Measham's account of the contemporary culture of intoxication shows that excessive alcohol consumption is not undertaken by a small or anti-social minority, but is prevalent across the UK. Against the backdrop of the contemporary culture of intoxication, it is hardly surprising that young people are engaging in excessive alcohol consumption, especially when the alcohol industry and NTE promote intoxication through notions of hedonism aimed directly at young people to buy into the culture of intoxication and profit from excessive alcohol consumption (Measham and Brain, 2005). This is achieved through the promotion of norms around excessive consumption which oppose traditional norms around discipline and constraint (Cherrington, 2009), as well as through: the marketing and advertising of alcohol, emphasising the liminality of the NTE, increasingly cheap youthful alcohol products and forms of popular culture promoting hedonism (Measham, 2006).

Marketing and advertising campaigns play a significant role in the normalisation of alcohol consumption, encouraging young people to engage in intoxication. This is achieved by making alcohol consumption appear part of everyday life alongside other brands that we encounter every day. For example, Alcohol Concern identified that children are equally, if not more familiar, with alcohol brands like Fosters as they are with food brands like McVities, McCoys or *Ben and Jerry's* because of the prevalence of alcohol media adverts and marketing campaigns that children encounter (Hughes, 2015). Despite regulations by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) (2015) insisting that televised alcohol adverts must be shown after the watershed, they are still common across UK television in the evenings. Similarly, the Department of Health's (2011) Public Health Responsibility Deal alcohol pledges stated that alcohol adverts will not be placed within 100 meters near schools; however, billboards which promote alcohol can be easily identified in public spaces across the UK.

Despite the alcohol industry being regulated by governing bodies like ASA and organisations including DrinkAware, arguably the industry continues to promote the normalisation of alcohol. Whilst some alcohol adverts and marketing campaigns have been banned for not conforming to ASA (2015) regulatory standards, who introduced stricter codes from 2005 stating that adverts should not: be direct to young people under eighteen, contain references to youth culture or link alcohol with irresponsible behaviour, social success or sexual attractiveness; there are a number of existing campaigns which could be interpreted as not conforming to such standards (Szmigin et al., 2011). For example, there are strong comedic elements to

Fosters 'Good Call' campaign which denotes that fun can be achieved through consumption. Additionally, *Disaronno's* 'On the Rocks' televised advert promotes sensual/sexual connotations through imagery along with the slogan "pass the pleasure around". Together such campaigns instil that alcohol consumption can offer a gateway to pleasure and hedonism rather than sensibility and restraint. This position is supported by research of alcohol advertising by Noel et al. (2016:45) which concludes that, "a significant proportion of alcohol marketing contains content that may be attractive to youth and that youth are exposed disproportionately to alcohol marketing". They suggest that current self-regulatory approaches by the alcohol industry are ineffective at their intended goal of protecting young people from the attraction of alcohol consumption. Consequently, commercial contexts that encourage excessive behaviour are often disregarded or given credibility through the alcohol industry's contribution to government policies encouraging 'sensible drinking' (Szmigin et al., 2011:766). This is how the industry refutes claims to encourage the normalisation of excessive consumption amongst youth.

The NTE is described by researchers in the field of alcohol studies as liminal play spaces or leisure zones which promote excessive alcohol consumption (Measham, 2006; Hayward and Hobbs, 2007; Smith, 2013). According to Victor Turner (1969), "liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention and ceremonial." Thus, NTEs can be considered as places or 'liminal zones' where traditional norms, practices and values regarding alcohol consumption may be suspended (Winlow and Hall, 2006). The rapid growth and development of the NTE has been attributed by the development of a post-industrial consumerist society, making such spaces an urban site of consumption and consumer excess (Hayward and Hobbs, 2007). These drinking establishments offer young people the potential for escapism, time out from the monotony of everyday life and work, and encourage ideals of 'living for the weekend' and a 'work hard, play hard' attitude (Measham, 2008). Participation in these spaces and the culture of 'letting go' has been made easier as a result of deregulation and relaxation in licenses laws from the Licensing Act (2003) (Measham and Brain, 2005; Szmigin et al., 2011).

In their research of youth identities in leisure contexts, Winlow and Hall (2006:91) go onto suggest that the development of the night-time leisure economy has become a primary area for consumption, 'identity-work' and the construction and maintenance of friendships for young people. They go onto suggest that it is here that alcohol misuse, violence and fear is common, arguing that young people view violence not only as part of the experience of going out, but can find excitement in witnessing this as it offers opportunities for transgressive adventure. Moreover, "the abandonment of virtually all sense of normality and reason – getting 'out of

your head' or 'off your face' has become virtually a prerequisite for the active search for individual hedonistic excess" (Winlow and Hall, 2006). Thus, their work has highlights that young people seek out transgression and hedonism offered to them by pubs, bars and clubs.

In line with the expansion of the NTE, a widening array of licensed leisure venues have made drinking the primary purpose of participation in the NTE, rather than drinking being a passive background pursuit amongst other social and cultural leisure opportunities (Measham, 2008). However, some researchers argue that drinking establishments are gentrifying, sanitising and feminising establishments to more consumers such as women to participate the culture of intoxication and NTE (Griffin et al., 2012). For example, there is considerable seduction for young people to pursue infantile/novel drinking experiences through clusters of drinking establishments in towns and cities across the UK, including an array of nostalgia pubs, and themed bars and clubs (Measham, 2004a) like: Vodka Revolutions, Tiger Tiger, Walkabout and *O'Neills*. Whilst such establishments suggest that responsible and sensible drinking is encouraged, there is still widespread activity of irresponsible drink promotions and poor practices evident across the NTE that leads to the rapid consumption of cheap alcohol and negative outcomes resulting from excessive intoxication (Szmigin et al., 2011). Collectively, the liminality of the NTE promoted by the alcohol industry contributes to the siren call for young people to participate in excessive alcohol consumption.

As well as a growth in drinking to excess promoted through the NTE, there has also been a growth in youthful alcohol products aimed towards young people/youthful consumption since the 1990s. Such products do not encourage responsible or sensible consumption, but instead promote infantile or extreme drinking behaviours (Smith, 2013). The further impact of this is that, "excessive drinking behaviours are lingering further into adulthood for a much greater proportion of the population than we might assume" and so, youthful drinking practices are encroaching further into adulthood identities, and not just influencing youth consumption (Smith, 2013:1070). For example, alcohol products have been re-commodified to capture youthfulness including: 'designer drinks' like up-market beers, ciders and alcopops, FABS (flavoured alcoholic beverages) and RTD (ready to drink) spirit mixers; all of which are sweet tasting and promote childhood nostalgia, but are very high strength that encourages drunkenness (Alridge, Measham and Williams, 2011; Fry, 2011;). As well as designer drinkers, 'shooters' and 'shots' continue to be increasingly popular amongst young people and adults. More recently, a variety of 'bomb'[5] shot drinks have emerged which are available to purchase in the NTE or can and are encouraged to be made and consumed at home (see:

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[5] A 'bomb' shot is a mixed drink that is made by mixing two or more drinks together. Typically, a small shot glass of a spirit or alcoholic beverage is dropped into another small glass containing a drink (which can be non/alcoholic.

drinkstuff.com, 2017). Supermarkets and off-licenses have also increased their range of novel alcohol products such as, 'alco-lollies', frozen 'slushi' cocktail beverages and pre-mixed drinks available in packaging that is able to be transported and consumed at home or on the move to facilitate excessive consumption practices like pre-drinking before entering the NTE (see Appendix One). Collectively, such beverages encourage excessive and risky alcohol consumption entailing drinking a mixture of different alcoholic drinks at a fast pace that leads to quicken and heightened intoxication, and "serves to generate attitudes, desires, habits and preferences that seem to not only legitimise but also encourage, childishness among adult consumers" (Smith, 2013:1076).

As well as selling youthful products, it is widely acknowledged that licensed establishments, off-licenses and supermarkets have historically and in a contemporary context, promoted cheap alcohol consumption through offers (e.g. happy hours and other cost-saving deals) that contribute to the normalisation of excessive consumption (Measham, 2006). Whilst, supermarkets and off-licenses have claimed to reduce irresponsible drinking marketing and promotion practices of alcohol that can particularly effect young people; it appears that such claims have not been met. For example, in line with Public Health Responsibility Deal (Department of Health, 2011) supermarkets made 'pledges' to foster sensible drinking culture. Specifically, Asda made a pledge not to advertise drink promotions at the front of their store or in foyers. However, by 2013, Asda had reverted to saying, "In response to customer demand and in order to restore a level playing-field, in September 2013 we took the decision to return alcohol to the foyers of selected stores on a limited basis at key seasonal points during the year" (Department of Health, 2013). This highlights the lack of commitment from organisations to promote sensible or responsible drinking amongst young people, which in turn endorses the normalisation of excessive drinking.

Forms of popular culture also play a central role in normalising and even glamorising excessive consumption in the culture of intoxication, including: television shows, films and popular music. Reality television shows like Geordie Shore, The Only Way is Essex (TOWIE) and Made in Chelsea often glamorises and regularly depicts excessive alcohol consumption as both normal and even desirable. For example, in TOWIE, much of the documenting of the young adults' lives shows young people drinking cocktails and engaging in hedonistic party practices taking place in nightclubs and bars that have now become somewhat iconic in the UK including: Sugar Hut, Eclipse, Faces and Club 195. Such depictions of glamorised youth drinking are then reported by the popular press (see: Usmar, 2012). Similarly, television sitcoms such as The Inbetweeners, Fresh Meat and Skins depict excessive and hedonistic drinking practices amongst young adults. Sitcoms like The Inbetweeners have subsequently been made into films including The Inbetweeners Movie (2011), The Inbetweeners 2 (2014);

both of which feature excessive alcohol consumption and drunkenness as a central theme. Unlike television soap operas, such sitcoms play down the negative consequences of alcohol consumption which strengthens the appeal to intoxication. For example, sitcoms like Fresh Meat cyclically depict the consequences of excessive drinking (entailing mild hangovers and somewhat regrettable sexual encounters) as part and parcel of university drinking, which is seen as often mildly amusing and even desirable.

The popular music industry, also play a central role in beckoning young people to intoxication. A close critical examination of recent popular music videos and songs identifies that there is a sustained focus upon the themes of enjoyment and pleasure linked to excessive alcohol consumption (Blackman, Doherty and McPherson, 2015). For example, a range of contemporary popular music songs and videos with explicit references to excessive alcohol consumption include:

- Katy Perry (2011) Last Friday Night.
- LMFAO and Lil Jon (2009) Shots!
- Lucy Spraggen (2012) Last Night (Beer Fear)
- P!nk (2010) Raise Your Glass.
- Rihanna (2010) Drink To That.
- Tinie Tempa (2010) Pass Out.
- Tulisa featuring Tyga (2012) Live It Up.

Moreover, organisations like the Time Out Group (2014) have published a list, "the 50 best drinking songs" regarded as drinking anthems endorsing and glamorising specific alcohol brands and messages that promote excess, pleasure and hedonism to young people.

Concerns about the influence of popular music videos upon young people's alcohol consumption has been acknowledged amongst the popular British tabloid press, whereby fears for young people are produced regarding this relationship between youth, alcohol and popular music. This is evident in The Daily Express (2013) who reports, 'Alcohol promoted in chart hits' and The Daily Mail (2013) who suggests, 'Pop songs which refer to alcohol brands could be encouraging young people to binge drink and have sex'. This highlights wider concerns about the influence of popular music upon young people's consumption. Despite such concerns, the playing of drinking songs is not just reserved for NTE establishments; drinking songs are also played day and night across radio stations in the UK. Therefore, arguably the music industry lack responsibility on their part in the enticement of youth to intoxication. One small exception to this has been in relation to the song Black Beatles (2016) by Rae Sremmurd featuring Gucci Mane, whereby radio edits of the song edited/bleeped out

reference to 'binge' drinking. Perhaps this is attributed to the song's success through its viral and social media exposure through the 'Mannequin Challenge'[6] trend that appealed to youth on a global scale.

This review has identified that in a contemporary context, young people are deliberately targeted to participate in the contemporary culture of intoxication by the alcohol industry and forms of popular culture. Despite the normalisation of excessive consumption being relevant to the wider UK population, it is young people and their 'binge' drinking values and practices that are at the centre of concerns about alcohol consumption in the UK. In the same way that historically young people have been viewed with fears of and for their alcohol consumption (as shown earlier in this chapter), these fears are mirrored in contemporary depictions of youth 'binge' drinking attributed to concerns about the culture of intoxication and normalisation of excessive consumption. Consequently, both historical and contemporary understandings regarding youth drinking cultures centre concern and blame about the negative social, personal and health outcomes from young drinkers themselves instead of exploring the social and cultural influences that inform youth drinking cultures, or the role of external bodies including the alcohol industry or popular culture. Moreover, these accounts, do not allow for the pleasurable or positive aspects that young people experience, nor do they acknowledge notions of agency that young people express about their drinking. This reinforces that young people are viewed as homogenous, mindless and hedonistic in a passive response to a siren call to intoxication.

1.5. Acknowledging youth agency and pleasure in a neoliberal context 'binge' drinking

As the 1980s and 1990s marked a move away from an industrial production economy towards consumer consumption leisure and the rise of consumer capital, with this saw the rapid development of nightlife and the NTE in urban centres (Hobbs et al., 2005; Winlow and Hall, 2006). Alongside this, a neoliberal order formed aiming to convince individuals that freedom, justice, equality and opportunity was available through capitalism's consumer society, particularly through the pursuit of leisure opportunities (Winlow and Hall, 2006). Regarding the UKs alcohol policy and drinking culture, a central feature of neoliberalism is that it purports the limiting of government interference with operations of the free-market to enable individuals to become more autonomous (Haydock, 2014). Therefore, with the expansion of NTEs,

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[6] The Mannequin Challenge is a viral social media internet video trend. The trend entails individuals having to remain completely motionless (like mannequins) whilst a moving camera films them. The song Black Beatles (2016) by Rae Sremmurd featuring Gucci Mane typically accompanies the filming as its background music.

regulatory responsibilities have increasingly been passed over to the alcohol industry to support the neoliberal order, allowing establishments to profit from consumer consumption under a powerful marketing strategy aiming to seduce youth towards weekend hedonism in the NTE (Winlow and Hall, 2006).

In line with neoliberal approaches, Hadfield (2008) highlights that corporate drinking establishments in the NTE, particularly nightclubs, have competed aggressively with one another to attract elite and enthusiastic consumers with money to spend, whilst at the same time, attempting to exclude those who threaten consumption and profit. This is achieved this through private governance where individuals with good 'fit' are encouraged to consume alcohol in spaces that young drinkers deem as exclusive, safe, predictable and in line with their own social norms and values. This not only attracts the spending power of individuals, but further attracts like-minded consumers (Hadfield, 2008). Thus, "clubland entrepreneurs exploit opportunities to engage and protect the most profitable and prestigious markets" (Hadfield, 2008:433). It can be argued then that these neoliberal approaches and the expansion of NTEs have fostered an environment that encourages excessive and hedonistic consumption (Hadfield, 2004). Thus, the ideal citizen is seen as someone who consumes alcohol and supports the industry, but does not impact profit (Haydock, 2014).

Against the backdrop of the expansion of the NTE, researchers in the field of alcohol studies support that contemporary discourses of 'binge' drinking applied to youth alcohol consumption "can be seen as representative of a neo-liberal social order which emphasises individual responsibility and accountability" (Szmigin et al., 2011:760). This is evident in alcohol policy documents such as Safe, Sensible, Social (Cabinet Office, 2007) and the government's Alcohol Strategy (HM Government, 2012) whereby young people are instructed to consume alcohol 'sensibly' and 'responsibly'. Through neoliberalism then, it is emphasised that young people should be held accountable for the consequences of their excessive consumption practices; as opposed to social, cultural or institutional circumstances that may lead to negative outcomes or consequences (Szmigin et al., 2011). Through such understandings, this reinforces existing arguments in this chapter that the alcohol industry and other institutions are exempt from being held accountable in shaping the normalisation of excessive consumption through a siren call to the contemporary culture of intoxication; instead young people become representative of the cause of a national moral decline resulting from 'binge' drinking because they cannot conform to notions of 'sensible' or 'responsible' drinking (Szmigin et al., 2011).

On the one hand, neoliberal alcohol policies and strategies aimed at tackling issues regarding youth 'binge' drinking and excessive consumption appear to be encouraging youth agency

through the suggestion that young people should be accountable for their own drinking practices and values. One the other hand, these same neo-liberal policies and strategies imply that young people lack the capacity to drink sensibly and responsibly. This is because like the historical representations of young drinkers presented earlier in this chapter, young people are consistently depicted as lacking control encapsulated through a moral failure of the self (Griffin et al., 2009). Through such understandings then, "pleasure is a problem where its pursuit – as in the image of 'hedonism' – conflicts with the other key requirements made of liberal subjects, notably 'responsibility', 'rationality', 'reasonableness', 'independence' and so on" (O'Malley and Valverde, 2004:27-28).

Consequently, neoliberal policies and initiatives underpinned by 'binge' drinking discourse fall back on emotive educational messages underpinned by fear, guilt and shame to encourage young people to drink sensibly (Szmigin et al., 2011). However, young people resist such messages which rely on scare tactics and emotional blackmail because they observe that 'sensible' drinking does not occur around them by adult society, nor in popular media and culture (Szmigin et al., 2011). This creates a 'credibility gap' because alcohol policy messages do not correlate with wider normalised heavy drinking practices evident in the UK and the contemporary culture of intoxication that calls upon young people to engage in excessive consumption (Measham, 2006:262).

Neo-liberal policies then, not only fail to address the full social and cultural environment context in contemporary society (Szmigin et al., 2011), but deny agency and give little incentive for young people to follow values of responsible or sensible drinking and supress the idea that intoxication can be linked to pleasure (Critcher, 2011). Consequently, young people are positioned in a contradictory space between neoliberal policies which state that young people must be sensible and responsible, against alternative principles of choice, access and opportunity that encourage excess consumption within the contemporary culture of intoxication (Blackman, Doherty and McPherson, 2015).

Despite the lack of agency attributed to youth drinking cultures presented through neoliberal policies and government and media discourse about youth 'binge' drinking, researchers in the field of alcohol studies are increasingly drawing upon Fiona Measham's (2006) pivotal work on 'calculated-hedonism' to highlight notions of pleasure and agency attributed to youth drinking cultures. This has enabled alcohol researchers to critique neoliberal policies and discourse of youth 'binge' drinking; enabling them to move beyond the problematizing of 'binge' drinking to contribute nuanced understandings of how and why young people engage in excessive intoxication.

Measham's (2006) work on calculated hedonism begins to emphasise a sense of agency to youth drinking through the suggestion that young people attempt to consciously regulate their levels of desired and actual intoxication by employing strategies that entail making informed judgements about their consumption and managing a balance between risky and pleasurable drinking practices. These forms of regulation are bound up in young people's "concerns about health, personal safety, image and identity [which…] interact with gender, age, ethnicity, and socioeconomic class" (Measham, 2006:263) which highlight that youth drinking is not mindless and hedonistic. Importantly, Measham (2006) acknowledges that managing desire and actual intoxication is difficult because in reality there is uncertainty in being able to control the outcomes resulting from the intoxicating effects of alcohol consumption.

Since the term calculated-hedonism has come to the forefront of alcohol studies, a number of studies of youth drinking cultures have applied this term to further explain how and why young people engage in excessive alcohol consumption (see: Szmigin et al., 2008; Griffin et al., 2009; Szmigin et al., 2011; Tuténges and Sandberg, 2013;). These studies acknowledge that youth alcohol consumption is underpinned by themes of pleasure, fun, sociability, friendship, togetherness, belonging and identity that encompass young people's lived experiences of alcohol consumption. In turn, these studies contribute insight about contemporary youth drinking cultures showing that young people display self-actualisation and self-expression to negotiate the seduction of excessive alcohol consumption (Hayward and Hobbs, 2007). Consequently, young people are not passive consumers who engage in reckless or out of control consumption as government and media discourse tends to suggest (Blackman, Doherty and McPherson, 2015).

Through in-depth qualitative empirical investigation alongside young adult drinkers the aforementioned studies are beginning to accentuate a sense of agency to youth drinking against the backdrop of neoliberalism through understandings that young people are "choosing when, where and who to drinking with and […] equally choosing when not to do so" (Szmigin et al., 2008). In line with such theoretical positions regarding youth drinking, this thesis seeks to contribute further empirical research from the perspectives of young people themselves as to how and why they engage in excessive consumption and negotiate the contemporary culture of intoxication through varying levels of agency.

1.6. Conclusion

This chapter has presented a social and cultural historical overview of youth drinking cultures showing that government, media and public concerns about 'binge' drinking is underpinned

by fears of and fears for young people. Such understandings have suggested that youth alcohol consumption needs to be governed and regulated because young adults are out of control and unable to self-regulate their own consumption which may lead to negative outcomes. However, research in the field of alcohol studies is increasingly acknowledging that young people display levels of agency in relation to their intoxication. However, this is unacknowledged and denied by the government, media and public against the backdrop of neoliberalism. In light of this emerging research, this study aims to contribute to these findings by emphasising notions of agency in contemporary understandings of youth alcohol drinking cultures that moves beyond discourse and debate of young people are mindless, hedonistic 'binge' drinkers.

CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY

2.1. Introduction

This chapter will firstly provide a contextual account of the research settings and participants to enliven the research context and introduce the main protagonists of the research. Secondly, the chapter will outline the theoretical and methodological framework of the thesis informed by influence from the Chicago School of Sociology, as well as an account of the grounded theoretical and feminist ethnographic approaches applied to fieldwork, data analyses and the writing-up of the research findings. Following this, the chapter will provide further insight into the key methods employed as part of the framework, offering an account of the trials and tribulations encountered during fieldwork with young people and community members in the London Borough of Sutton. An account of how the data was analysed throughout the research process will also be outlined through an ongoing process of reflexivity, and lastly an account of some ethical considerations will be examined.

2.2. Contextualising the research settings and participants

Fieldwork and data collection for this research spanned periodically across two and a half years, beginning in January 2011 and ending in June 2013 in and around the London Borough of Sutton. During the two year period, I attended various formal community settings that young people and adult community members occupied, and engaged with individuals who played distinct roles in the drinking culture of Sutton. I undertook in-depth ethnographic fieldwork in drinking settings that young people occupied, and interacted with individuals in these settings. Whilst I have revealed the research location as Sutton, all of the young people and most organisations have been anonymised using pseudonyms. The rationale for this will be expanded upon in the 'Ethical considerations' section of this chapter. Through close interaction with the research participants, I was able to gain a holistic representation of youth drinking cultures to address the research aims of this study. To eliminate ambiguity regarding the research, this section will firstly provide an autobiographical account of my relationship with the research location, and secondly, bring to life both the research settings and participants.

2.2.1. 'Hometown glory': an autobiographic account of my drinking biography, prior knowledge and insider status with the fieldwork location

In the Introduction of this thesis, I provided a short autobiographical account detailing the broad inspiration behind this thesis. In this account I did not detail that Sutton, my site of fieldwork investigating youth drinking cultures is in fact my hometown. This opening section of the Methodology will detail how this position proved to be highly advantageous to this study, whilst recognising that this approach is not without criticism.

From growing up in Sutton, I am aware that it is a location that is associated with excessive alcohol consumption, making it a useful site to explore youth drinking. From the age of approximately sixteen years old, whilst studying my A-Levels over ten years ago, my friends and I engaged in underage drinking, trying to obtain alcohol from local off-licenses to drink in public settings or in friends 'free houses'[7]. Ten years on, I still observe young people drinking in the same spaces including, the streets, parks and carparks. This prior knowledge of underage drinking spaces in Sutton advantageously enabled me to identify access and opportunities to underage young drinkers to commence research of youth drinking in Sutton.

When friends and I turned eighteen, we regularly went out and drank in Sutton. For more celebratory 'big' nights out, we frequented the surrounding areas of Wimbledon, Kingston upon Thames, Putney, Redhill and Central London. Nights out in Sutton with friends were usually pleasurable and devoid of extreme negative outcomes resulting from excessive alcohol consumption. However, on some occasions, my friends and I witnessed and experienced minor incidents of aggression and negative outcomes of excessive consumption including falling over and vomiting; but such incidences were generally exceptional. Once again, I saw myself as being advantaged having this knowledge because I was aware of the settings that young people occupied and places that would be worth in-depth fieldwork attention. Moreover, I felt confident in safely undertaking research in Sutton as a solitary female researcher in a potentially vulnerable field of study.

In relation to feeling safe, knowing the area was a strong contributory factor in choosing Sutton as the site of fieldwork. As noted by Hammersley and Atkinson, (2007), researchers may choose locations which offer ease of accessibility and entrance to fieldwork; however, my choice was driven by concerns about being and feeling safe. Additionally, I was conscious that conducting fieldwork alongside young drinkers would be spontaneous, therefore I would need to be able to get to and from different research settings at short notice; as this is how most

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[7] A 'free house' is a friend/acquaintance's family home whose parents were out of an evening or overnight.

young people organise their drinking activities. Having in-depth local knowledge about police stations, transport options (including cab-stations, bus-stops and train links) and trouble hotspots where well-known illicit activities took place, all contributed to feeling confident to navigating potential risky fieldwork environments.

Whilst I my main interest was in researching young people in-situ in drinking settings; to get a holistic picture of youth drinking cultures, I knew I would also need to conduct research in formal community settings and local organisations. Having grown up in Sutton and undertaken local voluntary work for several years, I was aware of services that existed who could help with access to fieldwork. This saved considerable time and energy in establishing and negotiating access to community organisations and services via gatekeepers because I already had existing connections to utilise (Holliday, 2007).

2.2.2. 'Making the familiar strange': initial mapping of Sutton's drinking culture

Whilst using prior and insider knowledge can be useful, qualitative enquiry requires a process of 'making the familiar strange' so that the researcher does not take the field or research participants for granted (Holliday, 2007). Heeding this advice, Deegan (2001) suggests that doctoral students under the academic leadership of Robert Park in the department of Sociology at the University of Chicago were encouraged to adopt a journalistic and investigative style to study the city and explore the everyday activities of urban life. In this respect, the city of Chicago was treated as a 'social laboratory' (Faris, 1967; Deegan, 2001). Examples of such Chicago School researchers who encouraged or adopted this style include Frederic Thrasher (1927), Vivien Palmer (1928) and Clifford Shaw (1930); all of whom conducted urban ethnographic studies employing research methods considered advanced and experimental in the early twentieth century (Blackman, 2010). Following these traditional Chicago School approaches, I conducted fieldwork in this investigative and experimental style, conceptualising Sutton as my 'social laboratory'. Thus, I began fieldwork by engaging in a process of mapping and surveying the community so that I could help gain a new and fresh perspective of the research setting and the people who occupied this place.

During the first month of fieldwork I spent time roving the community, mainly around the night-time economy (NTE) of Sutton and the surrounding areas. This entailed spending several hours walking or driving during evenings and weekends observing young drinkers in public drinking environments and recording observations in the field diary. Whilst these initial observations were covert, the purpose of these observations was not about gaining data in the strictest sense, but acted as a strategy to initially loosely explore the drinking culture within

Sutton in an investigative style to provide better direction for more in-depth fieldwork that was to follow.

During this time, I also began constructing my own maps reminscient of the Chicago School approaches. These marked out key public spaces where I encountered underage drinking in public spaces, young drinkers occupation of public spaces in the NTE, including: drinking establishments like pubs, bars, clubs, off-licenses; key places associated with drinking including transportation services like cab stations and bus stops; and other businesses like eating establishments). I colour coded, labelled and annotated these maps to gain a sense of the social and cultural functions that occurred within these spaces (see Figure One: 'Map of Sutton High Street' below).[8] This challenged and updated my prior knowledge about youth drinking cultures in Sutton, contributing towards making the familiar strange (Holliday, 2007). These maps also allowed me to plan out the fieldwork opprtunities that would be productive for future data collection.

Figure 1: Map of Sutton High Street

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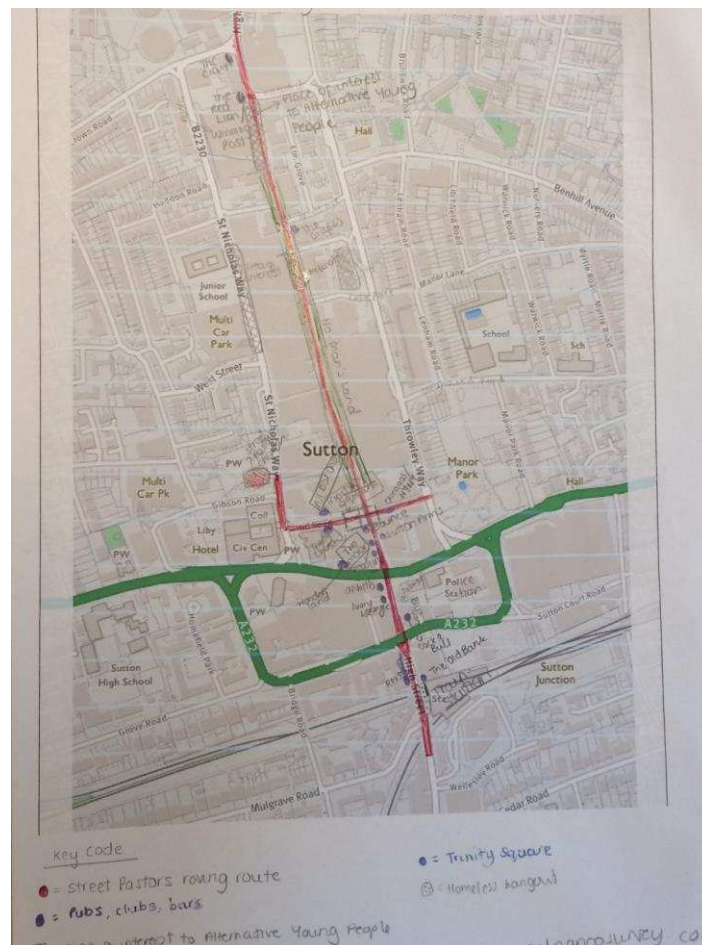
[8] To protect the anonymity and confidentiality of the research participants, key services and organisations, other maps have been excluded from this thesis.

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With these maps and initial observations, I also began supplementing my prior knowledge by establishing a list of potential contacts from relevant local services and community organisations who shape youth drinking cultures in Sutton and help me gain the holistic image of youth drinking in Sutton. The final stage of my investigatory approach entailed gathering a diverse range of local documentation, resources and materials relating to youth drinking in line with Chicago School practices. For example, William I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki acquired considerable autobiographical material for The Polish Peasant (1918-1921) to inform theoretical insight regarding adaption and social disorganising to explain the lives and world of Polish immigrants. Consequently, I collated local policy documentation, leaflets, pamphlets, media etc. relating to youth drinking to supplement my knowledge and eventually used this to 'triangulate' with other fieldwork data. (Denzin, 1989). This enabled allowed me to build a familiar and unfamiliar picture of drinking in the London Borough of Sutton that could direct later fieldwork activities more coherently.

Taking this process of making the familiar strange and ensuring that this research of youth drinking cultures was socially, culturally and historically situated; I heeded the advice from Human/Social Geographers that space and place should not be seen as a passive backdrop in understanding drinking cultures; but should be a central focus point of analysis within alcohol-related studies (Jayne, Valentine and Holloway, 2011; Jayne and Valentine, 2015). Subsequently, following this advice, I produced a 'drinking biography' of Sutton to provide an overview of the social and cultural history of alcohol consumption in the borough which in turn informs the empirical fieldwork of this research by unpacking hidden complexities with the research location.

2.2.3. Drinking biography of the London Borough of Sutton

According to Cluett (1976:12), the 1806 Domesday survey contains one of the earliest writings of Sutton as a village and parish, referred to as 'Sudtone'; meaning South-Tun or South Farm, situated in the county of Surrey. Sutton was described as an 'insignificant village' during the eighteenth century, until its expansion during the nineteenth century. However, when exploring the developments of Sutton during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it is apparent that the expansion of the village was partially attributable to the area's relationship and roots in intoxication; particularly through its history in alcohol and drug manufacturing.

Prior to 1864, Sutton had no access to piped water due to its chalky and clay terrain; therefore, ale was the providential drink supplied by several alehouses in the village (Smith, 1960). These alehouses and pubs also served the population's limited opportunities for social contact

and entertainment. According to Mannix et al. (2011) most of the brewing operated from the home up until the eighteenth century when breweries in the surrounding parishes of Cheam and Wallington emerged. The breweries in the area were thriving businesses from the 1880s including the Boorne Brewery in Wallington, which continued to operate until 1968, where they produced a number of local beers and ales for the community. This highlights Sutton's early relationship with alcohol which was fundamental in serving the everyday life, activities and needs of the village.

As suggested by Mannix et al. (2011), not only did Sutton have strong roots in the manufacturing of alcohol, but during the late eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century, there were several snuff mills in the parishes of Beddington, Carshalton, Mitcham and Morden. One of the major snuff mills in the area at the time was the run by the Lambert family, who later became the famous tobacco company Lambert and Butler. The mill was highly successful and by 1900 it was one of the largest snuff mills in the UK. Mannix et al. (2011) note that snuff was popularised by King George IV during the 1820s and became a fashionable substance used by the upper classes as it was associated with elegance. Therefore, the demand for snuff and its production played an important role in Sutton's local industry and provided work for the locals; thus emphasising Sutton's social, economic and cultural links to intoxication.

According to Cluett (1976) by the nineteenth century, Sutton continued to develop and expand due to the recontruction of the Brighton Road; the main route which runs from London to Brighton. This reconstruction resulted in the route to run through the center of Sutton, as well as subsequently connecting Sutton to the surrounding fashionable areas of Croydon, Cheam and Epsom. Due to this reconstruction, toll bars in Sutton encouraged passing traffic en route to Brighton or the Epsom races to stop at the one of the many available coaching inns, alehouses and pubs.[9] Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, Sutton's sense of community continued to grow as the quality of life in the area increased; contributed by enhanced transportation links which made commuting desirable and worthwhile, as well as more generous living environments (Cluett, 1976). This is supported in the Safer Sutton Partnership Plan 2010-2013 (2010:8) which states that, "The borough developed and grew in the 1920s and 1930s largely because its quality of life made a commute worthwhile – quieter and safer streets, a strong sense of community and stability, larger houses with more generous gardens." These accounts and historical developments demonstrate how Sutton transformed

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[9] Images by Crowe (1980) documents original historical drawings of sixty-one inns, taverns and public-houses in Sutton from the seventeenth century.

from an "insignificant village" to a noteable town situated outside of London which has been built upon a social and industrial heritage linked to intoxication.

Due to the considerable expansion of Sutton, in April 1965, the area transformed from a small village in Surrey to become a large suburban town forming part of Greater London, consisting of four electoral wards: Beddington, Carshalton, Cheam, Sutton and Wallington (Cluett, 1995:15). Since 2000, the London Borough of Sutton formed part of the Greater London Authority situated in South West London. Figure 2 (below) shows the location of Sutton within Greater London (Office for National Statistics) (ONS, 2013):

Figure 2: Map of the "London Boroughs, 2013"
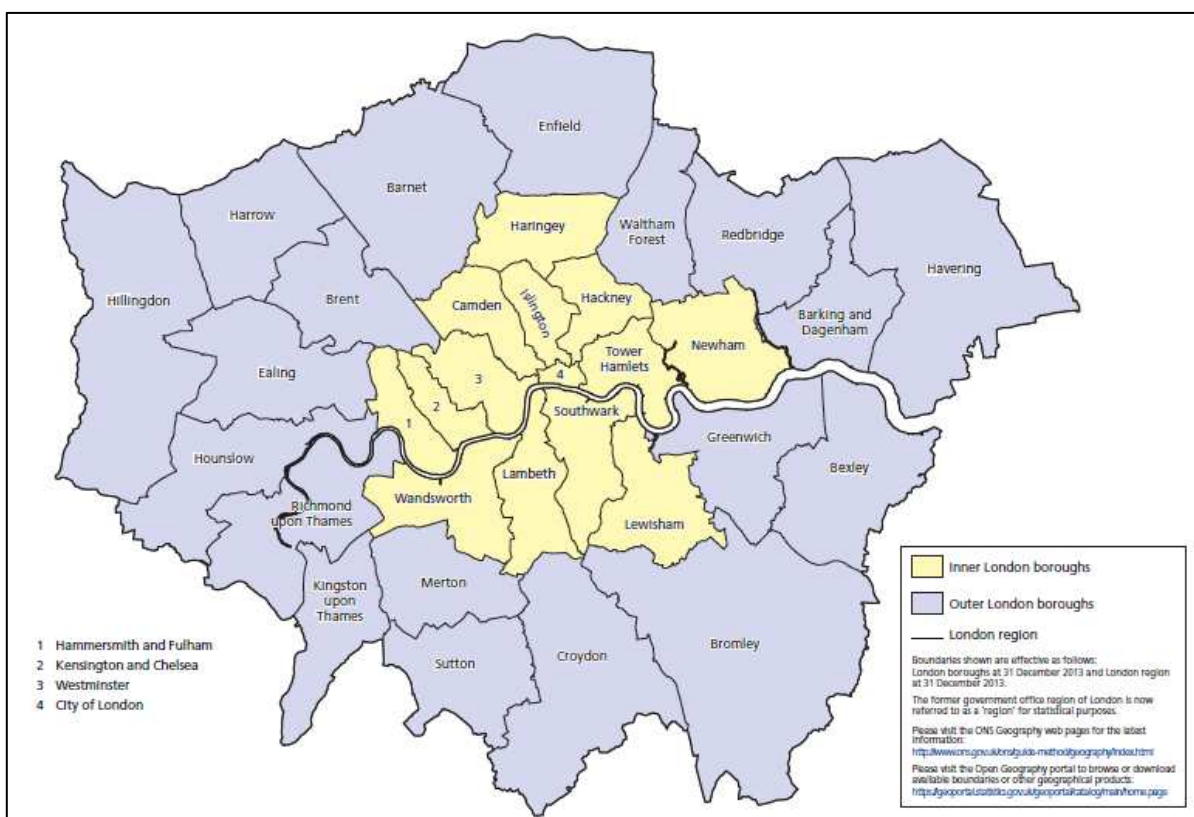
Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS, 2013)

It is worth noting that the London Borough of Sutton is made up of eighteen electoral divisions[10] in total, as presented below in Figure 3 (Neighbourhood Watch, 2013). Although fieldwork took place across the Borough, primarily, research alongside participants took place in the electoral

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[10] "Electoral wards/divisions are the key building block of UK administrative geography, being the spatial units used to elect local government councillors in metropolitan and non-metropolitan districts, unitary authorities and the London boroughs in England; unitary authorities in Wales; council areas in Scotland; and district council areas in Northern Ireland." (ONS, 2016)

wards of Cheam (4), Sutton North (5), Sutton West (6), Sutton Central (7), Sutton South (8) and Carshalton Central (13).

Figure 3: 'Sutton Ward Map'
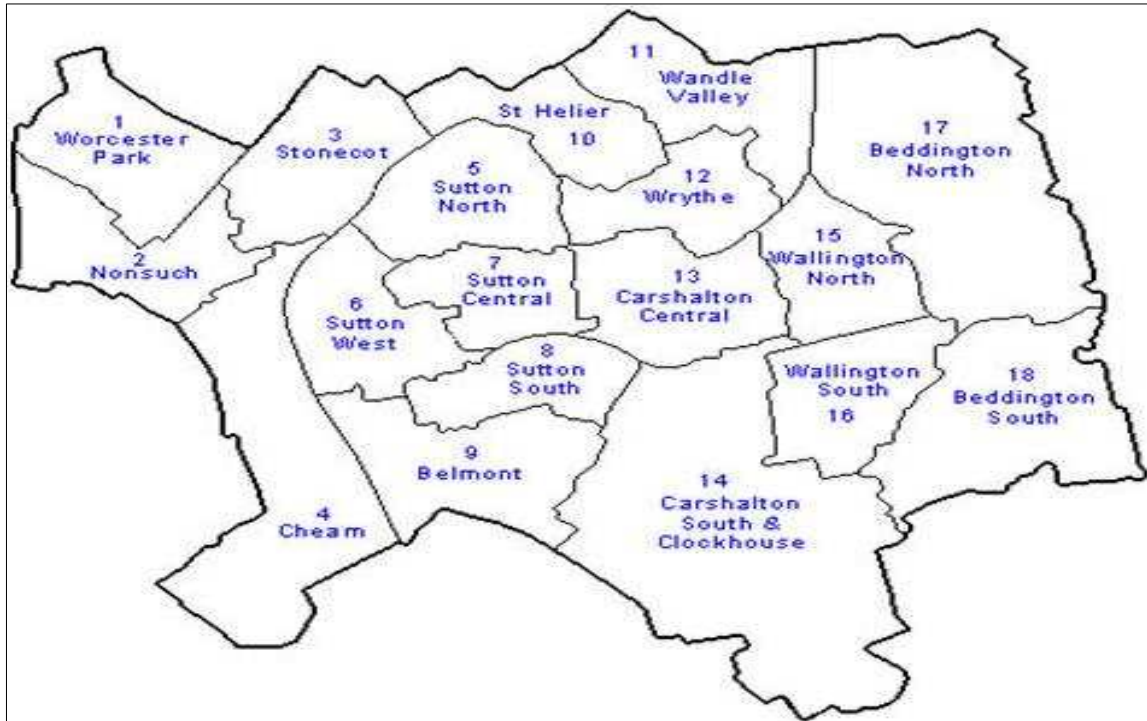
Source: Neighbourhood Watch (2013)

According to the Greater London Authority data (GLA, 2015) Sutton's population has continued to increase where the estimated population in 2015 was 201,200; the average age of that population was 38.6; and 20.5% of the population were aged 0-15 years old. This data highlights that approximately 1/5 of the population consists of young people, highlighting a fair visibility of youth within the Borough. Regarding ethnicity in Sutton, ONS (2011) data highlights that 79.3% of people identify as White; 3.6% as Mixed/multiple ethnic groups; 11.3% as Asian/Asian British; 4.5% as Black/African/Caribbean/Black British; and 1.3% as Other ethnic groups.

Some contemporary local authority perspectives suggest that Sutton contributes to the local economy through its daytime and night-time retail and leisure services, with clusters of night-time activities having 'sub-regional importance' (London Plan, 2008). Moreover, according to local strategy documentation and initiatives, Sutton is promoted as a desirable and attractive community (Joint Assessment Strategic Needs Assessment) (JSNA, 2008; 2013). For example, as presented by Councillor Sean Brennan (Chair of the Sutton Partnership) and Sutton's Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), the Borough is one of the safest in London;

offers quality leisure facilities which makes the area a healthy place to live; has some of the top exam results in England; and has a culturally rich and diverse topography (Sutton Partnership, 2008; JSNA, 2013).Furthermore, there are fewer unplanned hospital admissions (particularly relating to alcohol and drug use) compared to national and regional figures, as well as less child poverty than London as a whole (JSNA, 2011). Together, these perspectives appear to suggest that on the surface, Sutton is an attractive community in which to reside and has a seemingly healthy local drinking culture depicted through local social, cultural, economic and health data presented by local authorities.

Other local sources and documentation also identify how local authorities often attempt to represent Sutton and its drinking culture in a positive light. For example, news articles in the local press, including the Sutton Guardian, contain voices such as that of local politicians to represent drinking in Sutton positively. For example, one local politician claims, "As well as fostering a sense of community, the pub industry creates tens of thousands of jobs and acts as 'anchors' drawing other businesses into the area" (Pepper, 2013:11). Coinciding with this, in March 2013 I requested data from Sutton's licencing authorities who provided the 'Public Register Premises License'. This document provided further insight into the local drinking economy of Sutton. Through the process of summarising local licencing data from the register (see Figure 4 below), it became apparent that Sutton's drinking culture is informed by a large number of licenced venues in the area:

Figure 4: Summary of the London Borough of Sutton's Public Register Premises Licence (March 2013)

Licence Status	Total number
Licence Issued	427
Licence Surrendered	66
Licence Withdrawn	7
Licence Invalid	5
Application Received	9
Licence Refused	2
Decision Made	2
Licence Revoked	7
Licence Suspended	1
Checks Outstanding	5
Consultees Outstanding	1
Pending Decision	5

This supports community assertions that Sutton's local economy is built on a strong industry linked to alcohol illustrated through a large number of licensed premises which serve Sutton's

daytime and night-time economies. This coincides with Hadfield's (2004) assertion that local night-time economies are increasingly based upon alcohol consumption with fewer leisure alternatives. Despite this extensive nightlife, local authorities often attempt to promote the drinking culture of Sutton positively and reduce potential negative perceptions. For example, a local community magazine, Sutton Scene in its Feb/Mar 2011 edition, highlighted proposals to prevent anti-social drinking from escalating, which entailed the introduction of Designated Public Places Orders, namely through public and street drinking bans (Sutton.gov.uk, 2011).

Despite initial positive portrayal of Sutton's drinking culture, there are hidden social, economic, cultural and health complexities highlighting inequalities in Sutton linked to alcohol. Such inequalities reveal that the local drinking culture is not necessarily as unproblematic as some local portrayals appear to suggest. Consequently, other local authorities perspectives acknowledge these issues regarding the drinking culture of the Borough. I first became aware this during a meeting with a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of a local voluntary organisation in Sutton in 2010. Specifically, the CEO made me aware of documents such as local income deprivation data (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2010) as presented in Figure 5 (below) which illustrated that Sutton has pockets of deprivation and socio-economic inequalities which impact young people in the community, particularly regarding youth drinking:

Figure 5: 'Addressing inequalities in Sutton: Income deprivation data affecting children index 2010. Lower super output areas (SOAs) by National Quintiles.'
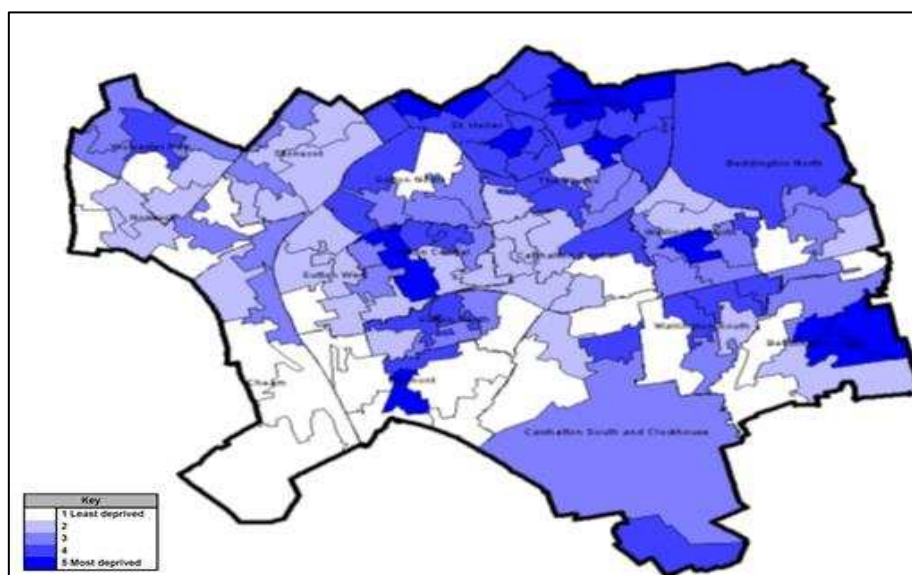
Source: Communities.gov.uk (2010)

These social, cultural, economic and health inequalities that the CEO mentioned were evidenced in the JSNA (2011:1) Sutton Executive Summary, which states that the "apparently good measures for Sutton as a whole mask significant variation within the borough". Moreover, according to Fiona Harris (Harris, 2013), a Joint Consultant in Public Health, JSNA data for Sutton suggests that 15.5% (1 in 6) of people in Sutton are estimated to 'binge' drink and 27% (1 in 4) of adults drink alcohol at an 'increasing or higher risk'; which is higher compared to London and England. The consequences of this is that health service use is increasing across the Borough. Data from 2013 also showed that Sutton had the fifth highest rate of alcohol-related mortality in London (Sutton JSNA, 2016a:2). As shown in Figure 6 (below), Sutton JSNA (2016b:5) uses Local Alcohol Profiles England data from Public Health England to show that hospital admissions for young people aged under eighteen regarding alcohol specific conditions have been shown to be problematic for young people in Sutton:

Figure 6: 'Trend in young people aged under 18 admitted to hospital with alcohol specific conditions'

Persons aged under 18 years admitted to hospital with alcohol specific conditions
Source: Local Alcohol Profiles for England

	2006/07 - 08/09	2007/08 - 09/10	2008/09 - 10/11	2009/10 - 11/12	2010/11 - 12/13	2011/12 - 13/14	2012/13 - 14/15
Sutton	73.2	66.2	48.5	49.7	49.9	49.3	47.8
London	38.9	37.6	34.6	33	29.8	26.5	23.7
England	68.4	63.3	56.9	52.1	44.9	40.1	36.6
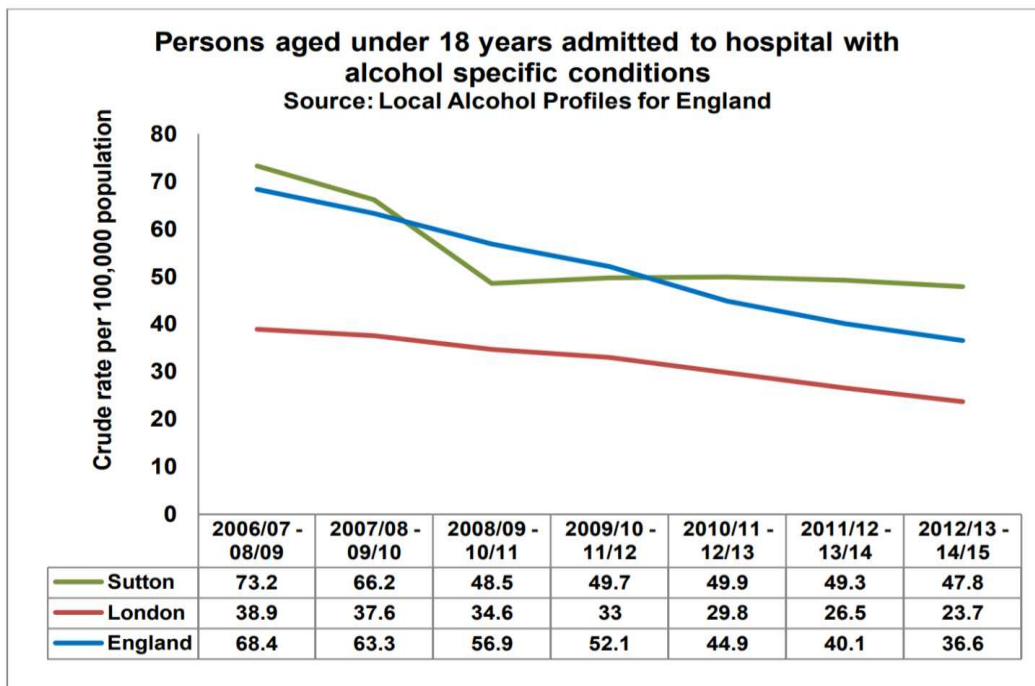
Source: Sutton JSNA (2016b:4)

This data shows that whilst the number of hospital admissions are generally low; between 2010 and 2013, the number of young people under eighteen years old admitted to hospital with alcohol specific conditions in Sutton has been higher than both London and England. Such issues can be attributed to health inequalities in the area (NHS Sutton Clinical Commissioning Group, 2016).

The CEO of the voluntary organisation in Sutton also suggested that the consequences of perceived representations about the Borough performing well is that local community services often receive less funding than surrounding London boroughs because of an understanding that there has been "less need" for Sutton. This impacts local youth services, and local drug and alcohol services because there is less funding to address issues such as alcohol and drug misuse issues within the area, particularly for young people. In relation to this, JSNA (2011) data highlights that "risky drinking" has been significantly higher in Sutton than both regional and national averages, which is often the cause of early death and increased hospital admissions relating to alcohol misuse amongst young people. These risks and inequalities produce further issues in relation to youth drinking in Sutton, such as pathways to increasingly risky lifestyle choices amongst young people, including drug and alcohol misuse and anti-social behaviour (Sutton.gov.uk, 2012). These hidden complexities regarding Sutton, its young people and the Borough's drinking culture make this location an important site of study; highlighting the complexities of space and place in shaping local youth drinking cultures.

As well as data suggesting that Sutton's hidden areas of deprivation may contribute to issues around youth alcohol and drug consumption, discourse amongst the local press and residents have highlighted issues relating to youth drinking and intoxication in Sutton. For example, community discourse have produced a reputation of Sutton as being a "chavy" town, alongside the acquisition of its nickname "Slutton" as a result of its perceived drinking culture (chavtowns.co.uk, 2004; ilivehere.co.uk, 2017). Consequently, Sutton is portrayed as another stereotypical, youth orientated, alcohol-fuelled urban town centre (Griffin et al., 2009). Nonetheless, such discourse and contradictions regarding Sutton's drinking culture serve to strengthen the argument that there are broader social and cultural complexities occuring within the Borough which shape local youth drinking cultures and make Sutton a worthy site of study.

Through the account provided above, I have attempted to show that as a Greater London suburb, Sutton offers a distinct comparison against existing case-studies of youth alcohol consumption in UK which typically fall at extreme ends of the spectrum in terms of location, that being, industrial city-centres or remote rural settings. Contemporary city-centre studies include: Manchester (Hobbs et al., 2005; Measham and Brain, 2005), Newcastle (Chatterton and Hollands, 2002) and anonymous city centres in the UK (Winlow and Hall, 2006); versus alcohol studies conducted in remote rural settings and villages such as Cumbria (Valentine et al., 2007; 2008). However, there are several studies that fall outside of this spectrum, such as Haydock's (2009) study of Bournemouth. Nonetheless, such sites can also be defined as large towns or resorts renowned for heavy drinking. For example, Bournemouth is associated with university student drinking and hen and stag parties. As highlighted by Jayne et al. (2011) youth drinking practices and values, and our understanding of them vary according to location;

therefore, opting for Sutton contributes to the everyday and ordinary drinking values and practices of young people within a suburban context. Consequently, this study attempts to move away from the preoccupation with extreme city-centre drinking, focusing on the everyday local drinking of young people in a suburban context.

2.2.4. Establishing fieldwork relations and introduction to the research protagonists

Whilst I had made a list of all of the local community services and organisations that I wanted contact for the duration of fieldwork, I decided that a good starting point for negotiating gatekeeper access into fieldwork was via utilising existing contacts. In hindsight, utilising these contacts turned out to be an essential fieldwork strategy because as I later discovered, negotiating fieldwork alongside young people in formal community settings turned out to be more challenging than I had initially anticipated.

Subsequently, my route into community research began with utilising contacts I had made whilst volunteering with young people at a local voluntary organisation. From here I able to approach other community organisations and gain access to fieldwork opportunities with them through name-dropping. Without the use of such names, as will be examined in the forthcoming sections of this chapter, I would have encountered difficulty in bypassing gatekeepers to access research alongside young people in formal community settings.

Thus, I adopted a 'snowballing' technique to gain access to other fieldwork opportunities in the community (Atkinson and Flint, 2001). Adopted this was reminiscent Chicago School sociologist William Foote Whyte's Street Corner Society (1943) who used informal sampling approaches to access hard to reach deviant research participants in his study of gang relations/dynamics. This seemed appropriate for me as I was studying deviance in relation to alcohol consumption and interacted with hard to reach youth populations. As a result of the snowballing approach, I was able to conduct fieldwork at multiple-sites with many people, services and organisations simultaneously; all of which will be outlined in a somewhat chronological order to provide context to enliven the key community research locations and the protagonists whom I worked alongside. To supplement the reading of this section, see Appendix Two 'The main protagonists of the research' for a summary table of the research sites, organisations and cultural background of the participants (note that some demographic detail has not been provided to protect participants' anonymity and confidentiality). However, to summarise for the reader, the majority of the research participants with whom I had prolonged interaction with identified as: white, working/middle-class, heterosexual and viewed

alcohol consumption as acceptable and did not abstain from drinking for any apparent religious/cultural reasons.

The Rafters

I first became aware of The Rafters in 2010 after a discussion with the manager of the local voluntary organisation whom I was doing voluntary work for with young people in the Sutton at the time. During this discussion I explained to the manager Cameron that I was looking to contact young people and community organisations to gain insight into the youth drinking culture of Sutton for research. Cameron informed me that he was a Coordinator at a local drug and alcohol service for young people in the community, The Rafters. According to The Rafters' Agency Booklet, "The Rafters is a comprehensive day programme that offers specialist support to young people under 19 years, where there are concerns about their substance misuse." As a result of this conversation, Cameron suggested that I attend The Rafters. I saw this as an exciting opportunity because I was not at all aware of this service and anticipated that this would provide insight about young people's alcohol and drug misuse.

During these early discussions with Cameron it became apparent that he invited me to attend The Rafters based upon on an exchange based on reciprocation and trust. Firstly, Cameron had agreed to allow me to undertake research as a thank you for the unpaid voluntary work that I had previously undertaken. Furthermore, having worked closely with me before at the voluntary organisation, Cameron could see that I worked well with vulnerable young people; therefore, whilst I attended The Rafters in the capacity of observer and researcher, I was competent in the way that I interacted with young people and so I would not impact the service. Secondly, it transpired that all of the existing Coordinators at The Rafters were male and therefore Cameron thought it would beneficial to have a female present for young females who accessed the service. Lastly, Cameron hoped that findings that I made regarding The Rafters and any further key findings from the PhD could be shared to help them improve the service offered. Whilst I was happy to share relevant findings with Cameron and The Rafters, I negotiated that my data would be shared on my terms that did not conflict with the interests of the PhD. This negotiation and exchange was mutual and fair; however, it highlights the challenges that a researcher can face when working alongside services who wish to access your data in exchange for access to their services and resources which can generate conflict and tension.

I attended The Rafters on three of their programmes in 2011-2012, each of which were intended to be a six-week programme orientated around the themes of: (1) drugs and the law;

(2) smoking; (3) cannabis; (4) alcohol; (5) identity (6) sexual health; however, some programmes were shorter due to issues relating to schools attempting to organise attendance. In total, I conducted fieldwork with students at The Rafters from three different local schools in Sutton, including: Birches High School for Boys, Cedar High School and Willow High School. Students were in National Curriculum Key Stages 3 and 4, aged fourteen to sixteen years old. Across the three programmes I worked with twenty-three young people and three Coordinators, Cameron, Christian and Steven. There were also other community workers who attended The Rafters including school teachers, sexual health nurses, youth offending team, and local authority/youth services workers. However, I experienced little significant interaction with the latter individuals as they made brief appearances to The Rafters.

The Sycamore School

During one session at The Rafters, to my surprise, I discovered that a woman called Lacey was part of the management team for the programme. This surprise was attributed to Lacey being a family acquaintance whom I had met several years before commencing fieldwork; although I was not aware of her profession at the time. During this meeting at The Rafters I chatted to Lacey and explained my research; subsequently she invited me to attend both The Sycamore School where she worked as an Outreach Worker and at the Sparrow Youth Club as a Youth Worker. This turned out to a moment of being in the 'right place at the right time', which enabled 'opportunism' for to extend the fieldwork through whatever means presented themselves (Holliday, 2007:22).

The Sycamore School is an alternative provision school in Sutton that provides education to young people outside of mainstream education, mainly for students in Key Stages 3 and 4 on site, but also provides support to other key-stages through other provisions. Regarding The Sycamore School, Lacey suggested that I could attend some of the relevant PSHE sessions related to alcohol and drugs, and felt it would be beneficial for me to attend a family support group run by the school as one of its provisions relating to substance misuse. I attended The Sycamore School during September to November 2011 and observed one PHSE session related to knife crime and violence (as Lacey thought this would be beneficial to attend as the session had a crossover with alcohol and drugs). This was the only PHSE session that I was invited to attend as the other sessions did not relate to alcohol use. Additionally, I attended four family support sessions which entailed talking to young people and their parents/carers about issues concerning the family. Whilst I envisioned that there would have been considerable valuable opportunities for fieldwork, The Sycamore School transpired to be a

challenging research location. This was attributed to the nature of the provision provided which was highly tailored to sensitive individual circumstances of young people and their families. Whilst I was eager to do research in this setting, I retrieved little relevant data from this setting relating to youth drinking and so began to seek new research locations.

Willow High School

When planning fieldwork, I had intended to conduct research at several local secondary schools in Sutton to explore alcohol and drug education in the curriculum and how this influences youth drinking. I set about doing this by listing all of the schools in the area and drafted a letter requesting to undertake fieldwork observing alcohol and drug education lessons. However, of all of the schools whom I contacted, all of them refused or ignored my request. Disheartened, I assumed that I would never gain access to schools to observe alcohol and drug education and decided to explore other fieldwork opportunities. However, during one session at The Rafters with a group of young people from Willow High School, a teacher Miss Hughes accompanied the group. I used this opportunity to ask her if I could observe some alcohol and drug education lessons at the local High School, and she willingly agreed and helped to organise access to the school. This demonstrated the value of having existing relationships with gatekeepers. Subsequently, I was able to observe two PHSE lessons relating to drug education with two Year 7 groups in January 2012 and two PHSE with Year 9 students in April 2012 relating to 'binge' drinking. There were approximately thirty students per class and each lesson lasted for one hour. This insight into drug and alcohol education complemented what young people in the fieldwork told me about their experiences of alcohol and drug education outside of school, informing the findings of Chapter Four 'Overcoming ephemerality in alcohol and drug education: an assessment of community educational strategies'.

The Sparrow Youth Club

At the time of fieldwork, The Sparrow Youth Club was one of the few youth services in Sutton[11]. I learned that had Lacey not vouched for me, I would have faced considerable difficulty in gaining fieldwork access to the youth club. This became apparent when I had an initial meeting with the youth club manager Lizzy who greeted me suspiciously upon arrival, despite Lacey's

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[11] Since writing this thesis, the youth centre has since closed.

reference. During the initial meeting with Lizzy, I had to negotiate access to fieldwork with her quite rigorously including showing evidence of Criminal Record Bureau (CRB)[12], explain my experiences of working with young people and explain the purposes of my research and justify how I thought conducting fieldwork at the youth club would be beneficial to the youth service, the young people and for my own research. Despite being put through my paces, I respected that Lizzy treated me this way which stemmed from of a duty of care and respect for the young people she worked with. I later discovered that part of Lizzy's reluctance in letting me do fieldwork was because historically researchers or organisations often obtained the information that they wanted from or about the young people/youth club and then abandoned them. Lizzy explained that this upset the young people, particularly when they had shared personal and sensitive experiences with these adults. Subsequently, Lizzy's position led me to reflect upon both the importance of entry and exit fieldwork practices with research participants (Blackman, 2007).

After a challenging negotiation of fieldwork access to The Sparrow Youth Club, I discovered that my fieldwork challenges in this setting would not end there. This is because the majority of the young people who attended the youth club associated themselves with 'Alternative' subculture, something that I was very much outside of. According to the young people who associated and labelled themselves as Alternative, they considered themselves as being outside of or on the fringes of mainstream and popular culture. Regarding sexuality, some of the young people identified themselves as lesbian, gay and bisexual. They also drew upon subcultural styles and interests to form part of their own subcultural style, including: Hipster, Punk, Goth and Emo. Alternative young people consumed alcohol and drugs to accentuate their participation in Alternative subculture. Forming fieldwork relations with these young people was initially challenging whilst we engaged in the process of trying to find common ground in social and cultural interests.

During August 2012 and March 2013, I visited the Sparrow Youth Club and interacted with the Alternative young people almost on a weekly basis at evening sessions from 18:00-21:30. During the sessions I typically interacted with four main youth workers: Lacey, Lizzy, Hayley and Manuel. According to Lizzy, the attendance of young people at the sessions was approximately eighty young people on average; although attendance varied from week to week. Whilst I interacted with many young people at the youth club, I formed close connections with eight young people at the club who were open about discussing their alcohol and drug use. This included: Graham, Henry, Katie, Luke, Seb, Seth, Sian and Stuart (see Appendix

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[12] Since 2012 a DBS check became a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

Two). I went on to conduct in-depth observations and individual and focus group interviews with these individuals, but also interacted with young people.

Sutton Youth Bus

After several months at the Sparrow Youth Club, Lizzy advised me to contact the Detached Service youth team in Sutton who ran the Sutton Youth Bus. This was a breakthrough because I had won Lizzy's trust as she said that I should mention that she referred me to the team. I contacted the service coordinator, Jackie, who invited me to chat with her about the service and the research that I could be involved in during August 2012. Jackie explained that the Sutton Youth Bus was a detached service that attended various public spaces in Sutton that young people occupied, providing them with information, advice and guidance about issues relating to these young people. She explained that many young people were aware of the Youth Bus and used the service for accessing sexual health information, and were interested in issues like alcohol, drugs, smoking, relationships, recreation, sports and wellbeing.

Having Lizzy's endorsement, Jackie was happy for me to attend the Sutton Youth Bus sessions. It was not until January 2013 that Jackie informed me that she had identified a group of young people who occupied a local park in Carshalton Central (Ward 13, see 'Figure 3: Sutton Ward Map'). Subsequently, I joined the Sutton Youth Bus between January to February 2013 for weekly sessions with a group of young people. The main young people who attended the service were: Robin, Ed, Morgan, Jimmy, Kate, Danny and Gavin (see Appendix Two for more details about these participants). During this time, I had formal and informal discussions with them about their alcohol and drug consumption. Whilst I aspired to continue fieldwork with these young people and the Sutton Youth Bus in the future, fieldwork came to a natural close as the group drifted away from the service and found alternative spaces to occupy and engaged in other recreational activities. Jackie informed me that she would be in touch if they located another group of young people to work with; but I never received correspondence about other groups.

Sutton Street Pastors

Through personal encounters of growing up in Sutton and participating in the NTE, I was aware of the Sutton Street Pastors[13]. The Sutton Street Pastors is part of the Christian charity,

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[13] The name of this service has not been anonymised. Permission has been used to refer to the service; particularly as anonymising the service would have been challenging.

Street Pastors UK. The Sutton Street Pastors was established in December 2005 in response to fear of crime in Sutton and other London boroughs (Sutton Street Pastors, 2009). Street Pastors volunteer from over twenty different local churches and is supported through ad hoc financial aid. Sutton Street Pastors rove in groups of typically 4-6 people across Sutton High Street between the hours of 9pm-3am to have a visible presence and contribute to a "Safer Sutton" (Street Pastors, 2014). They support people in the community, including young people out late at night, drinkers and the homeless.

I contacted the coordinator of the Sutton Street Pastors through their website in November 2011. Having already experienced difficulties in gaining access to fieldwork opportunities, I informed the coordinator, Matthew, that I was already conducting fieldwork with other local services and used my name-dropping technique to reassure him. After several emails, Matthew agreed for me to join the Street Pastors one Friday evening in November 2011. Despite efforts to request further research opportunities with the Street Pastors, this turned out to be the only opportunity that I would have to do fieldwork with the Street Pastors because of a seemingly apparent scepticism towards my research. Nonetheless, the one evening that I spent observing with the Sutton Street Pastors from 10pm–3am gave me tremendous insight into the NTE of Sutton and the drinking culture of young people.

This snapshot of the NTE provided rich data around how local services operate together at weekends including the Metropolitan Police Service, door staff, local businesses (e.g. food services and taxi services) and a variety of consumers in the NTE, including social drinkers, dependent drinkers and the homeless. The Street Pastors offered valuable data regarding space and place which contributed to the findings of this research. For example, they explained how community professionals and local authorities coined the term "No-man's land" to refer to a part of the high street which young adults rarely occupied and occasionally used as a thoroughfare to the heart of the NTE (see Figure 1: Map of Sutton High Street' for the Street Pastors roving area).

Sutton Life Centre

The Sutton Life Centre is a "unique state of the art educational and community facility in South London promoting good citizenship, personal safety and the environment" (Sutton Life Centre, 2017).[14] I attended the Sutton Life Centre on one occasion in May 2013 for approximately two

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[14] This location has not been anonymised due to the unique nature of the Centre and its state of the art facilities. Permission was given to refer to this service.

hours to observe a group of 96 Key Stage Two students from an all-girls school in the South-East of England participating in the 'The Life Skills Zone Tour.' The reason that I contacted the Centre was because I was aware of 'The Life Skills Zone' tours that they conducted relating to alcohol and drug consumption in addition to citizenship and personal safety. I believed that observing at this location would provide further insight to the ways in which the community educate and inform the drinking values and practices of young people in Sutton. The tour entailed walking through a series of rooms emulating public and private settings like the street and the home. Each room offered interactive elements and/or technology which played out scenarios. At the Centre, I had fleeting conversations with the co-ordinators about the tours but was unable to talk directly to the students or their accompanying teachers. Nonetheless, I recorded detailed field notes contributing to the findings presented in Chapter Five.

Researching alongside young people in drinking spaces

As well as conducting research with formal community organisations, most fieldwork consisted of researching alongside young people in-situ drinking in public and private drinking settings in and around Sutton. In terms of the drinking establishments in the NTE of Sutton, these settings would be considered as catering for 'mainstream' and heterosexual audiences, as none of the establishments could be labelled as 'gay bars'. This does not mean to say that participants who identified as gay felt excluded, more that these establishments were seen to be heteronormative. Fieldwork alongside young adult drinkers in NTE, private and public settings took place over two years between 2011 and 2012, where I participated with young adults on nights out on a monthly basis. Much of this fieldwork took place from the early evening from approximately 7pm up until the early hours of the morning, with the latest times being around 3am. Whilst I encountered potentially hundreds of young drinkers in public drinking settings, there were a core number of thirty young people whom I had close interactions with during fieldwork. These participants were of a legal drinking age, with their ages ranging from 18 to 30 years old. Regarding ethnicity, all of the participants were White, apart from one adult male, who identified as Black, African. Regarding sexuality, all participants identified as heterosexual, apart from one male, who identified as gay. See Appendix Two for details about these participants detailing names and some demographic background. The descriptions, voice and experiences of these participants are predominant across the data chapters of this thesis, particularly in Chapters Four and Five.

It is worth noting that many of the research participants were friends and acquaintances whom "there [were] degrees of friendship determined by carrying levels of familiarity, rapport, respect and emotional attachment" (Taylor, 2011:8). Researching with friends and acquaintances was

a deliberate fieldwork strategy; the methodological and theoretical implications of which will be examined in the forthcoming sections. Appendix Three details the main public and private drinking settings that were frequented during fieldwork, which have been given pseudonyms, including pubs, bars, nightclubs and the homes of some of the research participants. Fieldwork data was also drawn from participation in public transitional spaces with participants, including: walking to and from drinking settings or participants homes, and time spent at bus stops, cab stations and eating establishments.

2.3. Theoretical and Methodological Foundations

2.3.1. Prioritising youth agency, voice, lived experience and spatial interaction through traditional ethnographic Chicago School approaches

Albion Small is regarded as the key figure forming the renowned Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago after his appointment as Head Professor of Sociology in 1892. However, Robert Park and Ernest Burgess established the department's legacy in sociological research by nurturing a growth of monographs produced by graduate research students through their teaching and close supervision (Faris, 1967; Deegan, 2001). Park and Burgess conceptualised the city of Chicago as a 'social laboratory,' asserting that fieldwork methods enabled a critical examination of the relationship between people and their urban environment through the theoretical framework of 'human ecology' (Faris, 1967; Deegan, 2001).

As a student of Georg Simmel, Park reflected Simmel's sociological approach of 'capturing moments' and studied issues such as social change and conflict through social groups within the context of the urban city of Chicago (Blackman, 2004), exemplified through works by Simmel like 'The Metropolis and Mental Life' (Simmel, 1903). I argue that it was Park and Burgess's theoretical and methodological vision where the origins of urban sociology and the critical study of key sociological concepts emerged including agency, voice, lived experience and the study of space and place commenced. Although such terminology may not have been explicitly used at the time, these were areas of which can be identified across a body of research produced by Chicago sociologists (Blackman, 2010) Park and Burgess's vision was further developed by key figures of the Chicago School, namely Vivien Palmer, who played a vital role in communicating Park and Burgess's ideas via the University's graduate students who produced research monographs accomplishing this vision (Blackman, 2010). To illustrate these points, I will draw upon a critical selection of Chicago School monographs, including: The Polish Peasant (Thomas and Znaniecki, 1918-1921), The Hobo (Anderson, 1923), The

Jack Roller (Shaw, 1930), The Taxi-Dance Hall (Cressey, 1932) and Street Corner Society (Whyte, 1943) to show how these monographs applied a range of field study methods that prioritised agency, voice and lived experiences to examine causal links between research participants' social and cultural activities linked to the social settings that they occupied in Chicago. Through this examination, I will demonstrate how these monographs inspired the theoretical framework, fieldwork and analytical approaches towards my own study of youth drinking cultures in Sutton.

Thomas and Znaniecki: The Polish Peasant

The Polish Peasant (1918-1921) was one of the first monographs produced by the Chicago School and is one of the earliest and most important examples of biographical research (Merrill and West, 2009). The text marked a shift in sociology away from abstract theory and library research toward quality fieldwork of the empirical world, studied within a theoretical frame (Bulmer, 1986). The Polish Peasant blends theory and diverse qualitative data, providing a basis for generalization which moved away biological reductionism, focussing on immigrants as the subject of study (Bulmer, 1986; Roberts, 2010).

The Polish Peasant was innovative in its theoretical and methodological approaches whereby biographical documentation, like personal letters, systematic use of newspapers and official documentation provided insight into the lived experiences of Polish immigrants. Roberts (2010:76) suggests that the intellectual starting point of The Polish Peasant was through Thomas and Znaniecki's exploration of individual/group adaptation to changing social contexts:

> We must put ourselves in the position of the subject who tries to find his way in this world, and we must remember, first of all, that the environment by which he is influenced and to which he adapts himself, in his world, not the objective world of science (Thomas and Znaniecki, 1958: II:1846-47; cited in Roberts, 2010:76)

This thinking inspired me to pay close attention to how young drinkers in this research adapt their practices and values according to the environment; providing nuanced understandings of lived experience which is spatially contextualised. Using a range of diverse qualitative data, I aimed to ensure that space and place did not become a 'passive backdrop' to my study youth drinking cultures (Jayne, Valentine and Holloway, 2011). The above extract also informed the methodological approach of this study, whereby I prioritise theoretical description deriving directly from the voice and experiences of young adult drinkers, immersed in their settings.

Like Thomas and Znaniecki, I wanted to capture the perspectives of young drinkers to bring any marginalised voices and experiences to the forefront of the research; as opposed to imposing personal subjectivities to explain social phenomenon (Hadfield and Haw, 2001). I achieved this through focussing on the participant's subjective conditions and experiences using verbatim data to prioritise the world view of the participants (Bulmer, 1986). For Thomas and Znaniecki, this allowed them to generate social theory built upon the use and correlation of 'objective cultural elements,' 'subjective characteristics of members' and intermediary concepts to connect personality and society (Roberts, 2010); approaches of which I aspired to in my own data analyses.

Nels Anderson: The Hobo

Nels Anderson, published his seminal text The Hobo: the sociology of the homeless man in 1923. Understanding where, how and why homeless people gravitated was central to Anderson's research, resulting in The Hobo making a unique contribution to the plotting of marginal geography of 'Hobohemia' using a rich account of the life of the Hobo (Parker, 2004). Anderson all fully immersed himself into the culture of study by living life with Hobo's in Chicago to undertake the study. When reflecting on his experience of undertaking research in Hobohemia in "Stranger at the Gate" (Anderson, 1983), Anderson reveals how he identified with the Hobo's and their lives because he became one of them, which he achieved through an 'ethnographic mosaic' of techniques and intimate engagement with the participants (Blackman, 2010:199). As a young adult and resident within the London Borough of Sutton, I hoped to achieve a level of closeness with my participants like Anderson through an 'intimate insider' position to collect rich description about youth drinking values and practices within spatialised settings to ground the empirical findings of this study.

This level of detail captured by Anderson (1923) about the life of the Hobo also analysed the importance of various spaces from the perspective of the Hobo and how each space offered specific functions and levels of agency and constraint within the social lives of Hobos. For example, chapters like, 'The Jungles: the homeless man abroad' offers shows how the Jungles were truly marginalised areas close to the railroad division points, bur were places where Hobos could build shelters, fish, cook and form social bonds whilst attempting to avoid local authorities. Here Anderson identifies rules and etiquette regulated by Hobos that governed activities within the Jungles highlighting levels of agency. Through these in-depth accounts, Anderson enables readers to envision the social and cultural activities of the Hobo; creating an understanding of how and why Hobos occupy particular spaces within the city and illustrates the capacity of different spaces to influence values and behaviours. By capturing

similar in-situ perspectives in drinking settings from participants in my study, I will offer empirical data grounded in the research setting and location from the view of the participants that highlights similar levels of agency and constraint that young drinkers display and experience.

Clifford Shaw: The Jack Roller

The Jack Roller (1930) adopts the life-history method as the main approach to research into delinquency, whereby Shaw prioritises one participant, Stanley, with his "own story." This is so the reader can enter into the life of Stanley and ask questions about delinquency from the viewpoint of the delinquent. The life history approach reveals attitudes and values from the participants under study; ensuring that the researcher does not take for-granted details that are of vital importance to the delinquent. This mirrors the work of Frederic Thrasher's (1927) The Gang which also prioritised the viewpoint of gang members and the complex relationship of their habitats. Like Shaw and Thrasher, I prioritised obtaining levels of autobiographical data from young drinkers in fieldwork, firstly, to bring a sense of authenticity and realism to the study and to ensure that young drinkers' values and experiences were brought to the forefront of analyses that explain youth alcohol consumption values and practices in spatiality and contextually situated ways. This is a central concern of this thesis because as identified in Chapter One, the voice and experiences of young drinkers are often secondary to media and government discourse which produce and reinforce simplistic notions of young people epitomising 'binge' drinking.

The Jack Roller captures Stanley's voice verbatim and experiences from his perspective are used to examine juvenile delinquency. This is illustrated throughout the text, for example, Stanley gives an account of his life in prison at the Chicago House of Correction with a great level of intimacy and depth that allows the reader to understand the impact of his surroundings upon him:

> He grabbed me and kicked me into a cell, where I lay on my dirty bunk through the night. The air was dense and filled with that indescribable prison odor. The cell was made of old and crumbling brick. The dampness seeped through the bricks, and the cracks were filled with vermin and filth. The cell was barren except for the dirty bunk and the open toilet in the corner. The bell that meant lights out and bedtime rang. The closing of cell doors seemed an echo of my thoughts that I was in hell. (Stanley in The Jack Roller, 1930:150)

Extracts like the above offer an intimate narrative of Stanley's life and experiences; which has potential of offering theoretical insight and analysis into the issue of juvenile delinquency. This is confirmed by Shaw (1930) who suggests that the life-history method of youth's 'own story' is important because it reveals three main aspects regarding delinquency. Firstly, it gives the point of view of the delinquent or marginalised individuals. Secondly, it tells us about the social and cultural situation to which the delinquent is responsive. Thirdly, it reveals the sequence of past experiences and situations in the life of the delinquent. Like Shaw, in my own study, I prioritised the voices and experiences of young drinkers to understand the social and cultural world in which the participant lives, experiences and is responsive to. Doing so reveals how social action, identities, social relations and theories can be bound up in space and place, which Shaw (1930:7) explores in relation to delinquency, "it is true that the delinquent behaviour of the child cannot be understood and explained apart from the cultural and social context in which it occurred". Moreover, in a similar manner to Thrasher, Shaw placed youth narratives at the centre of analyses to understand the relationship between biography, locality and community which enabled emphasise upon the wider social and cultural factors that could explain delinquency more generally (Blackman, 2010). These are points that inform the study, whereby I seek to explore the social and cultural factors of excessive alcohol consumption and levels of autonomy of participants to understand youth drinking cultures situated within the locality and community which may influence them.

Paul Cressey: The Taxi-Dance Hall

The Taxi-Dance Hall (1932) by Paul Cressey explores taxi-dance hall establishments located inconspicuously near business centres of Chicago, where young women and girls were paid to dance for paying patrons. As noted by Ernest Burgess (1932:xi) in the Introduction to the text, very little was known about the taxi-dance halls and they were often misunderstood by the local press, social workers and the public and are presented as shocking and damning; echoing similarities about youth 'binge' drinking in the contemporary context of my study of youth drinking cultures. Due to the lack of understanding about the establishments and the activities that take place within them, Burgess highlights that campaigns and crusades were directed against the dance halls which led to them being outlawed in its city of Origin, San Francisco. As stated by Burgess (1932:xiii), although the study is of a small social establishment, Cressey's study had wider social and cultural factors worthy of sociological examination:

> This study has a significance that goes far beyond the taxi-dance hall situation. It raises all the main questions of the problem of recreation under conditions of modern city life,

namely, the insistent human <u>demand for stimulation</u>, the growth of <u>commercial recreation</u>, the growing tendency to <u>promiscuity</u> in the relations of the sexes, and the failure of our ordinary devices of social control to function in a culturally heterogeneous and anonymous society.

Cressey's study skilfully debunks myths surrounding Taxi-Dance Halls, including its dancers and patron's. For example, Cressey notes that instead of feeling commercially exploited, Taxi-Dancer's finds satisfaction derived from 'stimulation' of the social situation with the patrons; information which is derived directly from the Taxi-Dancer's own perspective biographical experiences, particularly evidenced in Chapter IV 'The family and social backgrounds of the Taxi-Dancer.' Cressey, like the other Chicago School sociologists obtains this data through prioritising the voice of the participants to inform the study and by drawing upon the details regarding the spaces that participants occupy. This ensures that analysis and theory derives from empirical data collection with participants, as opposed to relying upon abstract theorisation; which is how I will approach the production of theoretical description in this research and move away sensational explanations of youth drinking.

Cressey captures rich descriptive detail about the taxi-dance halls, particularly in the 'Eureka Dancing Academy' section of Chapter I "A night in a taxi-dance hall" where he describes the surrounding environment, visualising the location for the reader:

> It is a long narrow room with a low ceiling festooned with streamers of red-and-green crepe paper. Wall panels of crudely painted pastoral scenes serve only to accentuate the rude equipment. On a platform at one end of the hall the five musicians of the orchestra wriggle, twist, and screech. (Cressey, 1932: 6)

Here Cressey notes that the physical surroundings accentuate the atmosphere of the environment and activities within the taxi-dance hall. I aim to capture this is the level of detail in my ethnographic descriptions, which is vital in understanding how drinking environments occupied and experienced by young drinkers, and the role that young drinkers play in shaping the drinking environments surrounding them, reflecting levels of agency and constraint. I feel that this can be examined by adopting a similar approach to Cressey whereby he says that the taxi-dance hall is its own 'social world' (see: Chapter III 'The Taxi-Dance Hall as a Social World') with its own ways of acting, talking and thinking which functions through customs, meanings and purposes.

William Foote Whyte: Street Corner Society

Street Corner Society (1943) is a study of the slum districts in Chicago, where William Foote Whyte immersed himself alongside Italian immigrants in 'Cornerville' to examine youth gang involvement and deviance. The success of the study in terms of Whyte's immersion in the Italian community and gaining access to the world of gangs and deviance was through the assistance of arguably one of sociology's most famous informants, 'Doc' and his gang (Maanen, 2011). Chapter IV 'The Social Structure of Racketeering,' highlights how prohibition legislation informed deviant activities and youth gang relations which led to violence within the community through liquor racketeering, but also 'opportunities' for individuals:

> The liquor traffic of prohibition provided many of the prominent racketeers of today with their business experience and financial resources. In the early years of prohibition there were a large number of small liquor dealers in active competition. Prices fluctuated and spheres of operation were not clearly defined. Competition often led to violence (Whyte, 1943: 111)

Here Whyte's work offers an early critique of alcohol policies and legislation, demonstrating the ways in which they can impact upon both the everyday and deviant activities of youth at a local level within 'Cornerville.' Moreover, he offers a critique "divorced of moral judgements" (Whyte, 1943: 287) to explore how policies can influence deviance; and as highlighted in the extract above, how gang members benefited from these deviant activities in relation to their long-term outlook i.e. through his comment upon business experience and financial situation. This approach has informed this study whereby I have reflected closely upon the ways in which national and local alcohol policies and legislation impact upon young drinkers in Sutton, focusing on the influence of spatial activities, notions of pleasure and levels of agency relating to youth drinking practices and values adopting a neutral approach.

Through a critique of selected research by Chicago School sociologists, I have shown how their monographs produced early studies examining agency, voice and lived experience using innovative research methods of the time, which also contributed complex understandings about space and place. This account has also showed how the complex methods applied by the Chicago researchers built a multifaceted picture of issues under investigation which "was part of the specific contribution to the broader movement toward theoretically informed empirical research in sociology which the Chicago School represented" (Bulmer, 1986:108). Like Blackman (2010), during my doctoral experiences, I have strongly identified with approaches adopted by the Chicago School, and feel that their work has both contemporary methodological and theoretical relevance. Consequently, the work of the Chicago School has informed this study whereby I have immersed myself in the field of Sutton alongside young

drinkers, and by doing so, I have been able to examine the social and cultural meaning underpinning youth drinking values and practices through the production of theoretical description informed by Chicago School approaches.

2.3.2. Producing theoretical description about youth drinking using a grounded theoretical approach

'Grounded Theory' derives from Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss in The Discovery of Grounded Theory (1967). Kathy Charmaz (2011:360) usefully summarises Glaser and Strauss's grounded theory as:

> a method of qualitative inquiry in which data collection and analysis reciprocally inform and shape each other through an emergent iterative process. The term 'grounded theory', refers to this method and its product, a theory developed from successive conceptual analysis of data.

Charmaz's definition is useful because it captures the essence that The Discovery of Grounded Theory illustrates; it is both a methodology that guides data collection and analysis and produces theory grounded in data. Since its formation, Glaser and Strauss's grounded theory has been re-evaluated and re-established (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Using Glaser and Strauss's (1967) original work on grounded theory, I adopted a 'loosely' grounded theoretical approach in this research to firstly, develop, guide and refine fieldwork and data collection within this study, and secondly, to produce theory deriving and emerging from a wide variety of data sources including: observations, formal and informal interviews, official publications and unpublished documentation, material objects and mapping processes to seek relationships across a corpus of data (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007:163). I use the phrase 'loosely' grounded theoretical approach because in agreement with Hammersley and Atkinson (2007:158), interpretations and application of grounded theory often implies that there is a set of standardised steps that can be used to collect and analyse data, which does not ring true with exploratory qualitative ethnographic research.

Having explored Glaser and Strauss's (1967) work, I found myself aligned to their suggestion that theory should emerge from the research participants, settings and data collected during fieldwork. Informed by a close reading of the works by: Charmaz (2011), Silverman (2011), O'Reilly (2009a), and Glaser and Strauss (1967); I followed my interpretation of the stages of grounded theory to this study:

1. Engaging in data collection, initial coding and memo writing

2. Refining coding, memo writing and raising categories
3. Collecting new data through theoretical sampling
4. Saturating coding and categories
5. Integrating coding and memos to produce and write theory

In relation to the coding of data, whilst I engaged in-depth coding processes, I did not engage in what I perceived to be an overly rigid line by line coding to explore every "fragment" of data (Charmaz, 2011:368). Researchers may critique such assertions suggesting that without complying with all of the analytical stages of grounded theory, this may result in a lack of robustness because tentative categories and findings were not subjected to "rigorous tests" (Charmaz, 2011:360). However, as per Hammersley and Atkinson's (2007) supposition, such analytical process of grounded theory can present overly prescriptive and mechanistic approaches to qualitative research and subsequent data analysis, which I was experiencing during early fieldwork and data analyses.

Whilst my approaches may not have conformed to a grounded theoretical approach in the strictest sense, having a more flexible approach helped guide, refine and contain fieldwork development. This allowed for the production themes and subsequent theoretical description to emerge driven by data obtained from the research participants and my own reflexive subject fieldwork experiences. This helped 'funnel' and guide the research process (Silverman, 2011).

Whilst grounded theory purports that theory should derive from the fieldwork, data collection and analyses; I acknowledged that I could not ignore how my knowledge of extant literature and theories could potentially inform my own generation of theoretical description (Silverman, 2011). Additionally, I could not ignore my knowledge of extant literature and so this did inform my thinking. However, I made a conscious effort to refrain from linking immediately to fieldwork data and connecting my developing concepts to literature and theories straight away. As suggested by Silverman (2011:71) this can ensure "continual movement between data, memos and theory so that data analysis is theoretically based and theory is grounded in data."

Despite not using such mechanistic coding, I found myself engaged in an ongoing iterative process in fieldwork and data analysis and naturally reached points of 'theoretical saturation' (Charmaz, 2011; Silverman, 2011). Upon recognising this, I retreated from specific fieldwork activities when no new insights regarding data to inform theoretical description were being found. This reassured me that theoretical description arising through data collection was grounded in the data, and my analysis of the data from multiple perspectives ensured validity through a process of theoretical triangulation (Denzin, 1989).

My grounded theoretical approach commenced with engaging in data collection by writing field notes in the field diary. These notes were then transformed into extensive narratives that were typed up. After writing these narratives, I then re-read what I had written and engaged in the process of initial coding by identifying overarching themes relating to youth drinking practices and values. For example, codes extended from themes including: risks associated with drinking, gendered relations regarding alcohol consumption, ritualistic drinking practices etc. Having identified these overarching themes I refined these codes to explore them in detail and unpack what the research participants were doing and why. For example, in relation to ritualistic drinking practices, I identified specific connections around drink choices including participants' urge to try novel drinks alongside other rationales relating to cost and intoxication.

As noted by Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), analytical concepts that emerge can also arise spontaneously from the participants. Regarding this study, participants created their own terms, including "budget drinking" (see Chapter Five) which subsequently contributed theoretical description relating to youth drinking practices. Such terms were followed up because they marked theoretically interesting phenomena and theoretical description. When such concepts emerged, I would be more aware of them the next time that I entered the field and actively explored them with participants. For example, having identified participants' desire to try new drinks, I noted other data relating to these concepts including dialogue and practices observed, and subsequently followed up examination of these concepts with participants in interviews and informational field conversations. This lead to a 'saturation' of concepts which were then written up in the data chapters of the thesis (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Adopting the grounded theorising approaches outlined above reassured me that I was committed to "a method of social scientific theory construction" (Charmaz, 2011:360). This was important because Glaser and Strauss (1967:VI) and others have critiqued Chicago School sociological traditions, traditions of which I had adopted in this thesis, for adopting non-rigorous methodologies and failing to integrate theoretical description into their research.

2.3.3. Adopting feminist ethnographic approaches to study youth drinking

Like the feminist ethnographer Patricia McNamara (2009:162), I cannot claim that from the outset of fieldwork I was committed to distinctly 'giving women a voice' through my research. Yet, once I immersed myself in fieldwork and began to recognise the inequalities that women face about alcohol consumption; this was when I realised how important it was to prioritise women's voice and experiences and produce a feminist ethnography informed by feminist

epistemology, ontology, theories and ethical considerations which addresses sexist imbalances of masculine scholarship (Stacey, 1988).

From this point, I began to recognise that we should not only describe women's lives but challenge how we might 'know' them (O'Reilly, 2009b). Judith Stacey (1988) suggests that there is often an implicit agreement that feminist research is conducted on, by and particularly for women. As became apparent in fieldwork, there was considerable inequality, gender power relations and oppression that women faced, and so I prioritised female experience based upon these outcomes where appropriate. Nonetheless, acknowledging both men and women's experiences was appropriate because embedded within feminist ethnography are anti-oppressive principles and empowerment practices that coincide with the arguments set out in this thesis which suggests that all young drinkers regardless of sex face discrimination, marginalisation and oppression which a feminist ethnography has the capacity to respond to (McNamara, 2009). By drawing upon a range of both male and female experiences, this research can work towards the task of making sense of the lives of research participants and explore inequalities and oppression in relation to youth drinking cultures; not just to explain it, but to transform it (Abbott, Wallace and Tyler, 2005). Such attempts of this are evident in Chapter Five of this thesis, 'Contesting the convergence of young men and women's drinking cultures' which identifies different gendered relations and experiences of young female and male drinkers.

Adopting a feminist ethnography also fitted with my grounded theoretical approach because as suggested by Stacey (1988:21), feminist research tends to "ground theory contextually in the concrete realm of women's everyday lives by focusing upon experience and language". This is achieved by emphasising the experiential and contextual and interpersonal factors that serve to capture everyday reality and human agency. Skeggs (2001a:431) highlights that ethnographers should be cautious about defining what 'experience' means to the researcher. Using her work, I believe that understanding experience comes from capturing feelings, emotions, the personal, personality and subjectivity in a contextually located time and space to explore how and where experiences come from. Whilst this study draws upon feminist theory to support the research findings, I did not conform to a specific feminist theoretical framework as this would contradict my grounded theoretical approach. Instead, I drew upon a range of feminist theories to support the findings to conceptualise youth drinking cultures that reflects both women and men's interests and values by drawing upon their own interpretations of their own experiences.

As well as drawing upon feminist theory to support the findings of this research, I ensured that I adopted a range of feminist methods to conduct an authentic feminist ethnography. Drawing

upon the work of Judith Stacey (1988) and Patricia McNamara (2009), I infer that a feminist ethnographic is informed by particular values that underpin its methods, including: a focus upon feelings, emotions and beliefs; developing experientially based knowledge; sharing empathy and intuition; and developing interactions and relationships with the researched. These principles of feminist ethnography are aligned to my ambitions of achieving "reciprocity, honesty, accountability, responsibility, equality etc. in order to treat participants with respect" (Skeggs, 2001a:433), characterised by authenticity, reciprocity and inter-subjectivity between the researcher and the research participants (Stacey, 1988).

As well as adopting particular feminist values and principles, the major canons of feminist ethnographic methods include: reflexivity, listening, voice and ethical considerations. I prioritised these throughout the research process and write up of this thesis. Skeggs (2001a) suggests that reflexivity and attention to gender is what makes an ethnography stand out as a feminist ethnography. Reflexivity entails the researcher being acutely and "constantly aware of how her values, attitudes and perceptions influence the research process, from the formulation of the research questions, through the data-collection stage, to the ways in which the data are analysed, explained and disseminated" (Abbott, Wallace and Tyler, 2005:369). Therefore, I acknowledged that I, like the research participants, have biases, subjectivities and personal experiences which shape the research; which in turn has the capacity to shape the representation of those under study. As far as possible, I have remained transparent with myself and the research participants so that this could be reported, analysed and represented within this thesis.

To capture authentic voice Silverman (2011:420) states, "Listening to women's voices and validating women's experiences remain central to the feminist qualitative research enterprise." Subsequently, during fieldwork in public drinking settings and community spaces I could only attempt to listen to and capture women's voices and observe their experiences in what were often patriarchal male dominated spaces. This coincides with McNamara's (2009:173) assertion that "patriarchy and prejudice penetrate even the most carefully constructed feminist explorations of culture and subculture". Therefore, where possible when interviewing research participants, I actively chose to interview male and female participants separately in their friendship groups so that more opportunity was given for both women and men to speak more openly about their drinking values and practices.

Regarding representation of the voices of research participants, Silverman (2011) suggests that there is a challenge in reconstructing women's experiences that lie beneath and beyond the talk. This is supported by Stacey (1988) who argues that the researcher must be conscious of avoiding exploiting and distorting voices, particularly in the write up of research. To address

this power relationship where the researcher is responsible for shaping and framing voice (Stacey, 1988), I employed many strategies including: using quotes verbatim, wrote contextually so that the voices and experiences of participants were not misplaced or extrapolated, and where possible, offered research participants opportunities to review extracts of writing so that they could provide critical input. These approaches were inspired by the work of Gemma Commane (2011) who applied such methods in her research of female sexual identity in burlesque, fetish and BDSM clubbing cultures, which required sensitivity towards female voice and experience. These approaches helped retain a commitment to ethics which is a central tenet of feminist research.

Despite being strong advocates of feminist ethnography, both Stacey (1988) and McNamara (2009) argue that the approach is not without its challenges. Stacey (1988:22) goes as far as to conclude that there cannot be a feminist ethnography because the ethical contradictions that feminist ethnographies present, "I find myself wondering whether the appearance of greater respect for and equality with research subjects in the ethnographic approach masks a deeper, more dangerous form of exploitation". However, both Stacey (1988) and McNamara (2009) suggest that ethnographic studies can be enhanced through feminist perspectives and theory, and agree that the benefits of the principles, values and methods outweigh the costs of not adopting such approaches at all. These conflicts resonated with me because I regularly encountered a number of ethical contentions throughout fieldwork, data analysis and write up of this research which made me question at times my feminist perspective and ethical standpoint. Broadly, these contentions related to my relationships with the research participants, fieldwork processes and the representation of the participants and I in the dissemination of this thesis; all of which will be examined closely in the forthcoming sections of this chapter.

Despite the contentions that feminist ethnography presents, through a close collaboration with the research participants, I was in agreement with Stacey and McNamara that ethical controversies raised is worth the output of a study which presents a grounded presentation of youth drinking cultures informed by the everyday lived experiences of the research participants. This should make a positive difference to the lives of the research participants which is fundamental to feminist research (McNamara, 2009).

2.3.4. Producing an ethnography as an 'intimate insider' and friend to participants

Producing an ethnography from an 'insider' perspective emerged from early aforementioned fieldwork challenges of gaining access to young people in community settings and conducting

research alongside young drinkers in the NTE of Sutton. Regarding the latter, having decided to conduct research alongside young drinkers in-situ, one Saturday night, I embarked upon entering the NTE of Sutton with an aim to begin staking out the field and developing fieldwork relations with young drinkers. This stemmed from my understanding of how Chicago School researchers approached fieldwork and contemporary drug and alcohol researchers like Measham, Alridge and Parker (2001); and so, to honour these approaches, that is what I planned to do. So, I envisioned myself heading into Sutton and conducting observations outside of pubs, bars and clubs, and even approaching young adults as they congregated outside of establishments. I also planned to attend drinking establishments and initiate conversations with young adult drinkers and build relationships with them so that I could secure opportunities to conduct future research.

The reality of actually being able to approach young drinkers in the NTE economy hit me hard once I actually arrived at Trinity Square an area of Sutton High Street on that Saturday night (See Figure 7: 'Trinity Square' below of a not-to-scale fieldwork map as a visual appendage to this account). I sat down on a bench around 8pm with my field diary in hand and spent some time observing. Whilst sat there, I saw young adult drinkers come and go as they met one another, used cash points to withdraw money for the night ahead, as they stood and chatted, and as they made their way to nearby drinking establishments. After an hour or so of observing young people from a comfortable distance and having an internal conversation with myself, I knew that as a lone female researcher, I was not going to approach any of the young drinkers that evening. Shortly afterwards, having felt like a failure as a researcher, I walked down "No-man's land" to head home.

Figure 7: Trinity Square
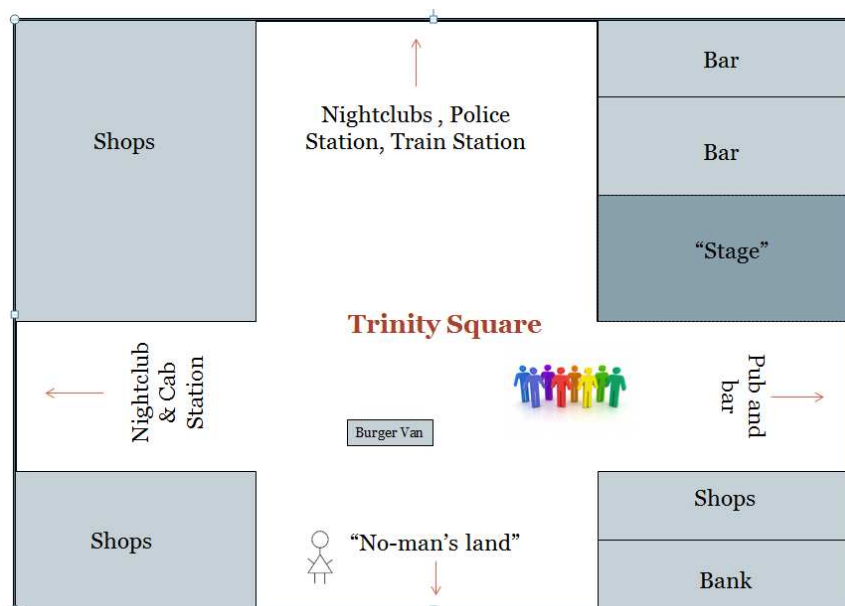
The reason I did not approach young people as I had intended to that evening was because I was aware that my approach in establishing initial connections with young people did not fit the typical social and cultural norms of establishing rapport in the NTE (i.e. meeting people at a bar whilst ordering a drink for example). Therefore, I anticipated that young people would not interact with me as a researcher in this field, where I was intruding upon their leisure and recreational experiences with friends. In light of this reflection, I knew that if I wanted to conduct effective research, I would need to change strategies.

After reflecting upon the above experience, I realised that I would need to blend into the culture of study more effectively. I comprehended that the best way to do this would be through the company of others, or even better, my own friends. Drawing upon my own experiences as a young adult drinker, I appreciated that I was confident enough to introduce myself and talk to complete strangers on nights out because I knew that my friends were at my side. With this revelation, I reflected on the suitability of doing research with my "mates". Initially, I scoffed at my own idea, assuming that conducting research alongside friends would not be deemed as 'proper' sociological research. Before sharing my idea openly, I undertook a review of literature relating to the role of friendship and intimate relations in ethnographic studies to assess my strategy.

During the initial research phase, I discovered that there was a body of research on forming friendships and intimate relations with the research participants. For example, Blackman's (2007) work on 'hidden ethnography' highlights how researchers can develop relationships and friendships with participants through close rapport, empathy, shared experience and emotion, and through participation in deviance. However, researchers might be reluctant to share such fieldwork findings and approaches because they anticipate that it would be considered too controversial (Blackman, 2007:700); which resonated with me completely in my early fieldwork experiences. Other research by Blackman and Commane (2012:231) also emphasise the value of how fieldwork friendships and relations can offer "insight into the emotional dynamics of fieldwork of fieldwork friendship" producing a more in-depth and rich qualitative accounts of the culture under study. As does Rachela Colosi's (201) work on lap dancing, whereby she draws upon her existing insider position as a lap dancer to establish fieldwork relations. Whilst reading these works, it also occurred to me that Chicago School researchers like Nels Anderson (1923), Frederic Thrasher (1927) and William Foote Whyte (1943) conducted researcher from an intimate insider perspective and formed friendships with their research participants; most notably, Whyte's relationship with 'Doc' in Street Corner Society.

The aforementioned literature review identified that whilst there was a body of literature examining forming relationships and friendships with participants; there was little literature which addressed conducting research with existing friends. The exception to this was an article by Jodie Taylor (2011) which provided a detailed account about conducting research with existing friends and relations as an "intimate insider" to the participants in relation to local queer culture; a culture she identifies with. Taylor (2011:8) defines an "intimate insider" as: researchers [with] pre-existing friendships (close, distant, casual or otherwise) [which] evolve into informant relationships – friend-informants – as opposed to the majority of existing work that deals with informant-friendships". Taylor's work greatly inspired me because it gave me the confidence to believe that my methodological approach was legitimate to proceed with to study youth drinking cultures in the NTE of Sutton.

Having reviewed the literature, when meeting socially with friends, I began to float the idea of them becoming friend informants. Initial reactions varied from empathy and humour. One friend, Amelia's stated, "Yeah you would have looked like a proper weirdo if you tried to tag along with random drunk people on your own. They would have tried to lose you straight away." I knew that she was right because I felt exactly like a "weirdo" whilst sat on the bench in Trinity Square. Tony jokingly responded to my request, "How much are you going to pay us for this?" but eventually agreed seemingly on behalf of the group present at the occasion, "of course we will all help". My reaction to my friends was one of gratitude; although I was hesitant because part of me believed that Tony's humorous response may have reflected a sign of tension (Kuipers, 2008). Nonetheless, my friends seemed comfortable with me conducting research alongside them, particularly as they began to accept my position as both a researcher and a friend.

'Friends with benefits': The positive impact of friends as researchers

Conducting research with friends brought many positive outcomes regarding fieldwork and the findings informing the data chapters of this thesis. Firstly, friends offered personal safety and pragmatic support to the research that I was doing. For example, I was aware of vulnerabilities of conducting research in risky spaces such as the NTE because I would be interacting with intoxicated individuals until the early hours of the morning. Therefore, having friends present made me feel safe because I had support if anything untoward happened and we travelled to and from research locations together. Not only did this prioritise my safety, but the transitions between research settings formed part of the data collection.

Having friends alongside me enabled me to feel more confident in approaching other young adult drinkers in the NTE because I could initiate conversations in the same way that I would ordinarily on a night out, using my friends as a point of reference. As I had hoped, my friends introduced me to other young people which resulted in strangers taking an interest in the research because they had endorsement by a fellow young drinker. For example, I recorded in the field diary a time when James haphazardly introduced me to a woman whilst stood waiting for our drinks at the bar in The Star pub:

> *"This is my mate Laura. She's doing university research about drunk people. Where are you guys going to tonight?" I laughed and so did the woman. But to my surprise, she said, "We're probably gonna' go to Voodoo Bar. What about you?"*

Whilst I felt slightly awkward by James' clumsy introduction, it had the desired effect because it initiated a conversation. From this introduction the women discussed her thoughts about the pub that we were in and the anguish of waiting to get a drink, "How long does it take to get a fucking drink in this place?" The brief interaction went on to reveal how she, like James, deliberately ordered multiple drinks at the bar so that she was not away from her friends by waiting a long time at the bar; showing how drinking establishments inadvertently lead to excessive youth consumption practices (this is analysed comprehensively in Chapter Five). Brief and fleeting interactions such as prompted by friend's interventions offered revealing insight into the drinking practices and values of other young people. Other actions included friends 'accidentally' pushing me into groups of young people on the dance floor as a way to strike up conversations with others, and pointing out things they thought I might find relevant. Whilst these actions by friends were engineered at the beginning of fieldwork, over time they prompted me less, but nonetheless, it was useful viewing friends and acquaintances as co-researchers or collaborators, which I believed fitted with the feminist ethnographic approaches of this research.

Like Taylor (2011), I felt that research conducted with friends and acquaintances offered more richness and depth because the participants verbal accounts and behaviours in drinking settings appeared increasingly transparent, emotive and detailed. Whilst accounts from young people and community members whom I had no prior relationship in formal settings like Willow High School, The Sycamore School, The Rafters, the Sutton Youth Bus and the Sparrow Youth Club were valuable; the accounts seemed less 'raw'. For example, friends and acquaintances were more willing to discuss a range of intimate negative and positive outcomes and behaviours that were emotionally charged and often self-implicating relating to alcohol consumption, like: regret, fear, embarrassment, violence, deviance, euphoria, pleasure, excitement etc. These were very insightful about youth drinking cultures. This does

not discredit other accounts, but it serves to highlight a closeness and intimacy that was more challenging to derive from participants whom I was less acquainted with. Often, I found that participants whom I was less acquainted with required more prompting to get the same level of detail without being obtrusive or making participants feel uncomfortable.

The challenges of friends as researchers

Whilst there were many benefits of conducting fieldwork alongside friends, there were a number of challenges to fieldwork and ethical considerations relating to the research. One of the main personal issues that I encountered when conducting research alongside friends was the challenge of separating my social life from the research. For example, in my own leisure time I enjoy going out with friends to have meals and consuming alcohol. On events like my birthday or other special occasions, it was difficult to distinguish whether or not I should be researching. To me, it felt impossible to ignore what was going on around me and I would be caught in a blurred position of research versus personal leisure time. I decided that there would be suitable occasions when I would not take the field diary or make notes because I was not researching. However, the reality was that I knew that I could not ignore such experiences because they would inform my thinking. Even if I could or wanted to, there was no escaping these experiences because the research participants would often discuss stories from these drinking occasions at future events when I was researching. Subsequently, some of the evenings that were my leisure time eventually made their way into the field diary, but from an alternative perspective derived from storytelling via the participants. When such situations arose, I attempted to stay true to the participants' perspectives and interpretation, but through a reflective process, maintained that my own subjectivities and interpretations may influence such accounts.

Another issue that arose when conducting research alongside friends, particularly in early fieldwork, was that friends and acquaintances did not like that I refrained from consuming alcohol to their desired levels and expectations. Prior to conducting fieldwork, when going out with friends, I may have consumed over the recommended levels of alcohol with them. However, when conducting research, I either did not drink at all or consumed one alcoholic beverage like glass of wine to maintain rapport with friends and acquaintances. However, I was reluctant to consume alcohol at all because I was concerned that such actions would completely discredit and undermine me trying to establish myself as a sociological researcher (Blackman, 2007) by skewing my judgement and coherency. For example, during one evening with Stephanie, Amelia, Jane, Malik, Justin, Tony and Leo at The Star pub, I informed the

group via text beforehand that I would researching and not drinking alcohol that evening. Initially they seemed fine with this; however, I recorded several moments in the field diary showing that friends were not OK with my lack of consumption:

> We got to the bar and Tony *asked everyone, "What you drinking?" [...] When it got to me I asked for a coke. Tony looked at me sceptically, "Don't be boring. Just have a drink." I reminded him that I was doing research and wanted to keep a clear head. He said to the barman, "Just a coke",* turned back to me and rolled his eyes.

During the same evening, friends continued to encourage me to have an alcoholic drink:

> Everyone at the table was getting close to finishing their drinks. Acknowledging this, *Stephanie proclaimed, "I guess it's my turn to go to the bar." She asked if everyone* was having the same, which they all agreed yes to. Before she got up to make her way *to the bar, she turned expectantly and beamed optimistically, "Are you having a drink yet?"*

The final attempt that evening to persuade me to consume alcohol came from Justin:

> Everyone was chatting around the table. When Justin came back from the toilets he *came and sat next to me, "It's not the same when we're all drinking and you're not. It's* not as fun*"*

I acknowledged Justin's plea, but continued not to drink for the remainder of the evening. I realised that not consuming alcohol with friends was a barrier to rapport in fieldwork. I knew that I would need to change strategies to restore rapport and fieldwork relations with friends. Consequently, I reluctantly began drinking small accounts of alcohol in some fieldwork occasions. I assumed that friends would ridicule me and call me a fraud because I was drinking and calling it "research". However, they surprised me. They were happier that I was drinking and did not see it as an issue, as noted by Justin in the field diary:

> On our way to The Sportsman I told Justin that I was thinking about drinking despite *being in "researcher mode". He smiled and simply said, "Surely it's f*ine as long as you *don't get blotto*[15]*?"*

When I discussed concerns about drinking with other friends and acquaintances, they shared similar sentiments. These accounts revealed valuable insight into youth drinking values; young people were more concerned about sharing social experiences of intoxication, rejecting the

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[15] Blotto is slang for drunk or heavily intoxicated

idea of me being sensible for research purposes. Already I could see how Government discourse around 'responsible' and 'sensible' drinking was not at the forefront of youth drinking cultures (Department of Health et al., 2007; HM Government, 2012); themes of which are extended in Chapter Five.

I now faced the issue of, as Justin put it, not getting "blotto" when undertaking research. This was challenging because friends would buy me drinks during their round as if it were a typical night. I started to think that my "researcher" identity was beginning to fade away as I became reinstated as a friend as opposed to researcher (Blackman and Commane, 2012). Subsequently, I had to employ further strategies to manage my intoxication and prevent fieldwork becoming implicated. The first strategy simply entailed telling friends that "I had have enough to drink" or that I did not want to have any more alcohol. However, they did not always adhere to this and bought me drinks regardless. This was not some attempt of pressuring me to drink; it was because they knew that either I was not drinking at my 'normal' levels or not 'keeping on par' with their drinking. Therefore, I employed alternative strategies like ordering myself a soft drink during my round and claiming to friends it was an alcoholic drink, or I would accept drinks from friends but leave them on a table or pour them away somewhere. The latter strategies presented ethical dilemmas because it entailed being deceitful to friend informants which went against the feminist ethnographic approaches that I strived to align to. Nonetheless, it appeased the participants and allowed me to feel more comfortable about the legitimacy of my fieldwork practices. To counteract this, after the fieldwork and I commenced the writing up of the thesis, I confessed to my friend informants about my deceitfulness in an attempt to restore my feminist ethnographic principles. Most laughed about it, with individuals like Malik saying, "I didn't even notice that you weren't drunk. I must have been wasted." Conversely, others like Tony and Leo agreed with Justin's playful outrage that I had "wasted a perfectly good drink." During the times when I questioned my own ethical stance, I reminded myself of Stacey's (1988) similar deliberations about dubious actions from researchers, but maintained that such practices were for the greater good or at the detriment of not doing the research at all.

Representation of the research participant was also a key consideration in conducting research alongside friends and acquaintances. Representing the research participants occurs at two stages, during fieldwork and in the write-up of the ethnography (Blackman and Commane, 2012). In relation to fieldwork, at times I felt that my actions were somewhat governed by participants out of a moral sense of loyalty and protectiveness towards them. For example, there were times when I sacrificed research opportunities because I was compelled by the desires and needs of friends and acquaintances. This occasionally resulted in putting

my friends first, as opposed to pursuing potential further research opportunities. This was evident from the field diary during a night out with Stephanie and Amelia at The Vineyard bar:

> *At 22:45 Stephanie'*s work friend, Jill, and her five other female and two male friends *(whose names I did not catch) were about to leave, "We want to get into Haze before they start charging entry". Jill had been nagging Stephanie*, Amelia and I to join them. I explained to Stephanie that I would like to because it would make for good fieldwork. However, Stephanie was reluctant and came up with several excuses not to attend. *She kept saying, "I hate Haze", but the main reason was th*at herself and Amelia had work early and did not want to be out late. She insisted that we all went home together. I said that I was happy to go off with the others on my own but Amelia insisted with *Stephanie's backing, "We can't leave you on your own".*

On the one hand, this scenario strongly represented the levels of female solidarity amongst young female drinkers on nights out, as depicted in Chapter Five of this thesis. On the other hand, this is a prime example of one of the rare occasions when friends stood in the way of fieldwork opportunities; but being an ethical friend can involve compromise in research (Taylor, 2011). In such circumstances I felt like I could not say no to my friend's desire to look out for me and decided that such experiences can also be taken as data in itself that young people because they reflected a value that was present amongst other young adult female drinkers; that friends stick together on a night out.

As with all research participants in this study, even those whom I was less acquainted with, I offered participants to review excerpts of writing about them to ensure that they were happy about the way in which they were represented in the write up of the thesis. This helped respect their integrity through accuracy and fairness, as well as ensure that they were happy in the way in which they I maintained their anonymity and confidentiality. By doing this I was formally seeking validation from the researched and offering control over their representation (Taylor, 2011). Most young people and community members I encountered in community settings such as schools, The Rafters, the Sparrow Youth Club and Sutton Youth Bus said that they were happy for me to go ahead and write up the findings without them reviewing the writing because they "trusted" me. I took this to mean that we had achieved high levels of rapport. Similarly, this was true of friend-informants and acquaintances. However, in the analysis and writing up stages of the thesis, there were times when I was concerned about how readers of this thesis might judge or misjudge representations of friends and other participants. I was particularly concerned about portraying individuals in a negative light where they might live up to stereotypical images of 'binge' drinking commonly represented in media and government discourse presented in Chapter One.

I accepted that "knowing someone, especially in a very close or intimate manner, has a significant effect on one's perception of a person and the ways in which you relate to this person" and effects interpretive analyses and outcomes (Taylor, 2011). Being aware of how personal biases and subjectivities regarding participants may influence my analyses, I adhered to the basic principles of ethnography, "...to describe what happens, how the people involved see and talk about their own actions and those of others, the contexts in which the actions, and what follows from it" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007:7). Similarly, when writing up the research, I made a conscious effort not to avoid omissions to ensure a commitment to equality in the writing and offer an accurate, authentic and authoritative account (Van Maanen, 2011). For intimate insider research to be successful, I had to "look both outward and inward, to be reflexive and self-conscious in terms of positioning, to be self-aware and researcher-self-aware and to acknowledge the intertextuality that is a part of both the data gathering and writing process" (Taylor, 2011:9). Collectively, this enabled me to create some critical analytical distance.

In sum, conducting fieldwork alongside friends and acquaintances is rewarding and challenging. In relation to this research, conducting fieldwork in NTE settings would have been awkward without having peers to help establish rapport with other young drinkers. Additionally, research alongside friends and acquaintances clearly produced more intimate and rich accounts relating to youth drinking cultures. This was of prime importance because there are many studies of youth drinking cultures that are non-participatory and rely upon surveys, verbal accounts through interviews or distant non-participatory observations (e.g. Bremner et al., 2011; Griffin et al., 2009; Valentine et al., 2007). By conducting research alongside friends and acquaintances I was able to gain a closeness that contributed towards more in-depth understandings about youth drinking cultures. Moreover, as per Taylor's (2011) suggestion, I did not rely exclusively upon fieldwork alongside existing friends and acquaintances and had a mixture of friends as participants and participants to gain a variety of heterogenous perspectives about youth drinking.

2.4. Key data collection methods and developments in the fieldwork journey

2.4.1. The integral role of the field diary in ethnographic research

Critically examining the process of recording field notes is central to the grounded theoretical approaches to this research methodology because field notes capture the everyday lived experiences of the participants that produced theoretical description about youth drinking cultures. Additionally, the process of writing notes in the field diary informed the interactions

and development of relationships between the research participants and I. At the time of commencing my own fieldwork whilst there was literature discussing the importance of recording field notes, there was limited practical guidance about recording notes in-situ during fieldwork, and a lack of critical discussion of the implications of recording notes alongside the research participants. Coming from a feminist standpoint of "giving something back" (McNamara, 2009), I hope that transparency in this key research activity from my own experiences can support other ethnographers in future fieldwork endeavours.

"Whether field notes can be written at all, how, and covering what issues, depends on the nature of the research, the setting(s) in which the fieldwork occurs, and the role(s) taken on by the ethnographer" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007:141). During fieldwork alongside young drinkers, I learned that I would constantly have to adapt the ways in which I recorded field notes and think creatively about recording notes in a variety of drinking settings because there was no 'one size fits all' approach that could be applied to the settings with the participants.

In keeping with the feminist ethnographic approaches, I ensured that I maintained accurate and detailed notes capturing the voices and experiences of the research participants themselves. Little did I know that in the early stages of fieldwork I was so immersed in recording notes and attached to the field diary that I had not realised it would impact how participants viewed and interacted with me; as ironically recorded in the field diary during a session at The Rafters:

> Steven was leading a discussion with a group of young people from Birches High School about alcohol and drug consumption practices. Steven asked each young person and Cameron about what drugs they had consumed and effects it had on them *[…] When Steven got to me, I looked up at him expectantly waiting to discuss my own* experiences with the group. To my surprise he completely bypassed me and avoided asking me the question. I was shocked at being left out of the discussion. *[…]* During the de-brief I asked Steven why he chose to leave me out of the discussion. He replied, *"Because you ha*d your head buried in that note*book of yours!"*

At the time I was taken aback because I had not realised my error and assumed that Steven had excluded me for some other reason. He explained that he assumed I was immersing myself in making notes because I was trying to avoid answering the question and was trying to respect this. After this experience of misunderstanding, I actively made a point of learning to abbreviate notes and use prompt words (Wolfinger, 2002); then wrote extensive notes after fieldwork. Following the advice of Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) I did this at the earliest

opportunity following on fieldwork experiences so that I could capture voices and experiences whilst they were fresh in my mind and avoid distorting events.

After making the conscious decision to abbreviate field diary notes and use prompt words so that I could focus my attention on what was actually happening in the field rather than making copious notes, this allowed me to be more focussed on observations and pick out nuances of what I was observing more closely. The abbreviations turned out to be imperative after a young male research participant at The Rafters, Toby, pinched my field diary from me:

> I pulled up a chair and sat nearest to Toby by the sofas. Suddenly, Toby leaned over the sofa and took the field diary straight from me. *Shocked, I questioned, "Toby, what are you doing?" He leaned away from* me so that I could not take the field diary back. *"I want to know what you're writing" and skimmed through the pages*. Just as I stood up to take the field diary back from Toby *he said, "I don't even understand it" an*d handed it back.

This experience made me appreciate the value of writing shorthand because I realised how private and personal the field diary is. This little notebook contained the thoughts, feelings and experiences of myself and the research participants that I had encountered in the fieldwork. Potentially anybody could pick this up and make judgements about the "raw" data written on the page. However, thankfully as highlighted by Toby, because of the abbreviations, the words had very little meaning to Toby but were of immense value to me as the words were loaded with meaning. This situation enabled me to protect the confidentiality and privacy of the participants until this raw data was ready to be interpreted and shared in an open environment.

In the moment of Toby taking my field diary I felt vulnerable, but I was also worried about betraying other research participants because I had allowed someone to take the field diary which I felt was an object which represented an entrustment between myself and the participants. Toby's actions prompted new fieldwork reflections because he continued to show an increasing curiosity about the field diary which helped me to use it as a tool in which to build further field relationships with the young people in the research. This was shown in the field diary during the same session at The Rafters:

> I could not help but notice Toby watching me almost every time I wrote something down. Whilst the group were completing an activity about drug categories in small groups, I noticed Toby watchin*g me make notes again, so I said, "Here's what I am writing" explaining it was the nick names* that the group gave to the drugs they had been asked to think about. This time, I voluntarily showed Toby the field diary to reassure him. He laughed loudly which prompted Mason to take an interest in our

conversation, "What are you two talking about?" Toby explained, "She's writing words we use for drugs." Mason became interested, "We know <u>bare</u> *drug slang." […]* Excitedly, Toby and Mason began listing slang that they use for cannabis, including: *'crow', 'bubble gum', 'spiff', 'cheese', 'piff', 'food', 'ganja', 'zoot', and 'toot'. They* looked proud *about their knowledge. Mason said, "We can teach you loads of stuff for you to write down, just ask."*

This moment made me realise how sharing notes in the field diary proved to be a useful tool in which to promote trust, rapport and generate further data through discussion. Therefore, the visibility of the field diary in this setting turned out to be a useful way to generate discussion with young people in community settings. Consequently, when undertaking fieldwork in other community settings including the Sparrow Youth Club and the Sutton Youth Bus I deliberately recorded notes overtly so that it would promote curiosity. This was particularly useful when trying to interact with hard to reach young people and during moments when I felt like an outsider or intrusive with participants that I found harder to build rapport with, like the Alternative young people at the Sparrow Youth Club.

Whilst the field diary proved to be a useful tool in community settings, it transpired that it turned out to be calamitous in NTE settings; highlighting the need for me to adapt my fieldwork methods according to the setting and participants. During a fieldwork occasion with the Sutton Street Pastors there was humorous incident that occurred which made me realise that it was entirely impractical to have a field diary in public NTE settings:

As the Street Pastors and I were walking, an acquaintance Louise and her two friends Lucia and Amie spotted me and came over to chat. Louise asked*, "Erm, are you out with these guys?" and began quizzing me as to why I was with them. I explained th*at I was with them for fieldwork, but she looked sceptical*, "Oh. It's just because of t*he *Bible that you're carrying…*I thought you had become a Street Pastor*?" I looked down* and realised that she was referring to my field diary - a small black leather-bound notebook. I burst into laughter because of the connection that she had made; however, I realised she was right, it looked like a Bible.

From this point, I used my smart phone to record notes unobtrusively (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007), as I did not want young people to interact with me differently believing that I was a Street Pastor carrying a Bible. Using my smart phone to record notes became a necessity across all NTE settings, especially when conducting research with young drinkers. I kept discovering how the field diary alienated young people in NTE settings. For example, when conducting research with friends there was clearly levels of embarrassment when I first attempted to record notes in the field diary in NTE, with one participant James remarking half

seriously, "What the fuck is that? Put that away." Other participants viewed the field diary as a barrier or an intrusion to their pleasurable drinking pursuits, encapsulated by Tony's comment, "Are you making notes again? Just sit down and come and have a drink." These experiences showed that whilst I wanted to be transparent and overt with participants about when I was recording notes during fieldwork, the field diary could be an obstacle to building fieldwork relations and rapport.

As a result of the above experiences, I formed alternative creative measures to record notes, and adapted to different settings accordingly. This included using my smart phone which was not alienating because the participants often used their phone to document their nights about through social media. Additionally, when I had a moment, I would go to toilet cubicles in drinking establishments and write notes in more detail; this is common practice joked about amongst ethnographers who need to write notes quickly, discreetly and privately (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Although this removed me from the fieldwork at times, adopting this approach had several benefits. It helped the participants feel more at ease around me and it gave me opportunities to reflect on the practices and values that were occurring to promote ongoing reflexivity. Moreover, as illustrated in Chapter Five, the location of the women's toilets was a central point of analytical interest regarding women's drinking.

These practices and reflections highlighted Hammersley and Atkinson's (2007:142) point that "satisfactory note-taking need to be worked at" and requires a repeated reassessment of purpose and priority in what, how and when to record notes. Reflecting upon my own research behaviours including recording notes in the field diary was vital in ensuring that I adapted to the different research settings and participants accordingly contributing to the data that informed my grounded theoretical approach. Sharing these approaches can help others to see that the practical difficulties in writing field notes can be deceptively underestimated by researchers (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007).

As fieldwork progressed, fieldwork notes became condensed, but there were enough notes and memos to prompt me when I needed to write more extensive narratives later on. As fieldwork took place sporadically; for example, I might spend several hours on a Monday at The Rafters, Wednesday evenings at the Sparrow Youth Club, Thursday evenings with the Sutton Youth Bus team and weekends on nights out with young adults; this meant that I generally had adequate time to write up extensive field notes shortly after events had occurred. However, writing up these detailed notes was most challenging when I had spent nights out with participants in the NTE and returned home in the early hours of the morning needing to write them up when I was tired. Thus, having opportunities to write-up notes in places like the women's toilets turned out to be productive because on some occasions after fieldwork I was

too tired to write up notes when I got home; so, these notes helped retrieve fieldwork memories. This allowed me to preserve experiences and observations from fieldwork and ensure that notes were not stripped of rich detail (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 2011).

I took note of Emerson, Fretz and Shaws' (2011:46-7) point that, "At best, the ethnographer 're-creates' her memories as written scenes that authentically depict people's lives through selected, integrated details". During the write up of the extensive field notes, I ensured that I distinguished direct quotations from my own summarising or paraphrasing of the participant's words and recorded uncertainties (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). This was so that there was no ambiguity and that I stayed 'true' to capturing the voices of the participants' in-line with my feminist ethnographic approach. This ensured that were contextualised in relation to the participants, settings, timings and the surrounding circumstances which could be incorporated into subsequent data analyses (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007).

Writing detailed field notes entailed typing up as much detail as possible from memory, typically in chronological order and holding off evaluation and editing until initial accounts had been produced. Following Chicago School approaches, I attempted to write "lushly" (Goffman, 1989:131) by incorporating sensory visualisations and descriptive details about participants, their actions and their dialogue, characterisation and the research settings to bring the ethnography to life. Once the initial draft of the account of fieldwork events had been written, I revisited the writing and engaged in a reviewing and editing process to refine the accounts. I was reassured by Emerson, Fretz and Shaw's (2011) recommendation that it is OK for the ethnographer to make ongoing additions, polish writing and reorganise paragraphs accordingly during the writing process as I was initially concerned about how this might be construed engineering the ethnography. This process of moving backwards and forwards through the writing allowed me to bring the richness, texture and comprehensiveness to the writing that were not present in initial field diary jottings (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 2011).

2.4.2. Conducting interviews

Altogether there were 14 audio recorded formal interviews that took place throughout the course of fieldwork. As detailed in Appendix 4, interviews 1-5 took place with friend-informants either individually or in small groups at the researcher's or participants homes. Interviews 6-12 took place with individuals or groups of young people in community settings (sometimes with community workers present). Interviews 13 and 14 took place with community professionals in Sutton in their place of work. All formal interviews, excluding interviews 11 and 12 are referred to in the thesis. The exclusion of data from interviews 11 and 12 was not

intentional, but attributed to reaching a point of data saturation, whereby similar themes had already been discussed by other research participants in their interviews and were consequently utilised in the write-up of the data chapters following the data analyses. These formal interviews were in addition to the informal, non-recorded "unsolicited" interviews and oral accounts that took place in fieldwork with young people and community members (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007:99). Each interview lasted 60-90 minutes and were recorded using a Dictaphone. An interview schedule with topical areas was developed prior to the interviews which was unstructured to allow promote a more conversational nature in line with the grounded theoretical and feminist approaches which prioritise discussions to flow from the participants. To encourage autonomy, upon consent to being interviewed, participants had the choice to decide where, when and who they wanted to be interviewed with. However, for some young people in community settings this was governed by gatekeepers. Full transcriptions were undertaken so as facilitate robust grounded theoretical approaches. I also wrote notes during interviews to capture non-verbal cues and further contextualise fieldwork to enhance levels of thick description (Holliday, 2007).

Whilst I had anticipated in research design that I would most likely conduct formal interviews, I took on Hammersley and Atkinson's (2007:147) point that, "No means of data recording should be simply adopted as a matter of routine: reflexive awareness is required here as much as anywhere else." Thus, I began to question whether I would need to conduct interviews at all, particularly because I had gathered rich contextual data from fieldwork; but I decided that I would see what emerged during fieldwork. Subsequently, I reached a point where I decided that conducting carefully selected interviews with particular individuals and groups would be beneficial to the research. Moreover, the rationale for undertaking interviews was because I wanted to ensure that I had 'saturated' concepts according to my grounded theoretical approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Therefore, when there were areas that I felt still required more definite 'triangulation' I used interviews to address this (Denzin, 1989). Other rationales for conducting interviews which emerged during fieldwork are explained in the forthcoming sections.

Interviewing young people in community settings

During fieldwork with young people in community settings including local schools, The Rafters, the Sparrow Youth Club and the Sutton Youth Bus; I encountered challenging moments constrained by circumstances in fieldwork. This included how gatekeepers intentionally and unintentionally altered ways in which I interacted with young people and the research environment. As a result of these constraints, I decided in some circumstances that conducting

interviews could overcome these challenges and "amplify the voices of those on the social margins" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007:97).

During my time at The Rafters, the Sparrow Youth Club and the Sutton Youth Bus, I had explained to the adult community members who worked with these young people (including: Jo, Lizzy, Lacey and Steven) that ideally, I would join young people outside of formal communal settings to explore their drinking in-situ. As some participants were under the legal drinking age, I explained that I would avoid conducting research with underage drinkers, nor those involved in illegal drug use to prevent placing myself and participants in any vulnerable situation(s). However, individuals like Lizzy instructed me that I could not, "under any circumstances" conduct fieldwork with young people outside of the Sparrow Youth Club or join young people outside of the youth club in the young peoples' leisure time. When I previously suggested to some young people that I would have liked to have joined them in their drinking activities, they agreed that it would be good for the research and consented for me to join them. However, I felt ethically obliged not to defy the wishes of community gatekeepers (some of who like Lacey was also a family acquaintance) who had provided me access to work with these young people in the first place. Without these individuals I probably would not have had the opportunity to engage with these young people at all. Additionally, from a pragmatic perspective, I knew that gatekeepers from the Sparrow Youth Club (Lizzy), The Rafters (Steven), The Sycamore School (Lacey), and the Sutton Youth Bus (Jackie) all spoke to one each other; so, if I broke the trust of one individual, I had no doubt that word would spread to others which would have been detrimental to fieldwork.

On reflection, one of the dangers of using a 'snowballing' technique was that gatekeepers were linked to one another, which can hinder research access and activities because they can be protective of research participants (Atkinson and Flint, 2001). After deliberation, I decided that conducting interviews with certain young people in community settings would be the most appropriate action to find more about their drinking cultures whilst retaining respect for community gatekeepers. Whilst not my desired option, this allowed me to "use what people say as evidence about their perspectives, and perhaps about the larger subcultures and cultures in which they belong" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007:98).

Conducting interviews in community settings was also challenging due to the environment. For example, at the Sparrow Youth Club it was difficult to conduct interviews because of noise and activity. Each session took place in a main hall where lots of social activities took place simultaneously like: arts and crafts tables, people playing pool; cooking activities; youth worker-led discussion activities about issues like sexual health or drug/alcohol use; young people running around and chasing each other; playing of television and/or computer games;

noise young people playing basketball in the sports hall adjacent to the main hall; vibrations from the music room; and always, without fail, loud music playing that filled the entire hall (including a mixture of rock, rap, grime, hop-hop, heavy metal, indie and pop music). This created a cacophony of sound that made interviews difficult to conduct and transcribing even more challenging. Moreover, there were interruptions from youth workers and other young people for the duration of many interviews. Other interviews that took place in community settings (e.g. schools and the Sutton Youth Bus) were much easier in comparison. Despite the challenges, I captured vital data from formal interviews using a quality Dictaphone.

Although built good relationships with some young Alternative people at the Sparrow Youth Club, I wanted to give something back for sharing experiences with me during their leisure time that I was intruding upon. Inspired by Cara Robinson's (2009a), as an added incentive to participate in interviews and as a small gesture of thanks, I bought drinks and snacks based upon participants requests for each interview. The young people were excited about this and gratefully tucked in during interviews. Having regularly observed some young people in the youth club reception struggling to pay the 50p entry fee, I hoped that this small offering was of some value. Establishing rapport with young people in this way in community settings helped build trust and reciprocation which contributed to more in-depth and rich discussions about their drinking cultures which formed valuable data for this study.

Interviewing young adults from the NTE

When conducting interviews with young adult drinkers there was more freedom in organising interviews compared to those young people I had encountered in community settings. These interviews either took place in the home of the participants or at my own home (participants were given a choice about the location). Participants were invited to attend interviews in their friendship groups, individually and/or by gender. Interviewing young adults in friendship groups (where possible) and in gendered groups generated in-depth and honest accounts through positive group dynamics whereby participants discussed their values and practices openly without imbalanced gender power relations coming into play (McNamara; 2009). The rationale for conducting interviews in groups was through a desire to mirror 'pre-drinking' environments that young people valued and engaged in extensive storytelling amongst friends. I wanted to recreate this context because they were insightful about young people's drinking practices and values as shown in the findings of Chapters Four and Five. This made the interview setting a resource rather than a barrier (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007).

During pre-drinking, participants tended to share intimate stories prior to going out and so by creating a similar type of environment, I believed that this would help build rapport and create a conducive to make the participants feel more at ease. To create this environment, I either cooked or ordered take-away food and provided a small number of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages for participants to consume with food. This offered a way to 'give something back' to the participants as well as create an environment similar to that of 'pre-drinking' (Skeggs, 2001a). The ethical considerations of providing alcohol to participants will be discussed further in the 'Ethical Considerations' section of this chapter. It is worth noting that participants were offered a token amount of alcohol in an attempt to recognise daily recommended drinking guidelines (i.e. 3-4 units for men, and 2-3 units for women) as suggested by the Government's Chief Medical Officer (CMO) (HM Government, 2010b).[16] If participants chose to drink during interviews, I chose not to drink but instead ate with them to sustain rapport without compromising my ability to conduct the interviews. This seemed to be a successful technique because participants appeared to 'let go', shown by the way that they engaged in jokes, banter, uncontrolled laughter and discussed drinking values and practices that mirrored 'pre-drinking'.

Interviewing community professionals

As this thesis has prioritised the voices and experiences of young people, I critically selected a small number of community professionals to be formally interviewed. The purpose of this was to provide more holistic accounts about youth drinking in Sutton. This included Lacey from the Sycamore School and the Sparrow Youth Club, and Steven from The Rafters who was accompanied by his colleague Darren a community outreach worker. Organising these interviews were straightforward. Firstly, community professionals made themselves available at their workplace on their own territory; surroundings of which provided me with insight into their world and how they make sense of what is going on around them (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Secondly, community professionals agreed to be interviewed because they perceived that my research had the potential to support young people whom they worked with and were emotionally and professionally invested in. Lastly, they were keen to be interviewed because they wanted me to disseminate research findings with the wider community anticipating that the research to support their own services and provisions. Whilst I agreed

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[16] Since interviews have taken place, guidelines by the CMO have been updated to suggest that weekly unit recommendations are in place of daily units. Advice about single drinking occasions suggest to: limit alcohol in one drinking occasion, alternate alcohol with water/soft beverages and plan your drinking safely to avoid harm/risk (DoH, 2016:6).

that findings could be shared, I informed community professionals that findings would be shared selectively in ways that did not conflict with the Doctorate.

2.4.3. Negotiating the relationship between building relations and exiting fieldwork

Stacey (1988:23) rightly states that no matter how "enjoyable" the researcher's presence may seem in fieldwork, fundamentally they are intruding into personal lives and experiences and needs to carefully manage how they will exit fieldwork and the relationships being left behind. Thus, throughout the fieldwork, I made a conscious effort to reflect upon how I interacted with participants and judged how this might affect both myself and participants when the time came to exit fieldwork. In some cases, managing this was smoother than others because some fieldwork was dictated by gatekeepers (e.g. schools and The Rafters), whereas other fieldwork (e.g. the Sparrow Youth Club and NTE research) was more challenging. As relationships built during fieldwork were of varying levels of intimacy; the stronger the relationship, the more I had to reflect upon fieldwork exit strategies because both the research participants and I were more emotionally invested in one another (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007).

Regarding schools, fieldwork at the Willow High School and the Sycamore School was restricted by gatekeepers, namely, teachers. It was impossible to build meaningful relationships with students or teachers because time spent in these settings were limited and guarded. For example, when attending schools, I had to report to reception and have students or a teacher escort me to and from classrooms that I was observing. In Willow High School, whilst the teachers such as Miss McPherson, Mr McCloud and Miss Hughes were welcoming, they would instruct me to sit at the back of the classroom and suggest that I could talk with students during the classes, but only about the activities they were instructed to work on. These instructions were understandable because I was there to observe their lessons; but even so, it was made clear that my role was non-participatory. In these settings my limited participation meant that I need not worry about fieldwork exit strategies.

Fieldwork relations with young people at The Rafters and the Sutton Youth Bus were more personal than schools. This was attributed to spending longer periods of time with individuals and because I had more opportunity to engage with them on a personal level through sharing experiences through informal interactions. For example, at The Rafters I saw groups of young people on a weekly basis for six weeks for half a day and so I had the opportunity to discuss alcohol and drug use with them. We built rapport by discussing recreational activities (including drug and alcohol use); stories of which they we were all happy to reciprocate. Once I learned that the Coordinator of The Rafters, Steven, did not want me to contact young people outside

of the service, I made a conscious effort to remind young people that we would only have opportunities to talk during the six weeks and to make the most out of being at The Rafters. Being clear about this made it easier when saying goodbye at the last session; which felt like a positive experience for everyone. Moreover, because participants knew that I lived in Sutton, they would say "maybe see you around Sutton anyway" which left things open.

In relation to young people from the Sutton Youth Bus, in the months that we got to know one another they shared snapshots about their alcohol and drug use. I looked forward to seeing these young people and they seemed happy to continue to share stories about their past, present and anticipated practices and values. Unlike The Rafters, it was the young people who dictated departure from fieldwork for me and primed the Outreach Workers (Jackie and Jade) and I in saying goodbye. Specifically, one young male, Morgan, informed us, "We might not be around here that much anymore" because they were preparing for their GCSE exams and needed to focus on revising; as their parents were keeping close eye on their studies. This highlights how departing the field can be equally challenging for the researcher as much as the participants, particularly when you have shared a part of yourself with the participants (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007).

Whilst I had spent much longer with Alternative young people at the Sparrow Youth Club (approximately eight months on a weekly basis), it was challenging to initially build field relations and rapport with individuals. This was attributed to their Alternative subcultural values and practices being so different to mine, it took longer to establish common ground. For example, I perceived myself as having a bland style in fieldwork, compared to Alternative young people who adorned an array of fashions. In the field diary I recorded how Alternative young people wore an eclectic mixture of styles, many of which were androgynous. Key style characteristics observed in fieldwork included:

- **Fashion styles and clothing: Punk** (ripped tights/stockings/fishnets; spiked belts and jewellery; Creeper shoes; Doc Martins/Bovver boots/Timberlands/heavy boots; leather jackets; choker chains; safety pins and chains). **Emo** (Often incorporating "Geek Chic" style including: heavy rimmed glasses; knee high socks; braces; suspenders; rucksacks; skinny jeans; hoodies; t-shirts with band names and superheroes; studded wrist bands). **Goth** (Black clothes; velvet jackets; sheer fabrics).
- **Hair styles:** "Bubble gum pink" hair; multi-coloured / "rainbow" hair; Mohicans / Mohawks; rat-tail hair; crew-cut; heavy fringes and side swept hair that covers the eyes etc.
- **Make up:** heavy eye make-up (eye liner and eye shadow), dark lipsticks (red, black, purple, blue).

- **Tattoos and piercings:** many young people had multiple piercings and tattoos.

Not all young people who attended the Sparrow Youth Club dressed this way, with many adopting mainstream styles. Most Alternative young people were dedicated fans of rock, punk, rap, hip-hip, death metal, heavy metal music; which again I had little common ground in.

After some time, I realised that my 'way in' with Alternative young people would not be through common interests; but through different interests. Thus, we managed to build rapport through my position as a novice to their culture and young people enlightened me about their subculture. One young male, Aidan, found me amusing because I was "so straight". Offering insight about their subculture was important to people like Aidan because he claimed that "nobody got them" in Sutton outside of the Sparrow Youth Club and he and his friends were often subjected to "dirty looks" and remarks. Therefore, I had to earn their trust by taking the time to understand their subculture before I could discuss their alcohol and drug consumption; which played a central role in their subcultural lives. Once I had built trust and rapport it was if the floodgates had opened because Alternative young people at the Sparrow Youth Club seemed more open with me because I had gotten to know them. In turn I shared what my experiences were like as an alcohol consumer and so our rapport continued to grow over the coming months.

Despite building what seemed like mutual rapport for one another based on completely separate interests, my experiences of departing from fieldwork at the Sparrow Youth Club was similar to the Sutton Youth Bus. This is because gradually the Alternative young people drifted away from the youth club. According to the participants and Youth Workers this was attributed to young people preparing for exams, becoming too old to legitimately attend, or they began spending their leisure time elsewhere. Once again, it felt to me that I was the one who was being left behind as the participants moved on with their lives. Thus, I informed Youth Workers that it seemed that fieldwork there was coming to a natural conclusion and so I also departed from the club. Exiting the fieldwork appropriately was particularly important in these settings researching alongside potentially vulnerable young people because I did not want young people to feel that I had abandoned them in any sense by ending fieldwork abruptly or prematurely, which can cause emotional distress (Rogers, 2011a).

Reflecting back on experiences of establishing field relations through rapport and considering exit strategies for fieldwork, I now realise that I shared 'friendship moments' with some participants (Blackman, 2007:703); whilst with my existing friends, I sustained existing friendships that extended beyond "research friendships" (Cotterill, 1992:599). Based upon my own feelings and the reactions of the participants to me leaving the field, it appears that I

developed appropriate strategies to phase myself out of the fieldwork in such a way that I did not "treat the researched as objects to be used by the researcher" and depart unethically from the field (Abbott, Wallace and Tyler, 2005:368). Engaging in an ongoing reflection of developing fieldwork relations and preparing both the research participants and I for departure ensured that I was committed to authentic feminist ethnographic approaches.

2.5. Ethical considerations

2.5.1. Obtaining ongoing ethical approval: from fieldwork to write-up

Prior to conducting fieldwork, I submitted an 'Ethics Review Checklist' to the Research Ethics and Governance Committee at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) outlining fieldwork intentions. I also completed a critical reading of the *British Sociological Association's* (2002) 'Statement of Ethical Practice for the British Sociological Association' to ensure that my research intentions fitted with their guidance for sociologists and referred to this document throughout fieldwork and the writing up process. Additionally, I found gained inspiring and pragmatic guidance from reading other PhD theses by peers conducting similar research in my field; three studies of which included: William Haydock's (2009) study of the NTE of Bournemouth, Cara Robinson's (2009a) study of youth illegal drug use, and Gemma Commane's (2011) study of BDSM culture. Each study offered practical advice around conducting ethical research including forming relationships with participants, building rapport and ensuring personal safety in vulnerable settings. Reading the trials and tribulations of researchers like myself gave me confidence in my own abilities, identifying that whilst there are common issues that researchers face, each researcher's journey is unique and personal. This encouraged a positive mindset that there is not necessarily a 'right' or 'wrong' way of doing research; but outcomes of the research will depend upon the researchers own biography and research context (Merrill and West, 2009).

As previously suggested, when conducting research in community settings I gained trust through name-dropping and snowballing through various community contacts. I also produced a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB)[17] check and letters from CCCU to confirm my identity and research intentions. These satisfied community members who decided that it was appropriate for me to conduct research alongside the young people. Without organisations like The Sycamore School, Willow High School, The Rafters, Sparrow Youth Club and Sutton Youth Bus, I would not have had opportunities to access certain groups of young people to explore

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[17] Now known as DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check.

their drinking cultures with them. Therefore, when individuals from these organisations requested that I did not conduct further research with young people outside of the organisations, I wanted to respect their wishes. Not only did I owe this to them, but they also highlighted legitimate concerns that might arise out of conducting research alongside these young people. The most prominent being that many young people would be engaging in illegal drug use, perhaps than alcohol consumption in public settings. Therefore, I would potentially be placing myself vulnerable in legal and ethical positions. Despite many young people inviting me to "hang out" with them, I decided that the participatory research I was conducting alongside young drinkers in NTE settings was producing sufficiently rich data that did not present the ethical quandaries relating to underage drinking and illegal drug use. Furthermore, I did not want to cut off the potential research avenues offered by a network of community professionals. These approaches felt underpinned by prescriptive ethics including reciprocity, honest, accountability, responsibility and equality which enabled me to treat participants with respect and avoid exploitation (Skeggs, 2001a).

Whilst gaining informed-consent with participants in community settings with professionals and young people took the form of an open-dialogue, gaining informed-consent in NTE settings in Sutton including pubs, bars and nightclubs was more complex. This was attributed to the challenge of gaining informed-consent from strangers and individuals in public settings with whom I observed and recorded data from. As acknowledged by Bengry-Howell and Griffin (2012), it is not always entirely appropriate or feasible to gain consent in social research, particularly in the case of ethnographic research with 'hard to reach' groups. Drawing upon the work of Measham and Moore (2009) I explored ways in which I could maximise consent amongst participants in NTE settings with potentially intoxicated young adults. Like Measham and Moore (2006; 2009), I focussed on attempting to maintain a dialogue with young adults regarding consent. In the case of my research, as much of the data collection was focussed on bservations of friend-informants, I had gained informed-consent with them prior to fieldwork, which was carefully negotiated, taking into account how the role of intoxication might influence consent. However, with prolonged interactions with strangers, friend-informants or I would inform individuals that I was conducting research and taking notes. On the whole, most of these individuals took an interest in the research and would engage with me so that consent could be obtained. However, with others that took an active disinterest, I did not record notes, assuming that this implied a lack of consent. Gaining informed-consent with those whom I had fleeting moments with could be seen inappropriate as there was little opportunity to discuss this with them. In cases where notes about these individuals appeared in the thesis, I have attempted to make them non-identifiable and did not interfere with their nights out, or invaded their privacy in an uninviting way. Similarly, in regard to venues, the drinking establishments

have been anonymised using pseudonyms and identifiable description has been edited in the writing process.

In regard to writing the thesis, following O'Reilly's (2009c) guidance I have ensured that readers have been presented with full a description (where possible) of where the ethnography was done and how, alongside an account of misgivings, mistakes, expectations, disappointments, revelations and pleasures; to allow the reader to enjoy and evaluate the written product. However, to maintain anonymity and adhere to confidentiality, there have been some deliberate omissions agreed upon with the research participants. This allowed me to commit to the feminist ethnographic approaches suggesting that findings should respect the wishes of participants (McNamara, 2009). In relation to this, I invited participants to view abstracts of the thesis that related directly to, or concerned them, and their representation, so that they had the opportunity to co-author the ethnography to avoid exploiting the participants (Stacey, 1988). Some participants asked to view the writing; although most of participants did not want to view transcripts, with one participant, Stephanie stating, "I trust you to write about us". This was a pivotal moment in feeling that I had achieved an authentic feminist ethnography because I had earned the trust of the participants.

2.5.2. Consuming alcohol with research participants

One of the most significant ethical considerations in fieldwork that I was unsure about sharing was participating in limited alcohol consumption with the participants; moments of which highlight the ethical dilemmas when fieldwork and the researcher's own personal values may clash (O'Brien, 2009). However, I did not want to deny this occurred and subsequently produce a 'hidden ethnography' (Blackman, 2007). When conducting a literature review regarding how researchers managed fieldwork linked to intoxication, initially I found little writing about this in the methodological discussions of others works. Writing was absent, or fleeting references of researching alongside intoxicated participants was made. For example, whilst William Haydock (2009) suggests that he had varying levels as a 'participant observer' in his research of young adult drinkers in Bournemouth, there is little reference to negotiating the intoxication of participants. However, some studies reveal insight about alcohol consumption or intoxication taking place with participants. For example, Blackman (2007) suggested that he consumed alcohol with the homeless and unemployed people in Brighton and alludes to drinking with Mod boys during fieldwork at a birthday party, stating, "It had been a restless night as a consequence of consuming too much alcohol" (Blackman and Commane, 2012:235).

Like Blackman (2007), the rationale for choosing to consume alcohol with participants was because it had a major impact in establishing rapport; which is achieved by signifying emotional commitment to participants and sharing experiences. Other prominent sociologists including Howard Becker, Paul Willis and Sarah Thornton (amongst others), have participated in intoxication with participants; not out of empathy, but because "it is an experience which came naturally in the context of the ethnography" (Blackman 2007:711). For these sociologists, their substance use was not a key research strategy; but from rapport already established. This resonated with my own experiences, which consequently led to a richer ethnography that contributes a closer understanding of youth drinking cultures. However, like Measham and Moore (2009), I had to retain an awareness of the role that intoxication has upon participant's levels of compliance and consent and what is consequently written about them. This is when re-confirming with participants what was written about them was carefully managed; giving participants the opportunity to review transcripts to maintain my ethical commitment. In sum, exposing these emotional and personal pressures regarding research has offered valuable insight into "the ordinary everyday spaces of moral processes that embed local worlds" (O'Brien, 2009:120).

2.6. Conclusion

This chapter has aimed to put the thesis into context by enlivening and positioning key research participants, research settings and the researcher biographical context for the reader. This transparent account supports subsequent data chapters to follow. The chapter outlined key methodological and theoretical approaches informed by the Chicago School which prioritise varying levels of participant observation, informal and formal interviews and the collection of personal and public documentary materials that informed the data and findings for the subsequent chapters. The grounded theoretical approaches that informed fieldwork, data analyses and the write up of the thesis have been identified to show how the ethnographic theoretical description informing the data chapters to follow have been produced. The feminist ethnographic approaches and ethical considerations that prioritise youth voice, rapport, emotion, subjectivity and reciprocity which places young participants at the heart of the fieldwork, analyses and write up of the data chapters have also been outlined.

CHAPTER THREE: COMMUNITY EDUCATIONAL APPROACHES IN OVERCOMING EPHEMERALITY IN DRUG AND ALCOHOL EDUCATION AND SHAPING YOUTH DRINKING CULTURES

3.1. Introduction

This data chapter explores the role of local community organisations, services and educational professionals in shaping the ongoing everyday drinking values and practices of young people in Sutton. Emerging through fieldwork, it became apparent that one of the main ways that the community attempted to shape youth drinking cultures in Sutton was through the delivery of a variety of drug and alcohol educational approaches. Thus, contextualised by drug and alcohol policy research, drug and alcohol educational research and youth work literature, this data chapter offers a critique of alcohol and drug education approaches delivered by community organisations, exploring the influence of these approaches upon youth intoxication values and practices in Sutton. Data informing this chapter mostly stems from formal interviews and observational fieldwork capturing the experiences and views of young people in educational community settings, as well as community professionals in educational spaces. Interview data from young adult drinkers and observational data in Sutton's Night Time Economy (NTE) settings are also briefly drawn upon to offer a holistic perspective towards alcohol and drug education and policy research (Fletcher, Bonell and Sorhaindo, 2010). Fieldwork revealed that community educational strategies that attempt to shape youth drinking values and practices are often underpinned by prohibition/abstinence messages including: scare tactics, stereotypes and 'pocket prohibition'. These showed to promote an ephemeral (short-lasting) effect upon young people's drinking values and practices. Conversely, educational strategies which adopted approaches linked authentically to harm reduction including educational games and open learning environments, appeared to offer greater opportunities to positively shape youth drinking values and practices, which young people then appeared more receptive to utilising in their drinking environments with friends.

3.2. Tensions between prohibition and harm-reduction policies upon drug education

As drug and alcohol education was a central way in which community members attempted to shape the drinking values and practices of young people in Sutton; the opening section of this chapter will begin with a brief account of the changes to drug and alcohol policies, research

and approaches to education in the UK exploring developments from prohibition stances to harm-reduction to contextualise how such changes relate to the London Borough of Sutton.

3.2.1. Prohibition: a history of moralism, temperance and a 'Drug-Free Society'

Although the twentieth century is considered as the 'age of prohibition', prohibition commenced with the modern growth of European colonialism and global capitalism in the sixteenth century (Blackman, 2004:8). Specifically, drug and alcohol prohibition movements date back to the Quakers in the 1650s and The American Temperance Society in the 1800s. Plant and Plant (2006:13) also state that many temperance organisations were prevalent in the UK during the nineteenth century, arguing that The Temperance Movement and The United Kingdom Temperance Alliance were particularly influential; movements of which adopted abstinence views influenced by US approaches. These movements "brought about the criminalisation of drug use through their moral campaign to both change and protect society" (Blackman, 2004:27) Despite strong historical links of prohibition, abstinence and temperance, in relation to alcohol prohibition, Plant and Plant (2006) argue that The Temperance Movement has had little influence in the UK in the past fifty years. Furthermore, recent debates about alcohol and its associated problems have taken place in a society where drinking is widely accepted and normalised (Berridge, Thom and Herring, 2007) and discourse about alcohol are secular (Plant and Plant, 2006). However, views on illicit drugs are viewed differently, whereby prohibition stances have been more prevalent in contemporary society, where "…drugs as a danger to the individual and a threat to the community. Drugs are defined as 'bad' or 'evil', and therefore prohibition seeks the complete removal of illicit drugs from society" (Blackman, 2007:4). Thus, prohibition has been historically, and is currently about power, control and contradiction underpinned by moralism as opposed to rationality or science.

In a contemporary context, the United Nations (UN) and World Health Organisation (WHO) are the two major institutions responsible for international drug policy and together could be seen as affirming recent drug prohibition stances (Blackman, 2004). Such stances have been maintained through American drug hegemony of the post 1945 period whereby the UN and WHO did not deviate from American drug policy. Blackman (2004:49) goes on to argue that "under the influence of American drug hegemony, the UN adopted anti-drug policies which failed to recognise cultural difference and diversity within major areas of the world". Consequently, under the UN, prohibition policies including the 'Drug-Free Society' of the early 1990s became a global approach to drug prevention which has acted as a way to continue

support for drug prohibition. However, with increasing reference of the 'drug normalization' thesis, drug prohibition policy including the morally idealistic 'Drug-Free Society' has come into question with government and policy-makers recognising that drug-use is a prevalent feature of everyday life in a number of societies. Such views have contributed to some movement away from moralistic prohibition policy, recognising the value of harm-reduction policy and approaches.

3.2.2. Drug normalization and movements towards harm-reduction

According to Blackman (2004:137), "the first modern sociological application of the term 'normality' applied to drug consumption was put forward by Alfred R. Lindesmith (1938:597), who argued that theories of drug use "tend to be moralistic rather than scientific". Parker et al. (1998) have since produced a theory of drug normalization underpinned by six dimensions: access and availability, drug trying rates, rates of drug use, being drug-wise, future intentions and degree of cultural accommodation of illicit drug use. Their theory argues that drug use is not just associated with deviant individuals because there is an increasing acceptance of drug use. However, as noted by Blackman (2004:138), "normalization does not suggest that drug taking is a widespread activity; it seeks to understand drug use as an action of everyday life for certain sections of the population." Subsequently, in relation to recreational drug use, the normalization thesis has the potential to remove moralistic and pathological understandings of drug consumption by exploring it within cultural norms and as a social practice.

As a result of emerging views about normalisation, more representative understandings about recreational drug use has allowed for new developments in drug policy to occur because, "the recent emergence of the normalization idea is one means put forward to advance the understanding of drug use in society to overcome the moralizing judgement of describing drug users as 'other'" (Blackman, 2004:147). It is here that such views have allowed for the development of harm-reduction policy, which moves away from past moralistic stances, because as stated by Russell Newcombe (1992:1), "harm reduction is becoming the major alternative drug policy to abstentionism, which prioritizes the aim of decreasing the prevalence or incidence of drug use." However, in agreement with Blackman (2004:184), drug prohibition remains the consistent position; nonetheless, in the twenty-first century, "international obligations within drug conventions have begun to show degrees of movement." This is because policy is less focussed on attempting to promote an unrealistic idealism which seeks to completely eliminate drugs from society.

Coomber et al. (2013) suggest that it is hard to locate the establishment of contemporary harm reduction; however, Brownstein (2013:40) states that understandings of harm reduction in UK drug policy dates back to 1926 with the release of the 'Departmental Committee on Morphine and Heroin' report by the Ministry of Health. It was here that harm reduction became established and gained support across Europe by the end of the twentieth century. When the Mersey Harm Reduction Model (MHRM) was developed in Liverpool in the mid-1980s, this became a pivotal point in the movement and development of harm reduction (Coomber et al., 2013; O'Hare, 1992). This highlights that in relation to both alcohol and drugs, harm reduction has been controversial since its original initiation (Blackman, 2004; Stockwell, 2006).

According to Newcombe (1992:1) "Harm reduction–also called damage limitation, risk reduction, and harm minimisation–is a social policy which prioritises the aim of decreasing the negative effects of drug use." Harm reduction policy differs from criminal justice approaches by aiming to tackle and manage personal and social harms associated with drug use, and is defined as, "a public-health approach to dealing with drug-related issues that places first priority on reducing the negative consequences of drug use rather than on eliminating drug use or ensuring abstinence" (Riley et al., 1999:10). Brownstein (2013:44) suggests that harm reduction policy takes a different philosophical approach to other drug policies because it moves away from moral and/or disease models by focussing less on drug use itself and towards the consequences of addictive behaviour upon the individual or wider society.

Coomber et al. (2013:130) have criticised harm reduction policy for having a "muted and theoretically underdeveloped stance on morals, rights and values". This is supported by Stockwell (2006:270), "while an evidence base is an important consideration for any strategy, one problem here is that allows the inclusion of abstinence approaches, which also inevitably reduce harm. As such, the term is emptied of any distinctive meaning in relation to other strategies." However, Newcombe (1992) has produced a rigorous conceptual framework for harm reduction which counteracts Coomber et al. (2013) and Stockwell's (2006) suggestion that harm reduction is theoretically underdeveloped. In his model, Newcombe (1992) acknowledges that harm reduction approaches are difficult to evaluate, more so than abstinence models. This is because harm reduction attempts to measure the health, social and economic risks, as well as harm to individual drug users, the community and society. Therefore, he argues that with multiple risks operating at different levels, it is important for harm reduction evaluators to focus on specific risks to measure. Despite having such robust conceptual models for harm reduction in place, it seems that they occasionally fail because although drug policy approaches often have goals of harm reduction, they often fall back to abstinence approaches (McInnes and Barrett, 2007).

Despite harm reduction policy becoming more prevalent in contemporary society, it appears that prohibition and abstinence stances often slip back into policy and strategies, creating tension and contradictory messages. Newcombe (1992) argues that is particularly true of drug and alcohol education. This can be evidenced in contemporary policy documents such as the Drug Strategy (HM Government, 2010c:10), which argues that the Government aims to reduce drug demand by stating that "all young people need high quality drug and alcohol education so they have a thorough knowledge of their effects and harms and have the skills and confidence to choose not to use[18] drugs and alcohol." Thus, messages are still underpinned by prevention and abstinence approaches, rather than genuine harm reduction which feeds into contemporary drug and alcohol education.

3.2.3. Contradictory drug policy and its impact on community education

Although it might be assumed that the three main players in the formation of drug policy, (politicians, police and the media) collectively take a primary prevention stance; they actually take opposing positions (Blackman, 1996a). Stockwell (2006) suggests that drug policy terminology is contested which impacts upon the communication and understanding of key mechanisms of policy approaches. Consequently, such contradictory policy and terminology feeds into drug and alcohol education delivered formally to young people. This is supported by Simpson, Shildrick and MacDonald (2007:9) who argue "there has been a long-standing tension between education strategies that aim to minimise the harm that might come to young people if they do use drugs and those that aim to educate young people to avoid drug use per say (i.e. prohibition)." Consequently, contradictions fail to meet the definition and expectations of drug education which is for young people to gain 'the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills, and exploration and attitudes and values which facilitate young people to be able to make informed decisions about their own and other people's use of drugs' (Drugwise, 2016).

A key contributory factor reinforcing contradictions in drug policy is that drug policies often do not recognise, or fail to admit, that drugs are not always necessarily harmful and can play an important role in the lives of people within society; thus, they lack a neutral position (Blackman, 1996a; Brownstein, 2013). In line with drug policy, although drugs education should be about drugs this is often not the case because it against use (Blackman, 2004). This results in biased approaches that deny pleasurable associations of drug use and refutes that drug use is not

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[18] Underlining is my own edit to the quote.

necessarily harmful in all contexts which is central to harm reduction policies (Newcombe, 1992). The impact of having drug and alcohol education that does not adopt a neutral position is that many education programmes in schools have little influence upon young people's attitudes or behaviours towards drugs (Blackman, 1996a). However, the pleasures associated with alcohol and drug use should not be ignored or else education will be ineffective because it inevitably returns to prohibition, abstinence and prevention approaches of the past which are evidenced as being ineffective and counterproductive (Blackman, 2004).

Contradictions about alcohol policy specifically are evident in current government policy and strategy documents including, 'The Government's Alcohol Strategy' (HM Government, 2012:5) which states, "Our ambition is clear – we will radically reshape the approach to alcohol and reduce the number of people drinking to excess" and subsequently lists a number of harm reduction strategies regarding alcohol consumption. Therefore, one could interpret the current Government's alcohol policy and strategies as being geared towards harm reduction approaches. However, the report subsequently produces a discourse around prevention, particularly in relation to youth. The report (HM Government, 2012:22) makes few references to alcohol education strategies, but when it does, references are prevention based:

> Good schools play a vital role as promoters of health and wellbeing in the local community. They understand the connections between pupils' physical and mental health, their safety, and their educational achievement, and are well placed to provide good pastoral care and early intervention for problems which may arise from, or lead to alcohol misuse. The Government's review of Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education is focussed on improving the quality of PSHE in all schools and its core outcomes. This will include exploring how schools can better decide for themselves what pupils need to know, in consultation with parents and others locally. Schools and out-of-school services will also be able to access information about effective alcohol prevention programmes[19] through the Centre for the Analysis of Youth Transitions (CAYT). (HM Government, 2012:22)

Therefore, much like drug policy, alcohol policy attempts to present a tolerant approach through the notion of harm reduction; however, hidden within it are abstinence messages (Blackman, 2004). This reinforces contradictory messages, and as will be evidenced in the forthcoming sections of this chapter, such contradictions impact upon messages that young people receive about alcohol and drugs via education by local community educational professionals. Drawing upon fieldwork undertaken in community educational spaces, I argue

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[19] Underlining is my own edit to the quote.

that these contradictory messages promote ephemerality in alcohol and drug education delivered to young people in this study.

3.3. The issue of ephemerality in drug and alcohol education

Whilst undertaking fieldwork in educational community spaces, it became apparent that drug and alcohol education delivered to young people was ephemeral; meaning that it appeared to have very little lasting effect upon young people's alcohol and drug values and practices in the context of Sutton. Many researchers have argued that despite a significant focus upon health promotion in UK schools, drug and alcohol education offered in secondary schools has limited effect, and at most, has some capacity in raising knowledge and modifying attitudes because it is not memorable (Plant and Plant, 2006; Fletcher, Bonell and Sorhaindo, 2011). This was mirrored in fieldwork with young people currently receiving alcohol education in schools and/or other community settings. This was articulated during an interview with Alternative young people at the Sparrow Youth Club:

> **Laura:** What do you think about the sessions that they have done on alcohol and drugs at school?
> **Sian:** Shit and crap.
> **Graham:** *Nothing, I don't think I even had any education.*
> **Sian:** It was never very detailed.
> **Luke:** They are really pessimistic about drugs, and they are really biased about their *opinions on drugs. And you can't really get much out of it because they don't really tell* you anything about the drugs.
> **Laura:** So, did you get much out of it from school?
> **Luke:** No, not at all.
> **Sian:** *No, it wasn't detailed that's all.*

Similar attitudes were revealed during an interview with young adult drinkers who reflected retrospectively upon their past alcohol education experiences at school:

> **Laura:** Do you remember much about what you were taught in school in relation to alcohol?
> **Rosie:** *I didn't get taught anything. Except don't drink and drive!*
> **Amelia:** *I don't remember much…I remember doing sex education, but I don't remember anything in PSHE about alcohol…*
> **Stephanie:** *There probably was, just if there was, then I can't remember any of it.*

> **Amelia:** Nothing that stuck.
>
> **Stephanie:** And because we were drinking at that time anyway, it must not have made a difference! [Laughs]
>
> **Amelia:** *Exactly! It wasn't effective.*

Despite suggesting views that drug and alcohol education was limited, negative and had little lasting effect upon their values, most young people in fieldwork expressed a strong desire to receive education that could/would encourage(d) them to consume alcohol more healthily, as expressed by one young adult drinker Rosie:

> **Rosie:** *They should do more at school even if it's in scienc*e or whatever because obviously alcohol is something that affects the brain. They should teach the effects and help you make decisions.

This shows that young people in this study were not in opposition to drug and alcohol education, but were yet to experience a curriculum or pedagogy that engaged their experiences and knowledge. Plant and Plant (2006) suggest that multiple studies have examined issues regarding the lasting effectiveness of alcohol education upon youth drinking values and practice, but few have examined this directly from the experiences of young people. Thus, this chapter seeks to contribute empirical findings unpacking this issue of ephemerality in alcohol and drug education from participants in this study.

3.4. Alcohol and drug education approaches promoting resistance and ephemerality

3.4.1. Scare tactics

Scare tactics can be defined as "so-called factual information on the harmful effects of alcohol or drugs to establish negative attitudes and maximise fear arousal" (Midford and McBride, 2004:302). Such approaches present drug use as a social problem for society and drug users, often linked to dependency and addiction (Blackman, 1996a). Educational professionals in Sutton advocated the use of scare tactics in alcohol and drug education because they perceived them in having potential to discourage alcohol and drug use amongst young people. Such views were expressed during an interview with Steven, a facilitator at The Rafters:

> **Laura:** How do you feel about the use of scare tactics?

Steven: I think tha*t it's a good idea. The more the merrier. But the idea is to shock, and…scare…but obviously it's not going to work with everybody. You need to have it* in your tool bag. You need to have the option of using it.

Laura: Do you think young people respond well to them?

Steven: *Yep, because it stops them in their tracks doesn't it. As long as it works…for* example the person that does the smoking bit*… [*referring to another community *professional] …*they show pictures of cancerous throats and mouths – *that's a scar*e tactic and it literally gets them [young people] to physically stop [smoking/drinking], and *mentally stop. And they think, "Damn," you know? And that's what you want. There's nothing wrong with that and there's nothing wrong with being scared.*

Similarly, Lacey, a community Outreach and Youth Worker viewed scare tactics as positive and condoned the use of them at The Sycamore School and the Sparrow Youth Club, believing that young people enjoyed scare tactics:

Lacey: *I think that they're effective. We use* a lot of scare tactics here and the kids remember it, and it is real life.

Laura: Have you got any examples?

Lacey: *So…there was example of a car accident where some friends had been* drinking and they were in a car crash. But it had a big impact on the kids because they *remembered it. By using scare tactics, you don't want to* <u>really</u> scare them, but you need to make them think about things that <u>could</u> *happen. It's about trying to find a* balance. But we know our kids here, and like, if for example, there was a kid whose *mum died from alcohol, we are not going to talk about that in a session. It's about* knowing your kids.

Laura: Have you had negative responses from young people in the use of scare tactics?

Lacey: *No, they like it. They say things like, "Miss, can we do things like this again?"*

Consequently, despite educational professionals informing me that they adopted harm reduction approaches, drug and alcohol abstinence is encouraged through scare tactics. Such approaches promote negative attitudes about alcohol consumption and a fear of use (Midford and McBride, 2004), confirming that prevention remains central to alcohol and drug education (Blackman, 2004).

Although educational professionals claimed that young people enjoyed scare tactics, fieldwork with young people suggested otherwise. For example, during an interview with Savannah, a Year 10 student from Willow High School, she identified scare tactics and critiqued in alcohol

and drug education delivered to her in school and articulated aversion to them, particularly about the Units System:

> **Laura:** OK. What do you think about health warnings like the *unit's* system?
> **Savannah:** *I think it's a bit over-*exaggerated.
> **Laura:** *How's* that?
> **Savannah:** *I dunno'. I think that…If you hear that the men's [units] are different to the girls and stuff like that, and in adverts and stuff, where they are just like, "Ah if you are a girl and you have drunk more than one drink you are gonna' die," and stuff like that. I jus*t think that it's over exaggerated.

Young people in fieldwork like Savannah recognised the use of covert and overt scare tactics used by educational professionals to encourage abstinence and there was a consensus amongst young people that they opposed scare tactics because they drew upon unrealistic, extreme and so-called "real-life" circumstances to instil fear. Consequently, when scare tactics drew upon extreme themes like death, injury and medical emergencies, young people were unreceptive towards such messages. As suggested by Savanah, this is because young people do not associate such outcomes as normal or typical in relation to their everyday alcohol or recreational drug use experiences. Thus, scare tactics lack authenticity and credibility which is why they have little influence upon youth intoxication values and practices (Coggans and Watson, 1995; Blackman, 1996a). These fieldwork observations show a mismatch between educational professionals' assumptions about the effectiveness of scare tactics and that they are seen as enjoyable to young people. These initial observations contribute understandings as to why drug and alcohol education is ephemeral; because young people in this study opposed them and do not identify with the messages

In fieldwork, I observed how educational professionals drew upon tabloid newspapers as a scare tactic method because they believed they were effective in shaping youth intoxication values and practices. This was unsubstantiated because young people were apt at identifying scare tactics underpinned by abstinence presented via sensationalised and exaggerated "facts" and "statistics" derived from tabloid news stories. For example, when observing PSHE lessons on 'binge' drinking for Year 9 students at Willow High School, lessons were underpinned by headlines, quotes and statistics from The Daily Mail. From the field diary it was observed in one lesson, led by Miss McPherson, that tabloid headlines were used to shock students:

> Miss McPherson had sections of her PowerPoint dedicated to Daily Mail headlines about youth and alcohol. They contained stories about young people suffering from

liver disease, deaths from alcohol and how young people have gotten into trouble for drinking. A handful of students reacted to the sensationalised headlines with shock, depicted by the*ir noises like "Whoa!".* Other students stared at Miss McPherson sceptically, to which she responded, *"They sound sensational*, but these stories are *true."*

Fieldwork observations identified that education around 'binge' drinking within the PSHE curriculum at Willow High School was informed by tabloid newspapers, in opposition to theoretical or empirical research; which is a critical element of effective alcohol and drug education in schools (Midford and McBride, 2004). Although scare tactics initially shocked young people, their effect was ephemeral because young people quickly became unfocussed during lessons by chatting and not be paying attention to teachers. Thus, this education focusing on negativity was recognised as being biased by young people, resulting in them becoming unreceptive (Blackman, 2004). These observations echo past drug education methods which relied on scare tactics and moral exhortations linking drug use to alarming physical and moral degeneration; showing that little change in alcohol and drug education approaches is being made (McInnes and Barrett, 2007).

In fieldwork, alcohol and drug education rarely offered opportunities for young people to challenge messages put forward by education professionals. This became evident when educational professionals expected young people to passively accept their scare tactic based messages and did not allow times for discussion or questions about the education. In relation to this, I noticed how young people gave the impression of passively agreeing with educational professionals' so that they could move on from certain activities that encompassed scare tactics. This was recorded as an observation in the field diary during a lesson on 'binge' drinking to a Year 9 group led by Mr McCloud at Willow High School:

> Mr McCloud returned to his PowerPoint and flicked through Daily Mail headlines and read out statements *like: "People are drinking 6 litres of alcohol, that'*s 400 units per *week" and "another person started drinking from aged 10." The students* simply nodded as he read out more and more headlines. Seemingly acknowledging their boredom *he said, "We're short of time. Let's move on to our next task."*

On the one hand, this highlights levels of agency amongst young people in this study because they were employing tactics to move on from activities. On the other hand, agency was limited because the teacher did not allow opportunities for discussion or silenced young people's challenges to their messages. Nonetheless, young people's seemingly passive nodding achieved the desired effect of moving away from scare tactic based education. Regarding

ephemerality, young people actively tried to ensure that educational approaches underpinned by scare tactics were short-lasting.

Fieldwork observations suggested that some young people were so adverse to scare tactics that they actively attempted to avoid being subjected to them completely. For example, whilst interviewing a group of young males at Sparrow Youth Club about their recreational drug use, a youth worker Lizzy interrupted the interview by interjecting with scare tactics. This involved comparing the outcomes of the young males' drug use to that of Leah Betts[20]:

> **Lizzy:** *Yeah, but how do you know that he won't have some kind of reaction to them* [magic mushrooms]?
> **Seth:** *I know that I won't. I am good with that kinda' stuff.*
> **Henry:** Yeah he will be alright, I will look after him.
> **Lizzy:** Well look at Leah Betts, she takes her first lot of ecstasy and she dies. So how do you know?
> **Stuart:** [Rolls his eyes] *I don't wanna' be awkward, but can I go and pee? We will leave* you to have a debate. [Stuart and Seth leave the interview to smoke and go to the toilet].

Notably, controversy surrounding Leah Betts' death was related to ecstasy and not magic mushrooms; which makes for an odd point of comparison by Lizzy. Nonetheless, this shows how educational professionals used scare tactics to highlight extreme negative outcomes to discourage youth alcohol and drug use. Irrespectively, I realised that Stuart and Seth departed from the interview because unlike schools, the youth club offered young people the freedom to remove themselves from alcohol and drug education underpinned by scare tactics that they did not agree with. In this case, Stuart and Seth expressed levels of agency by choosing not to challenge Lizzy; but expressed resistance by choosing not to engage with her. Up until Lizzy's interjection during the interview, young males at the Sparrow Youth Club desired to participate in this interview about their alcohol and drug consumption practices with me because they had freedom to openly explore and discuss their alcohol and drug consumption without me imposing judgement upon them. This shows that when messages about alcohol and drugs are relevant to young people and they can explore their values, they are more actively engaged in education; this is arguably more likely to have a lasting effect on their values and practices.

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[20] Leah Betts was an 18 year old female from Essex, who reportedly took an ecstasy tablet and subsequently drank 7 litres of water in a 90 minute period after consuming the drug. This event and her death was extensively covered in UK media.

Young people also showed resistance to scare tactics by employing their own scare tactics to shock educational professionals. For example, a group of young males who attended the Sutton Youth Bus often attempted to shock youth workers Jade and Jackie with statements or stories about their alcohol and drug consumption. One of the most deliberate attempts to shock youth workers was when I interviewed the young males on the Sutton Youth Bus:

> **Eddie:** Oi, all this *talk about drinking is making me wanna' get drunk you know.*
> **Jackie:** <u>No</u>*, don't say that! It's not meant to do that.*
> **Eddie:** Yeah, Morgan are you down? We have given up smoking so maybe we should go out and have a celebration this weekend.

Whether meant as a 'wind-up' or as a planned desire to get drunk, this highlights how scare tactics can have undesirable consequences because young people use them against educational professionals. Thus, when roles are reversed, educational professionals are equally as unimpressed by scare tactics as much as the young people. Therefore, there needs to be a close consideration of activities in youth work as there can be intended and unintended educational outcomes (Harte, 2010). This observation also implies that scare tactics are not taken seriously by young people shown by how they undermine them through the production of their own scare tactics. Consequently, if young people do not take scare tactics seriously, then they are not likely to have any lasting influence upon them.

In sum, fieldwork showed how scare tactics underpinned by abstinence messages were predominantly delivered in alcohol and drug education in schools (namely through the national curriculum) and in other educational contexts in Sutton, including in youth services. Moreover, young people were resistant to these scare tactics because they recognise attempts to scare them; recognise that abstinence approaches are far removed from their everyday experiences; and shocking, sensationalised and exaggerated stories bear little resemblance to their own practices and values (Blackman, 1996b; Midford and McBride, 2004). This is mainly attributed to scare tactics preventing the fostering of a constructive dialogue about alcohol and drugs which enables young people to "learn about the world around them and to analyse, understand and act within the world" (Evans, 2001:2). In turn, this may have an ephemeral effect because young people are disengaged from messages which prevent them from achieving their desire of obtaining accurate and reliable drugs information with little effort (McInnes and Barrett, 2007).

3.4.2. "It's just a stereotype really": or is it? Stereotypes and stigma in drug education

Alcohol and drug education community strategies delivered to young people in this study also incorporated stereotypes and stigma to promote abstinence. Fieldwork showed how both direct and indirect stereotypes and stigma were drawn upon by educational professionals and resources to promote abstinence. The impact of the use of stereotypes and stigma in alcohol and drug education were complex and contradictory in relation to ephemerality. This was attributed to stereotypes and stigma apparently showing an influential effect upon young people's drug and alcohol values in relation to others alcohol/drug use, but not having a lasting effect upon young people's own values and practices.

Tessa Perkins (1979:138) argues that stereotypes are important as they provide a means in which to study ideology; however, there is difficultly in explicitly defining the term because "dominant and often misleading assumptions about the nature of stereotypes exist [which] often prevent us from making theoretical statements about how stereotypes function ideologically." Nonetheless, she offers a useful theorisation as to how stereotypes operate:

> The strength of a stereotype results from a combination of three factors: its 'simplicity'; its immediate recognisability (which makes its communicative role very important), and its implicit reference to an assumed consensus about some attribute or complex social relationships. Stereotypes are in this respect prototypes of 'shared cultural meanings.' (Perkins, 1979:141)

Using Perkins theorisation of stereotypes, I identified the extensive use of direct and indirect stereotypes relating to alcohol and drug use as an educational strategy to promote abstinence by educational professionals in fieldwork. Similarly, using Erving Goffman's (1963) work on stigma, I identified how stigma was used alongside stereotypes to promote abstinence. This was achieved by noting how educational professionals drew upon "bodily signs designed to expose something unusual and bad about the moral status of the signifier" (Goffman, 1963:11). In other words, I observed how educational professionals highlighted negative physical attributes associated with excessive alcohol consumers and drug users to promote moral messages about abstinence.

Historically, there has been an overreliance on stereotypes of drug users and exaggeration of effects of drugs so that prevention and abstinence messages can be sustained (Blackman, 1996a). It was apparent through fieldwork that this is still the case in contemporary alcohol and drug education as stereotypes and stigma about alcohol/drug users were commonplace. Young people recognised stereotypes and stigma used by educational professionals. For

example, a Willow High School student, Savannah, discussed stereotypes and stigma in an interview about community influence in relation to her alcohol/drug use:

> **Laura:** What about the school? [Savannah scowls and I laugh]. Do they influence you?
> **Savannah:** *I don't know. I don't think, I mean like, the school know that people do* it [referring to alcohol and drug consumption], and programmes like The Rafters and that are intended for those people that they think actually do it. Like, [laughs] you can see *from our group and that they all think that we do it. And it's just a stereot*ype really.
> **Laura:** Oh really?
> **Savannah:** *I don't know, they probably just know about my family and background and* that and just think, well they are guessing that I am going to do it as well.

By saying it is "just" a stereotype, Savannah upholds that stereotypes held by educational professionals about youth alcohol and drug consumption is simplistic and does not acknowledge the complexities of her own and peers drug use. Due to such simplicities, stereotypes may fail to make connections to young people's personal alcohol and drug use (Perkins, 1979; Blackman, 1996a) which can promote an ephemeral effect. Savanah also acknowledges that she is being stigmatised based upon social assumptions about her family and background (Goffman, 1963). Such recognition, critique and rejection of stereotypes and stigma highlights agency because people like Savanah can identify distinctions between negative stereotypes that are not a true reflection of reality, against their own real-life experiences through a process of critical reflection (Coffey and Farrugia, 2014). This initial insight shows how young people in this study may resist alcohol and drug education messages underpinned by stereotypes and stigma which can result in an ephemeral effect upon their alcohol and drug values and practices.

Based upon the fieldwork observations, it is somewhat understandable as to why educational professionals used stereotypes and stigma in alcohol and drug education; they recognised that they informed young peoples' alcohol and drug values because young people did not wish to be stereotyped, stigmatised or labelled. For example, during a session on 'binge' drinking at The Rafters, a facilitator, Steven, informed a group of males from Birches High School as to how they could identify a 'binge' drinker, friend or family member using stereotypes and stigma:

> Steven *asked, "How might you spot someone who is drinking too much or binge* drinking? The boys looked at him sceptically. He offered answers before they had the chance to speak, *"greasy hair from not washing, red face, smelly breath or jaundiced."* Jacob *muttered, "Fuck that."*

Here Steven drew upon unusual or bad bodily signs to infer a low moral standard (Goffman, 1963) about individuals in society dependent on alcohol to produce stigma about drinking and promote abstinence. Based upon Jacob's response, he appeared to accept stereotypes and stigma of other people who are alcohol dependent. This could be attributed to stereotypes being presented to young people as easy to conceptualise and evaluate (Perkins, 1979) and because they have 'common-sense' appeal (Blackman, 1996a). However, when educational professionals challenged young people about conforming to stereotypes or stigma themselves, I recall from various other fieldwork observations that young people rejected such notions through statements like, 'that would never happen to me,' 'I would never let myself get into that much trouble,' and they would 'never let things go that far'; actively rejecting conforming to stereotypes or stigma. This coincides with McInnes and Barrett (2007) who suggest that young people often position themselves as being immune to harms caused by drugs and interpret such ideas as only applying to others like 'junkies'. This echoes Savannah's statement at the start of this chapter that perceptions of young people are "just a stereotype" and do not reflect the everyday drinking/drug experiences of young people in Sutton. Consequently, although stereotypes and stigma could be perceived as being successful to educational professionals because young people do not wish to be associated with problematic alcohol or drug use; young people perceived that negative outcomes of alcohol/drug consumption was for others, not themselves.

Young people's awareness of stereotypes and stigmatisation relating to others alcohol and drug use resulted in them avoiding local alcohol and drug services available to them in the Sutton. This was because they were aware of stigmas attached with these services and viewed them as spaces for others who conformed to stereotypes and stigmas around alcohol and drugs users (namely for those dependent or addicted to alcohol/drugs). During a session at The Rafters, a teacher Miss Hughes joined and requested to take a picture of the cohort to report back to Willow High School about how positive the cohort's experience of The Rafters was as part of the evaluation process. However, the group refused to have their picture taken:

> Chantelle and Savannah came back with their tea, seeming relatively cheery. They started joking around with Miss Hughes, who said that she was going to take pictures *of the session. The girls started saying, "Aww, Miss! Allow it, man." Miss* Hughes joked, *"Don't worry girls, if no one wants to be in the photos then they don't have to, but you look beautiful, so I wouldn't worry."* Chantelle *responded, "I don't want the world to know I was here."*

This shows that Chantelle and Savannah were aware of the stigma attached to them by attending The Rafters, and as noted by Savannah earlier in the chapter, young people felt that

they had been selected to participate in the programme based upon stereotypes imposed on them. Moreover, they were being 'othered' by being asked to attend a programme outside of school where alcohol/drug education would ordinarily take place (Goffman, 1963). Thus, alcohol and drug education promoting stereotypes and stigma negatively impacts upon young people accessing local alcohol and drug services because they want to avoid being subjected to the same stigma (Robinson, 2009a). This is problematic if young people need to access such services in the future and if they are not accessed then local authorities may argue that there is little demand for such services when the need might be hidden.

The implications of stereotyping and stigma of local drug and alcohol services were acknowledged by educational professionals, as encapsulated by Steven, a facilitator at The Rafters:

> **Laura:** So, you think the space [The Rafters] helped engage young people?
> **Steven:** In my opinion, yes. It was very central to Sutton, it was child friendly and I like the idea that its part of the community. Like if you had a sign that said drug and alcohol *service, that wouldn't have really helped. It's good because you have older peop*le come in one day, church goers another, and you have got the café. So, people could be coming in for any reason. Therefore there is no stigma attached for you coming to get help for drugs and alcohol.
> **Laura:** How well do you think the local schools engaged with the service?
> **Steven:** We had to watch our backs because we had to have the CAF Forms[21] for *each young person. I battled against the powers that be…because if you make them do the CAF Form then they won't want to do the service because parents have to* fill it out and everything as well. And it is an official document and it goes through social services blah blah blah. But they wanted it for their records. So every time that I went *with my best salesman hat on and we say, "We have a great drugs service," they are like, "Yeah, yeah we will have it, no problems and it's free of charge." But as soon as we say, "that you have got to do a CAF Form for us," they back off. Otherwise we would* have more work than we could deal with basically.

This highlights how both young people and the Sutton community do not wish to be associated with negative stereotypes and stigma relating to alcohol or drug consumption; demonstrating how this acts as a strong barrier preventing young people from seeking support when they

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[21] A CAF Form is: "The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) for children and young people. It is an assessment tool used by many agencies across England designed to help practitioners develop a shared understanding of a child or young person's needs so that they can be met quickly and effectively (London Borough of Sutton Council, 2016)

might need it. Nonetheless, despite educational professionals being aware of the implications of stereotypes and stigmas, they remain a central tool in alcohol and drug education.

Although young people mostly recognised stereotypes and stigma in alcohol and drug education, this was not always necessarily the case when stereotypes and stigma were subtlety, discreetly and indirectly used by educational professionals. Perkins (1979) suggests this is to conceal obvious pejorativeness or stigma, whilst reinforcing ideology and hegemony. An example of such hidden approaches was during the Life Skills Zone Tour (Street Zone) at Sutton Life Centre when a Year 8 school cohort were shown a video of a scenario depicting young men and women engaging in 'binge' drinking. I noted in the field diary that indirect gender based stereotypes were being presented in dialogue between the characters about 'binge' drinking, centred on women and body image:

> *…The two girls discussed "a girl they know" who has "gotten fat because she ha*s been *binge drinking a lot lately." I couldn't help but notice the explicit reference to "binge"* drinking and not *drinking in general. Following the 'bitchy' discussion, the women* suggested that the female in question had gained weight because alcohol contains many calories, which they compared to consuming several Mars Bars.

Despite young men being present in the scenario, the focus was upon the two females engaged in a stereotypical negative presentation of female gossiping or bitching whereby body image is stigmatised through 'binge' drinking and presented as a singular concern for women. In this scenario, young females were not presented as engaging in a valued cultural form of communication underpinned by intimate female friendship and solidarity attempting to examine issues pertinent to women (Hey, 1997); instead, the scene negatively presents young women idly chatting away within the context of 'binge' drinking activities and stigma around body image, which provokes embodied feelings of shame (Skeggs, 2004). Problematically then, not all young people in this study recognised implicit stereotypes and stigma used by educational professionals. Therefore, young people may be exposed to unconsciously accepting negative stereotypes and stigma about alcohol and drug consumers which may explain why they often reproduced negative associations about those with drug dependency/addiction. This is understandable when the pejorativeness behind such stereotypes are complex and concealed in wider ideologies regarding men and women (Perkins, 1979).

In sum, although stereotypes and stigma may encourage young people to accept lasting messages about alcohol and drugs, they are problematic because they perpetuate wider social and cultural stigmatisation of other alcohol and drug consumers that young people in

this study did not identify with. Therefore, such approaches perpetuate stigma about others, but have little lasting effect upon young people's own practices and values. As such hidden approaches lack transparency, this prevents young people from being able to have a fully informed dialogue, discussion and debate with educational professionals (Blackman, 1996b; 2004) which in turn denies young people agency because they do not have opportunities to critically examine stereotypes and stigma or and explore/challenge ideology around alcohol and drug consumption (Perkins, 1979). Having transparent discussions with young people about stigma and stereotypes could have the potential to have a lasting effect upon youth alcohol and drug values by critically exploring these areas; however, this cannot occur if educational professionals in Sutton rely upon stereotypes and stigma which do not offer young people the opportunity to have constructive or meaningful debates linked to their own consumption practices and values.

3.4.3. Pocket Prohibition

During fieldwork I observed how young people were inundated with alcohol and drug literature/items by educational professionals. Items included: pamphlets, leaflets, unit-wheels, drink "spikeys[22]" and unit measure cups (see: Appendix Eight). Extending the concept of "pocket ethnography" (Hey, 1997:50; Blackman, 2007:707), which refers to personal items belonging to participants shared with the researcher; the term 'pocket prohibition' has been developed in this thesis to identify drug/alcohol education items given to young people by educational professionals. Blackman and Doherty (2015) first used 'pocket prohibition' to account for two categories of items. The first form of pocket prohibition consists of items underpinned by harm-reduction approaches which are designed for young people to use whilst consuming drugs or alcohol in-situ. The purpose of such items is to encourage young people to reflect upon their consumption levels objectively. The second form of pocket prohibition consists of items underpinned by emotive abstinence messages. Through fieldwork it became apparent that young people's receptiveness to pocket prohibition and the lasting effect that these items could have upon their intoxication values and practices depended upon whether such items reinforced harm reduction or abstinence approaches.

When pocket prohibition items adopted a harm-reduction approach, young people responded positively towards them. For example, within the NTE, the Sutton Street Pastors often handed out: "spikeys" to prevent drink spiking; bottles of water to alleviate levels of intoxication; flip-

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[22] A drink 'spikey' is an anti-drink spiking device (typically a plastic stopper) that prevents others from putting substances into bottles.

flops for young women to prevent injury when they departed drinking establishments bare-foot; and 'space' blankets (foil blankets) for intoxicated and cold individuals travelling home. During an observation with Street Pastors, Karen and Terry, in the NTE of Sutton, I observed how a group of young women outside the nightclub Anarchy were grateful for pocket prohibition items provided by the Street Pastors:

> There were several young women sat on the pavement with their shoes off. One had a thick fur coat and a short skirt on, perched on a window ledge. She looked upset; however, on closer inspection she was using her phone. She dropped the phone, so Karen suggested we help her. The woman recognised the Street Pastors on approach, *"Oh, I have heard of you before, do you have any water by any chance?" She seemed slightly intoxicated, but her speech was coherent […] T*erry asked if she wanted some flip-*flops because she had her shoes off. She replied, "That would be great, thank you* <u>so</u> *much."*

Here young women are receptive to pocket prohibition provided by the Street Pastors because they support their drinking practices in a non-judgemental way. This was achieved by providing items which allowed the female to assess her own intoxication through embodiment (Jayne, Valentine and Holloway, 2012) by using the water and flip-flops to manage her intoxicated body; which facilitates agency through independent decision-making. Thus, pocket prohibition which did not interfere with or judge young peoples' pleasurable drinking experiences were generally well received.

Contrastingly, pamphlets and leaflets containing strong emotive messages underpinned by abstinence were not well received by young people in this study. This was apparent in an interview with a group of Year 10 students from Willow High School who attended The Rafters identifying that they did not engage with such forms of pocket prohibition:

> **Laura:** I wanted to ask you about the *unit's* system too. You know those wheels that Steven gave you, do you use those kinds of sources of information and are you given leaflets by other people?
> **Toby:** I use them as Frisbees.
> **Chantelle:** No, I just end up chucking them away when I am half way down the road or something.
> **Laura:** *Why don't you bother with them?*
> **Chantelle:** *There's just too much to read.*

> **Mason:** *It's just basically things that you have been told over again and again. It just* gets old. You have been told so many times, why are you going to follow what a piece of paper tells you?
>
> **Laura:** Are you self-conscious about carrying them around?
>
> **Mason:** Nah, we get given them all the time.

This indicates that young people were adverse to pocket prohibition that they saw as irrelevant, repetitive and or told them what to do; ultimately 'do not drink' or 'do not drink too much'. Such approaches that deny agency about consumption values and practices appeared to promote resistance. This was noted in the field diary amongst a group of young male students from Birches High School at The Rafters who showed a lack of interest and rejection of alcohol unit wheels:

> Cameron hands out the unit calculator which the boys fumble around with for a short *period of time and then abandoned them on the floor or around the room. […] They challenge the unit wheels, "What is the point?"* Cameron *maintains, "It's so that we don't go over the limit."* They laugh and say that they aren't going to carry the wheel around with them. They play around with them again, but struggle to get to grips with them, repeating*, "What's the point?"*

Information around the Units System was particularly disregarded because young people had little interest in it because like the majority of the UK adult population, the unit's system is not clearly understood (de Visser and Birch, 2012). Therefore, participants could not effectively use such items to promote 'sensible' drinking even if they were motivated to because of the complex nature of the Units System. This legitimises their question, "What's the point?" Moreover, such items were ineffective because they failed to acknowledge drinking motivations linked to fun and excitement (de Visser and Birch, 2012). In such cases, as noted elsewhere in this thesis and in other research of youth drug education (Fletcher, Bonell and Sorhaindo, 2010), young people rarely access telephone helplines, websites or literature targeted towards them because they are more likely to access friendship groups and social networks who offer impartial advice closely linked to their pleasurable drinking practices.

Despite consistently providing pocket prohibition to young people, Steven, a facilitator of The Rafters also suspected that certain pocket prohibition items have promote an ephemeral effect upon youth intoxication practices and values:

> **Laura:** Throughout the programme you often gave young people alcohol wheels, leaflets and things that like. Do you think that they are effective?

> **Steven:** *No, I don't think that they are effective. They might take it home and they might share it with their parents, they might use it and talk about that…wh*ich might be *great…but in my mind's eye, I can only assume that at the earliest opportunity they have thrown it away. Ultimately, if they have got it, they are aware of it, and if they don't* throw it away and put it somewhere, like, under their bed, or on the shelf. Then one day, they might need it and know where to get it. So that would be my aim, but in my *mind's eye, are they that effective? No*, probably not.

However, other educational professionals like Lacey, an Outreach Worker who offers drug and alcohol education to young people at The Sycamore School and The Rafters has positive views about pocket prohibition:

> **Laura:** Do you think that the leaflets and booklets that you give young people are effective?
>
> **Lacey:** Yeah, they are.
>
> **Laura:** How?
>
> **Lacey:** *Basically, what we're doing is…We haven't got a lot here, but what we do have* is current and young people have them there to use. Every year I go through the *resources and if they're out of date I will give them to another organisation. Or if it's* American I will tell young people as well, especially like when talking about rehab and *stuff when it doesn't really relate to over here.*
>
> **Laura:** What kind of resources do you offer?
>
> **Lacey:** *Alcohol wheels, drug wheels, diaries…*
>
> **Laura:** Are there any particular resources that you feel are particularly effective?
>
> **Lacey:** The beer goggles, they always get a lot out of that. Erm, the smoking and alcohol wheels, the drink diaries, they really like the drug box so that they can look at the drugs.

Despite Lacey's suggestion that pocket prohibition is effective, as identified in this chapter, there is a strong consensus amongst young people and other educational professionals that not all pocket prohibition items are useful. From these findings it can be suggested that pocket prohibition items which do not relate to young peoples' pleasurable alcohol and drug consumption values and practices by promoting abstinence and deny agency are ineffective because young people do not engage with these items or messages. Problematically, resources are being wasted because such items have little lasting impact upon young peoples' drug/alcohol values or practices. However, some forms of pocket prohibition have potential to inform young people's drinking values and practices in this study when they offer practical harm reduction approaches that contribute to their pleasurable everyday experiences whilst

offering them agency through active decision-making. Fieldwork suggests that much of the pocket prohibition currently being used in Sutton predominantly focuses upon abstinence; however, if more harm reduction pocket prohibition was utilised, this could have potential in offering lasting and meaningful relevance to youth drug/alcohol values and practices.

3.5. Alcohol and drug education strategies that have a lasting impact upon youth

3.5.1. Educational 'drinking games'

Drinking games are "a social drinking activity that encourages intoxication by governing players' alcohol consumption through the use of rules that specify when to drink and how much to consume" (Zamboanga and Tomaso, 2014:349). They operate on the idea of using "success of a task or other signals to judge levels of alcohol consumption" (Polizzotto et al., 2007:470). Despite the problematic nature of drinking games which encourage excessive and risky alcohol consumption; they play an important role in youth drinking cultures. It became apparent through fieldwork that educational professionals understood the value of drinking games to young people and subsequently utilised them as part of their community alcohol and drug education strategies. They did this by interpreting existing drinking games that young people played and generated their own alternative educational 'drinking games' (without incorporating intoxicating substances). Such approaches could be deemed as highly creative and innovative which is central to the success of alcohol and drug education (Blackman, 2004: 154). Educational drinking games then were activity based interventions used by youth work professionals at The Sycamore School, The Rafters, Sparrow Youth Centre and on the Sutton Youth Bus as an informal educational tool to explore alcohol and drug use with young people (see 'Appendix Nine: Educational drinking games' for full list of games and descriptions). As will be illustrated in this section of the chapter, these games were a central part of youth work in Sutton and well received by young people.

Drunken drink-pouring game

The drunken drink pouring game consisted of two elements. Firstly, young people were instructed to pour what they believed was a standard spirit single measure of a 'typical' UK pub (defined by educational professionals as 25ml). The amount that each young person poured was then assessed to see how many measurements they actually poured. Secondly,

when the young people had taken their turns, they were instructed to wear beer goggles[23] and pour their own self-defined measure of alcohol that they would typically have themselves, or pour for a friend on a night out. Educational drinking games which incorporated beer goggles were particularly appealing to young people and useful for educational professionals to elicit in-depth and critical self-reflection of young peoples' alcohol consumption in a positively engaging way. This was noted in the field diary during an observation of the Birches High School cohort at The Rafters who were instructed by facilitators, Cameron and Steven, to pour an accurate measure of alcohol wearing beer goggles:

> Cameron asked the boys to put the beer goggles on again in turn; all the while they were laughing and smiling. They each took it in turns to pour what they thought was a *single measure of alcohol whilst under the "influence of alcohol." Once every*one had taken their turn, Steven shows each young people the equivalent of what they had poured. The following results occurred: Seb poured the equivalent of 7.5 measures; John 4.5; Jacob 1.5, and Toby 9 measures. Although there was laughter at the results, young people like Toby was shocked, *"Woah, I must drink way too much than I should."*

This highlights many positive outcomes regarding drinking games. Firstly, young people genuinely enjoyed the game and engaged with it because of the realistic elements whereby the beer goggles impaired their ability to pour measures through real-life simulation of intoxication. Secondly, it enabled young people like Toby to acknowledge, reflect upon and question his current drinking practices. This was achieved through 'experiential learning' which allowed the young males to actively participate in a range of experiences that increased their knowledge, allowed them to become more aware of their feelings and develop existing and new skills (Rosseter, 1987). Thirdly, young people enjoyed attempting to pour a single spirit measure and their own self defined measures because could engage in competition with one each other regarding their knowledge of alcohol.

Similar to research by de Visser and Birch (2012) and Boniface, Kneale and Shelton (2013) who examined individual's knowledge of pouring units; young people in this research also appeared to have little knowledge of a single spirit measure (nor units). Therefore, despite wanting to be correct and accurate when pouring a measurement to boast about their knowledge, young people were often inaccurate when pouring measurements. However,

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[23] Beer Goggles (also known as 'vision impairment goggles'/ 'drunk goggles' or 'drunk glasses') are intended to simulate the effects of being drunk. Effects include: confusion, visual distortion, slowed reaction time and a lack of coordination.

when young people like Toby were incorrect, they expressed disappointment/shock about their lack of knowledge and inability to drink within safe/sensible drinking limits. Consequently, such reactions generated lively discussion amongst young people and was a good opportunity for educational professionals to question and challenge young people about excessive and risky drinking. Thus, such activities appeared to have a small but positive influence upon youth drinking values because young people could visualise safer drinking practices and improve skills in pouring drinking measures in the future (de Visser and Birch, 2012). This approach was revelatory for young people, as opposed to educational professionals telling them what they should or not be pouring and consuming.

The drunken drink pouring game did however highlight that young peoples' shock/ disappointment about their accidental underestimation of a single measure of alcohol did not apply to all young people, or was ephemeral. For example, as illustrated in the field diary, the Birches High School Boys cohort at The Rafters enjoyed boasting about how much they drank in their self-defined single drink measure, which was well above a single measure. This shows young people's lack of motivation or deliberate resistance to exceed guidelines for safe/sensible drinking and reflects young peoples' commitment to fun and excitement within the normalised culture of intoxication (de Visser and Birch, 2012). However, as highlighted earlier in the chapter, it could be suggested that young people deliberately poured excessive measures to shock educational professionals, or as an attempt of (conscious or unconscious) impression management by presenting themselves as a heavy drinker to their peers (Goffman, 1959).

Despite such contentions, the drunken drinking pouring game reveals capacity for educational professionals to encourage young people to reflect upon their current drinking practices and challenge excessive alcohol consumption within a context showing a genuine sense of engagement in alcohol and drug education. Such 'person-orientated' approaches appealed to young people which are arguable more successful in having some level of influence upon alcohol and drugs values and practices (McInnes and Barrett, 2007).

Drink-driving Game

Another popular educational drinking game was the 'drink driving game.' This entailed wearing beer goggles whilst navigating a remote-controlled car through an 'obstacle course'; and the person with the fastest lap was the winner. As observed in the field diary, this game was used extensively at The Rafters, often to follow up on the drunken-drink pouring game to keep momentum of critically analysing excessive alcohol consumption with young people:

The boys did the drink driving game with the following results: Barry 50 seconds; Jacob 24; Seb 19; Toby 16 and John*'s time is agreed as '3 minutes 13 seconds' as* he did not finish the race because he fell over as a result of wearing the beer goggles. Everyone in the room laughed hysterically, but Steven used this as an opportunity to *discuss the risks of drinking, i.e. "falling over and badly hurting yourself." The boys* don*'t dispute this […]* Steven and Cameron invite the boys to sit back down at the sofas to discuss the consequences of drinking too much and of drinking and driving. The boys expressed honest answers relating to violence, making bad decisions, embarrassment, *"weeing in the street and getting arrested" and causing themselves or others injury by "being stupid enough to drink and drive." This led on* to a natural discussion of why they drink, which included Tob*y suggesting, "It's because there is* nothing else to d*o and not enough facilities for young people." He followed this up by saying "there is some stuff to do during the day, but not that much." […]* Jacob *said, "I wouldn't drink*-drive anyway, especially not after seeing John *behind the wheel. He'd kill me."*

This shows how the games appeal to young people because it provided the opportunity to reflect upon and analyse their own drinking values and practices in a conducive way that encouraged lively debate and discussion between them and The Rafters facilitators. Like 'ordinary' drinking games, this educational drinking game was appealing, 'normal,' and enjoyable; even without alcohol, such games developed camaraderie and community spirit (Polizzotto et al., 2007). Moreover, the game allowed young people to see the consequences of "excessive drinking" for themselves; as opposed to imagining what 'could' or 'might' happen to them, like scare tactics. Thus, educational drinking games contrast considerably with aforementioned educational approaches and move away abstinence approaches; instead offering opportunities to encourage young people to reflect on their alcohol and drug consumption values and practices in a lasting and meaningful way.

Drunken Love game

During fieldwork on the Sutton Youth Bus, educational professionals initiated games to facilitate debates with young people about personal areas of their social lives. For example, as recorded in the field diary, Outreach workers Jackie and Jade encouraged young people who joined the Sutton Youth Bus one evening at to reflect on the role of alcohol in the context of sexual relationships. They began a session with the challenge of correctly putting a condom

on a model penis, followed by the 'drunken love' version, where they had to put the condom on the model whilst wearing beer goggles:

> Jackie got the beer goggles out and asked the boys to do the condom demonstration again, but this time wi*th the beer goggles on. […] Morgan* went first, but after several minutes of struggling to open the condom packet and place the condom over the penis; he admitted how difficult it was to do with beer goggles on. Before Ed takes his turn, Morgan *warns him, "It's fucking well hard mate." This* was clearly intended as a double-entendre a*nd makes the group laugh. […] Jackie evaluated Morgan and Ed's poor* attempts of putting the condom on the penis to highlight challenges of practicing safe sex whilst drunk.

This activity prompted further discussion between the Youth Workers and the young people regarding practicing safe sex whilst intoxicated which young people were attentive and engaged in. As I discovered through fieldwork observations and talking to Jackie and Jade, this activity had strong significance to this cohort of young people because one of the main reasons they attended the Sutton Youth Bus was to obtain free condoms (as part of the local sexual health service for young people). Thus, the Outreach workers successfully combined alcohol/drug education to inform young people's wider social and cultural values by associating their real-life everyday experiences relating to pleasurable activities like sex.

Educational 'Beer Pong'

Youth workers at Sparrow Youth Club were particularly innovative in creating educational drinking games appealing to young people. Moreover, they generated games based upon issues that were pertinent to the real-life and everyday experience that young people who attended the youth club faced. For example, youth workers informed me that they had concerns relating to self-harm being practiced collectively amongst some of the Alternative young people. However, as informed by the young people themselves, the practices that were labelled as 'self-harm' by youth workers were not deemed as self-harm by them. They perceived their activities to be harmless fun, experimental and something that they "just did for a laugh" in a social context amongst friends. 'Self-harm' practices in question included:

partaking in the 'Cinnamon Challenge[24];' 'Bloody Knuckles[25],' putting out cigarettes on each other and seeing who could hold out the longest with an ice-cube on their skin. They often did these things whilst consuming alcohol and/or drugs. Although these activities could be seen as testing boundaries, young people attending the youth club came in with physical wounds and scars from engaging in such activities which could not go unaddressed by the youth workers. Upon discovering these harms, as noted in the diary field, two youth workers, Lizzy and Hailey, generated their own version of 'Beer Pong'[26] to engage the Alternative young people in debates about their 'self-harm' activities linked to alcohol consumption:

> Lizzy informed the group *that they were going to play "Safe-Harm," her adapted version* of Beer Pong. Instead of using alcohol, Lizzy bought infamously awful tasting retro sweets from a shop in Sutton. This included super-sour sweets and jelly beans that *tasted of 'dog poo' and 'vomit' […] There were two teams (including Alternative young* people and youth workers) who had to throw a ping pong ball into plastic cups filled with horrible sweets. The opposing team had to eat the sweets if they got the ball into the cup. The youth workers, young people and I got really involved, and the game *became incredibly competitive. […] As each person tried a sweet,* Lizzy used this opportunity to discuss the activities she deemed as self-harm and highlighted the dangers of excessive drinking when *playing "innocent games like beer pong" […]* Seth *said, "Come on' we aren't out to hurt ourselves. It's just a bit of a laugh, like this!"* Henry*, responded, "Yeah, I agree with* Seth*…but you can see where she's [*Lizzy] comi*ng from mate."*

Not only did this game appeal to young people because they were used to playing traditional beer pong as part of their social drinking experiences; it also engaged young people in open debates about their social and cultural practices. Despite resistance from young people about the nature of their 'self-harm' experiences, the game encouraged them to draw upon their everyday experiences and were thus more receptive to alcohol and drug related messages as a result. The game was also tailored towards the social and personal needs of the young

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[24] The Cinnamon Challenge (a social media viral phenomenon) involves attempting to consume ground cinnamon in a certain period of time without consuming liquid. It is difficult because it dries the mouth and throat; which typically leads to extreme coughing and gagging.

[25] Bloody Knuckles is a game that involves two people sat opposite each other, whereby each person forms their hand into a fist and place it on a table. The players take it in turn to flick a coin at the opponent's knuckles. The game continues until a player draws blood or submits.

[26] Beer pong is a competitive skills based game where table tennis equipment is set up with cups positioned at either end. Two teams take turns to throw a ping pong ball into the opposition's cup. If successful, a member of the opposition must consume the contents of the cup usually containing alcohol.

people and so they felt that they were being listened to; this varies from youth work activities which are often generated by preoccupation with moral panics about alcohol or drugs, rather than for the good of those young people concerned (Banks, 2010). By focussing on the needs of the young people, they were more actively engaged because the message was more closely related to own lives; encouraging them to reflect on their current and future alcohol and drug consumption patterns and values.

These fieldwork observations highlight that the educational drinking games adopted by The Rafters, the Sutton Youth Bus and Sparrow Youth Club show a commitment to the ethical characteristics and values within youth work as defined by Banks (2010:10), including: having voluntary relationships with young people, having an informal education process, working together and encouraging youth people to participate in activities. Such harm reduction youth work activities are contextual, planned and meaningful in their focus; which offer opportunities to promote exchange, discourse, challenge and the development of the self and of others (Harte, 2010). Therefore, educational drinking games have the capacity to build foundations for effective informal education which enables knowledge to be embraced through an analysis of experiences, values, perceptions and beliefs in a lasting and meaningful way (Harte, 2010).

3.5.2. The impact of informal education and open environments on drug education

The term 'informal education' was first used by Coombs et al. (1973) to describe a life lifelong process where individuals acquire attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from daily experience and educative influences and resources in their environment, including: family and neighbours, work and play, the market place, the library and mass media. From this point, the term has been extended and popularised through the work of Mark Smith (see: Smith, 1988) and later with his co-authored work with Tony Jeffs (see: Jeffs and Smith, 1990; 1996; 1999; 2005). Through their work, they have focussed upon conversation, dialogue and relationships which they argue is central to informal education. In its most basic form, they define informal education as "the 'teaching' that goes on in daily life" (Jeffs and Smith, 2005:5). They go on to suggest that they "view informal education as the learning that flows from the conversations and activities involved in being members of youth and community groups and the like. In these settings there are workers whose job it is to encourage people to think about experiences and situations" (Jeffs and Smith, 2005:5-6). Thus, youth workers and educational professionals are able to create and foster environments for learning to take place which is at the core of their work.

Mills and Kraftl (2014) have also contributed to work on informal education, suggesting that there are three elements to informal education. Firstly, it is a process which emanates from the everyday concerns of young people so that they identify their own needs and are thus, more willing to engage. Secondly, it involves and relies upon a two-way dialogue and conversation which requires trust, affinity and respect so that young people can reflect in a supportive environment. Lastly, informal education often involves potential for a political edge, whereby educators move away from mainstream thinking and/or can relate local issues to a wider context. Subsequently, the spaces where such informal education occurs is important, and ideally is in the locales that young people choose to occupy and are most comfortable (Mills and Kraftl, 2014). The forthcoming sections will explore the impact of informal education linked to drugs and alcohol education upon shaping youth drinking values and practices.

Through fieldwork at Sparrow Youth Club I became aware of how aptly youth workers strategically position themselves in spaces within the youth club to allow young people to approach privately and on their own terms about their everyday concerns, including issues relating to alcohol and drugs. These key spaces that I identified are marked on Figure 15 below (signified by red crosses):

Figure 15: The Sparrow Youth Club
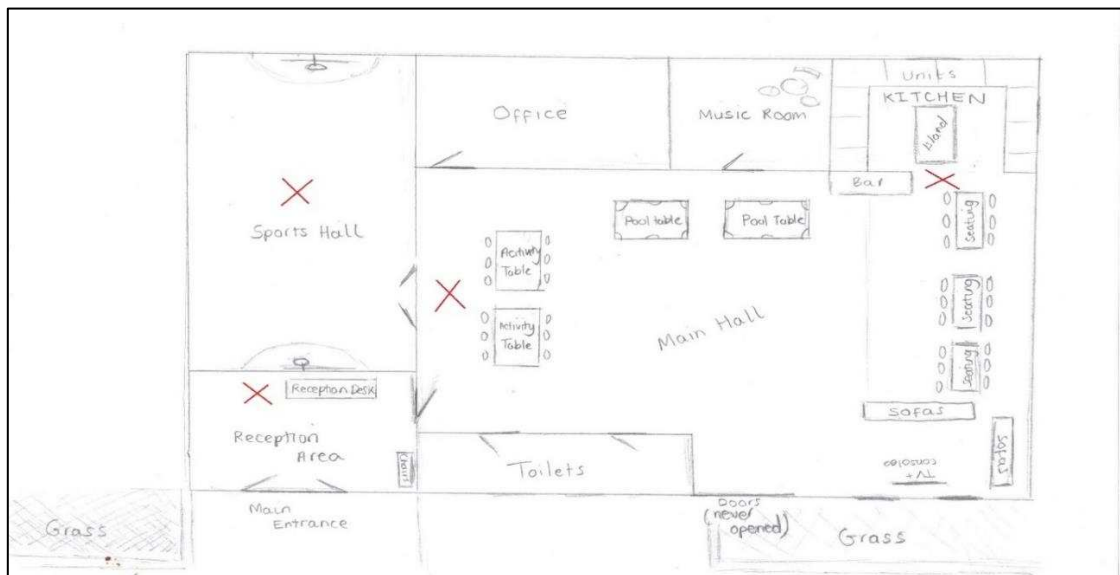
As identified by the map, spaces that youth workers positioned themselves included public spaces (the sports hall and at the activity tables) and private spaces (the office, reception area and kitchen). These were not static positions as youth workers also moved fluidly between spaces to approach young people.

After several weeks of attending Sparrow Youth Club I noticed how young people appeared to be engaged in an activity like playing pool in the main hall and then disappeared to the reception for considerable periods of time. Upon recognising this, I began spending more time the reception to uncover what was happening. I learned that this space was not just a thoroughfare in and out of the youth club, but a confidential space where young people actively sought youth workers to discuss personal concerns including issues relating to alcohol and drugs. For example, as identified in the field diary, one young female, Katie, regularly sought out Lizzy (youth club manager), or Lacey (youth worker) in the reception to speak to them about personal issues:

> Katie came in and out of the reception area throughout the evening to chat to Lacey, Lizzy and I about her new job working in a nursery. She complained how tired she was and told us storie*s about what the children had done and "driven her mad." Each time* she spoke to Lizzy and Lacey, she asked a different question, seeking advice about *her job and other personal questions about her life. […]* Lizzy and Lacey said things *like, "Now you know how we feel" clearly poking fun at her.* Katie, Lacey and Lizzy *explained to me how 'naughty'* Katie used to be when she first joined the club, including getting in trouble with the police, drinking too much and smoking cannabis.

As per Katie's request, this fieldwork diary entry has been edited to remove intimate detail about Katie's alcohol and drug use. Additionally, I often refrained from taking notes in this space because it most likely would have prevented young people from talking freely in this space. This was an ethical consideration whereby I did not want to deter young people from opportunities to approach youth workers and discuss issues in confidence. Moreover, I did not wish to break trust or rapport that I had built with young people like Katie by making notes in this space. Nonetheless, such experiences showed how young people actively sought out youth workers within particular spaces so that they could have private conversations about alcohol and drug use. In these situations, young people sought advice from youth workers and engaged in a two-way dialogue which entailed young people questioning their own values and practices. In turn, youth workers listened and engaged in coaching approaches to promote 'connectedness' (Grossman and Bulle, 2006) by encouraging young people to reflect upon their values and practices, as opposed to instructing them about what they should or should not do about drinking and drug consumption. In this context, youth workers could act as positive role-models to young people through building relationships with young people and displaying enthusiasm and being personable (Rogers, 2010). This highlights how informal education settings can promote spontaneous and opportunistic participation from young people demonstrating levels of agency through the ways in which young people actively seek

out information, guidance and advice to assist them in exploring their intoxication values and practices (Rosseter, 1987). In turn, this can help nurture and encourage young people with regards to healthy living and positive behaviours, particularly when positive role models take an active interest in young people (Rogers, 2011b).

Young people did not seek necessarily seek out youth workers on a 'one-off' basis, but would repeatedly return to youth workers to discuss issues with them on an ongoing basis. This prolonged interaction with young people shows that these informal drug and alcohol educational approaches do not have an ephemeral effect on young peoples' values and practices because young people are engaged in an ongoing dialogue. Thus, as observed by the ways that Alterative young people spoke positively about youth workers at the Sparrow Youth Club; youth workers are not just as individuals who provide leisure and social facilities, they are valued educators whose values and experiences are appreciated as a source to learn from when connectedness and rapport is established (Jeffs and Smith, 2005).

Similarly, facilitators at The Rafters strategically stationed themselves within the space, which was a considerably smaller space than Sparrow Youth Centre. As indicated by Figure 16 (below), The Rafters facilitators often stood by the pool table or the sofas so that young people could approach them (indicated by red crosses):

Figure 16: The Rafters
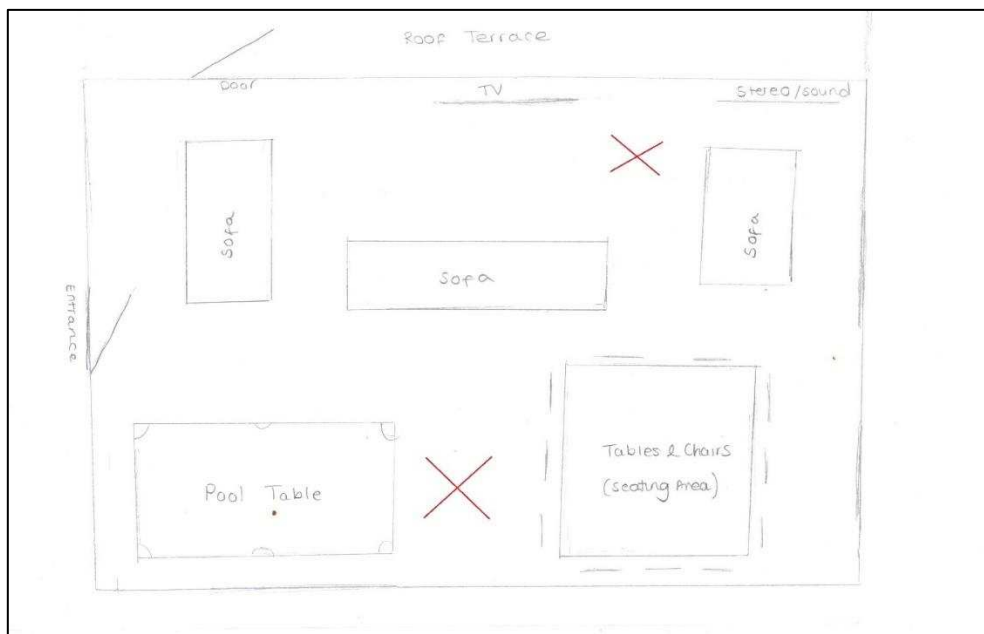
During fieldwork at The Rafters, I observed how young people approached facilitators to discuss their everyday alcohol and drug experiences at the start of the sessions. These scenarios showed how subtle informal education operated and how young people valued

these opportunities. For example, whilst having lunch with the Willow High School students at The Rafters, informal education was at play which was initiated by the young people when discussing a house party that they attended at the weekend:

> I asked Mason how much he had to drink at the party. He looked thoughtful, *"Probably about 8 bottles of Bud, not a lot really." I* say, *"That's a fair bit to drink, I would be feeling* a bit ro*ugh after that." However, he says that he drank them over several hours* - so he did not really feel it. Steven went on to ask how they manage to obtain large amounts of alcohol. Mason and Chantelle say that their parents buy them *alcohol, "so* that they kno*w what we are drinking and don't go having a crazy amount of stuff."* Steven asks if they have any more than what they give them and they confess that they drink more, *"whatever is at the party really" and that they "steal other drinks lying around" or that* they share stuff that their friends bring. I noticed how Steven did not pass judgement during this chat, but appeared curious by probing young people about their practices.

Here Steven listened attentively to young people whilst they spoke about their drinking experiences. However, it became apparent that Steven engaged in an informal education process by opportunistically asking young people questions about their values and practices to get them to reflect upon their behaviours (Jeffs and Smith, 2005). This allowed young people to open-up about their drinking practices and encouraged them to critically reflect. In turn, young people asked the facilitators questions about alcohol and drugs, operating on a mutual level. Such conversations fed into the formal education delivered by The Rafters facilitators; ensuring a continuum between informal and formal education strategies (Jeffs and Smith, 2005). On the surface, this activity may give the appearance of simply sitting around and chatting, but actually, such approaches have "hidden depths" and is a powerful activity that can shape future thoughts and behaviours (Jeffs and Smith, 2005:27).

When new cohorts of young people attended The Rafters, the first session entailed making rules together, which was guided by the facilitators. Rules were usually orientated around confidentiality, trust, respect, timing, not turning up intoxicated, and they also agreed how breaking rules would be dealt with. This traditional practice often used in youth work can empower young people because they are active in decision making; thus, such decisions are more likely to be implemented successfully (Lacey, 1987). Young people often spoke about how they enjoyed The Rafters specifically for the reason that there was a reciprocation of trust. This was reflected in an interview with a group of students from Willow High School who attended The Rafters:

Laura: Can you tell me a bit about your thoughts and experiences of The Rafters?

Toby: I thought it was really good.

Chantelle: I liked it.

Mason: Yeah, I enjoyed it.

Chantelle: Yeah I liked it, because I like talking to people, and like, knowing that I they *ain't gonna'* go running back to people.

Mason*: And it's good calling him [referrin*g to Steven] by his first name. It gets annoying and boring when you have to go around calling people Miss and Sir.

Chantelle: Yeah and he treats us like normal - *it's not like we are in here [referring to* school].

Mason: Exactly, and by him treating us like that then we have this respect for him.

Laura: *That's funny you mention the name thing, because a few times you called* Steven and Christian Sir and me Miss. [Everyone laughs].

Chantelle: Yeah, *it's just that stupid habit that you get from school.*

Unlike places such as The Rafters, young people felt that they could not have an open dialogue with teachers in school settings. The two main issues for young people was that, firstly, they are not involved democratically in the way in which alcohol and drug education is delivered. Secondly, young people were aware that teachers are under strict obligations to disclose information about their alcohol and drug use with other relevant adults, including other teachers and parents. Consequently, such approaches do not promote trust. Arguably, however, it is easier to achieve this in informal educational settings, rather than formal education offered in school settings. These findings highlight the pivotal role of two-way dialogue and trust in alcohol and drug education where young people feel safe to express themselves and educational professionals listen; as opposed to formal approaches which promote didactic approaches. Such unstructured approaches that do not rely on "hidden curriculum" or messages is positive approach which naturally facilitates dialogue (Rosseter, 1987).

When educational professionals promoted open and conducive space for young people, it became apparent that the spaces themselves could play a role in influencing and enhancing alcohol and drug education receptiveness, as evidenced at The Rafters, Sparrow Youth Club and the Sutton Youth Bus. For example, educational professionals at The Rafters created a homely, welcoming and fun environment for young people for education to be delivered. Specifically, lunch was set out for young people to share prior to the session which took place around a group of tables which presented a feeling of sitting round a family meal. Young people were also encouraged to support each other in sessions by making hot drinks,

washing-up at the end of sessions, setting up equipment etc. This promoted active responsibility amongst youth and moved away from pedagogy of 'providing' to 'enabling' (Lacey, 1987). The Rafters also contained reclining leather sofas with other soft furnishings including pillows and a rug. There was also a pool table so that young people could relax during the breaks and interact in meaningful ways and on their own terms with educational professionals.

Much like The Rafters, the Sutton Youth Bus was a social space that had been renovated to feel like a lounge (see Figure 17 below). There was comfortable seating in a u-shape with a table in the centre so that young people and the outreach workers could interact in a more intimate way than other learning spaces. The bus offered hot drinks and biscuits for young people and there was a TV screen where they could watch television.

Figure 17: The Sutton Youth Bus
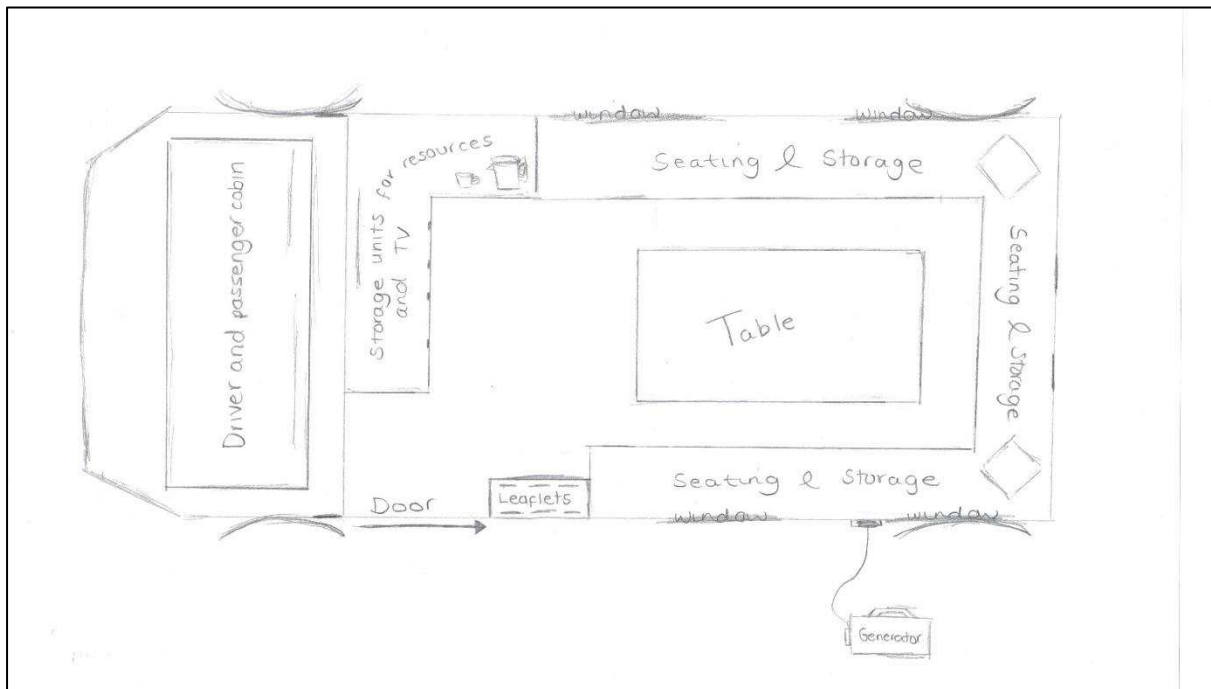
For the reasons outlined above, the Sutton Youth Bus educational professions were able to approach "at risk" young people in Sutton because young people enjoyed the space and environment. I observed how young people, in a short period of time, appeared comfortable within these settings. These spaces then, created an environment where young people appeared more engaged because they were at ease. This was evident in the field diary at The Rafters with the Cedar High School cohort:

> The Cedar High School boys were noisy when they came in, chatting amongst themselves. Each paused momentarily upon entering the room, expressing how they

were impressed with the surroundings. Steven welcomed them to take a seat. The boys threw themselves on to the black leather sofas. Jonathan reclined his chair, and put his feet up *"sick." Everyone else* slouched on the sofas.

This highlights the sense of ease that the Cedar High School cohort felt upon entering The Rafters space and how they treated almost as they would at home. As a result of informal environments, discussions about alcohol and drugs were more intimate and detailed between educational professionals and young people, which in turn promoted meaningful and open discussion about alcohol and drugs that young people were more receptive to.

Contrastingly, educational community settings like schools were often restricted in terms of how the physical space could be utilised to create a conducive environment. Due to space restrictions and high student numbers allocated to each class, classrooms were constrained by having seating in rows. Such settings created a closed setting which promoted a 'closed' educational style where students were expected to listen to the teacher, concentrate on the task and remain quiet to ensure that learning takes place (Bowlby, Lea and Holt, 2014). Upon acknowledging such issues, where possible, teachers attempted to change classroom layouts to round tables so that discussions and interaction between young people could take place (see Figure 18 below):

Figure 18: Willow High School Classrooms

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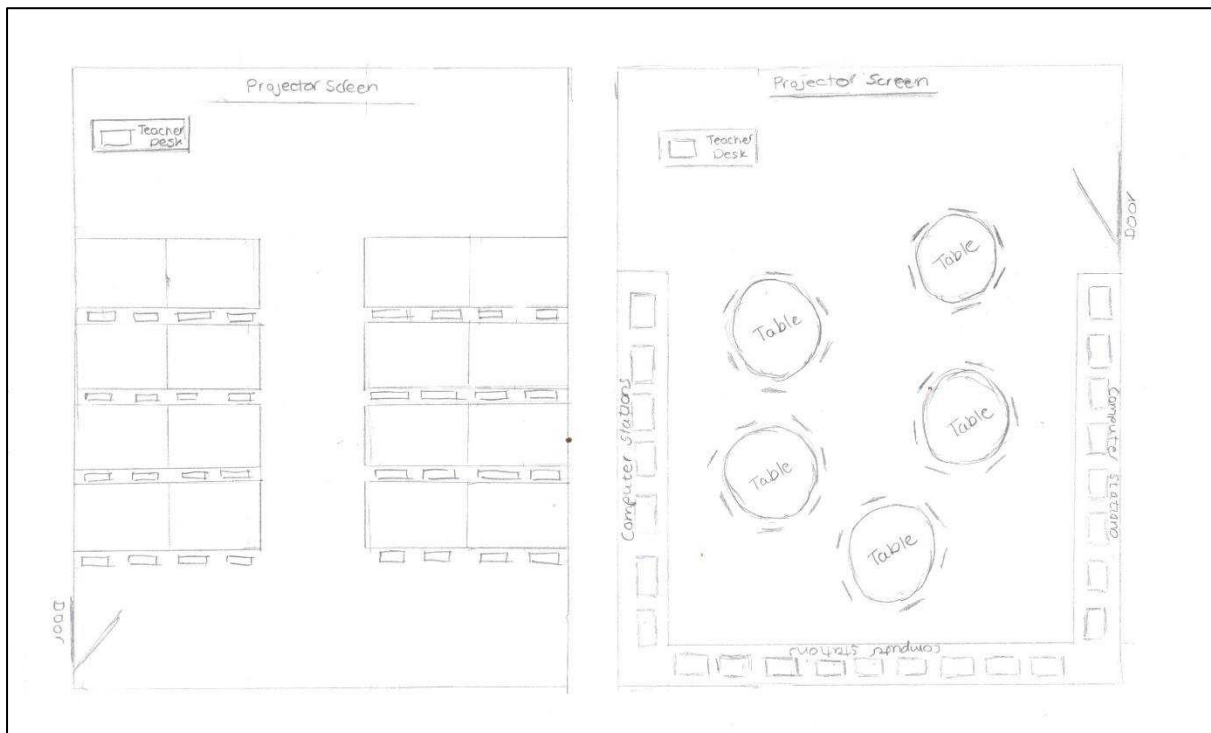
The limitations of formal environments in alcohol and drug education delivery which teachers have to contend with was widely recognised amongst educational professionals. This was expressed by Lacey when discussing how alcohol and drug sessions are delivered at The Sycamore School:

> **Lacey:** Yeah, they [alcohol and drug sessions] are in classrooms or group work rooms.
> **Laura:** In the classrooms, is it set out in rows?
> **Lacey:** No, we always do a circle, to make sure that everyone can hear each other.
> **Laura:** Is that the same across the entire school?
> **Lacey:** No. Every teacher will lay their classroom out different. That could be for a number of reasons, such as a particular student having a visual impairment, so that teacher will take responsibility for their class and the needs of their students. The environment is really important.
> **Laura:** Is there more to it than sitting in a circle then?
> **Lacey:** *Yeah. It's about the lighting, warmth and everything.*

This highlights Lacey's awareness of the importance of diverse learning spaces and how they need to be adapted to the needs of the youth people to encourage constructive debate and dialogue whereby young people's voices can be prioritised and they are encourage to speak openly. Such approaches can have a lasting effect upon youth drinking values and practices because young these open debates are often directed by young people and subsequently related to their own everyday concerns about their own pleasurable intoxication experiences.

Informal educational approaches and open learning spaces not only offer opportunities for meaningful alcohol and drug education, but offer young people the wider benefits of youth work, including: sanctuary, enjoyable activity, personal and social development relationship and community, and appreciation (Jeffs and Smith, 2010). These fieldwork findings show that when approachable spaces in learning environments are fostered by educational facilitators, this creates trust, respect and confidentiality valued by young people. In turn, this encourages young people to willingly engage in both formal and informal alcohol and drug education offered within these settings because they are seen as 'safe' spaces. As noted by Blackman (2004:152) a learning context which encourages exchange, openness and trust between young people and educational facilitators is vital; otherwise young people can lead to feelings of resentment caused by attempts to 'indoctrinate' them or govern their feelings. Young people's receptiveness to such education was illustrated by the fact that they continued to use the services available to them voluntarily, including Sparrow Youth Club and the Sutton Youth Bus. Although it is challenging to measure the 'impact' of such interventions like informal

education and mentoring (Rogers, 2011b), such informal approaches were acknowledged as positively shaping youth drinking cultures by young people and community members alike.

3.6. Conclusion

A main way in which community members attempted to shape the drinking values and practices of young people in Sutton was through the delivery of formal and informal drug education. Despite claiming to adopt harm reduction approaches in line with current alcohol and drug policies, it appears that much of the drug and alcohol education delivered by educational professionals in Sutton is underpinned by abstinence messages and prohibition stances. Therefore, alcohol and drug education continues to perpetuate contradictory messages to young people because educational community professionals claim that they are promoting harm reduction, but are promoting abstinence messages. This is evidenced by the use of scare tactics, stereotypes and stigma, and 'pocket prohibition' (Blackman and Doherty, 2015) approaches which were poorly received by young people in this study. Not only did the young people reject such ideas because they did not relate to their everyday alcohol or drug experiences, but such approaches also showed as having an ephemeral effect on their drinking values and practices because messages were quickly forgotten. However, promisingly, when genuine harm reduction strategies were adopted by educational professionals, like educational games and spaces to openly discuss the positive and negative consequences of drug and alcohol use, young people in this study seemed more receptive to such approaches. These approaches seemed less likely to have an ephemeral effect because the young people in this study recognised that such education could assist them in making more informed decisions around their alcohol consumption practices which did not necessarily deny pleasure (Milgram, 1996; Beck, 1998) that is strongly associated with contemporary youth drinking cultures. Moreover, these latter findings coincide with the forthcoming data chapters of this thesis, which shows how young drinkers attempted to implement their own harm reduction strategies to their everyday drinking practices in a variety of drinking environments.

CHAPTER FOUR: PURSUING PLEASURABLE DRINKING THROUGH 'CALCULATED-INTOXICATION'

4.1. Introduction

This chapter begins with a critique of the multiple terminology put forward to describe contemporary youth drinking cultures, including: 'binge' drinking, 'controlled loss of control', 'determined-drunkenness' and 'calculated hedonism'. Although such terminology is useful, they do not necessarily reflect the nuances of agency and pleasure in contemporary youth drinking cultures in Sutton. Subsequently, formal interviews with underage drinkers in educational community settings, and both interview and observational data with young adult drinkers in Sutton, exploring the consumption practices and values are examined to support this argument. Together this data shows that young people express agency through strategic drinking practices and choices, which are regulated through other social and cultural activities linked to intoxication including storytelling. This chapter proposes that terms used in the field of alcohol studies to describe contemporary youth drinking cultures could benefit from being re-examined to reflect the themes of pleasure, agency and friendship that constitute contemporary youth drinking cultures.

4.2. Critiquing terminology to describe contemporary youth drinking cultures

'Binge' drinking

The term 'binge' drinking has a confused long-term and contemporary history because of a multitude of definitions of 'binge' drinking that exist and depictions of excessive consumption (Measham and Brain, 2005; Berridge, Herring and Thom, 2009). During the 1940s and 1950s 'binge' drinking was typically associated with clinical definitions and disease models relating to alcoholism, but from the 1990s, 'binge' drinking came to be understood as, "heavy drinking (with different numbers of drinks specified) on one occasion and is often connected with fears about public disorder and young people's alcohol consumption" (Berridge, Herring and Thom, 2009:598). Since this shift in understanding and definition, 'binge' drinking has come to be understood as a phenomenon which entails passive consumption of large quantities of alcohol with intention to become heavily intoxicated, namely by young people (Hackley et al., 2013). Consequently, the term is of social, political and media concern resulting in alcohol policies which aim to address young people's 'problematic' approach to drinking.

Although the personal and social consequences of young people's contemporary drinking patterns should not be underplayed; 'binge' drinking is neither a term that accurately describes young people's consumption patterns, nor does it associate provide nuanced understanding about notions of pleasure linked to excessive youth drinking (Blackman, Doherty and McPherson, 2015). This is because 'binge' drinking discourse denies positive outcomes relating to alcohol consumption that young people experience and does not acknowledge levels of agency that young people express in relation to drinking because it is seen as mindless. Thus, in agreement with Measham and Brain (2005:263), "'binge' drinking is the latest in a long line of press campaigns to highlight and exaggerate the consequences of youth at play, particularly where the combination involves the city at night, intoxication and the mixing of the sexes." Thus, in agreement with Measham (2006:265) suggests "…current media, political, and public perceptions of unbridled British 'binge' drinking youths rampaging the city streets after dark needs tempering."

The term 'binge' drinking is also becoming increasingly redundant because as suggested in Chapter One, young people are part of a contemporary 'culture of intoxication' whereby developments in the alcohol industry and behavioural changes of youth are linked to broader attitudinal changes where intoxication is normalised (Measham and Brain, 2005). With this understanding of drinking in the UK context, 'binge' drinking is an unhelpful term because excessive consumption is more acceptable and even to an extent, desirable. Upon recognising the culture of intoxication, a variety of terms have since emerged seeking to more accurately describe youth drinking cultures.

Controlled loss of control

Fiona Measham (2002:349) claims that she coined the term 'controlled loss of control' in her unpublished PhD thesis in 2000 as a result of interviewing female research participants about their drug use, who spoke about "the desired state of intoxication they wished to achieve with either legal or illegal drugs." This research suggests that drug use is gendered because it is experienced differently by men and women. Measham (2002:356-7) suggests that women seek a 'controlled loss of control' because it offers them the ability to "relax, unwind, have fun, but never get into that state that results in total loss of control, because that could risk personal safety, ill health, embarrassment or social disapproval." In contrast, men were more likely to lose control because of drug choices which was less concerned with losing emotional or physical control.

Although Measham (2002) initially suggested that 'controlled loss of control' is more closely related to women's experiences, Measham's (2004b) subsequent research of youth drinking suggests that a controlled loss of control is desirable across young people's leisure experiences in a variety of spaces. Moreover, in their study of youth intoxication cultures Measham and Brain (2005) suggest that there was "no statistically significant gender, age or fieldwork location differences in their desired level of intoxication" (Measham and Brain, 2005:273); showing that controlled loss of control refers to youth intoxication generally.

Measham and Brain's (2005) acknowledge pleasure that young people associate with alcohol consumption and levels of agency through the suggestion that young people attempt to manage a desirable state of intoxication. Unlike 'binge' drinking, 'controlled loss of control' offers a more relative representation of contemporary youth drinking cultures catering for understandings around pleasure and agency. Nonetheless, their work appears to offer an underlying suggestion that young people are in fear of losing control, which could suggest that autonomy and pleasure associated with drinking is limited because it is underpinned by fear. Additionally, as the term is phrased 'controlled loss of control', this also implies that young people will eventually lose control which resonates with discourse around 'binge' drinking.

Determined-drunkenness

Following on from 'controlled loss of control', the phrase 'determined-drunkenness' was coined by Fiona Measham in 2004 as "the commodification of calculated hedonistic excess illustrated by determined drunkenness, recreational drug use and commercial sex is centred on the diverse and multi-purpose licensed leisure locations of the twenty-first century" (2004b:344). Measham and Brain (2005) have since expanded upon this concept explaining that 'determined-drunkenness' emerged as a result of developments in the alcohol industry, as well as broader attitudinal changes which suggests that excessive alcohol consumption is viewed as acceptable and even desirable. Together these changes are what Measham and Brain (2005) conceptualise as the contemporary 'culture of intoxication' (as outlined in Chapter One). Measham (2006:363) goes on to suggest that there is "support for the argument that a new culture of intoxication is emerging that features a determined-drunkenness by young adults as part of a broader cultural context of risk-taking and hedonistic consumption-orientated lifestyles bounded by occasions and location."

Research participants of Measham and Brain's (2005:273) study of youth drinking cultures suggest that young people not only simply plan to go out drinking, but aim to get drunk; hence determined-drunkenness. However, although participants in their research claimed that they

aimed to get drunk, they also wanted to sustain levels of intoxication so that they could maintain personal safety, manage their health, offer security to others, and some revealed a greater desire to drive rather than drink. Thus, "by and large most drinkers do manage their intoxication in terms of desired and actual states, and do not utterly lose control and become unbounded in their consumption practices" (Measham and Brain, 2005:274). Measham (2006:261) also highlights youth agency in relation to the term determined-drunkenness:

> Empirical research suggests that young people intentionally manage their levels of desired and actual intoxication by using strategies that incorporate aspects of perceived risk, accessing well-informed and credible sources, such as online scientific journals, health sources, and the popular dissemination and discussion of these on websites, in chat rooms and mobile phones.

Here Measham (2006) acknowledges that there are limits to how well an individual can manage their intoxication levels and harms associated with excessive consumption. Therefore, the term encompasses acknowledgement of both agency and pleasure in relation to youth drinking cultures.

Nonetheless, the term 'determined-drunkenness' is not without issue. This is attributed to implications regarding what the term implies about youth consumption practices and values. Although Measham and Brain (2005) suggest that many of their participants drank to excess, often to get drunk, this is not always the case for young adults. For example, as will be illustrated in the forthcoming sections of this chapter, fieldwork suggests that young people often actively avoided terminology such as getting 'drunk,' 'smashed' or 'annihilated' (terms often depicted in the media) because they did not perceive this level of extreme intoxication to be pleasurable. Instead, they incorporated terminology such as getting 'tipsy' or 'merry'; suggesting that low level intoxication is desirable, not drunkenness. This was encapsulated during an interview with a young adult Helen about her drinking experiences:

> **Helen:** *I don't like that feeling of being out of control. Like when I can feel myself in* that sort of spinny state when you are drunk, or too drunk. I would rather go and make myself sick *so that I don't feel like that* beca*use I don't like being totally out of control – which is weird because that's what drinking does. But you know when you just think, I like being that sort of tipsy drunk. Or silly drunk where you are not in danger…I don't* like it when it goes to that next step, where you think that that last drink was a really bad idea [laughs].

Thus, 'determined-drunkenness' might not necessarily offer an accurate reflection of contemporary youth drinking cultures; whereby determined-intoxication in this case could be arguably more appropriate to describe youth drinking values and practices

Calculated-hedonism

'Calculated-hedonism' is the latest and most prominent term to describe contemporary youth drinking cultures; a term popularised by Fiona Measham and taken up in contemporary alcohol studies (see: Hackley et al., 2013; Griffin et al., 2009; Szmigin et al., 2008). However, the term can be traced through a number of researchers in the field of alcohol studies including Mike Featherstone's (1991) bounded-hedonism and Kevin Brain's (2000) 'bounded'/'unbounded' 'hedonistic consumption' and 'rational hedonism'.

Mike Featherstone (1991:45) first described modern consumers as "calculating hedonists" explaining how consumers actively engage in a "de-controlled control of the emotions." Drawing upon Featherstone's work on calculating hedonists, Brain (2000:9) applied this concept to young drinkers, suggesting:

> Likewise, the hedonism of young drinkers is not simply one of uncontrolled abandon to the sensuous pleasures of indulgence, but rather a calculated and planned, rational hedonism. Here contemporary young drinkers mark out pleasure spaces in which they can plan to 'let loose' and engage in less restrained behaviour than they would have to in the formal, complex structures of institutional interdependence such as school, work or organised leisure or the networks of interdependence families. This leads to a form of hedonistic but bounded consumption. (Brain, 2000:9)

Here young drinkers aspire to 'let go' and express levels of agency in their consumption by making judgements about how far they should 'let go' within leisure contexts. It is this form of consumption that the alcohol industry desire because they want young adults to use their spending power to purchase products; however, they do not wish to encounter significant supply regulation as a consequence of excessive youth consumption (Brain, 2000).

Acknowledging the structural social constraints placed upon young people, Brain (2000:9) suggests that bounded hedonistic consumption is not achievable for all young people because:

> They too have aspirations of hedonistic consumption yet they lack the means to achieve this consumer good life and the integrating structures that would encourage

calculated hedonism. For such young drinkers' leisure time is often all there is – an endless cycle of days without meaning of aspirations unmet, and stimulated desired left burning.

In such circumstances, Brain (2000:9) suggests that "there is a looser degree of control and a greater degree of decontrol" for young people. Therefore, unbounded hedonism is seen as problematic and undesirable because it leads to illegitimate forms of consumption. Like controlled loss of control and determined-drunkenness, both 'bounded' and 'unbounded hedonism' acknowledges nuances of agency and pleasure in relation to youth drinking.

Szmigin et al. (2009), Featherstone (1991), Brain and Measham's (2005) work on 'calculated-hedonism' is useful because it enables an understanding of how young people can indulge in what appears as excessive alcohol consumption, which is also contained by time, space, situation and social structures. Moreover, they have observed that although levels of control may not be apparent to outsiders; young people drink excessively but are choosing when, where, how and who to drink with. Therefore, 'calculated-hedonism' is a much more useful term to describe contemporary youth consumption against a backdrop of a 'culture of intoxication', as opposed to 'binge' drinking which problematizes youth drinking (Griffin et al., 2009; Szmigin et al., 2008).

There are arguably some issues with the term 'calculated-hedonism'. Despite Featherstone's (1991:171) suggestion that "discipline and hedonism are no longer seen as incompatible," the word hedonism has connotations of mindlessness. Consequently, despite being preceded by the word 'calculated', calculated-hedonism, suggests a lack of agency in youth drinking because of the 'hedonism' terminology which could imply mindlessness through associations with passive indulgence and self-gratification.

Taking into account the terminology of 'binge' drinking, controlled loss of control, determined-drunkenness and calculated-hedonism, subsequent sections of this chapter will present fieldwork findings to explore levels of agency and pleasure in relation to youth drinking to see if and how relevant this terminology is in relation to contemporary youth drinking cultures in Sutton.

4.3. The ultimate drinking value: not drinking…?! You're no fun!

Of all of participants encountered in fieldwork, there was one young person who did not drink (Toby, 16 years old). The remainder of the participants in this study held the view that people who abstained from alcohol and those who usually drink, but for whatever reason were not

drinking on a night out, were regarded as "no fun" by peers. For example, during an interview with Toby, Chantelle and Mason from Willow High School, Chantelle and Mason claimed that alcohol and drug use is fun:

> **Laura:** Do you think The Rafters and y*our teachers, people like that…*some of them know *that you use drugs right…*do you think that they understand you and why you do it?
>
> **Chantelle:** No!
>
> **Mason:** No. they just think that you are doing it to fit in or just because everyone is *doing it, but it's not. It's just fun. There's just nothing else to do…* all there is, is parks. If you are sitting in a park what else can you do?
>
> **Chantelle:** *If you haven't got any money, and you only have a tenner, what else are* you meant to do?
>
> **Toby:** Go get some KFC or something.
>
> **Chantelle:** *I don't wanna' spend my money on that, you don't get nothing out of it. Where's the fun in that Toby?*
>
> **Mason:** *It's easier to grab a few beers or whatever and go out and have a good time.*
>
> **Toby:** Well what about bowling or cinema?
>
> **Mason:** *Why would you wanna' do that? It's boring.*
>
> **Chantelle:** You go to the cinema and the film ends quickly. You do a bit of bowling and its over in ten minutes, and its crap anyway. There is nothing good.
>
> **Toby:** You guys are just trying to act hard.

This shows that young people often regard alcohol consumption as pleasurable and normalised (Measham, 2006; Measham and Brain, 2005); however, young people like Toby can be identified as 'anti-consumers' who resist norms about alcohol that predominate contemporary society (Piacentini and Banister, 2009:279). For Toby, his identity and values clash with the normalised culture of excessive consumption and demonstrates resistance through challenging statements put forward by Mason and Chantelle. Thus, for some young people, tensions can arise amongst friends and peers when individuals attempt to exclude themselves from participating in the contemporary culture of intoxication, drinking and/or drunkenness (Piancentini and Banister, 2009). Here, young people like Toby, despite expressing levels of agency through resistance, experience a constrained position whereby they have to justify their non-participation in drinking.

Non-drinkers like Toby attempt to remain non-judgemental of peer's engagement in the culture of intoxication so that it reduces tensions amongst friends; however, for those who do consume alcohol, they appear to be more judgemental of peers who do not drink or are limiting

their drinking (e.g. for personal/health reasons etc.). Young drinkers often held the view then that alcohol consumption and intoxication equates to having a good time. The implications of this is that individuals expressed different views about what is 'sensible' or 'responsible' (Harrison et al., 2011), as identified during an interview with Rosie:

> **Rosie:** Sometimes you get those people my age that sit in the corner of the club, and *don't actually do anything. You just think, why have you actually bothered coming out? They just sit there, I'm not saying that you have to have a drink to have fun, but they* do*n't dance and don't do anything.*

Here Rosie scrutinises individuals who do not engage in social and cultural activities linked to consumption in the Night Time Economy (NTE) like drinking and dancing with friends. This shows that young people desire to consume alcohol to achieve desired levels of intoxication alongside friends which is deemed as pleasurable (Harrison et al., 2011). As per Rosie's assumption, there is an underlying value amongst that alcohol is seen as a requirement to having a good time; but should be consumed in such a way that it does not produce negative outcomes for individuals and friends.

Some young people expressed that they wished to restrict their alcohol consumption because of commitments and responsibilities. However, for friends of these individuals, they saw this as problematic because it prevented full-commitment with friends to the culture of intoxication. As noted in the field diary during an evening at *The Bull's Head* pub with a group of young people, it became apparent to James that some individuals were not drinking heavily, or not at all because they had work the following day. This did not go down well with James:

> James went around the pub asking if the others (Stephanie, Owen, Amelia and Tony) were coming to the nightclub after the pub. They all replied no because they had other commitments (like working or being the designated driver). James continued to pester the group about attending the nightclub but had no luck in persuading them to attend. He approached me*, "How boring are them lot? You had better be coming out." I* assured him that I would, which made him happy. He chinks my glass, *"Ye*ah, fuck *them lot."*

This shows that James (like other participants) to an extent, viewed personal responsibilities and commitments as inhibiting pleasure on nights out; holding the view that drinking and having fun with friends should be prioritised. Such views occasionally caused tension amongst friends when individuals were seen to be drinking less than normal because it was considered that this would impact pleasure for the whole group on the night out. This parallels Oliver

Smith's (2013) work on adult drinking which suggests that individuals attempt to maintain youthful identities by heeding to pleasurable outcomes associated with the NTE.

These fieldwork findings reveal that in line with other research, excessive alcohol consumption is regarded as "the norm rather than the exception among young people" (Harrison et al. 2011:469) and that light drinking or abstaining is not seen as desirable. In light of this, the remaining sections of this chapter will attempt to draw out why such values predominate contemporary youth drinking cultures in Sutton. The chapter will also explore that despite young people claiming that excessive consumption and drunkenness was often the perceived goal of a night out; young people often deviated from this in practice whereby it became apparent that drunkenness was not the desired goal.

4.4. Underage drinking as an early rite of passage into pleasurable social drinking

Excessive alcohol consumption by young people under the age of eighteen presents numerous negative health and social outcomes, including: accidents, physical and mental health issues, underperformance in education, anti-social behaviour and violence (Healey et al., 2014). Despite having an awareness of such issues, young people in this research desired to participate in excessive underage alcohol consumption regardless, and legal age drinkers also enjoyed recounting deviant underage drinking experiences. In relation to this, Coleman and Cater (2005) suggest that relatively little research has explored why underage drinkers consume alcohol excessively.

Fieldwork findings in this study initially suggest that such motivations were attributed to young people's desire to engage in the transgression of social and cultural drinking norms, which they perceived as fun and pleasurable with friends. In acts of transgression, young people set out to participate in underage drinking, including purchasing alcohol in off-licences and gaining access into licensed drinking establishments. The illicit nature of underage drinking acted as motivation for young people in this transgressive activity; correlating with work by the Chicago School, namely Fredrick Thrasher (1927), in which he connected deviance not as a form of pathology, but as fun and adventure. In line with this, fieldwork identified that young people in this research engaged in underage drinking as a form of adventure and pleasure.

Through interviews with legal age drinkers and underage drinkers, it became apparent that getting served alcohol under eighteen in off-licensed venues was common and easy. Young adults enjoyed re-telling deviant stories how they managed to get served alcohol underage when they were younger and participated illegitimately in the culture of intoxication. Underage

participants were also keen to share such stories which they viewed as minor and harmless, and so, found pleasure in devising creative ways to obtain alcohol. During an interview with David and James (legal age drinkers), they explained that when they drank underage, they applied local knowledge of Sutton to achieve their goal of purchasing alcohol underage:

> **David:** I always used to use my Connections card to get served. In that place by The Bell.
>
> **James:** *Yeah that's where my brother used to buy drink from.*
>
> **David:** I remember because apparently, if you just show something, as long as the camera sees you showing something then they let you get it. It was clearly obvious that I was like sixteen.
>
> *[…]*
>
> **Laura:** OK, so the guy new that you were underage?
>
> **David:** Yeah.
>
> **Laura:** Did you have select shops that you could go to then and get served?
>
> **David:** That was pretty much the only place. Me and Tim used to go together because for some reason we looked the oldest and everyone was like you two look the oldest so you go and get it. *When I was seventeen I used my brother's ID because he had his driver's license, so I could use that as well. And Tim used to forge his license to* look like he was eighteen. So, then we used to go to Spoons and stuff and spend the whole year on fake ID and it used to feel really good, and we were like*, 'Yeah we got in' [says excitedly]. And then when we turned eighteen it was like, aww*, this is shit, we can get in anywhere now.
>
> **Laura:** So, you lost the excitement?
>
> **David:** Yeah, definitely lost its excitement.

This shows detailed memories from David about off-licences where he could get served alcohol underage; information of which was shared and handed-down. David identifies that it was not necessarily drinking per say that he and friends enjoyed; more their ability to be deviant by obtaining alcohol illegitimately. This could be attributed to underage drinking being seen as forbidden and associated with engaging in legal age social drinking norms (Coleman and Cater, 2005), which young people can find pleasure, excitement and thrill from violating such laws (Bryant and Forsythe, 2005).

Unlike their older counterparts, current underage drinkers in Sutton expressed more difficulty in obtaining alcohol; although it was still attainable providing that they knew the right places to go. As identified in an interview with underage drinkers who attended The Rafters, they spoke about obtaining alcohol from both on/off-licences:

Mason: *I've not tried yet, but I will when I'm sixteen…*Because my brother is eighteen now innit, s*o he's got his ID and that. He told me to just grow a tash*[27] and then I can use his provisional or passport. It would be a bit weird though.

Chantelle: I can get away with things like that. Like if I get dressed up or something.

Toby: *She's gassing.*

Chantelle: *No, I'm not. Like it was my brother's mate's party the other day, or a few* weeks ago. And me and my brother went there, and like every kid under sixteen had *to leave like after like nine thirty and I didn't h*ave to get kicked out, I was alright. So, if *I dress up I'll be alright.*

Laura: Do you all get served in off-licences or wherever?

Chantelle: Yeah. Only certain off-licenses. Some are like, go away.

Toby: *I'm too small anyway.*

Mason: *If I'm in Wallington I* know somewhere that I can get served. But erm, around *the area not so much because I don't always look old enough.*

Chantelle: I have seen you outside that place near college, and getting served.

Mason: I usually just wait outside certain shops and just ask someone to get it for me. Most of the people, like if I go Tudor, [to me] you know where that is, yeah [I nod in agreement]? Like, if I go down there I know a few people down that way, so I just ask them. Not strangers, but friends of my brother.

Laura: Will strangers ever do it for you?

Mason: Oh yeah. You can just see like the type of people that will do it for you. You can just look at them.

Here Chantelle suggests that can enhance her femininity and sexualise her appearance to make her appear older so that she can obtain alcohol. However, Mason struggles to make himself appear older without such tools and resorts to alternative strategies to obtain alcohol illicitly. This shows, if problematically, the creative measures that young people employ to obtain alcohol underage. However, as identified by young people, these opportunities were/are easy for them to exploit because adults would serve or purchase alcohol for them knowing or suspecting that they were underage. This highlights a historical and contemporary irresponsibility of Sutton's adult community and the local alcohol industry who willingly give young people access to alcohol through non-compliance to the law and schemes like 'Challenge 21' nor 'Challenge 25' schemes (Drinkaware, 2016), whereby alcohol is sold to underage drinkers for profit.

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[27] Moustache

Once young people reached an age where they felt that they could almost pass for eighteen, they would attempt to access alcohol from local drinking establishments instead of off-licenses. There were several reasons for this, including not having to engage in street drinking; which often placed young people in a vulnerable position (Galloway, Forsythe and Shewan, 2007). This correlates with Coleman and Cater (2005) who suggest that drinking in a safer environment and in a calmer way is more desirable to young people. Ultimately for participants, drinking in NTE establishments was seen as a rite of passage, not only where heavy drinking takes place, but is regarded as a sign of maturity and offers autonomy to young people regarding to their drinking (Tuténges, 2012). Nevertheless, accessing the NTE before eighteen was attractive to young people because of its links to transgression and deviance. Additionally, getting served alcohol in pubs, bars and clubs was far more challenging than getting served in off-licences. For example, during an interview about her early drinking experiences, Helen explained how she enjoyed employing deviant strategies with friends so that they could drink in the NTE before they were legally allowed to do so:

> **Helen:** *I remember that I used to go out with Kelly's ID [laughs]. I used to use it to go* into Haze *and I used to go to like Wetherspoon's and have just* **a** drink, and Kelly and that would be in there. And then me and Liam, Edward or someone would go into the club [Haze] by like half nine. And then after a little while of doing it, we clocked on that the bouncers changed at about ten, half ten. So, then we text Kelly and said that the bouncers had changed over. So obviously she came in a bit later, because I had her *ID, her driver's license, and she would use her passport instead. Then we could all get* in there without any problems. So, it started off with Haze. We used to do that every Thursday, Friday, Saturday. *[…]* we used to go to Anarchy, and get in there really early, about eight, and we used to order dinner in there. But it would be like between six of us, so we would order like a burger and chips, and obviously you are allowed to order *alcohol with food aren't you even when you*'re like sixteen. So, we would wait, and then people would start coming in, so we would just try and blend into the others. So, we did that a few times, but then we got caught and got chucked out, so we never did it again after that, because it was like, oh the shame!

Although problematic, this shows the conscious and creative strategies that young people employ so that they can participate in alcohol consumption in the NTE. This reveals Helen and her friends' intimate knowledge about drinking establishments, including when door staff begin their shifts to avoid being detected through the ID process. Such attention to detail and awareness reflects levels of rationality, not mindless hedonism in youth drinking.

Upon recognising the difficulties of getting served in pubs, bars and clubs, young people like Cara explained during an interview that when she was an underage drinker, she resorted to complex strategies to gain access to drinking establishments underage, including forging identification:

> **Cara:** In school there used to be people going around selling us fake driving licenses *and that kind of thing. I don't know who done them, but you would get the odd person now and again who would be like, 'Do you want to buy a fake driver's license for l*ike *£20?' But then I used to be like, 'No.' But then I would pass it on and say to other people, like, 'Do you wanna' buy a driver's license for like thirty pounds?' [Laughs] And then I would go back to the person who made them and be like, 'I've got one f*or you *to make up,' would give them twenty and I would keep ten, so I would go out that night* and get pissed!

Later on, in the interview, Cara suggests that she was sure that the bouncers and bar staff were aware that she was using forged identification, but would give her access to the establishment and serve alcohol. Although problematic, this shows the lengths that young people will resort to access NTE spaces as opposed to public drinking and more importantly, the purpose of this was to build drinking stories relating to deviance and transgression.

These accounts about underage drinking from participants suggest that it is not necessarily drinking per say that is the most central reason for participating in alcohol consumption; but the process of participating in transgression that offered fun and adventure relating to drinking. Thus, underage drinking was not pathological, or necessarily seen by participants as a 'rite of passage' in the traditional sense of transitioning into adulthood, but "towards a more permanent 'socialising ritual'" where young people prioritised strengthening friendships and bonds through drinking practices that helped create memories and stories (Hollands, 1995:6). Strengthening these friendships and bonds could then be reinforced when participants reached a legal age to consume alcohol legitimately.

4.5. Seeking the social "atmosphere": carving out safe and fun drinking spaces

The concept 'atmosphere' has received increasing attention from researchers in the field of alcohol studies analysing varieties of drinking atmospheres to understand contemporary drinking cultures (see: Riches, 2015; Wilkinson, 2015). According to Anderson (2009:3) atmospheres are:

Generated by bodies – of multiple types – affecting one another as some form of 'envelopment' is produced. Atmospheres do not float free from the bodies that come together and apart to compose situations. Affective qualities emanate from the assembling of the human bodies, discursive bodies, non-human bodies, and all the other bodies that make up everyday situation.

This definition implies that spaces can have a sense of character, or even produce a feeling or mood about the space in question. This idea about a sense of atmosphere and the term itself was applied frequently by participants in this study, particularly in terms of a 'drinking atmosphere'. These encompassed ideas of being part of, or creating a certain type of atmosphere to facilitate pleasurable alcohol consumption. One young female, Louise spoke extensively about creating and experiencing the right atmosphere in relation to different drinking spaces and experiences during an interview:

> **Louise:** *It's so easy for the atmosphere to egg you on, like when it's a really nice day, it just feels natural to carry on drinking and then you end up fucked [laughs]. That's* why I try to think more about what I am having then, otherwise you can get a bit carried away.

Participants like Louise identified that spaces where young people consumed alcohol were meticulously planned because they were aware that space and place played a vital role in creating a pleasurable social "atmosphere" that could enhance intoxication experiences or detract from them. Fieldwork alongside participants showed that the perfect social atmosphere could not be easily articulated or defined, but instead, encompassed an assemblage of people, objects, ideas, affect, emotions, sensory feelings, embodiment and discourses (Shaw, 2014) dependent on the level the desired level of intoxication they wanted to experience. In her account, Louise identifies that on the one hand, herself and her friends seek out a social atmosphere so that they can pursue pleasurable drinking experiences together; on the other hand, they try to remain aware of how the social atmosphere may encourage them to consume alcohol to undesirable levels leading to negative outcomes. This highlights levels of ongoing reflection amongst young drinkers regarding how atmosphere can impact upon their drinking practices and experiences.

When trying to articulate a pleasurable or desirable drinking atmosphere, young people often found this easier to express in terms of what they found undesirable about drinking spaces and experiences. For example, part of seeking the social "atmosphere" for young people entailed active avoidance of particular drinking spaces. This is because certain spaces had or created bad atmospheres. For example, young people used local knowledge to avoid

establishments that they were aware had issues linked to underage drinking, trouble, a culture of problematic excessive consumption etc. One young female, Helen, encapsulated this during an interview:

> **Helen:** We are proper Sutton kids [laughs]. I would only go to The Project in Sutton *now, just because I haven't seen a lot of trouble in there. And when you go Anarchy, it's like me when I was seventeen. You can spot a sixteen or* seventeen-year-old in there a mi*le off, and there's always fights in there. The upstairs is always, like, you walk through to go to the toilets and you just get touched up all the time. You don't* really get that in The Project, and I think that it because the younger people are hyped up about Anarchy, but The Project is a bit more quieter...but once you go there you normally prefer it to the other clubs in Sutton. So, I prefer like, I mean Anarchy is very *cramp and crowded and it's really hot, and I just don't like it.*

Here Helen tries to dissociate herself establishments where underage drinking is rife, which in turn creates a culture prioritising excessive drinking and unpleasant emotional and bodily experiences due to the deviant consumption practices taking place there which interfere with her own pleasurable experiences. Whilst Helen may have once desired such spaces and experiences herself, her drinking values and practices have now changed; these spaces no longer suit her needs and do not fulfil the pre-requisites for the right atmosphere for pleasurable intoxication.

In relation to the above, during fieldwork at The Bell pub for Helen's birthday, I noticed how young people positioned themselves away from the main function hall where her party was taking place and remained near the bar so that they could avoid noise and interact with one each other at the beginning of the party to seek out a desirable atmosphere:

> In the main hall, there were circular tables around the edge on the room with chairs around them. The DJ was on a stage at the back of the hall playing music incredibly loud whilst drinking a pint. There were a few multi-coloured disco lights, but the rest of the room was dark with a long table with food along the sidewall. The room completely lacked atmosphere; the DJ looked miserable without an audience, who were all stationed just outside of the room by the bar drinking and chatting.

As noted in the field diary, later on in the evening, one adult male, Edward, commented that he did not want to enter the main hall until the "atmosphere picked up"; Edward and friends later entered the main hall once they desired to participate in excessive drinking and dancing after they had socialised with friends through conversation. This shows how people utilise

space to enhance their intoxication experiences based on the atmosphere that they desire, attributing levels of conscious thought and agency to youth drinking cultures linked to spatial awareness.

Participants revealed that they desired a range of different atmospheres, including those which would facilitate more reserved drinking, as expressed by Rosie during an interview:

> **Rosie:** It can be anything from going to the pub, to having movie nights and have a *glass of wine with a film. It depends…if you haven't seen somebody in a whil*e then you just have a quiet one. But if you want to have a proper night out then we go to somewhere like The Project and have quite a few drinks.

Here Rosie highlights the difference between have a quiet night of drinking in certain establishments or private spaces, in comparison to a 'proper' night out entailing excessive alcohol consumption typically in clubs or bars. This highlights the heterogeneity in youth intoxication cultures reflected in the diversity of spaces that young people appropriated in their ambition to seek out pleasurable intoxication atmospheres (Robinson, 2000).

Nonetheless, there were times when young adults sought out spaces that were reserved for excessive alcohol consumption. Such spaces were desirable when young adults were going to have what they coined as a "proper" night out. This correlates with Hubbard's (2005) research, whereby participants referred to "the big night out" which entailed excessive consumption and the crossing of boundaries in specific 'liminoid' spaces. For example, in interview with Justin, Leo and Tony, they identified specific places in the Sutton NTE to get drunk:

> **Justin:***…The difference between The Sportsman and The Star is that in The* Sportsman a lot more quieter. The clientele as well are a lot more mature and a better kind of smell and atmosphere, rather than The Star. And then I think the likes of Voodoo *Lounge and Canon Bar…Canon Bar is a lot more busy and more packed to the rafters.* But you still have the happy medium of the music with the pub environment although *you pay more than you would in the likes of Wetherspoon's. Erm, but the environment* is better, you have a more vibrant atmosphere.
> **Tony:** *In Spoon's you can get Jägerbombs for five for a tenner. It's the same for me really, I like going Wetherspoon's because the price of drinks are reasonable. Voodoo Lounge for cocktails…Canon Bar for when your… [*Justin and Leo interrupt and *simultaneously say "smashed" and laugh] …*yeah sma*shed…and then from that point you don't remember the rest of the night.*
> **Leo:** *That's when you do your nuts.*

This shows that spaces reserved for excessive alcohol consumption were considered desirable when they offered opportunities for unpredictability and unexpected encounters (Roberts, 2015). As will be highlighted in the forthcoming sections of this chapter, spontaneity was central to youth drinking cultures because this increased pleasurable consumption and had the capacity to create exciting intoxication stories.

The above accounts have revealed that finding the right social atmosphere can be restrained by the NTE drinking establishments themselves. To counteract such restraints, fieldwork showed that young people actively attempt to create their own social drinking atmospheres by carving out their own desired drinking spaces and atmospheres. This was pertinent to underage drinkers, who were restricted access to alcohol and drinking spaces and faced more challenge in creating pleasurable social intoxication atmospheres with friends. Such challenges resulted in young people showing determination and creativity to create social atmospheres. For example, in an interview with a group of young males at the Sparrow Youth Club, they enjoyed boasting to the youth club manager Lizzy and I as to how they obtained alcohol and cannabis and pursued illicit intoxication in forbidden spaces in Sutton to enhance the illicit atmosphere of their intoxication practices:

> **Seth:** Like me and whoever, like either we go into Sutton and we go on places like *rooftops…*
>
> **Laura:** Rooftops?
>
> **Seth:** Yeah, or we just smoke it in the high street.
>
> **Lizzy:** Where?
>
> **Seth:** *There's quite a few of them.*
>
> *[…]*
>
> **Lizzy:** *Where do you go, Morrison's or somewhere like that?*
>
> **Henry:** *Nah, we go…erm…*you know you got McDonalds and where you have got the *building opposite… they have got these little blue doors opposite, that they never chain* up, so if you go through them, they lead towards some like apartments, innit.
>
> **Lizzy:** Oh, I see, I know where you mean.
>
> **Henry:** So, if you keep going up the stairs in there it just takes you up on to the roof.
>
> **Seth:** *You know Tazza's in the high street? Well there's some shops opposite and you just go round the back and there's roof that you can get to from there.*

This shows how young people's illicit intoxication experiences of drinking alcohol and smoking cannabis was enhanced by pursuing intoxication in forbidden spaces that were public, yet hidden from authorities. Other spaces that underage drinkers occupied included a range of open and concealed spaces like: sheds, garages, parks, the woods, street spaces, "free"

houses, house parties or "gatherings", graveyards and car parks. Through the occupation of such spaces, young people were able to attach resistant or subversive meanings to create a desirable atmosphere which illustrates levels of agency against the structural parameters imposed upon them (i.e. being marginalised from public spaces and restricted from the NTE) (Robinson, 2000). These findings have shown that there is considerable conscious thought and action that goes into creating a desirable and pleasurable drinking environment for young people to enhance their intoxication experiences. The forthcoming sections will identify drinking strategies that young people employed to further facilitate pleasurable drinking experiences amongst friends.

4.6. Strategic drinking practices to facilitate pleasurable intoxication with friends

This section gives an account of the diverse range of the drinking practices that young people applied on nights out with friends, including: 'pre-drinking', 'drinking games', 'budget-drinking, a catching-up' drinking style, 'quiet drinks', and an awareness of how these practices impacted upon their embodied experiences of intoxication. These drinking practices show how young people adopted a range of strategic practices to regulate their intoxication so that they could achieve maximum pleasurable experiences on nights out with friends through desired level of intoxication, avoiding negative outcomes associated with excessive consumption.

4.6.1. Pre-drinking

'Pre-drinking', also commonly referred to as 'pre-loading', 'pre-gaming' or 'prinking' entails heavy sessional alcohol consumption, typically within the home prior to going out into the NTE (Wells, Graham and Purcell, 2009). Pre-drinking was a normalised practice observed in fieldwork alongside young participants in this study. Researchers have suggested that pre-drinking encourages excessive alcohol consumption because young people are not restricted by measures and therefore pour their own perceived acceptable measures of alcohol (de Visser and Birch, 2012; Boniface, Kneale and Shelton, 2013). However, fieldwork in this research identified young people felt that pre-drinking helped them to manage their intoxication and had other benefits like helping them to manage what they spent on nights out. For example, during an interview with Justin, Leo and Tony, they spoke how pre-drinking governed their intoxication better than in drinking establishments:

Justin: *That's the thing, when you are pre-drinking…like you would do before a club to save money, you would have that bit where you cram it in, but you don't want to be too drunk, because otherwise you won't get in, so you need that happy* point where *you're drunk but you think,* 'right, I can get in', but I just want that little bit more when *you're out so you don't spend too much. But now where you just go out and with the* same crowd at the pub, you just sit there and talk, and before you know it the time has *gone and your thinking, 'Who's* round is it?*' It's different when you physically have to* go up and buy your own drink, you know if you are buying a round, you will then get three other people who will buy a round too. So, before you know it you have had four drinks in a round.

Tony: *And normally it depends on the lads in the round and who's drinking. Like if someone finishes their drink first then they go up and get the next one because they've* finished first, so it makes you finish yours a bit quicker.

Here Justin outlines that pre-drinking is not just a money-saving activity, but it is done in a controlled way because he is aware that consuming excessive amounts of alcohol will result in him or friends not gaining access into drinking establishments due to high-levels of intoxication. Not gaining access into drinking establishments was deemed as problematic because it resulted in the night 'finishing before it began', which was universally socially unacceptable amongst research participants. When young people could see that friends were drinking too much in pre-drinking contexts they would encourage them to slow down or 'save' themselves for the rest of the night. Moreover, Justin and Tony imply that during pre-drinking, individuals drink at their own controlled pace, unlike drinking in licensed venues. This is because pre-drinking allows them to drink at their own pace, unlike traditional practices like round in places like pubs which often encourages drinking beyond desired levels of intoxication. Thus, pre-drinking is deemed as pleasurable to people because it enables them to feel that they have a sense of autonomy and control of their drinking and intoxication.

In relation to the above, Wells, Graham and Purcell (2009) argue that pre-drinking is problematic because instead of pre-drinking replacing drinks consumed in the NTE; young adults often consume more alcohol than those who do not pre-drink at all. Whilst this was observed on a number of occasions during fieldwork in this research, research participants identified that young people would employ additional strategies to regulate their drinking once out in the NTE. This was often achieved by what young people coined as 'slowing down', which will be examined in-depth in the forthcoming sections of this chapter. Therefore, pre-drinking does not always result in further excessive alcohol consumption in NTE spaces.

Young people like Helen identified that the greatest benefit that derived from pre-drinking was that it gave young people the opportunity to socialise and bond:

> **Helen:** But yeah, I do really enjoy it [pre-drinking], but I enjoy getting ready and doing *it with my friend's house and having a few drinks first. Like, I like the atmosphere of* being together and looking forward to a night out. I think that that is the best part of a night out, is the before bit. Because o*nce you are in there, you can't really talk in there before its really loud and you can't muck about. […] But, anyway, for me it's definitely* the social side rather than going out and just drinking.

Helen's account reveals that pre-drinking is less about the drinking per-say, and more about the opportunity to socialise with friends in a pleasurable environment. This reinforces that friendship and sociality is a priority for young people in this study, rather than intoxication whereby "alcohol together seems to enable friends to affirm their relationships through generating a different sociality to that which is possible when sober" (MacLean, 2016:97).

4.6.2. Drinking games

Studies of youth alcohol consumption have suggested that drinking games are a central component of youth drinking cultures, and although they are widespread amongst young people, games vary considerably across countries, cultures and social contexts (Polizzotto et al., 2007). Drinking games were prevalent amongst young people in this research and played a complex role in young people's pleasurable drinking experiences. Drinking games were typically reserved for the home and took place in pre-drinking contexts, or formed part of house-party activities (particularly for underage drinkers). Moreover, drinking games were reserved for 'big nights out' (like birthdays and special occasions), as opposed to being a frequent practice. This is because young people wanted to ensure that drinking games retained levels of spontaneity which can lead to positive emotions amongst friends (Fjaer, 2015).

Drinking games are a social activity involving the consumption of alcoholic beverages and are underpinned by rules which determine how, and how much an individual should drink. According to the research participants, success at drinking games was measured through being skilful enough at games to avoid alcohol consumption, or being able to maintain bodily control when drink 'penalties' were given. Drinking games played by participants were classified as: competitive versus non-competitive, and games of skill versus games of chance (Polizzotto et al.,2007:471). Games observed in fieldwork or discussed in interviews amongst

young people included (see Appendix Ten: Youth drinking games' for detailed descriptions of the games'):

- Beer Pong
- Liars Dice
- Ring of Fire
- Piss Artist
- Board games (Battleships, Pictionary, Twister)
- Card games (Rummy, Black Jack)

Fieldwork observations in young people's homes showed that the above drinking games encouraged and resulted in heavy consumption. This was confirmed through interviews when young adults explained how drinking games created drunken excess. For example, Justin, Leo and Tony discussed the impact of drinking games upon their intoxication levels:

> **Leo:** *I've done drinking games with cards, those are the easiest things to do really. I've* also played Liars Dice, which we last played on my birthday.
>
> **Laura:** How does Liars Dice work with alcohol?
>
> **Leo:** [Long dramatic pause] <u>Badly!</u> [The group laugh together hysterically]. If a person guesses the number of dice incorrectly, then that person loses a dice and has to do a shot. A shot based on their personal preference. But, if the person who challenges someone and says they are lying is wrong, then they have to do the shot instead. So, someone always does a shot when a dice goes.
>
> **Laura:** What sort of shots did you have?
>
> **Leo:** *Erm…we had Jägermeister…some Eristoff Black vodka…Corky's, that was* pretty much it. Oh, and some Sambuca, oh yeah and some Cointreau.
>
> **Laura:** Have you done any drinking games Tony?
>
> **Tony:** *Erm, yeah probably the same as what Justin and Leo have just said. But there's* another one called Pyramid. You err, basically have a pyramid of cards and one person turns the card over, and then the next person says basically higher or lower.
>
> **Laura:** So, like that old game on TV, with Bruce Forsyth?
>
> **Leo:** Yeah, Play Your Cards Right or something?
>
> **Tony:** Yeah, like that! But the first tier was one shot, the second tier was two shots – all the way down to three shots, four shots and then on the bottom tier its five shots. *It's a quick flowing, get drunk kind of game. [Laughing] People end up…face down…* on the floor!
>
> **Justin:** *I've never played that before.*

Tony: Ah well, I must introduce you to that one then. I like to bring these new games *and experiences to my good friends, so they know what it's like!*

Justin: *That's the good thing about Liar's Dice, becau*se effectively it is a judgement game. You need to keep your concentration, because you need to remember how many dice are in play and obviously as you are drinking more, your judgement becomes more impaired and you lose all track of what is going on in the game and then you make poor decisions, *and so…*

Tony: You start getting pissed and getting sloppy, and then getting even more pissed and even more sloppier.

Justin: So, *it's like a downward spiral, you just keep going.*

This shows the problematic nature of drinking games in the sense that young people are aware that they result in excessive alcohol consumption; but continue to play them regardless. This indifference towards risks associated with drinking games is illuminated through the accounts given by the participants. Firstly, Leo explains that drinking games create and evoke pleasurable memories with friends (like his birthday). Based on other young people's accounts and fieldwork observations of drinking games in this study, they appeared to generate a pleasurable effect. This opposes other studies like Pollizotto et al. (2007) who found that games ended up with negative outcomes like losing consciousness or vomiting. Pollizotto et al. (2007:472) state that young people in their research regarded this as "badges of honour"; in contrast, young adults in this research did not aspire to this. For example, although Tony presents an exaggeratory tale of ending up "lying face down on the floor"; as highlighted by Justin at the end of the interview extract, young people aimed to ensure that they can "just keep going" when it comes to drinking games and having a good night out. Therefore, drinking games for young people in this research is less about losing memories and negative outcomes; but achieving intoxication without losing complete control. Consequently, drinking games tended to arrive at a somewhat more natural end whereby individuals were ready to wind down excessive drinking so that they could maintain control. This opposes Pollizotto et al's. (2007) study which found that young people stopped playing games because of running out of alcohol, losing consciousness, being too drunk to remember the rules, or that the game had become boring. This suggests that drinking games for participants in this research enabled them to create valuable memories, and in turn, tell good stories amongst friends in future drinking occasions and strengthen social bonds.

Games like 'Beer Pong' were viewed as somewhat 'traditional' drinking games; however, young people often transformed 'ordinary' board games and card games into drinking games

For example, in an interview with a group of young males at Sparrow Youth Club, they explained how they changed the board game Battleships into 'Battle Shots':

> **Laura:** Do you play any drinking games?
>
> **Seb:** Battle shots!
>
> **Stuart:** Beer pong!
>
> **Laura:** What is battle shots?
>
> **Stuart:** *Oh my god. It's amazing!*
>
> **Seb:** *You see battleships the game, you gotta' set it out like that, and basically you* have got shots in it, and say I am playing against you like that, say if I say F3 and your shot is there then you have got to down it.
>
> **Laura:** So you take a real battle ship game and when you hit a ship you do a shot?
>
> **Seth:** *Yeah exactly! It's actually quite funny.*
>
> **Henry:** Drunk Twister is funny.

Whilst practices like drinking games could be seen as problematic, they highlight levels of agency through creativity and imagination stimulated by a desire to create novel drinking experiences that can be shared with friends in a social context to strengthen bonds; rather than simply drinking to get drunk. This further strengthens arguments within this thesis that contemporary youth alcohol consumption for young people in this study is driven by opportunities to participate in social and cultural activities that are linked to intoxication, but to fulfil alternative pleasures like strengthening friendships and enhancing sociality.

4.6.3. Round Drinking

Round drinking entails individuals within a group buying a round of drinks for the entire group. As noted in historical studies of youth drinking cultures, round buying has been regarded as a traditional drinking practice which functions to promote egalitarianism amongst friends and promote a sociable situation (Dorn, 1981). However, based upon fieldwork observations in this research, it appears that round buying is becoming a less common drinking practice. This could be attributed to the problematic nature that round buying generated for the research participants, linked to issues like money and un-desired intoxication levels. For example, in an interview with Stephanie, Amelia and Rosie, they explained how round drinking impacted upon their pleasurable drinking experiences:

> **Laura:** Do you ever do rounds?

Rosie: Our friends like to do it, but there is one person in the group who always tries to wiggle out of it, just saying. They always miss their turn.

Stephanie: That was like when we used to try and include Elaine and then she would*n't get one back.*

Amelia: Oh my God. She used to accept the drinks and then when it was her turn she *would turn around and say I'm not drinking anymore. Or she would say I'm just going* to the toilet and disappear. But we tend to do it with the bottles of wine.

Stephanie: Yeah I think we do.

Amelia: Yeah if someone gets the wine in the pub, and then when we move on the next person will get the cocktails in the bar and it works out roughly the same as getting the bottle of wine.

Stephanie: I only tend to stick with us, like 2-*3 people, just close friends. You can't* have a round with that many people otherwise you would end up drinking loads.

This highlights that round drinking is typically reserved for intimate friendship groups, whereby individuals trust one each other to buy a drink in return. This idea of not being bought a drink in return is clearly of high economic value to young people, which highlights the pivotal awareness and role of cost in youth drinking cultures. Beyond issues relating to cost, this group of friends engage in conscious analysis about the impact of round drinking and the effect it can have on their pleasurable drinking experiences. On the one hand, they wish to engage in round drinking whereby they drink at a similar pace so that they can collectively achieve the same levels of a desirable state of intoxication. This stems from a desire of wishing to have a collective and shared experience. On the other hand, they find round drinking challenging because they do not wish to be encouraged into drinking beyond their desired pace; which round drinking often causes. However, through their account it appears that Stephanie, Rosie and Amelia have created an exclusive friendship group to engage in round drinking which allows them to achieve a collective pleasurable and desired level of intoxication.

Leo, Tony and Justin also explained the rationale for round drinking and how it is a highly pragmatic consideration based upon cost, levels of intoxication and negotiating pleasurable drinking settings:

Laura: Do you go into rounds?

Leo: No, I err, I believe the phrase is to go Dutch! I just pay for my own drinks and just *leave it at that. Because if I do rounds with, for example Justin, it's going to cost me a lot. I don't wanna' do that and get d*runk, but he does and it just puts us at logger heads *and causes conflict so I'd rather go it alone.*

Justin: That is the problem, obviously if you buy four drinks, you expect the others to buy them in return. So for Leo, he can drink at his own pace, but if he enters the round *then he will be obliged to buy back in that round. I know he's getting drinks back, but* its forcing him to drink as much as everyone else.

Tony: Basically, when you are in a round you are stuck in it until you have bought everyone a drink–*there's no way out. The other th*ing as well is that instead of four or five of you going up to the bar all at once you can just send one person to go up to the bar.

Justin: *In Wetherspoon's, where we sit in the booths it's not very easy, like the log*istics *of trying to get to the bar, it's not ideal. So you try and drink with the fastest person, so if someone's empty, which is normally intimated by Tony [Laughs], you have to drink…* [Tony starts tapping his glass on the table, which makes Justin laugh]*….which is sometimes denoted by tapping… So sometimes, that's why we end up drunk. So my theory is, I don't drink to get drunk, it's just that in this social atmosphere you are* drinking as fast as the fastest person.

Leo: Occasionally, I will do rounds actually. Say, with Justin I will have a round with *him, if I am expecting a good night, or I will go into a round with Malik if he's in the mood for slow drinking because I know he's not going to rush his drink just because he know he will get a drink. It's* about finding people who match your drinking speed. Oh and lack of money.

In this account and based on field observations, conflict can arise from round drinking whereby some young people might request a more expensive drink when it is somebody else's round. Such attention to detail to cost highlights the centrality of money in youth drinking cultures. Tony suggests that the social "atmosphere" deliberately produced by the NTE producers can promote excessive alcohol consumption (Shaw, 2016), as well as friends who accompany round drinking. This suggests that round drinking has the capacity to encourage young people to consume more alcohol that they would desire. However, in line with Stephanie, Amelia and Rosie's views, round drinking can be successful when you match drinking pace with friend(s). Moreover, Tony reveals that round drinking is a pragmatic situation of attempting to manage a crowded drinking environment. This was supported by fieldwork observations which revealed that young people would agree to participate in round drinking so that they did not have to spend so long at the bar, away from friends. For young people, staying together on nights out was non-negotiable; therefore, they drank in rounds so that individuals were not removed from the group for long periods. This shows that young people in this study, selectively engage in traditional drinking practices providing that they promote values of

friendship and sociality, and does not promote undesirable levels of intoxication that could affect such values.

4.6.4. "Budget drinking"

Interview data and fieldwork observations highlighted that young people have a highly sophisticated level of knowledge costs of alcoholic beverages in licensed and off-licensed establishments. As suggested in this chapter, and in other research (Wells, Graham and Purcell, 2009), cost is a significant factor that governs the drinking practices of young people. For example in an interview with Amelia, Stephanie and Rosie, they explained that to an extent, price dictates their consumption patterns:

> **Laura:** So is what you order on a night out often based on price?
> **Stephanie:** Well I would usually order a bottle of wine to share with the others, or *maybe two…well yeah, I guess that those are quite cheap and you are shari*ng them.
> **Amelia:** Yeah, usually one of us will buy a bottle and you usually get a drink and a half each out of that, and then the next person would buy a bottle.
> **Stephanie:** Yeah, then we would get like a double of a spirit of some kind, like vodka.
> **Rosie:** My friends usually get a round of shots too, the cheap ones like Sourz.
> **Amelia:** In places like Voodoo Lounge its buy one get one free, or buy one get one half price on the cocktails. So, you would like get a buddy and partner up on the cocktails.
> **Stephanie:** *Yeah I get wine and then switch to something else because I don't like* wine headaches.

This shows that where possible, young people base drink choices upon taste. However, there are occasions when young people feel that price dictates their drink choices due to their economic position. Young people attempt to avoid this because it can result in undesirable outcomes such as "wine headaches", hangovers, sickness etc. However, they feel that this is not always possible and consequently engage in alternative drinking practices whereby they try to obtain the maximum amount of alcohol for their money. For example, Justin, spoke about "budget drinking" as a way to get drunk at the cheapest cost:

> **Justin:** When I was nineteen or twenty and used to go out with the work lot, we used to do something called budget drinking.
> **Tony:** [Laughing] Budget drinking?

Justin: We would all have like ten pounds each or whatever in a group of three or four of us. And we put the money together and we would get stuff, anything, like the pitchers, beers and spirits and basically large volumes of alcohol for as little money as possible, but it would be in the most concentrated form. So you would go for the likes of Long Island Ice-tea which was high in spirits and other strong stuff. So you would get drunk quicker, especially be*cause of mixing your drinks too…*going from shots*…*to beers*…*to cocktails. So, with the concentration of spirits and the variety of drinks, hence the budget drinking, because the time you have spent twenty or thirty quid you are absolutely sozzled.

Justin's account of 'budget drinking' could also be considered as what is commonly referred to amongst others a 'whip'[28]. This approach to drinking encouraged excessive and risky alcohol consumption because young people had less control of what was being purchased; but was a practice that was used only on special occasions or when they deliberate aimed to achieve high levels of intoxication cheaply. These findings highlight that whilst young people in this study are positively adept at finding value for money in the pursuit of intoxication; it also highlights how they are heeding to the 'culture of intoxication' by exploiting the access and availability of cheap alcohol in the NTE (Measham and Brain, 2005). These findings are relevant to current policy debates regarding Minimum Unit Pricing, showing that responsibility needs to be taken by the government and alcohol industry in doing their part to discourage risky alcohol consumption practices in the UK against the cultural backdrop of a normalisation of excessive consumption (Wood et al., 2014).

4.6.5. 'Catching up' and 'slowing down' to stay on drinking par

"Catching up" was a key drinking practice that young people referred to in fieldwork. This meant that an individual would feel the need to consume alcohol to reach the same perceived levels of intoxication as their friend(s). During an interview with Rosie, Stephanie and Amelia, they revealed that not only did they dislike arriving later than friends on nights out alone at pubs, but arriving much later than friends to the NTE prompted them to engage in the 'catching up' drinking practice:

Stephanie: And then you have to try and find people as well.
Rosie: They have normally had a few drinks before you as well if you turn up late, so then you want to try and catch up with them.

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[28] A whip is a collective contribution of money by a group of individuals for purchasing alcohol.

Like Rosie, young people who arrived later than their friends on a night out felt the need to catch-up to their levels of intoxication because they were ahead and wanted to be on par with them. Importantly, Rosie makes it clear that she is not expected nor is she pressured by her friends to catch up, it is her choice. In this study, young people attributed the catching up approach as wanting to share a collective embodied experience of intoxication with friends. In relation to this, young people who were already out drinking often encouraged their friends to catch up with them; thus making the idea of catching up a two-way reciprocal process. This is supported by MacLean (2016:97) who suggests that, participants in her research referred to this as "being on the same level" or "keeping up" so that "affinity between friends is maximized when both internal affective states as well as drinking enaction (the physical act of consuming drinks in tandem with others), were aligned." Similarly, Coleman and Cater (2005:130) refer to this as 'peer guidance' whereby young people suggest that it is preferable to keep up with friend's drinking levels because it is more fun to be at the same level of drunkenness.

When meeting Tony and Amelia at their house for pre-drinking to celebrate Amelia's birthday, the group in attendance had been drinking before Justin, Stephanie and I arrived. As a result, Amelia and Tony recognised our sober states in comparison to them and strongly encouraged us to have a shot so that we could catch up to their level of intoxication:

> Amelia suggested it was nearly time to leave, so we should do a Jägerbomb before we left. I tried to get out of it, saying that I hate Jägermeister, but Amelia and Tony laughed and handed one over. They had bought the Jägermeister and energy drink especially for the guests coming round tonight. All of the girls drank their Jägerbombs slowly; cringing and pulling faces as they drank. *Sadie said "eww" and "urgh" after* drinking it.

This shows how young people felt that catching up and sharing similar levels of intoxication could be achieved by drinking either strong alcohol (e.g. shots) in quick succession, or by consuming vast quantities of alcohol at a quicker pace than their friend(s). This approach is clearly risky because it promotes excessive consumption. Nonetheless, during fieldwork observations, I did not encounter young people placing excessive pressure upon each other to consume alcohol to catch up, nor did I observe individuals facing significant negative outcomes (such as losing consciousness) because of attempting to catch up. This is because catching up was a temporary drinking style with the specific function of allowing individuals to reach the same level of intoxication with friends.

Once young people felt that they had caught up and were on par with each other's intoxication, individuals were often aware of the need to re-alter their consumption patterns and practices

so that they could maintain their own bounded levels of intoxication. For example, during an interview with Justin, Leo and Tony, it was apparent that although the friends aimed to drink to achieve similar levels of intoxication, they would freely deviate from the groups drinking where necessary:

> **Justin:** *It depends. It's typically for me, done on value. But lately I have noticed,* especially because I drink a lot more with Tony now, we tend to ask each other what we are drinking and stay with the similar drinks as each other. Like we drink beer together, and then Tony will have Jack Daniels which is more stronger and hitting. But I have, what I have been told is a female drink [looks at Tony], and I get chastised for drin*king it every time…which is Malibu and orange juice.*

Here Justin makes it clear that he likes to enjoy drinking at the same pace with his friend Tony to achieve similar levels of intoxication, but will switch to lower alcohol content drinks so that he can effectively regulate his own intoxication levels. This is what young people often referred to as "slowing down" or 'taking it easy'; a common practice employed by young people observed in fieldwork. This highlights that although friendship and intoxication is central to youth drinking practices, young people in this study will assess their own levels of intoxication and deviate from friends to achieve an individual desired state of intoxication. This could mirror what Coggan's and McKellar (1994:16) consider as 'peer preference' or 'peer assortment' as opposed to peer pressure, which states that youth drug use can be attributed to favouring or choosing friends or associates over others views about drug-use.

4.6.6. "Quiet Drinks"

Whilst normalised and excessive alcohol consumption was observed amongst young people in this study in line with the 'culture of intoxication' which prioritises heavy sessional consumption reserved for weekends and big nights out (Measham, 2006); it became apparent that alongside such practices, young people equally valued what they called "quiet drinks". The aim of quiet drinks was to go out drinking with friends (occurring at any time or day of week) and consume alcohol in a way that was deemed as 'sensible' compared to other drinking practices. Such drinking occurred amongst small groups in settings like pubs, bars or at home. For example, during an interview with Louise and Cara, they suggested that they frequently go out for "quiet drinks", which they deemed as highly sociable and fun:

> **Cara:** No. I am like a Granny now [laughs]. I get up, go to work, come home and then *its dinner, bath, bed. If we go out, like randomly we might go…I don't know…say a pub*

quiz or just for a quiet drink and stay in a club or a bar. It's not so much clubbing, its *only really clubbing if it's like someone's birthday or a celebration, so that's the only* time we do it [drink heavily].

This shows that young people often favour 'sociable drinking styles' amongst other styles of drinking (Harnett et al. 2000:70). This is supported by Harrison et al. (2011) who suggests that transitions into young adult drinking styles may involve frequent drinking, but of reduced quantities per drinking session. This shows that not all youth consumption experiences live up to media and government representations of youth 'binge' drinking and that there is heterogeneity within youth drinking cultures.

In an interview with Leo, Tony and Justin, they expand upon the rationale behind 'quiet drinks' when discussing their drinking experiences:

> **Leo:** *Well I have been to clubs on literally a couple of occasions, but haven't really enjoyed it. It's too noisy, for me they are anti-*social. If I am going out with my friends, *I expect to have a good time. But you can't even speak to* your friends because the music is too loud and the club is too dark, too crowded. But the pub is an ideal *environment, you can sit down, it's quiet and relaxed, and you can have a conversation* without worrying about somebody spilling their drink down you.
> **Justin:** I think as you get older your social needs and environments change. So when *you're younger you're more energetic and it's a good meeting place to meet ladies and stuff like that. So that's why predominantly they are saturated. […]* Although, it can be a nice environment with the music and a good atmosphere, other times it can become quite aggressive.

From this account, it is apparent that young adults desire or have the need for 'quiet drinks' because the culture of intoxication and environments that promote excessive alcohol consumption can become unappealing. As describe by Leo, such environments and practices are anti-social, which goes against young people's desire to enjoy social and cultural activities linked to intoxication with friends. Thus, young adults deliberately engage in a style of drinking that promotes sociality so that they are able to meet new people, interact with others of their own age and status and relax in an environment, rather than get drunk. This reflects a choice biography (Harnett et al. 2000:75), whereby young people do not desire or feel constrained to participate in the contemporary culture of intoxication; instead they create their own desirable drinking approaches by choosing and adopting their own drinking patterns within chosen settings.

Although young people aspire to achieve lower levels of intoxication on nights when they have 'quiet drinks', it could be argued that because heavy alcohol consumption is normalised, at times, quiet drinks are not so 'quiet' as young people might perceive them to be. For example, during fieldwork observations in pubs and bars where young people were supposedly out for 'quiet drinks', heavy consumption and intoxication would often occur by the end of the evening. During an interview with Justin, Leo and Tony, they acknowledged that 'quiet drinks' can unintentionally become excessive:

> **Justin:** Same. These [quiet nights out] are normally organised by myself, apart from *err birthdays and stuff. We tend to stay in the pub. It's ve*ry ra*re…obviously when I was* eighteen, nineteen or twenty, it was more clubs and pubs and later nights. Erm, *obviously looking for ladies and things like that…so…but now it's just quiet drinks in* the pub with friends. OK*…It's sometimes a fair few drinks [laughs]*. Normally it is until the pub closes.
>
> **Tony:** *It's basically like what Justin just said. Justin normally sets it all up, and we all just go around yours and have a few quiet drinks here…and go to the pub and have a few quiet drinks there…and a few quiet dr*inks turn into more drinks and then you have you normally have some Jägerbombs.
>
> **Justin:** Which are normally introduced by you...
>
> **Tony:** [Laughing] Yeah!
>
> **Justin:** You are the Shot Meister!
>
> **Tony:** *[Laughing]...and then I wake up. Sick. I don't remember leaving* the pub, or club, *or walking home [laughing], and just remember waking up with the toilet seat…so yeah! Oh and by the way, it's Justin's fault!*

This shows that although young people aspire to achieve sensible levels of intoxication, sometimes they unintentionally become intoxicated because of having a good time with friends; likely because individuals may have different views as to what is 'sensible' and 'responsible' (Harrison et al., 2011). This could attribute to how and why young people's intended drinking strategies go wrong as is examined in forthcoming sections of this chapter. Nonetheless, these findings show that young people in this study attempt to make conscious decisions to drink in a regulated way against the backdrop to intoxication which promotes excessive consumption.

4.6.7. Embodiment and pleasurable drinking patterns

This chapter has shown that using a variety of drinking strategies often with the assistance of friends, young people attempted to govern and achieve a desired state of intoxication that mirrored friends levels of intoxication. Young people also attempted to achieve desired states of intoxication was by maintaining a conscious awareness of the physiological effects that alcohol had upon their own bodies. This was so that they could avoid negative health and social outcomes from alcohol consumption like hangovers, sickness and losing consciousness. For example, Amelia, Stephanie and Rosie spoke about how they have drawn upon their past drinking experiences and the effects that certain drinking patterns have had upon their bodies to govern their current and future consumption patterns:

> **Laura:** How much do you think you would typically drink on a night out?
>
> **Amelia:** *God erm…*
>
> **Stephanie:** *I used to drink quite a lot…*
>
> **Amelia:** Me too. I used to drink a hell of a lot than what I do now. Now, we might have *a glass of wine at home, then have another one at someone's house and then getting a bottle of wine to share…So I guess across a night it would be like the equivalent to* near enough a bottle of wine, a shot and maybe a cocktail or two.
>
> **Rosie:** *But if we do drink that much then it's across a long period of time.*
>
> **Amelia:** Yeah, that would be my limit. Nowadays I can understand my body and I can *feel myself getting drunk, so I just say to myself it's probably best that I don't have* another one and just stop there. When I was younger, I used to just knock them back, like I would have five or six of those VK things in a short space of time, and then it *would hit me when I walked out of a club. So now I'm a lot more sensible.*
>
> **Stephanie:** I used to drink a lot, but I always knew when to stop, and I was always quite careful when I had work or something the next day.
>
> **Amelia:** *Yeah you have always been good like that, whereas I wouldn't really feel it when I was dancing and then when I got outside or in a cab that's when I would feel it. Then I wouldn't feel very well.*
>
> **Rosie:** *I don't* drink that much when I go out really. I would normally have something *like 3 Malibu's and coke, doubles that is, but not a lot. Sometimes I'll have vodka and coke if there's no other option, but I don't really like vodka. But I'll go* for it anyway. I can *tell when I'm drunk and I'll just have a coke instead.*
>
> **Stephanie:** Generally I will have two glasses of wine and then go on to something else and have vodka, because I seem to be ok on vodka.
>
> **Amelia:** *Yeah I am normally OK on vodka too, it's the wine and the* shots that get you.

> **Stephanie:** Yeah if you go past two or three glasses of wine then you are in trouble the next day.

This shows how young adults engage in a process of reflexivity regarding the physiological effects of alcohol upon their bodies and use this knowledge and experience to gauge current and anticipated future drinking. Although this is not a robust approach to preventing negative outcomes from alcohol consumption, nonetheless, young people spoke confidently about their own ability to self-assess and govern their intoxication levels. Leyshon (2008:271) argues that the materiality of the body can be used to reproduce, sustain and/or contest dominant social assumptions and expectations. Thus, through an awareness of their bodies and by regulating their own bodies, young people in this research appear to contest dominant assumptions that young people aspire to drunken representations and lack bodily control.

During an interview with Louise, she explained that when friends and acquaintances buy her drinks, this is when she finds it difficult to manage her intoxication using strategies relating to embodiment:

> **Louise:** *Which is how sometimes I get so drunk. I've realised that if I buy my own* drinks, I know exactly how much money that I have got, and I know how much I can handle, and then I am alright. But as soon as people start buying me drinks, and shots *and getting in rounds and stuff like that, then I don't know how much I have drunk. And* then I just end up drinking whatever anyone has given me, and those bloody shots! Then I end up getting sick and having a three-*day hangover, so that's why I get ill.*

Here Louise explains that where possible she prefers to takes ownership of her drinking practice and intoxication by ensuring that she purchases her own alcohol because she knows what her body can handle. This shows young people's awareness of how the body is fallible and can "fail" us, particularly with others involvement and so young people actively attempt to change how their body performs through governing their consumption levels (Leyshon, 2008:273). Therefore, young people are clearly engaged in an ongoing process of reflection regarding the physiological effect that alcohol has upon the body and use the body as a tool to regulate intoxication to a desired level. Collectively, these findings demonstrate how young people in this study apply a variety of drinking strategies to govern their intoxication levels so that they maintain control to maximise pleasurable outcomes with friends in a variety of drinking contexts.

4.7. When drinking strategies go wrong: Accidental drunkenness

As much as young people attempted to control their individual desirable intoxication levels and that of friends; at times, unsurprisingly, young people consumed alcohol that resulted in negative outcomes including: loss of control, sickness, regrettable sexual experiences, aggression and memory loss. This is because the negative effects of alcohol cannot be accurately predicted or rationalised in the way young people often claim or attempt to achieve (Griffin et al., 2008). Whilst young people acknowledged that this happened on occasion; this was considered outside of the norm of their usual behaviours, and while excessive consumption may be seen as normalised, negative outcomes were not. This unintended and undesirable over-intoxication is what young termed as "accidental" drunkenness as identified in fieldwork.

Fieldwork identified that there was a mutual understanding amongst young people produced from a common and accepted understanding that even though negative outcomes from excessive alcohol consumption were not desirable, they would inevitably happened to everyone as expressed by Amelia, Rosie and Stephanie during an interview:

> **Rosie:** *I haven't had a bad experience with mixing drinks yet either, so I am going to keep doing things like this…*
> **Amelia:** *Oh don't worry, there is still time…*
> **Stephanie:** Yeah sooner or later, it will get you... [All laugh]

Although negative outcomes from excessive alcohol consumption were viewed badly amongst young people because they could be of detriment to the pleasurable pursuits of nights out; young people recognised avoiding negative outcomes when drinking excessively was not always realistic, whereby exceptions have to be made. However, providing that young people expressed some kind of moral emotion towards accidental drunkenness, such as remorse, guilt or shame, friends or acquaintances would often appease transgressions through forgiveness (Fjaer, 2015) particularly because they could relate to such experiences.

Upon recognition that intoxication could go wrong and lead to negative outcomes, young people attempted to put additional strategies in place to address issues relating to excessive consumption amongst friends. Collectively, such strategies were seen as 'looking out for friends' whilst consuming alcohol or drugs. This act of looking out for each other not only highlights the central role of friendship in youth intoxication cultures, but also how rituals around friendship can contribute to positive drinking/drug practices and values. One young male articulated the constitution of friendship and drug consumption between himself and his friends at Sparrow Youth Club during an interview:

Henry: This is like what I was saying earlier, because we regard people here as family *and stuff like that…*and were so *close with everyone here…*like we can judge each other on what drugs people can take, and what they can handle. So together, we can take them to get stuff that they want. And basically we know that for a fact, whoever *takes us, is going to take care of us and stuff like that. So we don't have to worry about* people here because we all look out for each other.

Such level of mutual trust amongst young people is seen as the hallmark of friendship (MacLean, 2016). Young people even went as far as to suggest that the level of intimacy between friendships was so strong that friends exhibited levels of intuition regarding whether or not someone was going to lose control through excessive intoxication. If this was the case, then someone would take action to ensure that the consequences of excessive consumption was minimised. This idea of intuition was expressed by one young female, Helen, during an interview:

Helen: But some groups are alright like that, I think that with your friends you know when to step in. Like if I know that someone is <u>really, really</u> drunk or more drunk than *they normally are, then I won't drink as much because I know that consciously they are going to need some help later on. So I can't afford to be like them. But, it sounds bad,* but sometimes it seems like we are almost taking it in turns, not properly. But if I got *drunk one week really badly and the others look after me, then I'm like, 'I am so sorry', but then it's like, 'Aww its quits now because I looked after you like six weeks ago. It's alright we're even.'*

This shows levels of consciousness regarding the welfare of friends even when individuals themselves are in a state of intoxication. Helen, like other young people in this research show respect for their friend's autonomy in relation to their alcohol consumption by not preventing them from drinking, but by 'keeping an eye on' friends. In fieldwork, I observed that this entailed providing care, like: asking friends whether they had had enough to drink (prompting individuals to slow their consumption), fetching them water or food, offering a helping hand (to prevent physical injury), or stepping in when potential regretful interactions were about to occur (e.g. kissing strangers). Such actions could be considered as harm reduction strategies employed by young people whilst engaging in intoxication. As highlighted by MacLean (2016:94), this is what William Rawlins (1992) refers to as a dilemma between autonomy and responsibility: "enaction [which] entails careful balancing of respect for individual autonomy against the care that is due to friends as a result of mutual intimacy". However, Helen's account reveals a problematic value that it is acceptable and expected amongst friends to take it in

turns to look after each other because of excessive intoxication. Such acceptance is reflected in her sympathetic comment later in the interview stating, "We have all been there." In summary, such findings show how young people in this study prioritise care to friends, which demonstrates that such relationships are real and protective (MacLean, 2016).

4.8. "Jägerbombs are like my kryptonite": Adapting drink choices to pursue pleasurable intoxication

As well as employing consumption strategies to manage intoxication levels, young people showed levels of conscious thought regarding alcohol beverage choices to facilitate pleasurable drinking experiences amongst friends. Across the fieldwork, young people were keen to indicate that the main rationale behind their drink choices was for taste because alcohol with a desired taste brought them pleasure. This was articulated by Tony, Leo and Justin in an interview about their drinking experiences:

> **Laura:** Is there anything you will not drink?
> **Tony:** Malibu.
> **Leo:** *I don't touc*h whiskey. I had a shot of that once and it was horrific. I had to dart to *the nearest water closet. That's why I don't join in with the Jack Daniels with the boys. I don't drink vodka because I don't like the taste of it.*
> **Justin:** *I can't drink vodka either [grimace*s].
> **Tony:** *Occasionally I will have a vodka and coke if there's no other drink that I can* have, I can manage it, just the smell of it normally makes me ill.
> *[…]*
> **Justin:** *Like gin and stuff like that I just won't touch, even if it's given away.*
> **All:** We are se*t in our ways. We like what we like don't we. Yeah.*
> **Tony:** *So it's like beer, then some spirits, or women's drinks in your case [referring to* Justin], and then some cocktails.
> **Justin:** And cider. The odd cider is nice too.
> **Leo:** Cider with a drop of blackcurrant to take the edge off is good.
> **Tony:** Yeah I would normally have cider instead of beer actually. So I would have a couple of ciders and then a couple of shorts, otherwise the cider just is quite sweet.
> **Justin:** Sweet and gassy.

This shows that in relation to drink choices, young adults drink alcohol that they actually enjoy the taste of, as opposed to drinking alcohol for the sake of it. This goes against media representations that regularly depict young people consuming 'whatever they can get their

hands on' in vast quantities resulting in negative outcomes (see: Evans, 2016). However, fieldwork with young people suggests that participants opted for particular choices because they do not wish to consume alcohol that they dislike and avoid drinking mixtures of alcohol that they anticipate will result in negative outcomes like making them sick.

Young people often referred to the idea of going 'out out'. This referred to going out and anticipating that they would drink to excess to mark a celebratory occasion and accept a certain level of perceived acceptable minor negative outcomes linked to excessive outcomes like being hungover (Szmigin et al., 2009). In line with this attitude, young people consumed specific beverages which they said symbolised going 'out out'. This idea of beverages which symbolised excessive nights out was articulated by two males, James and David:

> **Laura:** OK. So what do you like to drink on a night out?
> **David:** *It depends…if you are going out, or if you're going out out. If you're just going out, then you just have a beer. But you don't like beer do ya'? [to James]*
> **James:** *It's alright if you are going out. But if I'm going out to get smashed out of my…* [Pauses and grins*]. I can't drink beer. It gives me the worst hangove*r and makes me feel sick.
> **David:** *It's too bloaty as well. Whereas spirits you get to drink it and just down it.*
> **James:** But if we just go to the pub, I will happily just have one beer.

This shows how young people were selective about their drink choices and made sure that their beverage choices strategically coincided with the type of night that they were going to embark upon. James and David articulate that the physiological effect of lager impacts upon how much they can drink during the night, and anticipate that it is not a drink that they could consume all night without having specific negative outcomes the next day; which is why they choose alternative beverages like spirits. On the one hand, James and David are seeking to maximise their intoxication and excessive consumption levels; on the other hand, they are also attempting to think strategically about the impact that alcohol will have upon their bodies and their ability to participate on the night and base drink choices upon that. The underlying message of their account also implies that beer and lager is not 'special' enough when going 'out out'. This is further evidence later on in the interview when James and David discuss shots and talk about how they consume them to get drunk:

> **David:** Yeah, I quite like JD and coke, it gets me wet. I like shots. Like Jägerbombs, *that's my favourite thing, that gets me fucked up.*
> **James:** *Yeah Jägerbombs, [James goes 'woop, woop, woop' after saying it].*
> *[…]*

David: *Nah, I don't like alcopops. We used to get them all t*he time in like Liquid and that. Ah, what were they called?

Laura: *VK's?*

David: Yeah. You used to get like two for a fiver or something. Looking back now, I realise that they were rank. I would never buy that shit anymore [says with disdain].

James: I remember the next day they used to make my teeth hurt. And my piss used to smell of whatever flavour I had been drinking that night [laughs]. Too sweet, and I have a sweet tooth. But my worst drink has got to be Tequila, if I drink Tequila then its game over.

David: <u>Game over!</u>

James: Yeah, gaaaame over. Twice I drank tequila and both times...I was scared for *my health, let's put it that way.*

David and James' attitudes reveal the problematic nature of drinking shots and that some young adults are prepared to face the consequences of excessive consumption for the sake of anticipated pleasure. Similarly, Tony, Leo and Justin spoke about what shot drinking represented to them on a night out, which fundamentally was about drinking to excess:

Tony: *[…] I think that night I must have ordered…*

Leo: About <u>forty</u> Jägers.

Tony: Yeah [laughs], and I had a few other drinks.

Leo: Bloody hell, every time I turned around and was like, *'Where's Tony?' It's like, 'Oh, he's at the bar.'* Then I say, *'W*hat you drinking Tony?*' And he goes, *'I've got this, this and this.'* Then he says, *'W*hat you drinking Leo,*' and I say, *'O*h just an Amaretto*'* and then he goes back to the bar orders me a drink and then goes, *'O*h and four Jägerbombs love.*'*

Justin: *It was like we kept having chasers wasn't it. It was like, we had a beer with a* chaser.

Tony: Jägerbombs are like my kryptonite. They really are. Once I start on them I get *like that taste for them, and it's like, if I don't finish the night on Jäger*bomb*s then it's like… its crap…it's dead…it's like I've not had a good night.*

For Tony, shots like Jägerbombs were not just drank for the enjoyment of taste, but they promoted opportunities to enhance friendships through communality and shared pleasurable experience linked to intoxication; despite knowing that consuming Jägerbombs would likely lead to negative outcomes the following day. There are appears to be a mentality of 'we are in this together' in the pursuit of pleasurable intoxication experiences. Although such findings

are problematic, they reveal that shot drinking is not a mindless hedonistic activity; but acts as a way to enhance friendship through intoxication.

Cara and Louise explained how cocktails were symbolic drinks reserved for going "out out", which strengthens the idea that young people make deliberate drink choices to coordinate with the type of night out. However, they also explain that cocktails are a deliberate beverage choice that they feel helps them to drink heavily but in a bounded way so that a desired level of intoxication could be maintained:

> **Louise:** *Same for me, it depends on the situation. Like if it's a casual one I will have a Corona, or a Jacques, or Rekorderlig. But, if I'm going <u>out</u>, I'll have a rosé and* lemonade or cocktail, like raspberry mojito.
> **Cara:** Hmmm, I love those.
> **Laura:** What is it about a raspberry mojito you love?
> **Louise:** *Erm, they're really tasty and you can't even taste the alcohol that much. And* sometimes wine is just a step too far. Sometimes if I have wine then it gets me too *drunk and I get too much of a hangover, so I'll have a cocktail and it lasts longer too. Even though they are stronger than wine, I don't drink them quickly because I know that they can go straight to your head. That's why I put le*monade in my wine too, so it takes the edge of the alcohol a bit.

These findings suggest that specific drink choices were made to symbolise a "proper" night out whereby anticipated high levels of intoxication would occur. This shows that drink choices were not random but strategic for young people so that they could sustain their night out with friends by governing their drink choices.

Although young adults had their favourite 'go to' beverages that they believed helped them to independently manage their intoxication; as observed in fieldwork, young adults in this research were regularly actively searching for new beverages and drinking experiences. The alcohol industry has recognised such patterns and market new beverages in supermarkets, pubs, bars and clubs, to provide drinkers with novel experiences in relation to taste and new ways to consume products; which MacPherson et al. (2010) argues can lead to risky drinking practices. Young people were aware of such products, and of which were observed being consumed in fieldwork, which included, but was not restricted to:

- Pre-packaged shots in supermarkets
- Jelly shots (premade and/or made by young people
- 'Slushy' drinks

- Alcoholic ice-lollies
- 'Bomb' shots ('J-Bomb', Fruit Bombs, Skittle Bomb, Glitter Bomb, Jägerbomb)
- Ready-mixed drinks (e.g. Gin and Tonic, Jack Daniels and Coke etc. in a can)

It became apparent that many of the alcoholic beverages and products were deliberately marketed at young adults and promoted levels of infantilism. This is because many of the drinks could arguably be associated with childhood and youth, such as alcoholic slushy drinks, which young people in this research said reminded them of the drink 'Slush Puppies'[29] which they consumed as children. Nonetheless, the reason that young people desired to consume new alcoholic beverages was that they acquired pleasure from being able to share such experiences with friends; which strengthened friendship bonds and sociality. As suggested by Smith (2013) such drinking experiences convey youth and vitality as traditional markers of youth cultures. Stephanie, Rosie and Amelia discussed how trying new drinks is about striking a balance between sticking to what you know so that you do not get ill and having new drinks to add to their repertoire and sharing these with friends:

> **Rosie:** If you see other people drinking something new as well, and they say, *'Oh its nice, maybe you should try it,'* you think, oh, *'It looks quite nice I might try it'*, you know *like Jägerbombs. I mean obviously I didn't quite* know what they were when they first came out, and you see older friends drinking it, saying how nice it is, then you want to try it too.
> **Stephanie:** Like on your birthday.
> **Rosie:** Yeah loads of people just kept buying them, so we all joined in, and they were really nice.
> **Laura:** Do you have that a lot? Experiencing lots of new drinks?
> **Rosie:** *Erm, I don't that I do that much…*
> **Stephanie:** *I do with cocktails, I have tried loads of different cocktails. But it's not like* a weekly thing where I am buying loads of different drinks.
> **Amelia:** I have tried lots of different drinks, but I tend to stick to what I like. Normally, when we are together we will have a bottle of wine.
> **Rosie:** *It's not very often that a new drink comes out though. Sometimes I stick to what* I know *so that I don't get ill.*

From this discussion, it is apparent that even though the group liked to try new drinks, they were cautious because they were unsure as to how they might affect their ability to handle their levels of intoxication; therefore, they often treated new drinks with respect and caution.

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[29] See: http://www.slushpuppie.co.uk/ for description of Slush Puppies.

This suggests that young people wish to engage in 'sensation seeking' (Macpherson et al., 2010), whereby they seek out novel and stimulating intoxication experiences. However, as demonstrated through young people's accounts such sensation seeking is bounded because they weigh up the risks associated with sensation seeking.

Even when buying alcohol for 'pre-drinking', young adults often looked for new alcoholic beverages that they have not tried before and could take round to friend's homes so that they could share new drinking experiences together in a safe environment. For example, I recorded in the field diary an occasion when I joined Justin at the supermarket to buy pre-drinks prior to going into Sutton NTE one evening:

> Justin walked up and down the beer and lager aisle several times. Finally, he decided upon a drink he had never tried before, which was also a new product: lightly carbonated Budweiser. When walking over to the checkouts, without prompt, he began explaining to me why he chosen to buy them: they were on special offer, he had never tried it before and it had a lower alcohol content than the *other lager's, which would help him to "survive the night". Lastly, he explained, "I reckon Leo will* like *this. I'll let him try one."*

Such insight shows the level of decision making and justification of young people's drink choices revealing that young people consider weigh up influences of upon intoxication upon the body, new experiences and relationship with friends. During fieldwork with Amelia and Stephanie, I recorded in the field diary how they wanted to introduce me to a new cocktail that they had discovered in The Vineyard:

> Once we had finished the food we ordered Amelia and Stephanie*'s "new favourite drink"* which they insisted that I tried and ordered for me (which I had no say in). They returned to the table with a sparkling Sangria for each of us. I found this quite amusing because when I previously went to The Vineyard with Amelia and Stephanie their favourite drink was a Lychee Martini cocktail; but since our last meeting, their new favourite drink had become the Sangria cocktail. They looked at me expectantly as I *took my first sip. I said that it was "nice". However, they detecte*d that I was not too enthusiastic. When they tried the drink, they said that they were disappointed that it did not contain all of the fruit that was in it last time and that it was *"not as good as usual"*. They were disappointed for us all.

This account highlights the importance of how sharing intoxication experiences can enhance friendships and bonds. An additional factor that contributed to young people's desire to try new beverages was that they could potentially help promote spontaneously drinking

experiences and nights out. For example, this was articulated by Helen when she spoke about the idea of seeking out new drinking experiences and that the newness of drinks contributes to the nights out that were different, unexpected or "random"; something of which is highly valuable to young people:

> **Helen:** But it happened because I was just on that hype. You know like when you are getting ready really quickly, and doing this and doing that, and then you end up drinking quick as well. And somehow I managed to get us free entry into this club, and erm, we got champagne and fish bowls. So it was one of those, you know, random nights that *are just the best. They are the better ones where it's all just off the cuff, and it's like,* no I am coming. They always seem better.

This shows how young people gain pleasure from new drinking experiences and use these to form drinking stories with friends. However, as implied by Helen herself, the consequences of this is that young people appear to have less control over the night and get carried away in relation to their intoxication which may lead to unintended excessive consumption and negative outcomes.

Nostalgic drinks also informed young people's drink choices because they provoked old memories and drinking stories. Thus, young people often ordered particular drinks or adopted certain drinking patterns because they wanted to re-created old memories and promote a sense of nostalgia about their previous drinking stories. Such drinks were important valuable to young people because it presented the opportunity to re-live pleasurable drinking experiences. For example, during fieldwork in The Star pub, I noted in the field diary how David ordered James and I drinks prompted by nostalgia and memory about past drinking experiences that he wanted to share with us:

> When we arrived, David offered to get the first round. He said that he was going to *"stock up" because it takes ages to get served in the pub. He ordered James two double Amaretto's and cranberry, he had vodka and Monster a*nd orders me a large glass of rosé (without prompting me about the drink measure). Shortly after making the order he spotted a sign on the wall about Fishbowls. After seeing this sign he asked *the barmaid to add a 'Sex on the Beach' Fishbowl to his order.* Afterwards he explained *that he ordered it because it reminded him of a time he "got fucked up on holiday" and* proceeded to reminisce about his past holiday experiences whilst we waited for our drinks.

This shows how nostalgia also informed decisions around beverage choices as noted in fieldwork. Not only was nostalgia a good excuse to tell and share stories about intoxication

with friends, but the nostalgia acted as a prompt in which to highlight a pleasurable experience that an individual would like to recreate. This strengthens the idea that young people in this study actively make decisions to promote what they believe to be pleasurable drinking experiences devoid of negative outcomes to share with others.

4.9. Drinking and drug stories

Drinking and drug stories offered considerable insight into youth drinking/drug practices and values. Young people throughout fieldwork were eager to share drinking stories with me and amongst themselves. There is a growing body of literature regarding youth drinking cultures which highlights the centrality of drinking stories and narratives amongst young people (see: Workman, 2001; Sheehan and Ridge, 2001; Griffin et al., 2009; Tuténges and Sandberg, 2013). According to Tuténges and Sandberg (2013) these studies show that drinking stories have a number of functions for young people including: to recall pleasurable situations, form and consolidate friendships, provide entertainment, to acquire social and cultural capital, to make sense of consumption, explore embodied experiences and are in response to government discourse regarding responsibility and control. However, as suggested by Tuténges and Sandberg (2013), less attention has been given towards exploring the role of storytelling and its impact upon young people's substance use.

Generally, young people's drinking and drug stories in this research, much like other studies (e.g. Griffin et al., 2009) tended to focus on intoxication, pleasure and transgression. Young people under the legal drinking age were particularly eager to share that they had engaged in the deviant activity of underage drinking, which they often did without prompts. For example, during a lesson with a class of Year 7 students at Willow High School, two students Adam and Nigel wanted to share their experiences of alcohol consumption with me during the lesson:

> *Adam started to tell me proudly, "Miss, my parents have let me drink WKD before."*
> *"Really?" I replied. "Yeah, I didn't like know what it really was, I thought it was some* kind of o*ther drink, but I thought it tasted disgusting, so I just spat it out." […] I detected* that he wanted to show off that he has had tried alcohol, but was also looking for some approval by saying that he spat it out. Perhaps he wanted to demonstrate that was d*oing the 'right' thing?* Because of the environment, there was not much of a chance to talk to him. The boy sitting next to him, Nigel, wanted to share his experiences too, which disrupted our conversation. *"I've had WKD too. It's bangin'*, *Miss" and* simul*taneously flicked his fingers in the air. I said, "So both of you have tried it [alcohol]* then?" Nigel said, "Yeah, it was like at my Dad's friend's house party at Christmas time*

*and around New Year's Eve as well. My Dad and his friend made this sort of dr*ink that *had WKD, vodka and LOADS of juice in it. It wasn't like* that *strong because it had lots of juice in it, but it was really nice."*

Although there is very little information provided in this story, as highlighted by Tuténges and Sandberg (2013:538), "a narrator only needs to present story fragments or merely hint at stories for the listener to 'hear' the whole version." It appears that the function of this storytelling account for Adam and Nigel was to demonstrate to me that they had experienced alcohol consumption underage and committed a deviant activity. Furthermore, in agreement with Tuténges and Sandberg (2013) it seems that Adam and Nigel's need to share this story is a result of young people being inspired by drinking stories that they hear from others; therefore they want to be part of a shared experience and show that they are able to create transgressive stories for themselves.

Drinking stories were so predominant amongst friends and acquaintances, so much so, that during interviews, I discerned how young people could say a simple phrase that would spark laughter and hysterics amongst a group, followed by a more detailed narrative. This was illustrated by the Sutton Youth Bus boys when Morgan, Ed and Robin were talking about their drug use, which transformed into a drug story whereby Ed could barely contain his laughter:

> **Robin:** *Ah, I don't really smoke it [cannabis] that much.*
>
> **Laura:** What made you want to stop?
>
> **Robin:** I had a bad first time experience smoking that shit!
>
> **Morgan:** Awww my jaw! [Shouting; Morgan, Ed and Robin laugh hysterically].
>
> **Ed:** *[Still laughing] We were walking across the field yeah, and he's [referring to Robin] going…he rings his Mum yeah, and he says, "Mum I am in the park and I have smoked* some *drugs. Mum! Mum, can you come and pick me up…yeah. Can you hear me?" And he's like, "Mum, Mum! Hello? Hello?" And then she's like, "Yes Robi*n, I can hear *you, I will come and pick you up." Then he's walking up the street with me, and he's going, "Ed," and I'm like, "What's up?" He says, "My cheeks…are they going like this?" [Ed pulls his cheeks in opposite ways] and I was like, "Don't worry you are gonna' be alright," and he was like, "Am I gonna' die?" And then I was just like, "Yeah. You are gonna' die."*
>
> **Robin:** *Shut up, I didn't say that!*
>
> **Eddie:** Yeah you did!
>
> **Robin:** *I didn't say that, I said, 'Am I gonna' whitey?'*
>
> **Eddie:** *Nah mate, you was like, 'Am I gonna' die?'*
>
> **Robin:** Did I?

Morgan: Did you whitey?

Robin: Nah, I was alright in the end.

This shows the level of closeness and intimacy amongst young people whereby stories were shared, circulated and instantly recognisable amongst circles of friends (Tuténges and Sandberg, 2013). This is what Loseke (2012:253) calls 'master narratives', 'canonical stories' or 'formula stories' because "their plots, characters, and morals are recognisable and predictable to audience members." The reoccurring laughter shows ridicule aimed at Robin's incompetence of being able to handle the effects of cannabis; however, by the end of the story "all is well" because negative outcomes were not experienced. This shows how young people find some amusement in those who cannot handle full engagement in the culture of intoxication. Furthermore, this shows how transgressive drinking norms, to an extent, are allowed expected and valued amongst friends and not living up to intoxication norms can lead to a sense of failure (Fjaer, 2015).

In contrast to funny and acceptable transgressive drinking and drug stories, at times, young people told stories that they expected the group to appreciate and find amusing; but did not. Such values coincide with Fjaer's (2015) assertion that youth drinking practices, despite seeming chaotic, are both individually and collectively morally ordered amongst friends and acquaintances. For example, when comparing drinking stories in The Sportsman pub with Amelia, Tony, Justin, Martin and Malik, as recorded in the field diary, Tony told a story about how he drank and drove his car when he was younger:

> Tony started his story with the opening line, *"If you think that was bad..." and then told* a dramatic story about how when he was young he got in trouble with the police for drinking and driving when he was seventeen. At the end of the story, he boasted that *he "got away with it" and was not charged for drinking and driving. Had Tony not been* intoxicated, he would have sensed whilst telling the story that Justin, Martin and Malik were deeply unimpressed. However, because of his intoxicated state, he did not quite detect the atmosphere around the table. At the end of the story he was clearly expecting everyone to join in with his laughter, but nobody did. Instead, Amelia went on to ridicule him disapprovingly. Justin turned to me and said, *"Shall we go to the bar?" This was clearly to depart from the tense atmosphere.*

Clearly, Tony intended to tell this story to promote shock value, showing how deviant his drinking activities were. However, he was met with disapproval because he had gone 'too far' by breaking the law and potentially harming himself and others. This disapproval coincides with the argument of this chapter that young people aspire to create a balance in relation to

their drinking activities where they aim to benefit from the pleasurable outcomes of alcohol consumption and avoid the negative consequences. In similar occasions when stories were told that other young people disapproved of, friends quickly expressed disapproval to make clear that such practices were not deemed acceptable. This helps govern behaviours because young people avoid repeating such practices and neglect to repeat similar drinking stories. This shows how young people can influence each other's drinking values and practices positively by motivating young people to behave differently in the future (Fjaer, 2015).

In relation to young people's deviant drinking and drug stories that lead to disapproval, I noted how young people also regularly told drinking or drug stories with moral messages behind them. Unlike Tuténges and Sandberg's (2013) research of youth drinking which suggests that moral stories were often told to promote moral superiority; drinking stories in this study was to mark disapproval so that negative outcomes associated with past events and stories did not reoccur in the future. For example, when interviewing the participants on the Sutton Youth Bus, one young male, Robin, spoke about how his brother had to be collected by his parents because of excessive alcohol consumption, a brief story of which was heavily instilled with disapproval:

> **Robin:** We went one time to pick up my brother when he was pissed. So, we put him *in the back of the car and then all the way, he's like. "I got my fags, and no lighter. Got my fags, but no lighter." He did that* all the way home. Proper annoying.

Robin went on to explain later on that he would "never get in that state." Through such disapproving stories, young people articulated the difference between what was regarded as pleasurable and acceptable intoxication practices, and those of which were seen as being excessive and problematic. Such snapshots were regularly drawn upon to remind people how not to behave.

During one night out in Sutton for Amelia's birthday at the Voodoo Lounge bar, I recorded in the field diary how tensions arose when a couple on the night, Mike and Sadie, starting arguing, fuelled by excessive consumption:

> Mike and Sadie had started arguing again. Tony was propping Amelia up who was sitting on a stool and leaning her head on his shoulder, falling asleep. Amelia had three barely touched cocktails sitting on the bar that she had left unattended. Tony decided *that it was "time to call it a night" and so Amelia, Tony, Sadie and Mike left and told us* they would text to say they got home ok. The remaining people quietly sipped on their drinks un*til Jane said sarcastically, "Well that was a nice end to the night. What a way*

to ruin the atmosphere. Shall we head off too?" Everyone agreed that they wanted to go home.

As noted in the field diary on in latter fieldwork, the story of the night out detailed above was brought up several times, which I identified served multiple functions. Firstly, the story was recounted to signal that Amelia, Mike and Sadie's excessive alcohol consumption spoiled everybody else's night because their excessive consumption resulted in negative outcomes (including sickness, remorse, damaged relationships etc.). Secondly, the story acted as a warning to others not to get as drunk in the future because everyone as identified in previous sections, 'accidental drunkenness' was something that everyone was vulnerable to that could result in negative outcomes and impact the night out for everyone present.

When listening to drinking and drug stories, it was apparent that they were told at deliberate moments in time, such as during pre-drinking. This was to actively remind people, before the point of getting too intoxicated not to drink too much or repeat past negative outcomes. This shows forethought before engaging in alcohol consumption whereby stories served a specific function of governing friends drinking to ensure that everyone stayed within certain intoxication levels. Such acts serve to "stabilize social relationships by sensitising potential transgressors (those who breach a social norm) to others and the emotional displays appease observers who could sanction the breach" (Fjaer, 2015:300). This was so that maximum pleasure on nights out could be achieved by all by individuals not becoming undesirably drunk. These findings regarding young people's drinking and drug stories in this study show that their practices are highly ordered so that negative experiences resulting from excessive consumption can be avoided for individuals and groups.

4.10. Calculated-intoxication

Bringing together the work of Measham, Brain and Featherstone and the fieldwork findings presented in this chapter, I propose that 'calculated-intoxication' could be a more appropriate term to describe youth drinking within the context of Sutton. The reason for this slight change in terminology from 'calculated-hedonism' is not to introduce a fashionable term or for the sake of being pedantic; it is so that levels of agency and pleasure can be equally acknowledged in the conceptualisation of youth drinking cultures in Sutton. As previously suggested, 'binge' drinking is not a useful term because it denies agency and pleasure in youth alcohol consumption. 'Controlled loss of control' implies that young people are more often than not inclined to lose control, which is not an accurate reflection of youth drinking presented in this chapter. 'Determined-drunkenness' also implies that young people intend to get drunk, which

is not necessarily the case for many participants in this research. Lastly, 'calculated-hedonism' has connotations of mindlessness, which weakens notions of agency within the term. Therefore, with the term 'calculated-intoxication', the word 'calculated' offers association with agency linked to conscious thought and action expressed by participants, and the word 'intoxication' allows for differing desired levels of intoxication to be acknowledged; which participants displayed in fieldwork presented in this chapter. This term is intended to pay homage to the pre-existing terminology put forward by Measham, Brain and Featherstone.

Additionally, the discipline of cultural criminology has been valuable in making sense of the everyday drinking practices, values and notion of 'calculated-intoxication' that informs the drinking cultures of the young research participants in this study. Firstly, the flexible ethnographic fieldwork approaches reminiscent of the Chicago School that I have utilised, approaches of which contemporary cultural criminology studies are inspired by (Hayward, 2012), have allowed me to explore a variety of urban locations in Sutton that young drinkers occupy. Exploring these everyday settings have identified that young adult drinkers proactively seek out particular atmospheres and settings to either support their ambition of pursuing 'calculated-intoxication' and pleasurable consumption and avoid spaces that detract from this; or seek out spaces that they are aware can fuel excessive consumption and allow them to engage in transgressive behaviours should they wish to. Fieldwork with underage drinkers has also shown how young people utilise local area knowledge and occupy urban spaces to support their participation in illicit drinking activities, which they view not only as a rite of passage, but as a liminal space until they can engage in alcohol consumption at the legal age.

Secondly, given that "cultural criminology explores the many ways in which cultural forces interweave with the practice of crime and crime control in contemporary society" and with it explore "the centrality of meaning, representation and power" (Ferrell, Hayward and Young, 2008); for this study, cultural criminology has helped to better understand the drinking cultures of young people in this study and the notion of 'calculated-intoxication'. For example, whilst everyday consumption practices identified in this chapter such as 'pre-loading', 'round drinking' and 'budget drinking' etc. might be seen as risky or transgressive and seemingly supports deviant 'binge' drinking; data from young people has shown that these practices are not only closely linked to enhancing sociality and friendship, but are also practices which enable young people to resist consumer constraints placed on them by NTE establishments, such as expensive drink costs, high entry fees for nightclubs, limited drink choices and opportunities to meaningfully socialise with peers. Thus, whilst on the surface young people appear to be engaging in transgressive activities linked to alcohol consumption, it becomes apparent that there are multitude of cultural factors at play which often influences their pursuit of 'calculated-intoxication'.

4.11. Conclusion

A number of theoretical terms like 'binge' drinking, 'controlled loss of control', 'determined-drunkenness' and 'calculated-hedonism' have been used to describe youth drinking cultures. Whilst such terms have been referenced across the field of alcohol studies, such terminology does not necessarily fully appreciate the merit of agency that is present in youth drinking cultures in this study. Therefore, I propose that the term 'calculated-intoxication' could be a useful term that highlights the significance of youth agency. Support for this term can be evidenced by the fieldwork findings in this chapter which suggest that young people depict levels of agency. This is expressed through the conscious drinking strategies and beverage choices that young people choose so that they can attempt to govern pleasurable drinking outcomes and avoid negative outcomes with friends. Young people also deliberately occupy and create drinking spaces to facilitate pleasurable levels of intoxication. Additionally, young people reflect upon their past drinking experiences by drawing upon and sharing intoxication stories with friends to govern future drinking practices, so that collectively, they can attempt to maximise pleasure and reduce negative outcomes from alcohol consumption.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONTESTING THE 'CONVERGENCE' OF YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN'S DRINKING CULTURES

5.1. Introduction

This chapter will further explore the heterogeneous nature of youth drinking cultures in Sutton through an exploration of gender differences in drinking practices and values. Despite a growing body of literature suggesting that there is a 'convergence' in male and female consumption patterns, this chapter shows that there are distinct nuances in young adult male and female drinking styles, practices and values. The first part of this chapter, in keeping with the feminist ethnography principles of this thesis focuses upon women's drinking cultures. This first sub-section regarding women's drinking cultures contextualises a condemnatory backdrop illustrating issues that female drinkers contend with when participating in the NTE including: stigma, sexual harassment and community control. The second sub-section shows that despite issues that women encounter, they apply strategies to overcome them to pursue pleasurable drinking. The second part of the chapter explores male drinking experiences showing distinct practices and values that contribute to masculine drinking practices. Following on from these accounts of male and female drinking cultures, the chapter will return to the convergence theory argument to address claims that men and women's drinking cultures are supposedly converging.

5.2. The "Slutton" girl reputation: sexual objectification and stigma of female drinkers

Fieldwork data and my own prior experiences as a young adult drinker in Sutton reveal that young women in Sutton face considerable sexism, social stigma, sexual harassment and community control regarding to their alcohol consumption. One way that is sustained is through the "Slutton" reputation and its association with female drinkers. "Slutton" is a play on words using a combination of the place of 'Sutton' and 'slut' to refer to certain types of intoxicated female drinkers who give off sexual signals and are seemingly sexually available to men because they are drunk (Abbey, 2002). Perceptions of 'Slutton girls' are present in online accounts; revealing condemnation of female drinkers. In a post written by an anonymous visitor on the website ilivehere.co.uk (2017), an individual provides their perception of how 'Slutton' is a place where sexually available women can be located in a number of drinking settings:

Chicargo's - This is where the term Slutton Mutton comes in to its own. Whilst your 18 yr old chavette is in liquid chewing the face off and opening her legs to some random chav in a pink shirt her muva is more than likely wearing her clothes in chicargos chewing the face off and opening her legs to some random 40 yr old skinhead chav in *a chelsea shirt. So basically the moral of the story is if you've got a thing for chavettes,* have fantasys about shagging a chavette/slutton mutton in matalan car park while she *sucks your mate off, really can't be assed to make much effort in pulling said chavette* or her mum sluttons the town for you.

These accounts show that alcohol is seen to loosen women's inhibition and drive female sexual desire (Blackman, Doherty and McPherson, 2015). This was echoed by young adult male research participants like Tony during an interview:

Laura: What do you think about the women you meet in Sutton?
Tony: *They are all quite…slappery. I mean I don't think they are easy, well, but it's probably just because some of them look so rough and ready, you just wouldn't wanna' associate yourself with certain women. I wouldn't anyway.*

These overt forms of sexism signal an "unequal and unfair treatment of women relative to men" where women are demonised for their drinking practices in a way that men are not (Swim, Mallett and Stangor, 2004:117). Other accounts revealed that local young adult male drinkers used the term 'Slutton' to label female drinkers in everyday language; in less condemnatory, but still problematic ways. For example, as recorded in the field diary at The Star pub with James, David, Liam, Tim, Dean and Sam, the group spoke about venues they intended to visit during the evening, revealing their perceptions of female drinkers in Sutton:

Edward and Liam explain to the group how they dislike going out in Sutton because it *can be boring. Edward says, "There isn't exactly much talent" and suggests that Wimbledon has a "better atmosphere" and more attractive women. Overhearing the* convers*ation, Tim winks at Edward, "You can't go wrong with a bit of Slutton every now and again mate."*

Edward condemns female drinkers by sexually objectifying them through the suggestion that female drinkers in Sutton have little "talent" (i.e. are unattractive). Tim's playful remark indicates that he perceives an opportunity to 'hook up' with women in Sutton. Consequently, men see women in Sutton as sexual availability because of their intoxication; assisting men to have easier sexual encounters with women. This shows that the 'Slutton' label and its association with young adult female drinkers imposed by male community members reveals

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a problematic insinuation coinciding with Plant and Plant's (2006:2) suggestion that, "…it is [a] widely accepted equation that: Alcohol + Woman = Sex". When exploring the 'Slutton' perception more extensively, it became evident that these views by men were underpinned by the idea that female drinkers were sexually available because of what they wore on nights out. As will be illustrated in this chapter, female drinkers were subject to sexual objectification whereby the clothes that they wore alongside their intoxication seemingly attributed to a male understanding that women are sexually available to men (Blackman, Doherty and McPherson, 2015).

In everyday conversations regarding women, men would talk covertly about women in sexist, derogatory ways and sexually objectify them, often guised through humour. Such humorous conversations or drinking stories at the expense of women were recorded in the field diary. This was evident during an evening of 'quiet drinks' in the pub with Malik, Martin and Justin at The Sportsman pub:

> Malik told us that he went to Liverpool with his cousins and some friends for the *weekend. "We got there on Friday…and had a… [*looks directly at Justin and smirks] *night at the dogs." Instantly, Justin* laughs hysterically and Martin joins in. I recognised that there was some kind of in-*joke, but did not get it, so asked, "Have I missed something?" Malik chuckled, "Nah, nah. It's cool" and carried on with his story, "…but* Saturday was a <u>FINE</u> day, it was a <u>HOT</u> *night." The men* laughed again and simultaneously looked at me. After a moment, I realised that Malik was making *reference to women. "You with us now?"* Malik chuckled.

This shows my own naivety of Malik referring to women as dogs and analogies comparing women to different weather conditions to describe their attractiveness. Similar descriptions of women have been encountered in de Visser and Smith's (2007:353) work where male participants described women as an "ugly fucking dog". Thus, there are overt and hidden ways that men perpetuate sexism and sexual objectification of female drinkers (Bates, 2014). Like overt sexism, covert sexism treats women unequally and unfairly in comparison to men; although arguably more problematically because such views are deliberately attempted to remain hidden (Swim, Mallett and Stangor, 2004). These fieldwork accounts show the extensive backdrop of sexism, stigma and sexual objectification towards female drinkers in Sutton perpetuating the "Slutton" reputation and supporting gender inequality regarding women's participation in the NTE. This could be driven by concerns about new forms of participation in alcohol and drug cultures by women (Hobbs, O'Brien and Westmarland, 2007).

Derogatory attitudes and sexism towards female drinkers were perpetuated by various drinking settings in the NTE of Sutton through the commodification of women, alcohol and sex. During many observations I recorded in the field diary how venues like Anarchy nightclub employed women to pole dance, clearly intended for male arousal through the 'male gaze' (Mulvey, 1975). Additionally, fieldwork identified that 'shot girls[30]' were regularly present in nightclubs and bars in Sutton including, Voodoo Lounge, Canon Bar, Anarchy, The Project and Haze. Each of these venues often had female promoters dressed in sexualised attire (often sport-themed) to encourage young people to attend the venues via promotional and marketing offers like free-entry or free drinks. This shows the mainstreaming of female sexual commodification of women in the NTE; although some venues that took this further by not only sexually objectifying women, but actively promoting derogatory attitudes towards women through this commodification. This was evident from the field diary during a night at The Project nightclub after one research participant, James, returned from the male toilets to the dancefloor, re-joining his friends in the club:

> James comes back from *the men's toilets smelling of a strong but pleasant aftershave, with a lollypop in hand. He's grinning like a child. I ask him about the lollypop he has acquired, to which he laughs, "I always get a lolly from lollypop man!" [referring to the* bathroom attendant]. James and David take great delight in telling me about other attendants they have met and phrases they have learned from them at nightclubs in the past; such phrases included*: "No spray, no lay"; "No splash, no gash"; "No Calvin Klein, no sexy time"; "No cologne, then go home". James also mentions that the attendant was singing a little rhyme to him, "Lollies, lollies, sucky sucky lollies" which* he attempted to drunkenly relay.

This shows that the male bathroom attendant in The Project nightclub made crude remarks about female drinkers, underpinned by humour, to encourage consumerism in the private setting male bathroom of the nightclub. As suggested by James and David, attendants are often located in nightclub and bar settings, showing that men regularly encounter such activities; hence how they can easily recall the phrases and rhymes. The implications of this is that, firstly, young adult males (like James) adopt and consolidate derogatory attitudes towards female drinkers by repeating the 'catchy' rhymes and phrases through 'unintentional sexism' because such phrases are just seen as humour or banter (Attenborough, 2014). Secondly, through consuming products provided by the attendants, young males could be

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[30] 'Shot girls' are women who walk around drinking establishments and approach young people to buy shots from them in addition to what is offered at the bar. Women are often dressed in sexualised attire with holdalls around their hips for transporting the alcohol and shot glasses.

subscribing to the commodification of women, sex and alcohol through the "market manipulation of female sexuality to sell alcohol" and other products offered in the NTE at women's expense to enhance male drinking experiences (Blackman, Doherty and McPherson, 2015:51). Here women are seen as a source of pleasure and alcohol as an aphrodisiac; so "the fantasy presented by the commodification of alcohol is fulfilled; despite the discourse of regret and teasing, rules around sexual encounters are never fully changed, so performances around drunken arousal continue" (Workman, 2001:440). This is achieved in the private space of the toilets which women cannot access or respond to.

Whilst female toilets also have attendants who sell products; neither personal experience nor fieldwork indicated that attendants in women's toilets encouraged the purchase of products to promote opportunities to sexualise, objectify or stigmatise men. However, as will be examined in forthcoming sections of this chapter, bathrooms were an important space for women in this study to manage their intoxication and assist them in pursuing pleasure, which incorporated the use of the products provided by the attendants.

5.2.1. "Asking for it"? Perceptions of women's style and patriarchal control

Fieldwork identified that women encountered considerable male patriarchal control in what seemed to be men's attempts to govern women's drinking practices and participation in the NTE. Much of this patriarchal control related to the attire that women reserved for nights out; which Mackiewicz (2012) argues is because physical attractiveness and sexuality is central to patriarchal control whereby women experience moral prohibition based upon their sexual, social and economic activities. This became evident when women cited how male relations attempted to govern their drinking experiences. For example, in an interview with Amelia, Rosie and Stephanie, Amelia noted how her older brother attempted to govern her participation in the NTE:

> **Amelia:** Well there was quite a big age gap between me and my brothers. The younger *one out of the two didn't really drink that much, the older one…*well I only remember a couple of occasions *[…] I rememb*er little bits, like occasionally he would go out *drinking and come back a bit drunk, but neither of them were massive drinkers. […] They were strict with me when I went out because my dad wasn't there. They were like, "You aren't going out dressed like that, go and put some clothes on".*

It became apparent that Amelia's brothers were aware of male perceptions that women's attire is linked to sexual availability and want to protect her from sexual objectification, unwanted

sexual advances from man, or being assigned the "Slutton" girl reputation. Later in the interview, Amelia said that out of respect for her brothers' wishes, she changed her clothes, and other times she did not because she rebelled from her siblings' "over-protective" interventions. This is to protect her brother's familial reputation as well as their own; representing a central feature of traditional patriarchy ideals and values.

Whilst conducting fieldwork with the Sutton Street Pastors in Sutton High Street, one Street Pastor, Matthew, revealed he was concerned about the ways that women dress in the NTE because it could 'provoke' men into subjecting women to unwanted sexual advances. This was revealed in the field diary when observing a group of young women outside of Anarchy nightclub:

> *"Before I say this, I don't want you to think that I condone men's behaviour towards women, or that women deserve some terrible things that happen to them…but the* ways in which some of these young women dress, you can understand why men behave in certain w*ays towards some women." I was mortified at Matthew's statement,* but did not challenge him as I wanted to see what else he had to say. He went on to *describe women's attire as "provocative", "to attract men", "appealing to men" and "attention seeking." He* did not seem to understand why women in Sutton dressed the *way that they did and said that women's magazines explain the ways* that women *dress, "They wear heels to elongate their legs…*or something lik*e that, isn't it?" He* looked confused and mumbled something ab*out "feminine form." […] He* started talking *about parents, thinking aloud, "I wonder what their parents think of their choice of dress?" […] "If I had a daughter, I wouldn't let her go out dressed like that" but mentioned, "Young people can be rebellious" and joked that if he did have a daughter* then he might not be able to stop her wearing what she wanted. He finished with*, "I would at least make her take a coat."*

Matthew's comments show how women are seemingly to blame for attracting unwanted sexual advances from men because they provoke men with their clothing; a clear form of 'victim blaming' imposed upon women by 'drawing attention' to one's self or 'leading men on' (Cairns, 1997). His commentary is also littered with 'everyday sexism' (de Beauvoir, 1979; Bates, 2014).

'Everyday sexism' was first introduced in 'Les temps modernes' published in 1973, prefaced by Simone de Beauvoir (cited in Timmerman, 2015). The preface, translated by Marybeth Timmerman (2015:240) highlights de Beauvoir's call for "our women readers – and men readers – to collaborate here by sending us articles or facts that tell of outrages against

women." These outrages were collated and analysed in 'Le Sexisme Ordinaire' or 'Everyday Sexism' (1979); which de Beauvoir says explores subtle and disguised uses of sexism. In a contemporary context, feminist writer Laura Bates, created the website The Everyday Sexism Project in 2012 which mirrors de Beauvoir's work, whereby Bates collected examples of 'everyday sexism' from the public via social media. From this project, Bates published 'Everyday Sexism' (2014) which explores themes relating to women's experiences of everyday sexism relating to their occupation of public space, motherhood, media and the workplace. Whilst there is blatant sexism, what de Beauvoir and Bate's work reveal is that subtle and discrete discrimination towards women is so prevalent that this form of oppression is practically hidden (Timmerman, 2015). Thus, Matthew's commentary could be regarded as 'everyday sexism' because he offers discriminatory views towards female drinkers without recognising this as such. There is little conception from Matthew that unwanted sexual advances is a problem that lies with men, and does not acknowledge that women dress how they want for their own pleasure. Thus, "…normative inequitable relationships of patriarchal societies that constitute woman as always at risk and therefore required to remain vigilant" (Waitt et al., 2011:271).

5.2.2. "Grabbing rights" and being "touched up": the sexual harassment of women

Fieldwork showed that women were subjected to sexual aggression and harassment by men in the NTE; coinciding with wider evidence in the UK context that young adult females routinely experience sexual harassment on nights out (Baber, 2017; Brown, 2017; Good Night Out, 2017). Despite male perceptions presented in this chapter that women could be "asking for it"; this was not the case. In fact, women who encountered unwanted and non-consensual sexual advances from men referred to this as "grabbing rights" and being "touched up". 'Grabbing rights' refers to men believing that they are entitled to touch and grope women for their own sexual gratification, which fieldwork identified included women's breasts and buttocks, often in passing as women as moved through drinking spaces. One female, Helen, explained during an interview that she has received unwanted attention from men in the nightclub Anarchy, especially near the toilets:

> **Helen:** I used to just turn around and look at them, and they would clearly think like, *'Oh dear!' Erm, but it doesn't matter, because either you do something and they* continue to do it more, or you have to use different toilets. So, if you walk through the crowd they get you, and if you do something to react, then on the way out, they will just do it again. So, it comes to point where you just ignore it, and you kind of have to

accept it, but it's not right. But nowadays, if someone does that and doesn't leave me alone then I just go and report them to the bouncer. I have done that a couple of times *in Anarchy now because it's not nice. Like, if I wanted someone to touch me I would* let them for a bit, or if I fancied them and wanted to get with them, I would go up to *them wouldn't I! But I'm not interested, and I am happy. […] You are not going to get a girlfriend by groping them in a club. It's so vile. It's like, you are ten, get off me, don't* touch me.

As noted by Helen, the space outside of the women's toilets is a hotspot for sexual aggression, where 'grabbing rights' or being 'touched up' was commonplace. This is what Philip Kavanaugh (2013:25) defines as "opportunistic predation" which entails sexual aggression with no prior knowledge or interaction with one another; which was what women in this study experienced. Grazian (2007) also calls this "girl hunting" where men congregate in large groups. On the one hand, Helen accepts that going to particular establishments in Sutton results in unwanted sexual advances, which she has partially resigned herself to because women view this as an inevitable, undesirable, part of socialising in the NTE (Becker and Tinkler, 2014). The fact that Helen is obliged to inform door staff about male behaviour though, suggests that sexual harassment including non-consensual kissing, touching, groping is unregulated in the NTE and more should be done by licenced venues to allow women to enact their desired identities (Fileborn, 2012) and suggests that there is an increasing need for female door staff to address to diverse needs of women in NTE spaces (Hobbs, O'Brien and Westmarland, 2007). Moreover, certain sexist behaviours are reluctant to be labelled as 'sexist'; thus, particular types of sexual encounters are not seen as sexual harassment (Mallett and Stangor, 2004). This highlights a difficult space that women occupy which could be attributed to a lack of awareness by men that their behaviour is sexual harassment.

During fieldwork I experienced being grabbed and touched by men. During a night out in Wimbledon at *Harry's Bar*, a female acquaintance, Alice, asked if I would go to the toilets with her after remarking, "I don't want to go alone." Somewhat confused by this, I agreed to go with Alice. As recorded in the field diary, the experience of going to the bathrooms in *Harry's Bar* was intimidating:

> As we approach the toilets the entrance is surrounded by men. As we try and walk past, I feel men grab me by the hand and waist, trying to pull me towards them. I see other men *reach out, pinching and slapping Alice's bum, and feel the men do the same* to me. I hear the men laughing and see Alice shaking her head, trying to barge her way through as quickly as she can whilst batting the men away. I stay close behind her *as she clears the path ahead of us. […] Whilst drying our hands, Alice says defeatedly,*

"Here we go again." The same men are lurking by the toilets trying to catch our *attention as we walk out. Alice stares at one of the men and says defiantly, "Don't* even *think about it." The guy laughs and as soon as she walks past,* he slaps her bum.

This shows that the thought of being groped can be equally as distressing as actually being groped (Fileborn, 2012); which men find this merely amusing. The space outside the female toilets could be regarded as source of blame for sexual aggression because setting factors like crowding, low lighting provide men with the opportunity to get away with such behaviours (Becker and Tinkler, 2014).

On a separate night out with Rosie and Stephanie, we also faced men touching us up, and I distinctly recall Rosie worryingly asking Stephanie and I, "Is it always like this in clubs?" Rosie had recently turned eighteen at the time and was new to clubbing; thus, she found such experiences particularly troubling. I empathised with Rosie, and Stephanie and I reassured her it was not always like that; but at the same time, was not entirely uncommon. Importantly, women in this study did not self-blame the actions of men upon themselves by portraying a 'victim- blaming logic or ideology' (Kavanaugh, 2013) they recognised male agency in enacting sexual aggression towards themselves and other women as viewed the blame and problem with them.

From women's perspectives, being grabbed by men in the NTE was an unpleasant experience. However, as outlined by Justin, Leo and Tony in an interview, they suggest that men performed such acts in noisy clubs and bars, with the dancefloor being a key hotspot to interact with women because they were innocent strategies to capture the attention of women:

> **Laura:** So, what about meeting women in pubs?
> **Leo:** *I would much rather talk to women in a pub. It's easier.*
> **Tony:** *I reckon it's easier in a club. I think norma*lly you are all pissed s*o it's…*easier.
> **Justin:** *I think what he means it that it's more intimate, there's grinding and a bit of dancing. I think that it's a bit of an ice*-breaker. In one way you can see what people are after, how flirtatious *they are on the dancefloor and…*
> **Tony:** Yeah, if you see a woman at a bar or pub, then you have to walk up to her and say *'Hello, my name is this…'* but if you are on the dancefloor, dancing, then everyone *is dancing all around you and you have had a few drinks. Like if you slyly…bump into them…accidently, on purpose…turn around and then give them the eye or something, then if they look at you and shrug you off then you know it's a no go! [Laughs] You* know that you are on the wrong path and you save yourself the embarrassment of

walking up to a girl and then turning around having them snub you where everyone can see you.

Justin: *Like you say, it's the look rather than talking. You can avoid the slap that might come…or the blunt knockback. You know like when someone shows an interest…*

Tony: Or in a pub you have that thing like buying a girl a drink and not getting one or anything in return.

For men, grabbing women from behind is a normalized form of sexual aggression enacted on the dancefloor (Ronen, 2010). However, Justin and Tony suggest a less sinister view through the suggestion that men touch women just to initially get their attention and is essentially part of heteronormative dating rituals. Coinciding with this, Becker and Tinkler's (2014:15) state that women are gatekeepers who navigate men's sexual advances and it the man's "'job' to make those advances without violating the norms against sexual aggression". Here Justin and Tony suggest that men fear being rejected by women; thus, are trying to protect their masculinity.

Nonetheless, as illustrated in the field diary on a night out with Alice, James, David, Harry, Liam and Edward at *Harry's Bar*, regardless of their intentions, men are aware that women do not desire to be unsuspectingly touched by men:

> Harry, Liam and Edward stand at the bar for the majority of the night, having drinks and trying to talk to one another over the loud music. Alice, David, James and I spend most of our evening on the dancefloor and return to the other boys just to have a drink. Occasionally Harry, Liam and Edward join us when particular songs come on. Throughout the night I notice that if the entire group of us danced together, the boys would stand in a circle around Alice and I as we danced, or if it were just James and David, then they stood like a protective barrier against other men if they tried to approach us. If any men managed to somehow breakthrough the protective barrier, one of the men in our group would grab us by the waist and push us back into the middle of their circle.

Notably, our friends were aware that Alice and I were in relationships and so seemed to be protecting us from unwanted male advances because of social norms around relationships (Fileborn, 2012). Nonetheless, we did not request this protection, but it was a welcome unspoken agreement amongst friends that they would do this for us. However, there is also potential expressions of masculinity and power relations at play whereby our male friends could be attempting to show levels of ownership over us indicating power relations between other men at play through the 'myth of protectiveness' by subordinating women (Sachs, 1978).

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Being grabbed and touched up by men was an unpleasant experience; although there were further extremes of sexual harassment that men subjected women to in the NTE. As recorded in the field diary, whilst walking down Sutton High Street with two Street Pastors, Terry and Karen, I observed first-hand some of the more extreme harassment that women faced:

> As we walked down the High Street, two males and two females were coming out of a fast-food restaurant. Each woman was paired up with one of the men. They were talking loudly; laughing and joking. Suddenly one of the men pulled up one of the wome*n's black dress all th*e way to her neck to reveal her underwear. The girl *screamed, "What the fuck are you doing?"* trying to pull the dress down. She struggled *as it was a figure hugging bodycon dress. Appalled, Terry said, "Oh dear" followed by Karen, "That's not a nice thing to do." The man who pulled up the woman's dress shouted and pointed at the woman, "Look at that dirty slag, just look at her" shouting repeatedly, "What a slag!" Her friend shouted, "That is* SO OUT OF ORDER*, go and help her" to the other man. She pushed hi*m and looked to be hitting him to attempt to make him react. The men doubled over with laughter and the instigator ran up the High Street away from them. He grabbed on to a tree, clutching his stomach, still laughing *to himself, "Oh my God, that was just too funny." By this point the woman had gotten* her dress back down and went over to her female friend, visibly upset. They reached out to one another and wrapped their arms around each other and walked away down the High Street.

This shows how women in this study become the target of male sexual harassment because of what they are wearing and are thus sending out the 'wrong signal' because women in sexual attire who are drunk supposedly send out sexual and promiscuous signals (Abbey, 2002). It is unclear as to what prompted this behaviour; nonetheless, it appears that the male attempted to bring shame and embarrassment by exposing the woman's body and labelling her a 'slag'. This shows that men construct women as sexually promiscuous and publicly discredit women based on what they are wearing in the NTE (Blackman, Doherty and McPherson, 2014).

5.2.3. The stalking and surveillance of women in the NTE

A number of female participants in this study expressed that although they generally feel safe when participating in the NTE of Sutton, there are occasions when they have directly experienced, or are concerned about being watched and stalked. As discussed in an interview with two female participants, Cara and Louise, they have direct experience of such issues:

Cara: But that time that I got followed home, is the reason that I have a criminal record for smashing up the Chicken Shop, and it was because that man had followed me home. […] *I had been drinking that night, erm, with everyone. […]* So, I am at the bus stop, waiting and sitting on my own. […] This man totted out of the Chicken Shop and *put this big bag of chicken next to me, and I was like thinking, 'Aw*w man, I want some *of that!' and he was like, 'I work in the Chicken Shop'* and this is what he had brought out because he worked there and said I could have some if I wanted. And I was like, *"Nah I don't take chicken off a stranger". So, I didn't. And then he must have offered* me a cigarette or something. So, knowing me I probably took it, and then I got on the *bus. […] …he was just watching me the whole time.* So, like I said, I know when I need *to be aware, and I was like sober and normal and know what's going on.* So, I was like, right this is my next stop and this was really freaking me out. I was only fifteen at the time and then he, I got up, and I usually get off the bus at the Clothes Shop. So, I was *like right I'm going to do a little test here.* So, I pressed the bell before the Burger Shop and got up, so he got up and stood by the door, and I sat back down, but then he sat back down. *[…]* So, I went round a corner turned back round and walked past him and he turned around and followed me. So, *I was like, 'S*hit, what is going to happen to *me?' I stood there thinking, he knows that I know that he knows he's following me, he's* not that stupid. So, I carried on walking, and I could hear him walking closer behind me. So, *I thought, if I don't act any sooner he could grab me or anything, but I will make* him jump, so I turned round in his face and scared him, and then I screamed as loud *as I could, "Go away and stop following me, I know you are following me". I don't know what he was saying, and then I just run off to my house. […]*

Louise: You know I said that we used to go to Waterloo all the time, well one day I just left there when I was on my own as I was drunk, I got the train home on my own, I *didn't have any money, and I got a train to Wimbledon because there were no trains* to Sutton. When I got there I had no money, so I had to beg this man on the train to give me some money, so that I could get a cab, so he gave me fifteen pound bless him. So, *I got off at Sutton High Street, as I didn't want to go home. Duh. I walked in Liquid on my own, I don't know where the bouncers were because I wasn't even* eighteen at the time, and I was just wandering around there on my own. So, I was like this is boring, and left. So, I was walking down the high street and this lady was like, *'Oh where do you live?' and she was like, 'Two girls is better than one so let's walk together', so she walked me home bless her. […] It was like there was angels watching* me that night. I had a happy ending.

This shows both the real and imagined risks women face regarding being followed when women are perceived to be intoxicated in public spaces (Brooks, 2011). Positively, Louise demonstrates how women show solidarity towards one each other in such circumstances.

When undertaking fieldwork with the Sutton Street Pastors, some of the volunteers informed me that women experienced multiple risky situations including being followed home, stalked and observed by men in the Sutton NTE. As recorded in the field diary, one Street Pastor, Matthew, explained supporting the safety of women on nights out in public NTE spaces was a key activity of their work whilst we observed a potentially contentious situation for one female outside of the nightclub Anarchy:

> Matthew explained that many women in Sutton get stalked on their way home, particularly when they are on their own. He mentioned this because he thought it was actually occurring whilst we were watching people outside of Anarchy. We watched a young woman who looked intoxicated walk round the corner by the cab queue whilst an older man appeared to be watching her and followed several metres behind. He stopped momentarily watching her, but then continued to walk on in a different direction. Once Matthew was assured that the man had stopped watching the woman, he continued our conversation. He said that for the reasons we just observed, that is why the Street Pastors are so important because they deter *these "kinds of men". He laughed ironically as he explained that the Street Pastors engage in "a kind of stalking"* themselves to ensu*re that people "get to safe locations on a night out". He added that* Street Pastors stop and talk to people who appear to be walking home and their own *and use their "powers of persuasion" to remind them that they are unsafe walking home* alone, point out dangers, and will accompany them to a cab station if required.

This observation illustrates a triple gaze that is occurring in the NTE of Sutton. There are women who are looking out for men who they believe could be watching them, men who are looking at women participating in the NTE and the Sutton Street Pastors (and/or services like the Police) observing the men observing the women as well as the women themselves. Women are seen to require such surveillance because women are seen as especially vulnerable and exposed to risk as a result of excessive consumption or appearing to be intoxicated (Mackiewicz, 2012). As expressed by female participants, although they experience unwanted surveillance by men, they are reassured by the community surveillance which contribute to their feelings of safe in the NTE, as well as employing their own safety strategies as will be discussed in forthcoming sections.

This section of the chapter has illustrated a backdrop of contentious issues that women in this study face when participating in the NTE. As suggested by Waitt et al. (2011:271) "there are important repercussions from normative ideas that continue to position drinking women in problematic ways, including partial accountability for 'instigating' unwanted attention because of 'unfeminine' behaviour". For some female drinkers in this study, this included being subjected to perceptions that women are to blame for unwanted male attention and sexual harassment. As will be illustrated in the forthcoming sections of this chapter, the assertion that female alcohol consumption is driven by sexual promiscuity is limited and discriminatory (Blackman, Doherty and McPherson, 2015). As shown through the fieldwork, women's drinking practices are underpinned by other motivations linked to pleasure; but they have to employ multiple strategies to overcome the stigma and discrimination imposed upon them.

5.3. The drinking cultures of young adult females in Sutton

This section offers an empirical understanding of the drinking practices, strategies and values that women employ to pursue pleasure in the NTE of Sutton. This section will draw upon data collected in pre-drinking settings, and private and public drinking spaces that young women occupied to explore themes relating to: hypersexual feminine style, respectable femininity, exploitation of femininity and risk management strategies by women.

5.3.1. Adopting 'hypersexual-feminine' styles and identities to regulate intoxication

An emergent theme regarding female drinking cultures was how styles reserved for the NTE influenced women's drinking cultures and participation in drinking spaces. Female participants explained how they gained pleasure from getting ready at home in preparation nights out, which entailed adopting highly sexualised diverse and eclectic feminine styles (see Appendix Eleven: 'Hypersexual feminine styles' for notes about the styles). This mirrors the work of Griffin et al. (2013), Linda Bailey (2012) and Alison Mackiewicz (2012) who have applied the term 'hypersexual femininity' to women's drinking identities; defined as, "a particular form of 'excessive' sexuality that is associated with femininity in the post-feminist order […] The hyper-sexual feminine 'look' is characterised by high heels, short skirts, low-cut tops, fake tan, long, straight and (bottle) blonde hair, smooth bare legs in all climates, lots of make-up and a buxom slimness" (Griffin et al., 2013:3).

Conversely, sensationalised and moralistic media portrayals have labelled hypersexualised feminine styles adopted by young adult females in the NTE as "stripper-chic" (Carey, 2011),

where women supposedly sexually objectify themselves and compete with other women for the attention of men and the 'male-gaze' (Mulvey, 1975) because women lack self-confidence. This correlates with feminist critiques of post-feminism which suggest that women are pressured to participate in sexually objectifying themselves through discourses of pleasure and empowered expression of femininity (Griffin et al., 2013). However, as will be identified in the forthcoming sections, hypersexual feminine styles that women adopted in the NTE were a strategic choice that helped them to perform their desired feminine identity (Butler, 1990) alongside the pursuit of pleasurable social and cultural activities in the NTE whilst enabling them to regulate their levels of intoxication.

Hypersexual feminine styles were prominent across a variety of fieldwork settings, as recorded in the field diary during a night out with Stephanie and Amelia, when I noticed a group of women occupying Trinity Square in Sutton High Street:

> As we got closer to Trinity Square I could hear music and excited conversations amongst the young people ahead. Stephanie and Amelia needed to use the cash point, so I stood to one side and used the opportunity to observe the young people. There were small groups of young men and women mingled together. I could not help but stare at the different women because their outfits grabbed my attention; particularly women. One had a beautiful low-dip hem skirt. The bottom of the skirt was a deep navy that faded and transformed into a sky blue. She had a large multi-coloured bright chunky necklace that stood out from her black top. She looked much taller than her friend because of her black platform heeled shoes. Her friend had a black bodycon *dress on that hugged her slender figure, and studded high heels that gave an 'edge'* to her look.

This reflects the unique and diverse styles adopted by some female participants that defy media representations suggesting that female drinkers go out "identically dressed" and adopt "standard uniforms" of the 'stripper-chic' style (Carey, 2011:28).

As noted by research participants like Amelia, Stephanie and Rosie, hypersexual feminine styles were informed by mainstream popular media and culture:

> **Laura:** So, what informs your style? Do you get inspiration from anywhere?
> **Stephanie:** Yeah, everywhere. I even look at people in the street. Just, erm, like different trends, which you pick up from seeing *what other people are wearing…*Or, maybe in magazines, which have loads of nice clothes in there. And I just like to get new things so that I can keep up-to-*date, rather than wearing old stuff, that's what I*

would like to do. But I am going to have less money now…[Laughs]. So yeah, just inspiration from things around you.

Laura: What kinds of magazines do you mean?

Stephanie: Fabulous magazine.

Laura: Fabulous?

Stephanie*: It's a free magazine that comes with '*The Sun*', on a Sunday. That's a good one. Oh and 'Look', that's always a good one. It's a bit gossipy but there's clothes in* there too.

Amelia: *There's always a fashion section and about what the celeb's are wearing too.*

Stephanie: They show you what goes with what. Oh, and just generally the shops that *you notice. That's it really.*

Rosie: I tend to look at websites like Topshop, they show you the latest trends and *match up different items. River island do that too. It's a good way to have a look around and see what's out there, because I really like to buy stuff that other people haven't got. I wouldn't really say that I have a normal style. Like, I love my chunky DM's which most girls don't have.*

Laura: You mentioned celebrities, is there any celebrity styles or icons that inspire you?

Rosie: *I like Avril Lavigne. I really don't like these Essex people. I can't be wearing* that.

Stephanie: You hardly dress like Avril Lavigne on a night out though? [Laughs]

Rosie: Well, yeah, I know, but I what I mean is that I opt for that unique, wacky kind of style that she goes for, rather than like putting on all that fake tan and wearing some really short dr*ess. I just couldn't get away with that. And anyway, who would you go* for then?

Stephanie: *I don't know.*

[…]

Amelia: *I don't really have a specific celebrity that I really would want to look like, and I don't think just because someone famous is wearing s*omething that I like that I would *be like 'Oh My God I have to have it.' I mean because I am a little bit bigger, I tend to stick to the styles and sorts of dresses that I know I look alright in…Like the skater* dress, because they come out a bit at the hip*s. Whereas I wouldn't wear a bodycon* dress because I would look like a sausage! [All laugh]. I know that there are certain *items of clothing that I should avoid because I won't suit them. I might buy something* different every now and then, and I will re-use clothes and buy different accessories to jazz it up a bit, but the sort of style that I go for will stay the same because I know that it suits me.

> **Rosie:** *Yeah, it's better to go with what you think, rather than people telling you what you should be wearing.*

This shows how these women drew upon mainstream popular media and culture to inform their hypersexual feminine style and perform feminine identities. However, the style is calculated and informed, requiring careful thought, not only to get the right balance between 'respectable' and 'slutty' feminine identity (Mackiewicz, 2012); but to choose something that they feel confident and comfortable in to empower themselves. Thus, female participants interacted with media and applied it selectively which entailed accepting, rejecting, resisting and modifying representations to suit them (Lyons, Dalton and Hoy, 2006). This requires a close appreciation and understanding of their own bodies, and by drawing upon media and cultural resources women could negotiate meaning, express resistance and decide upon their ideals of femininity which they desire to perform in the NTE (Stacey, 1994; McRobbie, 1991).

High heels were significant to creating and performing hypersexual feminine styles and identities in the NTE. In fieldwork participants discussed how they enjoyed wearing high heels as it made them feel sexy, feminine and were symbolic of the fun to be had on a night out. However, they often found high heels painful, and so, as recorded in the field diary when observing one evening with the Sutton Street Pastors outside of Anarchy nightclub, I discovered that women employed pre-emptive strategies to alleviate issues with high heels whilst maintaining their hypersexual feminine styles:

> A young female left Anarchy alone, so Karen, Terry and I watched her as slowly walked around the corner by the line of black cabs. Terry was concerned that she might be trying to head home alone. From the way that she winced as she walked it was clear that her shoes were causing her pain. Karen pulled off her rucksack of supplies and was getting ready to go over to the women to give her some flip flops; however, the woman pulled out some fold-up flat shoes, put those on and squeezed the heels in her bag. Once changed, she walked back around the corner to where her friends were *stood outside the burger shop and stayed with them. Terry chuckled, "She didn't want to be spotted changing her shoes."*

This shows how some young women planned ahead to ensure that they could sustain their hypersexual feminine style in NTE spaces which was of significant value to them. Women also relied upon and accepted the flip-flops offered to them by the Sutton Street Pastors to protect their hypersexual feminine style. Regarding this, as noted in an interview with Amelia, Rosie and Stephanie, whilst men stigmatised women for not being able to sustain wearing heels, women avoided stigmatising one another:

> **Rosie:** *I wouldn't really thin*k much of it though; because I mean all us girls know that if you wear heels for long enough then they start to hurt, so you understand.
> **Amelia:** Your feet actually feel like they are going to die if you wear them for long enough!
> **Rosie:** *But I don't think there's anything wrong with it.*

This shows a sense of solidarity and understanding amongst women about their hypersexual feminine styles, as opposed to stereotypes about 'bitchiness' that women subject one another to (Mackiewicz, 2012); but instead seemed to celebrate one each other's 'sexual deviance' against the backdrop of patriarchal community stigma and condemnation faced by women in Sutton expressed through hypersexualised feminine styles (Skeggs, 2001b).

Female research participants gave detailed accounts as to why they adopted the hypersexual feminine styles, rationales of which were nuanced but fundamentally linked to how women pursued pleasure in the NTE. As recorded in the field diary, women communicated with one each other prior to going out to collectively analyse what 'kind' of night it was going to be and whether the drinking setting warranted the effort of adopting the hypersexual feminine styles. This was apparent when talking to Amelia and Stephanie regarding what to wear for Amelia's birthday taking place at Voodoo Lounge in Sutton:

> *Amelia and Stephanie 'Whatsapp'ed' me earlier during the day to ask what we were wearing. The consensus was "dresses and heels" because it was a "special night out" for Amelia's birthday. When I arrived at Amelia's house, Amelia, Stephanie and Sadie looked 'dressed up' [...] Stephanie informed Sadie, "Normally we don't get this dressed up to go to Sutton."*

Upon arrival at Amelia's house all of the women looked diverse even though we worked on the 'dresses and heels' agreement. This is because there is a collective understanding that this phrase is a synonym for adopting the hyperfeminine style. As noted by Stephanie, for this particular friendship group, these women do not generally regard Sutton as a location in which to adopt the hypersexual feminine style; but are making an exception because adopting a hypersexual style is symbolic of a special night out to celebrate Amelia's birthday. This highlights the value that the hypersexual feminine style is a calculated choice linked to pleasure underpinned by the idea that, the more dressed up women are, the more fun the night is anticipated/has the potential to be.

Despite Stephanie's earlier suggestion that Sutton does not necessarily warrant adopting hypersexual feminine styles, where possible, women would get dressed up because they took

pleasure in the process of getting ready for nights out, which entailed alcohol consumption. This was articulated in an interview with Amelia, Rosie and Stephanie:

> **Laura:** So, is creating your look fun or some kind of effort?
>
> **Stephanie:** No, *it's definitely fun. It's more fun when you have something new and nice. It's hard when its last minute though, and you haven't had time to think about* what you are doing and wearing.
>
> **Rosie:** *If you are going out with people you haven't met before, you also want to make* a *good impression. I think it's fun if you have been to work all week as well. Like with my job, I always look like a skank all week. I don't do my hair, I don't wear make*-up, I wear horrible clothes. So just to be able to dress up, makes me feel better and its fun.

As revealed in the above account, the process of getting ready and adopting the hypersexual feminine style was pleasurable for some women and offered opportunities for escapism from the monotonies of work, including their day-to-day wear. Helen expanded upon this, suggesting that getting dressed up was not just fun, but allowed her to project the image of embodying fun to other people in the NTE:

> **Laura:** Do you like getting dressed up when you do go out?
>
> **Helen:** Yeah. Like I do enjoy it, but at the *same time, it's a bit of hassle sometimes. You know when you are like, "Urgh, I can't be bothered.' So sometimes I will. If I am* really looking forward to a night out and I know what I am doing and I have got time to get ready, like on my day off, I will t*hink I will paint my nails and all that. But I'm not the* kind of girl that takes like four whole hours in the afternoon to start getting ready, and *then by the evening they are still not ready. I'm not that dedicated […] But yeah*, I do really enjoy it, but *I enjoy getting ready and doing it with my friend's house and having* a few drinks first. Like, I like the atmosphere of being together and looking forward to *a night out. I think that that is the best part of a night out, is the before bit. […] The* boys end up talking to me because I look like a tit, and you know what, they probably *think that I look like fun. But, anyway, for me it's definitely the social side rather than going out and just drinking. It's not like I need alcohol to have a good time.*

For Helen, adopting the hypersexualised feminine style is not always about getting the "right look" i.e. meeting conventional heterosexual feminine styles that is sexy but not too sexualised (Bailey, Griffin and Shankar, 2015), but is about striking a balance between obtaining pleasure from the process of getting ready for a night out, versus taking the process so seriously that it becomes an unpleasant experience that can impact upon the fun to be had on a night out. Helen articulates that by embodying fun in the NTE, this allows her to socialise and bond with

others to enhance her pleasurable experiences of the NTE. Feminist research on the body, is hardly new, but understanding the body is central to understanding women's embodied experiences and practices in various constructs of social life (Davis, 1997). Here it could be suggested that Helen is 'writing her own body' (Cixous, 1976) through embodying fun and thus empowering herself through denying oppressive stereotypes about looking 'good' or 'right'. Moreover, Helen also suggests that the 'getting ready' part of the evening with her friends as the "best part" of the evening because female friendships, bonds and solidarity are strengthened through close intimacy that women share in private female spaces (Blackman, 1998). This shows that the social and cultural activities of preparing the hypersexualised feminine styles and bonding with female friends is central for some women, as opposed to alcohol consumption per say.

Not only was the hypersexual feminine style a source of pleasure in enhancing some women's participation in the NTE; they also used the style to govern alcohol consumption and dictate their attendance to different drinking settings. This was evident on a night out with Amelia and Stephanie when we had planned to go to The Vineyard bar for a 'quiet night' of food and drinks. However, as recorded in the field diary, a friend of Stephanie, Fiona, tried to encourage the three of us to go to the Haze nightclub with them, but the group did not feel adequately dressed up:

> Stephanie text me before we were meeting to ask what I was wearing. I had patterned shorts, tights, flat shoes and a black vest top; so quite casual. Stephanie turned up in patterned jeans, black sparkly flip-flops and a black top. Amelia had combat trousers, flip-flops and a patterned bright vest top. Although Stephanie was checking what we were wearing, they knew that the dress code was quite casual because of where we *were eating and drinking. […] Stephanie's friend, Fiona, downed her prosecco, "Right. So, will you join us once you're finished here?" Amelia and Stephanie sheepishly* explained that they could not go to somewhere like Haze because they were not *"dressed up enough." They also said that they had work early in the morning,* which *was their other reason for not getting "dressed up" tonight. Eventually, Fiona agreed, "OK. Fair enough." […] After Fiona and the rest of the group left Amelia said, "I didn't* want to get tempted into going clubbing or someth*ing, that's why I wore this."*

This shows how Amelia and Stephanie were not concerned about impressing men through their styles, but deliberately chose particular clothing to prevent them from attending drinking establishments where they know that heavy alcohol consumption would take place. This entailed forward planning of matching their attire to the drinking space to ensure that did not become tempted to go elsewhere afterwards and potentially experience negative outcomes of

excessive alcohol consumption and their work responsibilities. Instead they remained in The Vineyard where they could engage in desired levels of lower levels of alcohol consumption. Similarly, participants like Cara and Louise spoke about how they adopted a "smasual"[31] style reserved for 'quiet drinks' that entailed low levels of consumption in specific settings like pubs and bars.

The ways that hypersexual-feminine style helped female drinkers govern their intoxication also became evident from field diary notes relating to how women used bathroom spaces in the NTE. As recorded in the field diary, some women used the bathroom in the nightclub Anarchy to simultaneously regulate their hypersexual feminine styles and govern their intoxication:

> Along the row of sinks and mirrors there is a girl in front of each applying their make-up. They are busy rummaging through their handbags and pulling out various make-up items, and start applying blushers, concealer and brightly coloured lip-glosses in bubble gum pinks and deep red. One young woman at the sink pulls out a miniature brush and starts backcombing her hair, giving it height and volume. When she finishes *playing with her hair she turns to the girl beside her, "How do I look?" The woman responds, "Fabulous" to which the girl smiles and asks, "I don't look to*o drunk do I? I *think I've had one too many and I don't want to look a state." The other woman tells her, "Honestly, you look fine." The woman smiles again, puts her hand on her shoulder and says "Thanks" and then mak*es her way out of the bathroom.

Here the toilet spaces positively "sensitivity to appearance" and offers a positive opportunity for women to prioritise and maintain their hypersexual feminine style utilising the bathroom spaces whilst checking their levels of intoxication through assessing their bodily appearance (Skeggs, 2001b). During these moments, participants used beauty products to re-evaluate their image and intoxication levels, both of which could impact on their hypersexual femininity; consequently, they regulate their drinking as a result. This shows that women can feel that alcohol can undesirably interfere with their feminine status (Blackman, Doherty and McPherson, 2015). Cahill (2006:74) suggests that private spaces allow for physical and interactional cover for particular behaviours and activities to inspect and repair their publicly displayed body. This practice allows women to reappear into drinking spaces giving the impression that their sobriety is effortlessly sustained; when in reality it is achieved through close self-regulation in the private space of the bathroom. However, such practices also show that some participants were torn between the pressure and contradiction of maintaining their 'respectable femininity' and drunkenness (Griffin et al., 2012). Moreover, fieldwork findings demonstrated that the toilet space offered empowerment; not 'oppressive' (Skeggs, 2001b).

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[31] The term 'smasual is wordplay of 'smart' and 'casual' combined to make smasual style.

This section has shown that aspiring to the hypersexual feminine style can have a positive effect upon some women's alcohol consumption because they regulate their levels of intoxication to prioritise maintaining their hypersexualised feminine styles. As suggested by Waitt et al. (2011:271-2) this highlights how alcohol, drinking and drunkenness is spatially contingent and enmeshed in gendered categories of drinking cultures. In sum, adopting the hypersexual feminine style could be regarded as a form of "calculated-intoxication" whereby some are seen to be women restricting their alcohol consumption and experimenting with style to pursue pleasure in the NTE which facilitates other pleasurable social and cultural activities including: dancing, bonding with friends, meeting new people, and engaging in sexual encounters (Blackman, Doherty and McPherson, 2015).

Alongside reserving hypersexual feminine styles for NTE spaces, as suggested, female drinkers also prioritised exemplifying 'respectable femininity' (Skeggs, 1997). This was underpinned by the desire to get drunk, but not too drunk; which highlights femininity as a contradictory and dilemmatic space for women to inhabit (Griffin et al., 2013). One way that young women promoted a feminine drinking identity was through the consumption of alcoholic beverages that symbolised femininity. As noted in the field diary, whilst celebrating Amelia's birthday on a night out at Voodoo Lounge with a group of friends, beverages like champagne symbolised the ultimate feminine beverage:

> When we arrived Amelia huddles Stephanie, Sadie, Jane and I around the bar and *excitedly says, "Its cocktail time". […] Justin, Tony, Leo and Mike put in their drinks order […]* To our surprise Jane got the barmaid to bring over an ice bucket with champagne and enough glasses for her, Amelia, Stephanie, Sadie and I. Each glass had a strawberry in it. The girls were happy and surprised. Amelia hugged Jane, *"That's so lovely and sweet of you." Everyone else gave Jane a hug and a kiss to*o, and Stephanie insisted that we have a photo with the champagne. We fussed over the bottle and chinked our glasses whilst having a photo.

This shows how some women utilise specific beverages to emphasise respectable feminine drinking and the more feminine the drink, the more special the night ahead will be. Here female participants also desired to share these experiences together strengthening female friendship and solidarity. Moreover, women actively chose certain feminine beverages to regulate their levels of intoxication as articulated in an interview with Louise and Cara:

> **Louise:** *Same for me, it depends on the situation. Like if it's a casual one I will have a Corona or a Jacques or Rekorderlig. But if I'm going out, I'll have a* rosé and lemonade or co*cktail, like raspberry mojito. [Cara goes "hmmmm"]. I love them.*
> **Laura:** What is it about a raspberry mojito you love?
> **Louise:** *Erm, they're really tasty and you can't even taste the alcohol that much. And* sometimes wine is just a step too far. Sometimes if I have wine then it gets me too *drunk and I get too much of a hangover, so I'll have a cocktail and it lasts longer too. Even though they are stronger than wine, I don't drink them quickly because I know that they can go straight to your head. That's why I* put lemonade in my wine too, so it takes the edge off the alcohol a bit.

Here some women aspire to maintain their feminine drinking identities through the consumption of feminine beverages that were available in an increasingly feminised NTE catering for the tastes and needs of women (Griffin et al. 2012). Here participants deliberately reserve specific drinks of varying strengths for different types of night (i.e. 'quiet drinking or going 'out out'); this allowed them to perform and maintain a respectable feminine identity by consuming beverages fruit-based beers and ciders (fruit-based/sweet drinks were seen to symbolise femininity), wines and cocktails to manage desired levels of 'calculated-intoxication'. This reflects female participants' reflexive consideration of using feminine beverages to not loss control; which defy media and government depictions of female drinkers as mindless consumers who cannot handle drinking.

Generally, female participants were resistant to drinking what they perceived to be as masculine beverages as encapsulated by research participants such as Rosie during an interview with Amelia and Stephanie:

> **Rosie:** *I won't drink beer, it's not very lady like.*
> **Laura:** Is that your sole reason for not drinking it?
> **Rosie:** *Yeah! It's just* like standing in a club with a big pint is not a good look.
> **Stephanie:** Yeah, *I wouldn't have something like that in a club, but maybe if you were* somewhere else it would be ok. A cider in a beer garden in the summer is nice, but *that's it really.*

This emphasises some women's lack of desire to consume alcohol in the same ways that men do. For many women in this study, maintaining a valued respectable hypersexualised feminine identity was deemed as more pleasurable and desirable than the inhibitory effects of intoxication itself (Blackman, Doherty and McPherson, 2015).

5.3.2. Being 'risqué' and exploiting femininity for pleasure in the NTE

Whilst female participants were aware of the risks imposed upon them in the NTE, during fieldwork I discovered that women adopted the term 'risqué' and applied it to their drinking practices and values as a way to re-gain ownership of their pleasurable drinking experiences which were overburdened with discourse and concerns about risk. As will be examined in forthcoming sections, these risks were both real and imposed upon them. One way that women overcame this linked to hypersexual feminine styles which were deemed as 'risqué' but also the drinking practices that they adopted. Adopting hypersexualised feminine styles enabled women to express and celebrate both their femininity and sexuality through "risqué" style, as recorded in the field diary during a night at *The Bull's Head* pub:

> Alice and Stephanie want to use the toilets before we move on *to Harry's Bar.* Stephanie goes into the first cubicle whilst Alice and I wait for the other cubicles to become free. There are a couple of women washing their hands at the sink, discussing where they should go next on their night out. One of the women walks over to use the hand drier, stares at Alice and smiles. Alice looks at me and pulls a confused face, a *signal which I interpret as, 'Why is she looking at me?' When the woman finishes drying her hands she looks again at Alice and asks, "Erm, excuse me…I just wanted to say* that I l*ove your top, where did you get it?" Alice explains that she "bought it in River Island ages ago" [referring to a black laced top which reveals her black bra underneath]. The other woman's friend comes over and interjects, "I love it! It's very risqué."*

This shows how individuals like Alice adopt and hypersexualised feminine identity through style reserved for the NTE which are seen as sexually deviant because they are an unapologetic expression of sexuality that celebrates women's bodies, recognised by other women in fieldwork. This could be seen as being in line with third-wave feminism that adopts "a pro-sex stance that includes an emphasis on women's agency within the domains of sexual life and cultural representation" (Green, 2013:140) or a 'post-feminist' view which anchors "women's agency in the erotic domain and finding in sexuality and gendered performance pathways to liberation" (Green, 2013:141). Some may argue that such styles are re-establishing patriarchy and masculine hegemony by appealing to normative male heterosexual desire within a 'pornified NTE' (Griffin et al., 2013); but accounts by participants in fieldwork suggested that women dressed this way for themselves so that they could pursue pleasurable social and cultural activities linked to intoxication in the NTE including dancing, drinking, etc.

As recorded in the field diary, the notion of risqué also applied to women's drinking practices. This was evident on a night out with Cara and Louise at The Star Pub, when they celebrated certain drinking styles:

> *Cara finished her wine and asked, "Shall we have one more cheeky one [drink] before* we go? *Lucinda joked with Cara, "Are you trying to get me drunk young lady?" to which* everyone laughed. Louise grinned and concluded*, "Well it is a little* risqué, but I think *we could have one more before we move on." They spoke about getting a shot to* accompany their chosen drinks but collectively Louise, Cara, Jenna and Lucinda *decided that it would be "going too far."*

This shows that 'risqué' drinking by some women could be linked with heavy alcohol consumption (hence 'risqué'); but there is still an underlying desire to achieve a desired level of intoxication, showing how women are able to navigate the dilemmas and contradictions associated with drinking and femininity (Griffin et al., 2013) through their conceptualisation of being 'risqué'; which allows women to play with the boundaries of respectable femininity. These accounts of 'risqué' drinking practices and values show that participants appear to be inverting the notion of risk and transforming in such a way to take ownership of their participation in the NTE and not allow risk to govern their pursuit of pleasure by engaging in calculated-risky behaviours to pursue fun and intoxication in the NTE.

As identified in fieldwork, some women sought pleasure through actively exploiting their hypersexualised feminine identities together, not only a source of pleasure; but to further empower women and their friendships in a space still considered to be dominantly a 'masculine leisure activity' (Brooks, 2011). Women demonstrated strong levels of friendship, solidarity and sociality in the NTE by telling drinking stories of occasions of not only engaging in 'risqué' practices, but exploited their femininity as a source of pleasure in the context of the NTE. This was revealed in the field diary when walking up Sutton High Street with Amelia, Stephanie, Tony, Justin, Sadie and Mike towards The Star pub:

> Amelia started to tell a story, very proudly, of how she had managed to get free drinks at a bar the previous weekend. She explained that herself, Tony, Sadie and Mike went *to a snooker hall, where they "had quite a few drinks and played a bit of pool toge*ther *… and got a bit drunk". She explained, "Me and Sadie went to the bar and ordered four Jägerbombs. Sadie gets quite flirty when she's had a few drinks, and said to the barman," [Amelia puts on a higher pitched, slowed voice] "'Do we get these for free because we're pretty?'" and laughed because Sadie was, "proper fluttering her eyelashes and smiling at him." […] "The barman, who was pretty cute by the way,* laughed and <u>actually</u> *gave them to us for free!" She said that as they went to get more*

drinks, the *barman kept undercharging them, "and throwing in loads of extra Jägers for free." Stephanie laughed, "Oh my God. Good work!" Amelia continued the story and explained, "We told the boys that we were getting the drinks for free, and they got* <u>*well*</u> *jealous." Apparently, Tony and Sadie's boyfriends also went to the bar, and Tony* ordered some Jägerbombs. Amelia explained they tried to do what Sadie did and said to the barman, *'Can we have these because we're pretty too?' It was so funny! The* barman was just like *'*<u>no</u>*' and made them pay full price… but he still let us have them cheap when we went back to the bar!"*

One interpretation of exploitation of femininity to acquire free drinks could be explained by Catherine Hakim's (2011; 2010) concepts of 'erotic capital' (informed by Bourdieu's [1984] theories of 'capital') and the 'male sex deficit' which suggests that women use the six elements of 'erotic capital' including 'beauty', 'sex appeal', 'social skills', 'liveliness', 'social presentation' and 'sexual skill' to succeed in obtaining resources that women desire; particularly by taking advantage of men being more susceptible to sexual desire and visual stimuli (Hakim, 2011). However, many feminist authors and media critiques have rejected Hakim's thesis on the basis of it being considered asociological; ignoring issues relating to intersections like race, class and age; and does little to tackle gender inequality because it reverts back to reproducing masculine hegemony (Day, 2011; Green, 2013). Instead, Adam Green (2008, 2011) has proposed that the playing the 'sexual field' may be more appropriate to explain way to explain women's power using relating to sexual stratification, also using Bourdieu's (1984) work on capital, habitus and field and Erving Goffman's (1959) presentation of the self. Using the sexual fields approach Green (2008:26), suggests that

> …self-presentation and sexual practice - to fields of objective relations wherein historically specific erotic schemas acquire a structural manifestation that erotic players must navigate. In so doing, the sexual fields approach advances a set of sensitizing concepts for identifying the institutional dimensions of erotic worlds and the social organisation of sexual stratification.

Thus, it could be suggested that women like Amelia and Sadie have appropriately applied erotic capital explicitly with the sexual field of the NTE to acquire 'rewards' like feel drinks.

During an interview with Cara and Louise, they were excited to tell me about games that they had developed with their female friends which entailed exploiting their femininity to get free drinks to achieve their desired levels of intoxication:

Cara: *Ahhh! Let's share our little game!* [Cara says excitedly and quickly]
Louise: Haha.

Cara: *Right, this is the game, and our rules. When you're at the bar, and there is a guy, and he's been there 10 minutes or whatever, trying to get a drink… Well, we take it in turns, like, you go do it, or I'll go do it.* So, *I'll say [*to the man at the bar], Right, if *you get served before me, you buy my drink, and if I get served before you, then I'll buy your drink." So, the guy is like, "Yeah, deal, that's fine." So obviously, he gets served then that's fine, I get a drink anyway. But if the bar staff* comes to me first, I just say, *"Oh, don't worry, serve him first. He was here before me"* [Cara and Louise laugh simultaneously]. So, then he gets served first anyway. So, *then I'm like, "Woooah* you *got served before me, so you get me…" [waves her arm to indicate as if she was going* to order].

Louise: *Then she turns round and goes, "Lou' what you having?"*

Cara: [Laughing] Yeah! I tell him I am with my mates, and they are in my round, so you *can't* just get me a drink and not her, you have to get both of us!

Louise: <u>Trust me</u> it works loads! And it is so funny!

This shows how some women are able to able a combination of sexual and non-sexual resources 'endogenous' to field (Green, 2013) of the NTE as a valuable source of power to women enabling them to acquire free drinks and have playful social interaction with men; both of which were pleasurable social and cultural activities because it helped women to achieve desired levels of intoxication and interact with men against a backdrop of masculine hegemony.

Female participants also consciously utilised resources including community gatekeepers available to them in the NTE field and applied erotic capital to pursue pleasure. For example, during a night out with Stephanie and her work colleagues, some members of the group were reluctant to go the nightclub Anarchy because of entry costs and queuing times; However, as illustrated in the field diary, Stephanie's friend Katherine used her femininity to address their concerns regarding accessing the nightclub:

When we get to Anarchy there is a long queue outside; perhaps of about thirty people. *There is another queue of five people; the guest list queue. […] There were three,* stocky male door staff, all dressed in black uniform, in thick layers. Katherine walks straight over to one of the door staff whilst we tail behind her*, "Hiya, honey"* she says in a quite over the top, happy voice, which I have not heard until now. She wraps her arms around him and they hug. I do not catch their entire conversation, but I can see *him continuously smiling at her, "…It's great to see you. It's been a while since you were here." They share a brief conversation […]* and I basically capture that she is *telling him that it is her friend's birthday and that they are on the guest list. He*

flirtatiously responds, "Well you had better go straight on through then." […] As we walk through I glance back and at two men who had *been listening to Katherine's* exchange with the door staff. They look unimpressed that we have jumped the queue. *Stephanie also notices this and laughs nervously, "Look at the evils were getting.'* Katherine hugs the door staff once more, *"Thanks honey." He* discretely tells the woman taking the entry money not to charge us.

Here Katherine appropriately uses her erotic capital in the context of the NTE with existing relationships with door staff to enable herself and friends that enhances the pleasure to be had on the night out by avoiding entry costs and queuing in the cold. Collectively, these findings show how some female participants in this study express their sexuality through promiscuity and exploitation of their femininity which can provide sources of pleasure for them; rather than being overshadowed by stigma, risk and vulnerability (Wolf, 1997).

5.3.3. Risk-management strategies to manage vulnerability and promote pleasure

As suggested, female participants in this study felt exposed to potential risks by participating in the NTE of Sutton often deriving from their experiences of stigma, sexual harassment and being stalked. Fully aware of such issues pertinent to their gendered experiences of the NTE, women collectively and individually employed multiple risk management strategies to alleviate feelings of vulnerability; also reflected in the wider context of women's drinking in the UK (Waitt et al., 2011). Feminist critiques suggest that women are advised to accept individual responsibility for managing their own risk and note the gendered risks exposed to them; which argues that this limits women's freedom and autonomy in public spaces, particularly if they do not adhere to personal standards of conduct (Brooks, 2011). However, participants in this study saw taking ownership of their individual safety and achieved this through collaborative strategies with female friends and so embedded these strategies into their nights out, ensuring they could achieve pleasurable pursuits in the NTE, rather than allowing themselves to be governed by women being "simultaneously positioned as a 'risk' and 'at risk' when they socialise in bars, pubs and clubs" (Brooks, 2011). Thus, they transformed risk some risk management strategies into the pleasurable social and cultural activities linked to participating in the NTE.

As suggested, some women viewed getting ready together one of the "best parts" of going out because it enabled them to create and embody their hypersexual feminine identities, and socialise through moderate alcohol consumption in 'pre-drinking' contexts. Not only was this

pleasurable, but 'pre-drinking' contexts offered opportunities for women to plan their safety on nights out. This was articulated by Louise and Cara:

> **Laura:** Do you go round each-others houses and get ready? Things like that?
>
> **Cara:** Yeah.
>
> **Louise:** *Usually it's you and me isn't it.*
>
> **Cara:** *I just can't stay away from you OK [Laughs].*
>
> **Louise:** But yeah, we normally end up going round each-others houses and finishing off each-others hair and that kind of thing, and we might have a drink or two before we go out as well.
>
> **Cara:** *Yeah that's more of the reason isn't it! Say if you are going to Sutton for example.* Like we both live there, but I live closer [to the NTE], so I will bring her to me and then *we can both drink at mine and then walk together from mine. Whereas if it's the other* way round and we are going a bit further out then she will usually pick me up and we will go to hers and have a few drinks, whilst we are getting ready and have a chat and all that, and then get a cab. So, *it's good to have a drink or two at home whilst were* getting ready.

This shows that female gatherings are not idle or meaningless, but serve multiple social and cultural functions for women (Blackman, 1995:214); in this context to strengthen female bonds, friendships and solidarity but also to ensure their personal safety when going into Sutton and avoid the potential feelings of intimidation when entering drinking establishments as a solitary female (Leyshon, 2008). These views were echoed by women consistently in field work interviews and observations who went on to suggest that leaving female friends to travel to and from the NTE alone was undesirable, not just from a safety perspective, but also because not participating in 'pre-drinking' activities offered opportunities to enhance fun. Travelling home alone, however, was not undesirable, but unacceptable because this placed women in a vulnerable position. By sticking together women were able to actively avoid putting themselves in "stupid" or "risky" situations like walking home alone when their inhibitions were lowered through alcohol consumption (Sheard, 2011); correlating with this, fieldwork identified that women rarely travelled home alone.

As observed in fieldwork, to tackle issues presented to them in the NTE like being grabbed, touched-up or feeling the dis-inhibitory effects of excessive consumption, female drinkers communicated via hidden language, codes and signals to ensure their safety on nights out. This was discussed extensively by Cara and Louise:

> **Cara:** *Like if it's just us two going out then we always stay together and get a cab* *together. Or if it's like me her and Jenna, we will get home together or if it's hard for*

one *of us to get home then we will just stay at one another's houses for the night. But I don't…it's rare that I will get dropped home in a cab by myself because I will say, "Can I either go first" …basically I just don't want to be the last one. I don't like* even like that in licensed cabs.

Louise: I always try and say to people, text me when you get in, and I make it obvious to the cab man so that he can hear. Do you remember that Lucinda had those secret words? It was like muffins or something. She got it from Hollyoaks and it seemed to work quite well.

Laura: *Do you actually do that when you're out?*

Cara: We have them in place if needed, but we try and make sure as best as we can *that we don't get split up anyway. Like if someone wants to come over and talk*, they will have to come to the whole group.

Louise: *I think that we are all quite loud enough to tell them, that 'I don't want to talk to you', or 'just leave me alone.'* So, *we don't really need codes or signs because we* are happy enough to tell any unwanted attention to go away.

As explained by Cara and Louise these codes and signals were used amongst women to signal to female friends when needed to remove themselves from any potential risky situations like unwanted attention from men and in or getting into cabs. However, they also see this language as fun because it allows them to be playful and pursue pleasurable pursuits like using the language to exploit their femininity. Thus, having this safety-management strategy in place ensured that they did not allow concerns about risk to dominant pleasurable intoxication in the NTE.

Participants suggested that they liked to drink in Sutton because knowing the locality made them feel safe when participating in the NTE. Fieldwork showed that applied extensive knowledge of the local area to facilitate their levels of fun to be had in the NTE, but also to ensure that they remained safe, as expressed by Helen:

Laura: Well, on that note, do you feel safe when you go into Sutton?

Helen: I do! But some people really h*ate it. But I don't know if it's because I have always gone out in Sutton. But to me I know that I can get home, I know how much it's* going to cost me in a cab to get home, I know that if I have only got a fiver left then I can get a cab home. Erm, so I do*n't know if it's because I am used to it that I don't* mind. And places like, say Croydon, the cab station is at the other end of the high street, and whenever I go to Croydon I have to walk missions just to go and get a cab. *I don't want to risk just getting into a cab that says it's a cab. I don't know Sutton to me, its local, it's easy, its cheap. And I always have a good time, so it's…* yeah, I have

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never seen any <u>proper</u> violence. Or <u>proper, proper</u> fights. I have heard about them, and sometimes they are about people that you know of, or that you know that might have heard about them or been in them.

This shows how having local knowledge and direct experience of an area is key to women feeling safe in the NTE (Sheard, 2011). Other female research participants in fieldwork revealed extensive knowledge not only of the area but historical knowledge of each drinking establishment, including knowing which places were labelled as "rough" or "seedy"; places known for violence, underage drinking; establishments that those 'new' to their drinking career and therefore dominated by intoxicated youths; or places that were dominated by a particular gender. Women also knew about all options of getting home safely together and often pre-planned journeys home through in-depth knowledge of local public transport etc. Having this knowledge made women feel safer about moving around drinking establishments or how to get home safely.

In sum, whilst some women in this study experienced lived and real risks within the NTE, they employed strategies to ensure that discourse around risk and fear did not govern the pleasurable social and cultural pursuits relating to their drinking experiences, and where possible transformed practices to embed risk strategies into their pleasurable pursuits. In turn, this section of the chapter hopes to contribute to moving away from the scripting of femininity in terms vulnerability, non-assertiveness and passivity (Hobbs, O'Brien and Westmarland, 2007).

5.4. The drinking cultures of young adult males in Sutton

Whilst undertaking fieldwork, I had many opportunities to go out with "the lads." This was made possible because my friend James invited me out so that he could show me "what going out with the lads is really like." This section of the chapter explores male drinking cultures in a variety of settings, exploring emerging themes of: asserting masculinity, bravado, scoring "man-points", banter, infantilism, drunken journeys, transgression of tradition male drinking practices, and violence.

5.4.1. Asserting masculinity through 'scoring man points' linked to intoxication

Fieldwork showed that young adult males in this study were concerned with asserting masculinity regarding their drinking values and practices when out with friends. A notable way

that men acquired masculinity was through the collection of what male participants directly and indirectly referred to as "man points". The term 'man-points' has been acknowledged in Richard de Visser and Elizabeth McDonnell's (2013) research of young adult male health. Using Bourdieu's (1984) work on symbolic capital, they suggest that man points can be considered as a form of 'masculine capital'. Synonyms for 'man-points' also include masculine 'credit' and 'insurance' (de Visser and McDonnell, 2013:6). Forms of masculine capital include expressions of masculinity like participating in sports, having a muscular physique, demonstrating masculine drinking behaviours and displaying heterosexual behaviours. Like symbolic capital, "different masculine behaviours may convey more or less masculine capital, and masculine capital accrued in one field may not be easily transferred to another field" (de Visser and McDonnell, 2013:6). Subsequently, different activities in a variety of 'fields' (Bourdieu, 1984) or contexts would amount to a different number of points. de Visser and McDonnell (2013) suggest that man points can also be lost through the expression of feminine activities. For example, then, men could hypothetically earn '100-man points' by winning a sporting competition; or alternatively, lose '50-man points' by doing something feminine such as watching a 'chick flick'.

In this study, fieldwork showed that 'man points' were central to male drinking cultures, whereby different masculine drinking practices and values allowed male drinkers to accrue man points within a within the 'field' of the NTE (Bourdieu, 1984). As noted by James and David, one-way men could accrue 'man points' was through their engagement and sexual interaction/'conquests' with women in the NTE:

> **Laura:** What do you think of the ladies in Sutton?
> **David:** [David makes a fake vomit noise] Pretty skanky.
> **James:** Yeah, pretty skanky and pretty slutty. But pretty good! Wayhay.
> **David:** *Yeah, pretty bloody good. It's a good show.*
> *[…]*
> **Laura:** So, you are calling them slutty, but is this not necessarily a bad thing?
> **James:** No, *it's not all a bad thing. I mean like, it's nice to look at, but you wouldn't* take them home to meet your parents.
> **David:** Exactly. Like I would probably, you know, get on one for a bit of man points.
> **Laura:** *A bit of man points…?*
> **David:** Yeah, man points. Just like, you know getting the girls you know, that kind of thing.

In line with the derogatory ways that men spoke about female drinkers in the NTE, this account from James and David suggests that men could acquire 'man points' through hooking up with

women who were seemingly sexually available to them. As implied in James and David's account; there are different levels of complexity regarding female sexual availability/ encounters with women and 'man points'. On the one hand, if men hooked up with a sexually attractive woman, they could acquire considerable man points if the woman conformed to "the quality called 'beauty' [that] objectively and universally exists…[which] men must want to possess women who embody it" (Wolf, 1990:12). On the other hand, men could equally earn man points by hooking up with sexually unattractive women (often referred to in derogatory ways such as "moose" or "ugly birds") or sexually available "slutty" women. This is because men celebrated other men's 'bravery' of getting with 'undesirable' women. This could explain why women were cautious about maintaining 'respectable femininity' (Skeggs, 1997). As illustrated by David's comments, men were cautious about getting with "the wrong girl" (Workman, 2001:439) whereby they felt that they had been lured into a sexual trap during their drunken state and ended up in the "wrong bed" (de Visser and Smith, 2007:353). Thus, 'man points' signify the assigning of a culturally imposed value that men have appropriated for themselves towards women, based upon the physical appearance of women (Wolf, 1990).

During a night out at The Sportsman pub, through a drinking story, Justin was awarded 'man points' by his friend Malik through showing commitment to excessive alcohol consumption and 'getting one over' on other men:

> Malik asked us what *we had done for New Year's Eve […]* Justin explained *"We played this really good game called liar's dice. It was sick. I got Laura's Brother*-in-Law Niall *big time."* Justin was proud that he "got revenge" and "set him up" with lots of shots by *making him lose the game. He said, "I would have got Laura normall*y, but he was out to get me, so *he got them [the shots] instead" making* the boys laugh. *[…]* showing off he said*, "Basically the three of us did a whole bottle of Sambuca." He* continued explaining that there were friends round the next day, and that Niall w*as "trying to get me [Justin] drunk, but it totally backfired on him." I got one over him again…*it was so *funny. He ended up chucking his guts up and passing out at like eight o'clock." Martin laughed and Malik responded, "You earned some major fucking man points there."* What Justin failed to mention in this story was that he was also ill and vomiting that night from the alcohol that he consumed during the game, but did not mention any signs of his own weakness in his story telling.

This shows that masculine capital can be acquired through the winning of 'man points' in male drinking competitions, which brings pleasure to male consumption practices. Justin is seen as masculine not because he won the drinking game and because Niall has consequently faced negative outcomes of alcohol consumption that were viewed by this group as amusing not

detrimental. Whilst this is not a positive view held by males towards excessive consumption, it shows that male consumption practices can be driven by a desire to accumulate masculine capital.

5.4.2. Banter, dares and practical jokes: male infantilism in the NTE

A significant dimension of male drinking cultures observed in fieldwork, was the partaking of banter, dares and practical jokes linked to drinking and intoxication amongst friends. For example, in the interview with Leo, Justin and Tony, Tony boasts about a time that he spiked a friend's drink supposedly with Viagra as a practical joke:

> **Tony:** *I've done stuff to peoples drinks but never actually had stuff done to mine.* *[laughs] One time we put Viagra into someone's pint, not knowing that it would do what* it did, it was only half a pint left in a pint glass and it fizzed – we put half a tablet of Viagra in it to see what it done and there was basically nothing left in the glass after because it all frothed out and started bubbling up. He come back and just looked at it *and just… was like "I'm not drinking it." Three quarters of the pint was now foam and* frothy.
> **Justin:** He knew something was wrong then.
> **Tony:** Yeah basically.
> **Justin:** *I have heard that on stag do's and stuff like the old golf ball game, where you* get the ball and have it dropped in your drink then you have to down it and stuff like that.
> **Laura:** So, there is some kind of drink spiking going on?
> **Tony:** *Yeah…*
> **Leo:** *Yeah but its friendly. It's a non*-malicious act between pals.
> **Tony:** Yeah, *it's with your mates. Yeah, like if someone wants a single, so you go and* get them a double or whatever – so you get them drunk.
> **Leo:** *But what's worse is when you actually worse* is when you ask for a double and they buy you a single – *so you buy them a more expensive drink and…*
> **Tony:** *[Looking a Justin] …Or like when you order two triples and run away and then* let someone else pay for it.
> **Justin:** [Smirking] that is disgusting behaviour. Who would do something like that?
> **Leo:** [Feigns seriousness] Oh yeah, that is really bad. I believe that is when friends *'hook you up'.*

Although this is act can be seen as friendly 'banter' between men, defined as the playful exchange of teasing remarks but play humour, competitive and defensive roles in male gendered interactions (Hein and O'Donohoe, 2013:6); drink spiking can have serious health repercussions because young adults cannot maintain control or have knowledge of what they are consuming (Sheard, 2010). For men, dares and practical jokes in relation to drink spiking is seen as part of the fun between men, and part of an ambition to try and get one each other intoxicated, or what Benson and Archer (2002:9) have identified as men looking to "have a laff" [have a laugh]. This enabled men to participate in social and cultural activities linked to intoxication that were out of the ordinary and could be linked to seeking novel experiences and generating drinking stories as identified in Chapter Four of this thesis.

Women were also targets of men's practical jokes. For example, during a night out in The Star pub, as recorded in the field diary, Justin performed the masculine role a gentleman towards his female friends by trying to get us a chair so that we could all socialise as a group. However, he proceeded to enact a practical joke upon other females in the pub:

> Malik and Leo had a table at the back of the pub, so we joined them; however, there were not enough chairs for everyone. Stephanie, Amelia, Sadie and Jane were *desperate for chairs so that they could "save" their "feet for dancing" at Voodoo Lounge* later that evening. On the table next to us were three women, who were sharing a couple of bottles of wine. When one of them went up to go to the toilet, Justin took her chair and brought it to our table. When the woman returned a few minutes later she was very aggressive towards our group. She walked around our table, clearly knowing *that our group had her chair calling us, "pathetic losers".* She returned with a chair from *elsewhere saying, "I'll get another fucking chair."* Stephanie, Amelia, Sadie and Jane were embarrassed and ignored the woman, but Malik, Leo, Tony and Mike found the situation hilarious and praised Justin for his trick. Justin continued to collect chairs for the others in our group, offering them to the women first. Eventually he found enough *chairs for everyone. […]* When the aggressive woman left her chair again, Justin returned to her table again, and loudly asked the two remaining women loud enough *for us to hear, "Excuse me, do you know if anyone is using this chair?" Everyone broke* into raucous laughter and the two women joked *"sod off."*

One the one hand, banter, dares and practical jokes can be seen as a way in fostering a sense of community amongst young drinkers; but one the other hand, this can reinforce homosocial drinking spaces and uphold 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell, 1995; 2005) by directing such jokes at the expense of women, which could be considered as a form of 'putdown' banter

through ridicule but allows men to assert their masculine status in the NTE (Hein and O'Donohoe, 2013:12).

On a fieldwork occasion with Street Pastors, Terry and Karen, we crossed paths with two other Street Pastors Patrick and John whilst roving Sutton High Street. Terry and Karen proceeded to ask them how they were finding the evening so far. As recorded in the field diary, Patrick and John enjoyed telling us an amusing story about a group of young men who played a practical joke on one of their friends that they had encountered earlier that evening:

> Patrick explained a scenario to us of two men that they had spotted in Trinity Square. The two men appeared to be hanging around and chatting when according to Patrick, sudden*ly one of the men "Darted down the high street."* […] *The* man explained that the friend who had gone running down the high street left his wallet on a table in The Sportsman; so, his friend put it in his pocket. When the two men got to the top of the high street, the man realised his wallet was missing. Patrick *chuckled, "His friend told him he must have lost it in The Sportsman." This explained why he went running dow*n the High Street. However, Patrick said that the man pulled the wallet out of his own pocke*t and confessed that he took it from his friend, quoting him as, "to teach my mate a lesson" and laughed. John chipped into the conversation that they said seriously to the man, "I hope you are going to give it back to him when he comes back?"* Patrick exp*lained that the man had told them, "I'll let him stew a bit longer and give it back to him tomorrow."* John added that he and Patrick tried to point out that this prank may *go wrong, but the man just laughed and said, "It's OK. He's my* mate, he will understand. Just a bit of banter*." Patrick laughed harder, "The most interesting part of that was that the one who took the wallet said he was a policeman himself!"*

In this scenario practical jokes and banter are used deliberately amongst some young males to police one each other's drinking practices by teaching lessons about the consequences of excessive consumption. In sum, for many young males in this study, banter was a prominent part of male drinking cultures that helped men to pursue pleasure through this form of 'play' which helped promote closeness, rapport and homosociality amongst male friends in the context of the NTE (Hein and O'Donohoe, 2013:12). However, these forms of play also reflected the capacity to help young males regulate their drinking values and practices positively. These fieldwork observations also show that the infantile playfulness and silliness associated with men's drinking is seen as "acceptable, unquestionable and normalised within the NTE" (Blackman, Doherty and McPherson, 2015:52).

5.4.3. Drunken journeys

Young men and women in this study spoke about the importance of 'pre-drinking' and the pleasures that this brought them, some of these occasions being more fun than the actual part of going out. Whereas going home for women was a serious part of the evening, particularly in relation to their safety and risk management; as identified in fieldwork and interviews with young males, the journey home was a source of pleasure. This was articulated extensively during an interview with James and David:

> **David:** Yeah, we had the best journeys home [says excitedly]. *[…]*
>
> **James:** *That's one of the funniest bits of the night. We have done loads of funny things.*
>
> **David:** I ca*n't even count how many things. W*e used to do loads of shit. We still do *though, don't we.*
>
> **James:** There was one time we were coming home and we thought we would try and *like piss off everyone's neighbours. What we used to do was steal everything from the* gardens [David is laughing hysterically as James is telling the story, which causes James to start *laughing]* …and go and put their stuff in their *neighbour's* garde*ns…so* they would wake up the next day and just think that their neighbour is a bastard.
>
> **David:** And there was this massive plant pot, like a massive tree, and we took it out of one garden and put it in the *neighbour's* garden, right in front of the door [laughs uncontrollably as he is saying this between breathes]. You can imagine them opening *the door like, "What the fuck?"*
>
> **James:** And we used to put shoes and whatever we could find on their steps and that.
>
> **David:** But then they cottoned on to it, because then when we went next time, they *had like a lock on their plant pots so that we couldn't get it. Do you remember that time* then we put the road barrier up?
>
> **James:** Oh yeah, we set up a road block.
>
> **David:** Yeah, we like closed the road, and some car drove into it. It was funny. Oh, and do you remember that kids bike that you found and you fell off it?
>
> **James:** Oh yeah. That was funny! It was like a little trike. I was peddling along and just toppled off it, but I put it back.
>
> **David:** Aww what else did we do? We used to have races as well.
>
> **James:** What?
>
> **David:** What do you mean, what*? Don't you remember the other night? Well, not the* other night but a little while ago. Remember that night when I fell in that man hole? And I had a massive cut on my leg and you went home naked.
>
> **James:** What?! [Starts laughing, but also shocked]

David: *You don't remember? It was like the coldest night ever! And then you were* naked.

James: Oh yeah! But you fell down a man hole?

David: *Yeah, we had a race, like I don't know why…oh no wait! We were playing knock* down ginger[32].

James: Oh yeah!

David: *And then we ran off, and then I was like, 'Argh' or something like that, and I* had fallen down some manhole, and I had this <u>massive</u> *cut on my leg. It's only just* healed [he pulls up his trouser to show the scar of where it was, which reveals a small reddish scar]. But when I woke up the next morning, there was blood everywhere. And *I text you or Daniel, like, "What happened?" And one of you was like, "Yeah, you fell* *down a manhole."*

Laura: So, *you didn't remember it?*

David: Not fully, kind of. Then you and Daniel were crawling up Ridge Road.

[…]

Laura: *Oh OK. So that's quite* fun, is it?

James: Yeah.

David: *Yeah. It's like one of the best parts of the night out. It's like holidays, you know* *like, getting on the aeroplane is one of the best parts? It's like that.*

James: You know in Sutton, when we used to go to Manor Park, the actual park? The one with the round-about? I love going on there when I am fucked and going round on the round-about. And we used to erm, sometimes, do a piss in the pond.

David: Oh my God, you <u>pissed</u> in the pond?

James: Yeah, and there was that time when we stole your camera [talking to me].

Laura: Ah yes. I remember.

David: What?

James: Yeah me and Tim took some naked photos on the climbing frame and then *posted the camera back through Laura's door when we had finished.*

David: *[Laughs] You weirdo's. I remember when we used to go to Tesco's… [*to James] did you used to come as well?

James: Sometimes.

David: We used to do the Trolley races around the car park in there as well on our walk back home.

---

[32] 'Knock down ginger' is a 'game' which entails loudly knocking and banging on a strangers front door in an attempt to get them to answer the door whilst the culprit(s) run away to avoid getting caught.

Laura: So how did all this happen, was there an element of planning or did it all occur spontaneously?

James: I think that subconsciously you would plan some of it maybe.

David: We know now, that it is going to happen. Because, I think like the first time, it *was like… I dunno' how it happened, but it just did. [To James] You remember the first* time that we were moving the stuff around and the police drove past? [He starts laughing] and we liked dived under a car or something! And we were like SHIT!

James: Yeah, that was jokes!

David: *They're after us! [Laughs]*

Laura: Did the police catch you doing it?

David: Nah, we were alright, they just drove past.

James: I remember one time when I was mooning cars as they were driving past, and then I was mooning this one car, and it turned out to be a police car. And I was like, *'Oh shit' [puts on high voice, and David laughs']. And then I ran off as fast as I could, but the police car didn't do anything.*

Laura: Where was that?

James: *I can't remember. We decided to walk all the way home from Kingston once.* But we got so far, and then just called a cab. It was me, you and Dean.

David: Oh yeah. We got lost in Surbiton or something and we were playing knock down ginger. And you literally *went into somebody's house and knocked on their door.*

James: Oh yeah.

David: We ran off before you even knocked [laughs]. You took a step like that way, *and we ran and you didn't even notice, and you were like in their porch, like knocking* on their door, it was so funny.

James: *Who was it? Me, you and…ah…what's his name…Rob! That's his name. And then Rob pushed me in the bush and I had a kebab in my hand…so I decided to go* into the bush face first, like this, [holds hands in the air] to save my kebab [David laughs hysterically]. Then I ended up with loads of cuts on my face. But I saved my kebab.

David: Do you remember that time when you had a drink in one hand and a kebab in the other, so I just went over to you and pulled your trousers down. It was so funny *because you literally couldn't do anything. He's just standing there, it was so funny.* [David laughs continuously throughout and then turns to me and says]. See. We have the best nights out.

Initially whilst James and David's initial experiences of journey's home were unprompted, it appears that they predictably engage in transgression to characterise their drinking as spontaneous and impulsive (Thurnell-Read, 2011). This because it brings pleasure to their

drinking experiences, as traveling home intoxicated shows how men desire to extend the pleasure of their nights out away from the constraints that drinking establishments impose upon them. Here they can participate in further infantile acts of banter, dares and practical jokes underpinned by playful deviance and transgression. Not only do these moments act as opportunities for men to strengthen bonding and homosociality through memory making and creating novel experiences; they make for entertainment-based drinking stories that could be told at future events (Tutengés and Sanberg, 2013).

It was not just journey's home that were important to young males in this study, but it was also the travelling to and from, and in-between venues that provided men with a source of pleasure. For example, on one fieldwork occasion I offered to pick up James and David from James' house before we go and meet the rest of the men at The Star pub. On the way, James and David mess around in my car whilst I drive them into Sutton:

> *As we drive, James says "shotgun" and sits in the front of my car. As soon as he gets* in he starts messing with the radio station and turns the radio right up, so that my car is vibrating from the sound. He starts s*houting "Yeeeeah, bruv! Let's have a rave,"* *whilst David is in the back of the car laughing and singing. It's a dance track on Kiss* which I do not recognise. As we stop at traffic lights, James leans over and starts pressing the horn on my car, and taps it slightly. I laugh, but tell him to stop, which he *laughs back and is like, "Alright, bruv', we don't want no police banging you up." This* *makes David laugh, "If any police pull you over I am going to put this cider next to you* and tell them that you were *drinking it!"*

Here James and David are engaging in infantile behaviour to create memories and fun, but as they are already slightly intoxicated they are clearly feeling confident and brazen about their behaviour. As noted by Wilkinson (2015), moving between drinking spaces is not simply a case from transitioning from A to B, it is an experience for young adult drinkers that can be transformed to create a sense of connectedness and belonging.

5.4.4. Transgressing 'traditional masculine' drinking norms

Fieldwork showed that young males in the study were conscious of traditional masculine drinking norms of the past like the partaking of round drinking, consuming masculine drinks like beer, lager and whiskey and the ability to 'hold' one's drink; both of which are seen to be 'hegemonic' forms of masculinity (Campbell, 2009; Connell, 1995). Being able to 'hold' one's drink included the management of intoxication and retaining bodily control. Whilst these

traditional drinking norms informed some of their drinking practices and values, in a contemporary context, men appeared to be moving away from these traditional drinking norms, or at least appropriating them differently to make them more relevant within the contemporary context of the 'culture of intoxication' (Measham and Brain, 2005).

One departure from past male drinking cultures identified in fieldwork was some men's move away from the consumption of strictly 'masculine' beverages like lager, beer and spirits like whiskey. Men showed that they drank a diverse range of beverages including what they said were feminine beverages, but providing that this was done in the appropriate context, as articulated by Leo, Tony and Justin:

> **Leo:** I think that when we got to the Voodoo Lounge, for example, which do specialised cocktails, we tend to all partake and we can do rounds in there, because the drinks are the same price, and they do the offer of buy one get one free, so you pair up. So, we generally drink the same drink, much to their dissatisfaction at the bar. We generally drink Key West Coolers.
>
> **Tony:** Ooooh yeah, Key West Coolers [Laughter].
>
> **Leo:** So, if there are nine of us going to Voodoo Lounge, most of us want Key West Coolers, so when we rock up to the bar asking for them they generally get a bit upset. *But hey, they are getting paid and we are getting drunk…so…*
>
> **Laura:** So, *don't you get chastised for drinking cocktails then?*
>
> **Justin:** *Well, that's because we are all drinking them.*
>
> **Leo:** *Exactly, we can't chastise each other. You want some alcohol.*
>
> **Tony:** *It's different in the pub, if I order a Jack Daniel and he [Justin] has a Malibu, he's gonna' get ribbed for the rest of the night. We will never let him live that one down* because men drink beer and whiskey, well, us real men [smirks at Justin].

With the changing social context of the NTE, there is an increasing acceptance amongst men of consuming feminised drinks and attending feminised settings (Emslie and Hunt, 2013). Here the men appear to be willing to display feminine qualities as a way to reinforce one's masculinity (de Visser and McDonnell, 2013), but also display that they refer to the context to excuse what could be perceived as non-hegemonic behaviour like drinking feminine drinks (Emslie and Hunt, 2013). Thus, some male drinking choices are becoming increasingly informed by taste and personal preference, although there can be a slight overspill of hegemonic masculinity being displayed; nonetheless, men display assertiveness regarding beverage choices whereby they do not succumb to pressure and fieldwork reflects that their drink choices are not passively chosen.

The growing diversification of some men's beverage choices was further explained in an interview with James and David, who suggested that pint drinking is losing its relevance in contemporary drinking settings:

> **Laura:** Is there any pressure to have a pint?
>
> **David:** *No. I think it's part of a social…you know like…what's that thing that they say on the Big Bang theory, where they are like…erm…they say something about what* they can and c*an't do socially.*
>
> *[…]*
>
> **James:** *I know what you mean, but I don't know what it's called. You see I think that when you go to a pub, there is pressure to have a pint, but when you go out there isn't. And anyway, I don't think that there are many places that sell draught pints anyway.*
>
> **David:** *And even if they do…it's holding it. I mean like it's a pint, and a pint is a lot.* And people knock into you and stuff. But if you have a short, like with coke, you can dance with i*t, you can walk around with it…and it's like you don't have to worry ab*out spilling it.
>
> **James:** *I think that it's the other way around. In the pub, if you're not having a pint then* people take the piss out of you. If you are in a club and you are having a pint then people do take the piss out of you, because they are like, look at this old guy, what *does he think that he's doing?*

This shows that the setting of the pub or a bar/club informs the consumption practices of male participants. Here men are actively weighing up the physiological effects of different beverages and also closely reflecting upon how the setting itself can intervene with other pleasurable social and cultural pursuits in the NTE like dancing. This shows again how such pursuits can be considered more important than the process of drinking and the effects of intoxication (Blackman, Doherty and McPherson, 2015).

As suggested by Thurnell-Read (2011:279), "The male body is one of the principle sites for the performative construction of masculinities", whereby traditionally the male body has been viewed as being contained, controlled and strong. In relation to this, Campbell (2000) suggests that in regard to masculine drinking practices, men are expected to retain bodily control and discipline over the effects of alcohol consumption including the ability to refrain from urinating and vomiting. Achieving this signifies masculinity because it demonstrates that one is able to 'hold' their alcohol; thus embodying 'hegemonic masculinity' (Peralta, 2007). Whilst elements of this held true for the male research participants in this study, these traditions are arguably beginning to vary and transform in contemporary male drinking cultures. For example, in an

interview with Justin, Leo and Tony, they provide a new understanding regarding Campbell's (2000:572) suggestions that male drinking discipline of the ability to "hold your piss":

> **Tony:** Plus, *you don't wanna' break the seal too early*[33].
> **Laura:** *What's the issue with that?*
> **Tony:** *Because once you break the seal, it's like every other sip you need to go to the* toilet.
> **Laura:** A*nd that's a bad thing?*
> **Tony:** *Yeah that a bad thing because you gotta' keep getting up and gotta' leave your pints and your mates which isn't great.* Plus, *when you are with a certain crowd it's a* bad idea to leave it uncovered.

As suggested by Tony, the issue with 'breaking the seal' was not linked to the sense of losing bodily control as per Campbell's (2000) point relating to hegemonic masculinity; the issue was that men could be exposed to the banter, dares and practical jokes mentioned earlier in the chapter, as well as miss out on opportunities to bond and socialise because of a constant need to frequent the toilets. This shows subtle transformations of traditional masculine drinking practices amongst some males in this study within a contemporary context where pleasurable pursuits in relation to intoxication, friendship and sociality in the NTE is more valued than hegemonic expressions of bodily control.

Fieldwork alongside young adult males continued to show that some men often celebrated, to an extent, the loss of bodily control (Thurnell-Read, 2009; 2011). This was reflected in an interview with James and David showed that at times who saw losing certain bodily control was acceptable, which could signify masculinity:

> **James:** *I went out a few weeks ago and I was throwing up all the next day, I couldn't* believe it.
> **David**: I never throw up.
> **James:** The last two times that I have been out I have thrown up the next day. That has never happened before.
> **David:** Jesus. I swear you used to be sick all the time.
> **James:** Not the next day.
> **David:** Oh, do you remember when you threw up in Anarchy, and you threw up and *you were like, 'Urgh' [makes sick noise], and then you were like, 'Yeah I'm all right now, let's get on it' again.' It was right next to me and I was like, 'Urrrrgh' [laughing].*
> **Laura:** Was this in the toilets or somewhere else?

---

[33] 'Breaking the seal' is a reference to going to the toilet.

> **David:** It was literally by the bar. I was getting a drink and he was here [points a small *distance] and was like, 'Urrrrgh' [repeats sick noise and lau*ghs]. Then he was like, *'Yeah let's get the shots in.'*

Whilst David ridicules James for vomiting from excessive alcohol consumption, he also shows high regard for James in being able to continue drinking. This coincides with Thurnell-Read's (2009, 2011) of male stag tourism whereby acts like urination and vomiting were celebrated amongst men with good humour, mock disgust and encouragement over censorship. Consequently, in contemporary male youth drinking cultures, being able to restore one's self after losing control, rather than "maintaining the appearance of total sobriety and self-control" is now a signifier of masculinity (Campbell, 2000:571) and shows that the drinking culture of Britain is characterised by a normalisation of excess and a lack of restraint (Hobbs et al., 2005; Griffin et al., 2009).

Nonetheless, some participants did not aspire to lose complete bodily control which could result in negative outcomes from excessive alcohol because this could prevent socialising and bonding with friends on nights out. Thus, some male participants developed a strategy called the 'tactical chunder' so that they could continue their night and participate in the culture of intoxication. I was first made aware of the tactical chunder, often abbreviated in code to "T.C" by one young male, Owen; and then later recorded James' experience of it in the field diary during a night out at The Project nightclub:

> *James tells me that does not feel well and approaches David to inform him, "It's time* for the old tactic*al chunder." David laughs and asks Jamie, "Are you having that sugar rush again?" I ask James what a tactical chunder is, He explains that when he has had too much to sugar or alcohol, he feels "shaky" and unwell;* so, he goes to the toilets and forces hims*elf to vomit so that he "feels better" and doing this can enable him to carry on drinking. After explaining this to me, he tells us, "I'll be right back" and heads* to the toilets. He returns approximately ten minutes later and tells us proudly that he mana*ged to make himself sick and "feels so much better."*

This shows that some men also value the bathroom space like women do, but for different reasons. Here James problematically utilises the toilets to make himself vomit so that he can continue to consume alcohol with friends; as signified by David's laughter, such actions are deemed as socially acceptable in the context of the NTE. Thurnell-Read (2011) suggests that this could be attributed to a strong sense of men's commitment to their pleasurable drinking pursuits amongst friends. In regard to practices like the 'tactical chunder' it is important to note that these collective transgressive acts of excessive and lack of bodily control displayed by

men are "entered into as a matter of choice" (Thurnell-Read, 2011:988), highlighting the agentic action of male drinking cultures. These findings show that despite traditional male drinking practices being associated with contained bodily control, male participants in this study appear to be entering into more feminine expressions of the 'leaky body' (Shildrick, 1997) as illustrated through their lack of bodily control regarding their intoxication practices.

It was not just deviation from masculine beverages and bodily control that appeared to signal a departure from traditional masculine drinking cultures in fieldwork; some male participants also appeared to move away from the masculine domain of the NTE into domestic spaces often associated historically as more feminine spaces (Holloway, Jayne and Valentine, 2008). A somewhat hidden key fieldwork finding that I discovered was how men showed a strong commitment to getting ready for nights out in the NTE and took considerable interest in their style reserved for nights out. This was recorded in the field diary when Stephanie and I accidently arrived unexpectedly early at Edward, Liam and Dean's flat where a group of male friends were pre-drinking and getting ready for the night ahead them:

> *When we arrived Liam answered the door, embracing James in a manly hug, "Alrigh*t *mate? Come in" followed by Paul who received the same greeting. Liam then saw Stephanie and I, looking slightly sceptical he remarked, "Hiya ladies…you've come early." He gave us a hug and led us into the living room. […] Liam offered to help sort* the drinks we had bought and showed us to the kitchen to get glasses for the wine. As *he was sorting through, Leo remarked, "I didn't realise you and Stephanie were coming over this early. I thought you were coming later?" […] Dean arrived a little later than* everyone else because he had gotten home from work later. He went straight to the *shower after saying a quick "hello" to everyone. He came back through in his towel* and went straight into his bedroom to get changed. The boys in the corridor wolf whistled at *him and as he walked by David says, "Very sexy, lover boy" in a camp tone,* clearly for comedy effect. This makes everyone laugh. As we were stood in the corridor the boys started talking about their clothes. James was asking Paul, then wanted confirmation *from Stephanie and I, "Does my shirt over t-shirt look, look OK?" Paul laughs, "Yes James, you look really lovely." James smiled, "And what about my rosemary [sic] beads, they don't make me look gay do they?"* Again, this prompted laughter and we said that he looked fine. He was reassured for a moment. David *started to say, "Actually, I usually borrow Dean's clothes, is he is ready yet?" He does not wait for anyone to answer and walks straight over to Dean's bedroom door, knocking loudly, "Are you decent mate? I don't wanna' see you with your knob out."* Dean comes to the door and lets David go in without saying anything. David winks at *us as he walks in. Stephanie laughs, "Is there something we don't know about there?"*

Paul and James start laughing, but it is clear from their faces that David is messing around. We hear David and Dean talking, and a few minutes later they come out and *David has borrowed Dean's chequered shirt, "It's cold out tonight, and I look a bit* boring with just a plain t-shirt. Now I get *to be like James." He puts his arm around James. David turns to Stephanie and I, "This* looks, *better doesn't it?" We agree and he replies, "I always borrow Dean's clothes" and walks back to chat to the others in the* living room.

As highlighted by Liam's questioning of myself and Stephanie's presence at his flat during the early part of the evening, this was an occasion that should have been strictly a male setting whereby women were not invited to until later on in the evening, providing time for "homosocial bonding ritual that shapes and reasserts male friendships" (Thurnell-Read, 2011:987). This was a time and space where men could get ready together, 'pre-drink' and engage in social activities like listening to music. Such close friendship rituals within the space of a private domestic setting could be seen to mirror a feminised "bedroom culture" (McRobbie, 1978; Lincoln, 2005; 2012). From fieldwork, it appeared that like Lincoln's (2012) analysis of bedroom culture, young men in this study engaged in the organisation of their social and cultural lives and engaged in activities like swapping clothes, listen to music, chat, drink and get ready for a night out. There appears to a recognition amongst the male participants that they are aware of crossing the boundaries into feminine behaviour because they attempt to counteract this through remarks underpinned and guised by humour which attempt to help them to reclaim their hegemonic masculine status. Nonetheless, this shows that the domestic sphere offers an important site for young adult males in this study to carve out their own time and space to bond and socialise in their pursuit of pleasurable intoxication practices.

5.4.5. Masculinity and violence in the NTE

I occasionally witnessed violence amongst 'other' men in fieldwork (not amongst participants that I researched alongside), although discussions of violence were a reoccurring theme in interviews amongst the research participants. Male participants attributed violence as being linked with excessive alcohol consumption and loss of inhibition and could stem from gendered interactions with women, being 'provoked' by the environment, or as a result of the infantilism displayed by men in the NTE. These ideas were encapsulated in an interview with by Justin, during an interview:

Justin: [...] *So when you're younger you're more energetic and it's a good meeting place to meet ladies and stuff like that. So that's why predominantly they are saturated.*

But by the time that people get into the clubs people are really drunk, because the *prices are so expensive people tend to drink at cheaper pubs like Wetherspoon's or at* home and then they go out to clubs. Because you may pay five or six pounds for a drink, and it works out really expensive. So naturally when people have had a few *drinks, they naturally become aggressive or there are fights over females…So their* behaviour changes. Although, it can be a nice environment with the music and a good atmosphere, other times it can become quite aggressive.

This shows that there are multiple sources of aggression and violence in the context of men's drinking including environmental factors, but interactions with women are regularly cited as a source of aggression (Benson and Archer, 2002; Graham et al., 2010). Unfortunately, this can mirror earlier discussions in this chapter of victim blaming of women regarding provoking violence (Kavanaugh, 2013). This account also shows that some men also place blame upon clubs and bars for bad policies that prioritise the commodification of women (Blackman, Doherty and McPherson, 2015) in creating tensions that can lead to violence. Thus, accounts by young adult males appeared to suggest that men were sometimes to be devoid of blame.

Although young men engaged in infantile behaviour when drinking because it offered them a source of pleasure and fun, like the idea of 'calculated-intoxication', on occasion acts of infantilism could go wrong because the situation has been misjudged which can lead to unintended negative outcomes. For example, whilst observing a night out in Sutton with two Street Pastors, Karen and Terry, two young men began a 'rap battle' which ended in violence:

Two men and a woman were talking loudly, and laughing and joking with one another. One of the men is short and stocky with dark hair appearing to be in his mid-twenties. He wore a long white shirt, smart trousers and black leather shoes. The other man *looked younger than twenty, tall and slim. He was casual with his beige chino's and* black t-shirt. The young woman is wearing a cream floaty top, mini skirt and black high *heels. […] Suddenly, the men are shouting and the stocky man beg*ins violently punching the slim man like a punching bag. The slim man curled his head down to his chest in an attempt to protect his head. The woman was grabbing the stocky man by *the shirt, trying to pull him away whilst screaming, "What are you doing?" "*Leave him *alone," "Get off of him" […] Karen used her radio to call for the police. […] As the stocky* man and woman walk away, Karen and Terry helped the slim guy who was badly beaten and see if he is OK. He tells us that his name is Aidan and is 18 years old. He *begins shouting aggressively, "I am fine. Where did that cunt go? He ain't getting away with that." It suddenly dawns upon Aidan he is talking to the Street pastors, and*

changes temperament, "I'm really sorry I don't usually swear like this…it's just because of what happened you know? I'm <u>so</u> angry." […] He calmed down and joked, "I'm pretty messed up, aren't I?" He told us that he had been evicted from the Anarchy nightclub for being drunk. He got talking to the man who had just beaten him and the woman whilst waiting for his friends to find him. He explained, "The guy was like do you MC bruv? And started getting up in my face with all this, like, Eminem shit." He laughed. "So anyway, he insulted me, I insulted him, I called him, like a 'fat bastard' or something." He explained that he must have "embarrassed" the stocky man in front of his girlfriend and, "So he starts beating the shit out of me."

This reflects the "frequently chaotic relationships that are generated by the field, which violence is often a by-product (Winlow et al., 2001). Moreover, this presents how aspirations of acquiring hegemonic masculinity and masculine capital (de Visser andMcDonnell, 2013) through the pursuit of pleasurable social and cultural pursuits linked to intoxication in the NTE, can lead to negative outcomes because the situation had been misjudged.

5.5. Challenging the convergence of female and male drinking cultures in Sutton

In recent years, there has been a growing number of claims that there is a 'convergence' culture of men and women's drinking, where it is suggested that women are increasingly attempting to drink like a man (for example see: Bratberg et al., 2016; Chatterton and Hollands, 2003). As briefly outlined in Chapter One, much of this is attributed to media depictions that have presented women trying to gain equality with men, including areas of leisure, which can be traced as far back as depictions of the 'Ladette' in the 1990s (Jackson and Tinkler, 2007; Day, Gough and McFadden). Similarly forms of popular music and culture reinforce similar depictions of women regarding alcohol and intoxication which can be epitomised in songs like Jessie J's (2010) Do it like a Dude, namely through the lyrics, "Bong, bong, hey, pour me a beer / No pretty drinks, I'm a guy out here". This suggestion of a convergence culture has enhanced moral panics around women's drinking, where women are subjected to further discrimination. For example, in *The Government's Alcohol Strategy* (2012) men's drinking is referenced four times, whereas men are referred to eleven times (Blackman, Doherty and McPherson, 2015:48). Collectively, this denies agency to women's drinking experiences, whereby they are depicted as passively emulating the practices and values of men in the culture of intoxication, where both men and women alike supposedly aspire to excessive consumption.

Researchers in the field of alcohol studies have contested the idea of a 'convergence' in male and female drinking cultures, including Demant and Törrönen (2011) of Danish drinkers and Measham and Østergaard (2009) comparing UK and Danish drinkers. Both authors suggest the rationale about the idea of a 'convergence' culture may stem from quantitative data from surveys like the European School Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD) which show that there are trends of women showing to be drinking early as much as men and that the gap in consumption patterns are narrowing. Nonetheless the data consistently shows that whilst this gap has been narrowing, females do not drink as much as men and they have argued that alcohol consumption in the UK has levelled out or reached its peak. This is shown in consistently across the surveys whereby it is shown that, "in no country did girls drink more frequently than boys and in few countries, did girls drink more heavily than boys, although this gap narrowed substantially between 1995 and 2007 (Measham and Østergaard, 2009:416-7). The UK did not participate in the latest 2015 ESPAD survey; however, figures across Europe from the 2015 ESPAD survey suggest that regarding 'heavy episodic drinking' prevalence values decreased from 2011 to 2015 (for boys - 44% to 37%; for girls 38% to 33%) across many countries (ESPAD Group, 2015). This data shows that girls are still not drinking as much as boys and that overall consumption levels are decreasing. The latest figures for the UK come from the 2011 ESPAD survey which suggested, "Differences between boys and girls become more apparent when the frequency of use is considered. On average, 22% of the boys and 14% of the girls reported drinking 20 times or more during the 12 months prior to the survey. This tendency, with higher figures among the male students, is found in nearly all counties" (Hibell et al., 2011:70). Thus, evidence from quantitative statistics identify a lack of convergence in the consumption patterns between young male and female drinkers.

In support of arguments against convergence theory, this chapter has also shown significant differences about male and female participants drinking practices and values as identified in fieldwork. Thus, the qualitative empirical data supports a lack of convergence regarding male and female drinking in this study. For example, fieldwork has shown that some women face stigma about their drinking, which men do not appear to be subjected to. This could be attributed to characteristics like loudness, vulgarity and excessive drinking being linked with masculinity and the working classes (Measham, 2002; Skeggs, 2005); thus, women behaving in this way can be seen as "a threat to the state of the nation, but also to herself" (Skeggs, 2005:967). This could be attributed to some women, particularly working-class women, being put in a position where they feel that "they have to prove themselves through every object, every aesthetic display, and every appearance" (Skeggs, 1997:90) in the NTE to adhere to notions regarding respectability and femininity. In the case of female participants in this study, they strove to demonstrate respectability through the body, a clear site where respectability is

displayed (Skeggs, 1997). Participants attempted to achieve this through the careful balance of creating a hypersexualised style that was seen to be sexy, yet feminine, and through a careful management of intoxication, adhere to notions of respectability. Thus, whilst female participants in this study took pleasure in dressing up and engaging in the culture of intoxication, this was often "disrupted by their knowledge of a judgemental external other who positions themselves as surveillant of themselves" (Skeggs, 1997:89); an issue of which male participants did not have to contend with. Participants seen to be deviating from the respectability and heteronormative femininity were stigmatised and seen as transgressive, even when attempting to participate in the contemporary culture of intoxication.

Whilst fieldwork showed that men and women both aspire to achieve a desired level of intoxication through 'calculated-intoxication', they do so through diverse social and cultural pursuits that are linked to gender because men and women view pleasure linked to consumption differently. Fieldwork also identified that some men and women occupy public and private spaces and move through spaces in different ways so that they can achieve pleasure linked to intoxication. In sum, empirical data from this thesis shows that not only do men and women participants in this study consume different levels of alcohol (i.e. women consume less than men), there are other distinct values and practices applied by some men and women that explain differences in men and women's drinking experiences in this study. Fieldwork findings also identified that young people themselves broadly acknowledged gender differences regarding alcohol consumption, challenging convergence theory themselves, whereby men in particular infer that women cannot and should not drink like men (Blackman, Doherty and McPherson, 2015).

5.6. Conclusion

This chapter has shown that there are distinct nuances in the drinking practices and values between young adult males and females in this study. Collectively, the findings from this chapter suggest that there is little 'convergence' of male and female drinking cultures because men and women not only experience the NTE differently, but they also hold different values towards alcohol consumption. Consequently, men's excessive alcohol is viewed as normalised, infantile and humorous which is strongly linked to the performance of masculinity; whilst women face forms of oppression which they attempt to overcome through feminine pursuits of pleasure in the NTE linked to the performance of hypersexualised and respectable feminine identities. Similarly, whilst both men and women in this study faced negative outcomes linked to alcohol consumption and intoxication, these experiences differed between links to vulnerability and risk for women and links to violence for young adult males.

CHAPTER SIX: THESIS CONCLUSION

6.1. Introduction

Drawing upon theoretical and methodological approaches within the disciplines of sociology, cultural studies and alcohol studies, this thesis has produced a qualitative examination of youth drinking cultures which moves beyond the problematizing of youth 'binge' drinking evident in government, media and social discourse. Instead, the thesis has explored the social and cultural nuances of young people's drinking practices and values which show that youth drinking in this study is underpinned by complex and diverse notions of pleasure. This pursuit of pleasure by young drinkers is not purely mindless and hedonistic, as is commonly perceived and represented; but is informed by varying levels of agency expressed by young people in this study about their drinking values and practices. Discovering these findings regarding pleasure and agency in youth alcohol consumption amongst a diverse range of young research participants and community members has been facilitated by this study being historically, socially, culturally and spatially contextualised within the research location of the London Borough of Sutton. In turn, this has shown that space and place is not a passive backdrop to youth alcohol consumption, but is an active constituent that informs youth drinking cultures.

These contributions to the themes of pleasure, agency, space and place defies contemporary depictions of young people as mindless, hedonistic and homogenous regarding their drinking cultures. This will be shown in the final chapter of this thesis, whereby findings regarding pleasure, agency, space and place, which were central to the research aims identified in the Introduction chapter will be summarised to show the main research contributions of these themes in relation to youth drinking cultures. Alongside this, the key research contributions, namely the theoretical description and concepts that emerged through the empirically grounded theoretical approaches to the research will be examined, including findings relating to drug and alcohol education, gender and community influence; all of which offer valuable contributions to better understanding of the social and cultural nuances regarding youth drinking cultures in this study. This chapter will also offer a critical reflection of the methodology, highlighting how the grounded theoretical and fieldwork approaches adopted in this research have contributed nuanced understandings of the complexities of youth drinking cultures. Lastly, the chapter will suggest areas for future research regarding youth drinking cultures, highlighting the implications of this research within the field of alcohol studies whilst taking into account alcohol policy considerations.

6.2. Moving from 'problem' to 'pleasure' in youth drinking cultures

Chapter One, 'A social and cultural history of young people's excessive drinking in the UK' argued that government, media and social discourse heavily problematizes youth alcohol consumption to the point that notions of pleasure associated regarding youth and alcohol practically go unacknowledged in a national context. This contributes to youth drinking being presented through a framework of fears of and fears for young drinkers. This is not to suggest that youth drinking is not without issue, or that the negative outcomes of young people's contemporary consumption practices should not be underplayed; however, this thesis contends that this problematizing is unhelpful in contributing to understandings of how and why young people drink to excess. Nor does this problematizing encourage young people to drink 'sensibly' or 'responsibly' as per government guidelines (HM Government, 2012).

As researchers in the field of alcohol studies have identified, understanding young people's notions of pleasure is central to understanding how and why young people drink to excess, which the empirical data chapters of this thesis contributes to (see: Haydock, 2014; Tuténges and Sandberg, 2013; Measham, 2004a). Findings from the young research participants in Chapter Four, 'Pursuing pleasurable drinking through 'calculated-intoxication'' identified that it is not necessarily drinking and becoming heavily intoxicated that is the central goal in youth drinking values and practices, but other diverse social and cultural pleasures associated with alcohol consumption, which importantly, occurred alongside friends. Research participants from local schools, The Rafters, Sparrow Youth Club and the Sutton Youth Bus who participated in underage drinking for example, were more interested in the adventure of obtaining alcohol illicitly with friends in both licensed and off-licensed premises, rather than the act of drinking per say. Such opportunities offered moments for playful deviance whereby they could participate in innocuous transgressive behaviours linked to alcohol consumption.

Similarly, young adult drinkers of a legal drinking age found the social aspects that accompanied drinking more appealing than the drinking itself. This was evident in the findings of Chapter Four, including 'pre-drinking' activities, seeking out a 'social atmosphere' and going out for 'quiet drinks'; whereby young people actively carved out their own drinking spaces to pursue social and cultural activities to enhance their friendships through sociality, bonding, solidarity and camaraderie. Some of the social and cultural activities that young drinkers in this study engaged in linked to alcohol consumption which also facilitated the enhancement of friendship included: drinking games, experimenting with and sharing new experiences of alcohol consumption, and drinking stories. Such activities were central in creating shared experiences and memory-making for young people which they greatly valued, which complements the findings of other ethnographic research of young drinkers in the field of

alcohol studies (e.g. Tuténges and Sanberg, 2013). Identifying these social and cultural activities through fieldwork alongside research participants are key contributions which are central to understanding how and why young people in this study drink to excess. Essentially, this chapter showed that young people in Sutton are seeking to enhance friendships through these pleasurable activities linked to alcohol consumption.

Chapter Five, 'Contesting the 'convergence' of young men and women's drinking cultures' showed further nuances regarding notions of pleasure in relation to gender relations and experiences regarding youth drinking cultures. Here the chapter showed that whilst young male and female drinkers shared some common values and practices linked to pleasurable alcohol consumption, there were also distinct differences regarding pleasurable drinking experiences closely linked to gender. This serves to highlight the further complexities and nuances of how and why young people in this study drink to excess; namely by showing that alcohol consumption could facilitate the performance and embodiment of feminine and masculine identities which young women and men deemed as pleasurable and desirable.

Grounded theoretical description presented in Chapter Five showed that young adult female drinkers found pleasure in adopting 'hypersexual' feminine styles and identities reserved for the NTE, and exploiting their femininity to enhance female friendships, femininity and solidarity was fun for young women. Whilst these were specific to young women's experiences, women also were aware that to pursue and achieve these pleasurable gendered activities and perform and embody feminine drinking identities, they needed to 'balance' their intoxication levels, by 'not getting too drunk'. For young adult males, they engaged in alternative pleasurable activities in drinking settings such as scoring "man points"; having banter; enacting dares and practical jokes; being infantile; and extending nights out through "drunken journeys" en-route home to acquire 'masculine capital' (de Visser and McDonnell, 2013) and masculine identities linked to pleasurable drinking experiences. Much like women, men also had to closely consider how their alcohol consumption and intoxication levels could influence their pursuit of gendered identities.

In relation to the above, it is vital to note that young adult drinkers were aware that to participate in the social and cultural activities that could enhance friendships and gendered identities, they needed to attempt to manage their levels of intoxication when drinking so as to avoid negative outcomes associated with excessive alcohol consumption. This I argue, is how and why young people in this study engaged in 'calculated-intoxication', a term of which builds upon the concepts of 'controlled loss of control' (Measham, 2002), 'determined drunkenness' (Measham, 2004b), and the term 'calculated-hedonism' (Brain, 2000), which suggests that young people consciously attempt to achieve a desired level of consumption which allows

them to avoid the negative consequences associated with excessive consumption so that they can maintain their participation in the social and cultural activities linked to alcohol consumption, which in turn, have the capacity to enhance friendships and gender identities. It is maintaining this balance that young drinkers deem as pleasurable in alcohol consumption.

The above findings identify two important contributions regarding youth drinking cultures in this study. Firstly, that the drinking values and practices of young people in this research do not correlate with government, media and societal discourse regarding youth 'binge' drinking, which depict young drinkers as homogenous and imply that young people drink to get drunk as an act of mindless hedonism. This is because young people do not seek to get drunk, but attempt to achieve a desired level of intoxication for a distinct social function and purpose: to pursue pleasure with friends. Additionally, findings from Chapter Five showed that intersections such as gender are linked to pleasurable drinking experiences. These findings serve to reinforce current research in the field of alcohol studies that 'binge' drinking is an unhelpful term to apply to youth drinking experiences (Szmigin et al., 2008). In regard to this, it is also worth noting that 'binge' drinking was a term that was absent amongst the young research participants in this research, except when noting that it was a label imposed upon them by adults, or was a practice performed by others such as dependent drinkers, not themselves because 'binge' drinking is depicted as a problematic not pleasurable way of drinking.

Secondly, whilst this thesis agrees that there is some normalisation of excessive consumption in the UK in a contemporary 'culture of intoxication' (Griffin et al., 2009; Measham and Brain, 2005), findings showed that on the whole, young drinkers engaged in purposeful drinking to strengthen friendships and gendered relations through shared experiences and values; as opposed to finding pleasure in extreme drinking associated with negative outcomes such as vomiting, losing control or consciousness etc. (Hackley et al., 2011). In fact, whilst heavy consumption was seen to be somewhat normalised in that young people in this study did often drink beyond recommended limits, they did not however view negative outcomes as pleasurable or normalised. This also differs from the work of Winlow and Hall (2006), who argue that engaging in hedonistic excess, transgression and even negative outcomes such as witnessing or participating in violence offered by the NTE has been seen to sought out by young adult drinkers. This research identified that participants in this study actively avoid such outcomes and did not seek opportunities to lose oneself in recklessness or discard social conventions of sociability (Winlow and Hall, 2006). Nonetheless, as the participants in this study can account for, good intentions and efforts to avoid the negative outcomes associated with excessive consumption did not always go to plan, which could result in risky behaviours leading to negative outcomes. Arguably then, the exploration of pleasure in this thesis can

also contribute to questions put forward by researchers in the field of alcohol studies which ask why so many people drink to excess despite evidence and advice pointing out the dangers of excessive consumption (Yeomans, 2013). These findings also have implications for the study of drinking into adulthood, whereby researchers such as Smith (2013) have suggested that youthful alcohol consumption practices are encroaching upon the identities of adults, who are showing a commitment to condoned hedonism within the NTE.

6.3. Restoring a sense of agency to youth drinking cultures

This thesis has attempted to prioritise notions of agency to young people's drinking practices and values by highlighting moments when young people have displayed levels of agency through expressions of autonomy, social conscious thought and action, and signs of resistance regarding their drinking practices and values. Such signs are often overlooked because of depictions of youth as mindless hedonistic 'binge' drinkers who's drinking is seen as problematic.

Whilst this thesis supports that young people express levels of agency, that is not to say that young drinkers are completely autonomous agents of action because as the findings of this thesis have shown, there are structural constraints that young people face regarding pursuing their pleasurable drinking practices and values. Consequently, there were times when young people believed that they were autonomous, but were reproducing the normalisation of excessive alcohol consumption through features of neoliberalism that the alcohol industry promote which appeared to offer choice, access and opportunity. However, these principles are often dictated by the production, regulation and consumption of the political economy of the NTE, which constrains young people's apparent freedom and autonomy (Chatterton and Hollands, 2003). Nonetheless, the grounded theoretical description produced from fieldwork alongside a variety of young drinkers has demonstrated signs of agency amongst young drinkers presented in the empirical data chapters of this thesis.

Chapter Three, 'Overcoming ephemerality in alcohol and drug education community educational strategies' showed how young people receiving (often compulsory) drug and alcohol education in community settings in Sutton such as schools, youth organisations and local drug and alcohol services showed levels of agency. During their educational experiences in these settings, young people would critique, contest and challenge messages regarding drugs and alcohol informed by their own knowledge, experiences and values; recognising that they were often being subjected to abstinence and prohibition messages about alcohol and drug consumption messages. These actions demonstrated signs of resistance by young

people when they felt that they were receiving messages that lacked authentic alcohol and drug education by community members such as teachers, youth service workers and other alcohol and drug educational professionals.

Nonetheless, when harm reduction messages were offered to young people that they were critically receptive to, young people augmented some of these harm reduction strategies into their everyday drinking practices on their own terms. This included adopting strategies to reduce negative physiological or health outcomes such as alternating between alcoholic drinks and soft drinks, consuming water, not mixing drinks; as well as reducing negative social and emotional outcomes or risky behaviours such as walking home alone after nights out, or unprotected sex etc. By establishing these connections through fieldwork alongside young people about educational experiences and everyday drinking practices, this research is able to show the levels of conscious thought and action that young people in this study display regarding to their drinking practices and values informed by the alcohol and drug education delivered to them by the community.

Chapter Four also demonstrated expressions of agency by young people in Sutton about their drinking practices and values. As previously mentioned, in their pursuits of pleasurable social and cultural activities linked to drinking young people engaged in 'calculated intoxication' to manage their consumption levels. For example, young people consciously managed their levels of consumption through drinking friendship-developed drinking strategies including 'round drinking', 'budget drinking', 'catching up' and having 'quiet drinks'. This allowed them to follow drinking practices that they desired in the pursuit of pleasurable drinking and intoxication on their own terms through conscious forms of self-governance and regulation informed by learned experiences. This chapter also showed how young people in this study carved out their own drinking spaces when NTE spaces did not meet their needs or employed their own strategies to navigate potential barriers to pleasurable drinking experiences. For underage drinkers, this included occupying using local knowledge of Sutton to participate in illicit alcohol consumption activities which they found pleasurable because it defied authority. For legal age drinkers, they participated in 'pre-drinking' activities to carve out their own spaces to facilitate pleasurable drinking experiences with friends and employed strategies to navigate barriers that could prevent them from pursuing pleasure in NTE spaces. Whilst these practices and values amongst young people were not entirely problematic, for example, it could be suggested that underage drinkers occupied risky and hidden spaces to pursue alcohol illicitly; what these findings do highlight is young people's capacity to display levels of agency regarding their alcohol consumption against a backdrop of structural constraints presented through the community and the political economy of the local alcohol industry.

Chapter Five showed further nuances of how young people in this study displayed levels of agency through their gendered relations and experiences. For example, young women were acutely aware of the condemnation and stigma that they experienced as female drinkers (McErlain, 2015; Mackiewicz, 2015) and subsequently employed a number of strategies to navigate not just the moral regulation imposed upon them, but the real risks that confronted them including stalking, surveillance and sexual harassment. They performed and embodied hypersexualised feminine identities which reinforced their position, so that they too could pursue pleasurable drinking activities alongside young adult male drinkers within the NTE. Similarly, men displayed levels of agency by asserting masculine identities within the NTE so that they could pursue pleasurable social and cultural activities that were important to them. These findings show young people's social and political awareness of how their gender can help them to facilitate their pleasurable drinking pursuits, which supports a central argument of this thesis that young people in this study express levels of agency regarding their drinking practices and values.

Examining levels of agency displayed in youth alcohol consumption also offers an important contribution to research in the field of alcohol studies because references to youth agency are often implicit rather than explicit. The work of Brain et al. (2000) was pivotal in debates about youth agency through the suggestion that young people are 'psychoactive consumers' who drink with design. However, subsequently in alcohol studies it appears that some researchers tentatively suggest that young drinkers display agency through conscious action through purposeful drinking that perform social functions through bounded aspects of the NTE and alcohol industry (e.g. Hackley et al., 2013); but few studies talk explicitly about signs of agency that young drinkers display. Perhaps this is attributed to the contentious nature of suggesting that young people's excessive alcohol consumption practices and values are meaningful or are positive experiences for young people which may appear to condone such practices and values. Nonetheless, this thesis hopes that by talking openly about youth agency and autonomy in regard to alcohol consumption, this could encourage future studies to further unpack the nuances of youth drinking cultures and how they are informed by agency and social structures; particularly the role of the alcohol industry in these debates.

6.4. The centrality of space and place in youth drinking cultures

Embedding space and place to the forefront of the research has produced an ethnography of youth drinking cultures that is spatially contingent and contextualised. Approaching the study of space and place this way in the thesis by drawing upon a variety of disciplines including

sociology, community studies, urban studies and human/social geography throughout the thesis has ensured that space is not seen as a passive backdrop to youth drinking cultures (Jayne, Valentine and Holloway, 2011). Taking this view has offered contributions to the active role of space in influencing youth drinking cultures which are contested, resisted and negotiated through space (Valentine, 2001).

The 'Drinking biography of the London Borough of Sutton' presented in Chapter Three, the 'Methodology' thesis initially allowed me to unpack hidden complexities regarding space and place within the Borough that impact youth drinking cultures. The biography showed that despite having a seemingly positive drinking culture on the surface, there are pockets of social, cultural and economic inequalities within Sutton that can impact young people, including alcohol and drug misuse and increased risks to young people. Consequently, at the time when fieldwork was undertaken the Borough was seen as having less need for services to alleviate such issues which escalates these issues about youth drinking. The biography also revealed that Sutton's local economy has historically been built upon a strong alcohol industry with a large number of licensed premises which have invited young adults to 'binge' drink (Hobbs, 2004). The findings of the drinking biography were 'triangulated' (Denzin, 1989) with fieldwork findings throughout the thesis confirming that the inequalities and local alcohol industry have the capacity to impact youth drinking cultures in Sutton. For example, young people, particularly those underage, revealed that they had few leisure opportunities which could lead to alcohol/drug use or misuse. These findings offer valuable contextualised contributions into youth drinking within the Borough which could be beneficial to Local Authorities in Sutton to reflect upon the current support and services in the Borough to tackle issues relating youth drinking (including youth services, alcohol and drug services, health services, school, police etc.). The approach to space and place research demonstrated within this thesis has the capacity to offer real-life impact to youth drinking at the site of study.

Ethnographic fieldwork conducted alongside young drinkers in drinking settings contributed to more complex understandings of the role of space and place in shaping youth drinking cultures, particularly in producing a better understanding of pleasurable drinking pursuits and levels of agency. Throughout the empirical chapters, it was recurrently confirmed that young people in this study proactively built and applied local knowledge about Sutton to ensure that they could pursue pleasurable drinking experiences which formed part of the 'calculated-intoxication' approach to drinking. For example, young people showed in-depth local knowledge of where to purchase alcohol illicitly from off-licenses or negotiate licensed venues to be able to consume alcohol because such deviance and transgressive behaviours amongst friends brought them pleasure. Similarly, young adult drinkers used their collective knowledge to frequent establishments that would give them the most pleasurable "social atmosphere"

(including a positive sensory experience), whilst fulfilling other key social and cultural needs like sociality, fun, bonding, transgression. When spaces and places did not fulfil their needs, young people applied strategies and carved out their own pre-drinking and drinking spaces when constraints were presented to them by the community or the local alcohol industry. These findings show that space and place is at the forefront of young people's conscious thought regarding their drinking practices and values, which they contest, navigate and negotiate so that they can attempt to drink alcohol pleasurably on their own terms. This contests depictions of young people mindlessly bar-hopping or locating venues to fuel excessive consumption and drunkenness as cheaply as possible.

The study of place and place in thesis also allowed for richer understandings of intersections like gender, as presented in Chapter Five. For example, whilst literature has argued that NTE spaces are becoming increasingly gentrified and sanitised, making drinking settings more hospitable for women (Griffin et al., 2012); fieldwork findings in this thesis highlight that women in this study still experience considerable condemnation and stigma about their participation in drinking within the NTE. This reinforces arguments in alcohol studies that the problems associated with drinking are levied more upon women than men (Thurnell-Read, 2015). Subsequently, for female participants in this study, they employed strategies to navigate stigma and pursue pleasurable drinking experiences including: participating in 'pre-drinking' to enhance feminine identities and build solidarity with female friends; expressing resistance through adopting hypersexualised feminine styles reserved for NTE drinking spaces; used bathroom spaces in the NTE to enhance their feminine drinking identities and manage intoxication levels; and used local knowledge to implement risk strategies, particularly when travelling to and from the NTE. The study of space and place revealed contrasting experiences for young adult males, who viewed the NTE with more freedom and almost as a 'playground' in which to pursue social and cultural drinking identities which could enhance their masculinity, including: acquiring 'masculine capital' (de Visser and McDonnell, 2013) in drinking spaces through enacting banter, dares and practical jokes underpinned by infantilism. Moreover, unlike women, men appeared to view the journey home after a night of drinking as an extension of the evening, as opposed to being viewed as a risky endeavour in the way that women did. In sum, the study of space and place has offered valuable insight into gender showing contrasting complexity as to how men and women in this study approach and experience pleasurable drinking experiences, which offer more nuanced understandings of the values and practices, including how and why, men and women consume alcohol.

Much like other NTEs in town and city centres across the UK however, the drinking culture and landscape of Sutton has changed significantly, particularly since departing fieldwork. For example, as regularly identified in local press reports in the Sutton Guardian, there have been

concerns regarding the closure of several public houses in the Borough, often becoming supermarkets or flats (see: Pepper, 2013). This correlates with the broader UK context with pub closures being attributed to competition from new style venues; increased payable duty charges on beer; competition from supermarkets; increasing levels of drinking in the home; and the combination of low profit margins and establishments being enticed to sell premises to reap gains from the property market (Roberts and Townshend, 2013). As well as the closure of pubs, a number of large leisure chains and renowned nightclubs across the UK are declining or have faced closure, with the number of operating nightclubs reducing from 3,144 in 2005 to 1,733 in the UK (Wiseman, 2016). Consequently, these changes to the NTE could impact upon the drinking spaces and places that young people occupy, as well as their drinking practices and values. Chapters Four and Five of this thesis has potentially begun to show some insight of the impact of the changes to Sutton's NTE, with the emergence of data showing how young adults were increasingly occupying domestic settings to pursue pleasurable drinking experiences and were engaging in pre-loading through alcohol bought cheaply and readily-available from supermarkets, with less desire to attend establishments in the NTE. This coincides with other alcohol studies which indicate that youth drinking could be moving to a 'home-pub-club' model as opposed to a traditional 'pub-club' model (Barton and Husk, 2014). Nonetheless, as noted by Smith (2013), despite the reporting of closures of drinking establishments, excessive alcohol consumption amongst young people and adults is showing little sign of receding.

6.5. Diversity and difference in young men and women's drinking cultures

Exploring the areas of pleasure, agency, space and place within this thesis identified that there are some commonalities or overlapping areas in men and women's drinking values and practices. These have been mentioned above which include the pursuit of social and cultural activities linked to alcohol consumption including enhancing friendships, sociality, bonding, memory-making, story-telling, fun, intoxication, deviance and transgression. However, as argued in Chapter Five, when exploring intersections such as gender, it becomes increasingly apparent that youth drinking cultures are not homogenous and reveal further nuances regarding the complex and heterogeneous nature of youth alcohol consumption practices and values particularly. This thesis argues then, that there is little evidence to support a 'convergence' between men and women's drinking values and practices and that men and women's drinking is diverse and different.

This thesis has shown that women in Sutton face serious community condemnation and stigma about their drinking practices and values, which they have to negotiate and overcome. This backdrop of condemnation is attached to perceptions of women's expression of sexuality in the NTE, namely through 'hypersexualised' feminine styles and identities (Bailey, 2012; Griffin et al., 2012; Mackiewicz, 2012). Consequently, victim-blaming is imposed upon women who are subject to forms of sexual harassment in NTE spaces, specifically what female participants identified as male 'grabbing rights', because they are seen as 'asking for it' due to the combination of their sexualised image and intoxicated state. This backdrop of condemnation was not something that male research participants were exposed to because the normalised culture of excessive consumption is often linked to masculinity; which together shows significant gender inequalities in relation to men and women's participation in the culture of intoxication in this study.

Nonetheless, female research participants showed that they could still pursue pleasurable social and cultural activities linked to intoxication which was intimately linked to performing and embodying hypersexualised but respectable drinking identities managed through 'calculated-intoxication'. This entailed taking pleasure in getting dressed up together and getting ready for nights out and exploiting their femininity within the NTE through engaging in 'risqué' behaviours. This allowed women to enhance solidarity and bonds through these identities; discourse of which is often absent from literature of female drinking which focuses on problematising women's drinking through a framework of being risky and being at risk (Brooks, 2011). Whilst notions of risk did appear in accounts by female participants and in fieldwork observations; importantly, women showed that they did not let real and imagined perceptions of risk overrule their opportunities to pursue pleasure through drinking in the NTE; thus, women employed risk management strategies to overcome barriers presented to them. Importantly, the findings of Chapter Five show that there is still more to be done in regard to restoring agency and pleasure to women's drinking which is overshadowed by historical condemnation and stigma placed upon women (Blackman, Doherty and McPherson, 2015).

As male participants drinking cultures were linked to asserting and performing masculine identities in the NTE, their pleasurable social and cultural pursuits linked to intoxication varied considerably from women's. Fieldwork identified that men found pleasure in acquiring 'masculine capital' (de Visser and McDonnell, 2013) through scoring 'man points' often achieved through infantilism in the NTE, like engaging in banter, dares and practical jokes. Such activities were central to enhancing male friendships through homosocial bonding. Unlike women, men saw traveling to, from and between NTE spaces as an adventure or an extension of the night where they had more freedom away from the constraints of NTE spaces. Nonetheless, participating in such activities could consequently lend themselves to leading to

violence, particularly when men misjudged 'calculated-intoxication' that could lead to such negative outcomes.

The relevance of these findings regarding gender differences in youth drinking values and practices in this study is that they contest government, media, societal and even some researchers in the field of alcohol studies (e.g. Bratberg et al., 2016; Chatterton and Hollands, 2003), who have argued or alluded to the notion of a 'convergence' in male and female drinking practices, namely whereby women are attempting to drink like men. However, this thesis has produced empirical evidence to illustrate that male and female drinking practices and values are vastly different, arguing that their drinking practices are not converging. These findings complement quantitative data regarding consumption patterns which highlight that although there is an appearance that men and women's consumption patterns may appear similar on the surface, looking closely at men and women's drinking reveals that they are in fact diverse and distinct (Demant and Törrönen, 2011; Waitt et al., 2011; Measham and Østergaard, 2009). Thus, Chapter Five has brought together empirical data from both male and female perspectives in this study to reject the notion that male and female drinking cultures are converging.

6.6. How 'binge' drinking discourse harms community drug and alcohol education

Fieldwork alongside young people and educational community professionals (teachers, youth workers, drug and alcohol service practitioners, outreach workers) in educational community settings such as The Rafters, Sparrow Youth Club, The Sutton Youth Bus and local schools identified that youth drinking cultures were mostly influenced by pleasurable drinking and intoxication amongst friends and peers. This is because friends were enablers of these pleasurable pursuits, whereas educational community professionals often problematized youth drinking through 'binge' drinking discourse, as well as through education regarding the 'unit's system' which young people did not relate to. This was because exceeding recommended units did not always appear to result in the negative outcomes that community members warned young people about in their everyday lived experiences of alcohol consumption. As Chapter Three showed, these messages were also implemented through the use of scare tactics, stereotypes, stigma and 'pocket prohibition' (Blackman and Doherty, 2015). The implications of this is that this makes much of the alcohol education delivered by the community in Sutton defunct because of it being underpinned by discourse and strategies that young people resisted. Moreover, the findings suggest that alcohol and drug education

has changed very little from early abstinence messages and prohibition approaches of the past and continue to lack an authenticity or credibility gap (Measham, 2006; Blackman, 2004).

The main research contribution resulting from Chapter Three was that it identified that drug and alcohol education which adopted abstinence and prohibition messages by the community educational professionals in Sutton resulted in an ephemeral influence upon youth drinking values and practices. This is because such messages were resisted and ignored, and so subsequently forgotten by the young research participants due to their lack of association with pleasure. Conversely, when alcohol and drug education strategies adopted harm reduction approaches, the young people in this research paid more attention to them, and as illustrated in fieldwork conducted alongside young people in drinking settings, these messages were augmented by participants in their real-life drinking practices. For example, approaches such as drinking games and informal education linked to the young people's real-life drinking experiences allowed them to reflect on how harm reduction strategies could be applied to drinking occasions. Moreover, the young research participants articulated that they had a strong desire to receive such kind of education so that they could apply this to their 'calculated-intoxication' drinking values and practices to drink more sensibly and responsibly, which in turn, could reduce the risks of negative outcomes associated with excessive alcohol consumption.

Collectively, the findings of this study contribute to wider debates regarding the effectiveness of alcohol and drug education, showing that there are some strategies and approaches that have little impact on young people's excessive drinking practices; but harm reduction approaches have value and potential in tackling issues relating to youth drinking. These findings could be shared with local educational community professionals in Sutton to assist them in reinvigorating educational approaches which could have more potential to influence and shape young people's values towards alcohol consumption which they could apply to their everyday drinking practices.

6.7. Methodological contributions and reflections

This thesis has adopted traditional methodological and theoretical approaches from the Chicago School to produce an in-depth and rich social and cultural understanding of youth drinking cultures in a spatially contingent context over a fieldwork period of two and a half years. The use of traditional fieldwork methods including participant observation, informal and formal interviews, and the collection of documents inspired by the exploratory styles adopted by Chicago School researchers including Robert Park, has produced a rich ethnography which

prioritises the voice and experiences of the young research participants and community members in this study. The grounded theoretical approaches informed by the work of Glaser and Strauss (1967) to fieldwork and analyses identified in Chapter Two has resulted in emergent theoretical description and themes relating to youth alcohol consumption that derives directly from, and are pertinent to, the research participants themselves. These theoretical descriptions and concepts have produced original contributions to the themes of pleasure, agency, space and place within the field of alcohol studies presented in the empirical data chapters of this thesis. Thus, through the ethnographic data presented throughout the thesis, this has given rise to new ways of theoretically describing young people's drinking practices, including young people participating in 'calculated-intoxication', which explains how young drinkers seek to maintain a desired level of intoxication through pleasurable social and cultural pursuits linked to intoxication. Other terminology like 'risqué' similarly contributes to new knowledge regarding women's drinking values and practices by reframing women's alcohol consumption away from notions of being at risk. These unique theoretical descriptions can contribute to and complement existing studies in the field of alcohol studies and build unique knowledge about youth drinking cultures. In turn, these social and cultural empirical understandings could inform future UK policies and strategies at a local and national level, as opposed to dominant health perspectives which pathologize youth 'binge' drinking.

Adopting an 'intimate insider' (Taylor, 2011) approach to fieldwork and the writing up of this thesis as outlined in Chapter Two where possible is what I believe has been one of the most valuable contributions that this research offers to the field of alcohol studies. On a pragmatic level, conducting research alongside friends and acquaintances as participants enhanced my level of safety within what could be considered a vulnerable field of study; which an important consideration for all ethnographers. Moreover, having an intimate insider position with existing friends and acquaintances as research participants showed how this position had the capacity to enhance fieldwork relations built on trust, reciprocity and rapport, whereby participants openly shared experiences, emotions, values and stories relating to their drinking values and practices which became valuable sources of data. Additionally, as outlined in the Methodology, participants opened up further research opportunities with other young people in the field that I would not have had access to as a solo researcher. This produced rich in-depth data because participants were open and transparent about values and practices linked to alcohol consumption which could be explored from a variety of angles including regret, fears, deviance, pleasure etc. all linked to their drinking cultures. Thus, data stemming from the fieldwork alongside friends was revealing and insightful regarding the social and cultural nuances of pleasure, agency and the role of space and place in youth drinking cultures that have been examined in this thesis.

This intimate insider position and researching alongside friends and acquaintances mirrors the work of Chicago School sociologists, highlighting the lasting legacy of their work in a contemporary context. For example, like Nels Anderson's work in The Hobo (1923) I fully immersed myself into the place, spaces and culture of study. This allowed me to produce empirical data grounded in the research setting and location from the view of the participants. Similarly, like the work of Frederic Thrasher in The Gang (1927), I approached deviance encountered in the field amongst research participants devoid of moralistic judgement produced an ethnography which explores how and why young people engage in excessive alcohol consumption practices. Finally, like William Foot Whyte in Street Corner Society (1943), I had the contemporary equivalent of research participants or informants as friends like 'Doc' who I conducted research alongside to capture intimate, rich and detailed accounts of youth drinking values and practices.

Collectively, the intimate and often auto-biographical approaches and relations prioritised the voice and experiences of the research participants which in turn facilitated the feminist ethnographic approaches built upon the principles of respect, subjectivity and accountability (McNamara, 2009; Skeggs, 2001a; Stacey, 1988). From the outset of this thesis, these values and principles have been important because as outlined in Chapter One, misconceptions about youth 'binge' drinking have built upon young people lacking a voice and experiences of marginality (Hadfield and Haw, 2001). Moreover, the intimate insider position that I adopted appears to be somewhat unique against other research in the field of alcohol studies which have categorised themselves as 'ethnographic'. This is because they have not necessarily had sustained engagement and participation with the research participants at an intimate level and have often relied upon more distant interview data or non-participatory observation. Intimate approaches appear to however further unpack the complexities and nuances of youth drinking values and practices, including the central role of space and place.

Whilst this thesis has produced valuable insight into the themes of pleasure, agency, space and place in relation to youth drinking cultures in Sutton, there are certain limitations of the research that should be acknowledged. Firstly, as a result of the investigatory sociological approaches to fieldwork during the research process there were consequently a number of different avenues that the research could have explored. For example, an unexpected theme that emerged during fieldwork was how younger research participants were keen to discuss their recreational drug use and poly drug use alongside their alcohol consumption practices. In keeping with the ethos of prioritising youth voice and inexperience, elements of these findings have tried to be incorporated into this thesis. However, to ensure that the research retains its focus, only findings about drug use providing relevant insight into youth drinking practices and values were incorporated. Consequently, similar to other feminist researchers

like Stacey (1988) and McNamara (2009), I encountered tensions when attempting to maintain feminist ethnographic principles including such as prioritising youth voice and experience in the research process.

Whilst adopting an intimate insider position was a desired in the research, it was not without its challenges and limitations. As outlined in the Methodology chapter, because some of the gatekeepers in the research, such as youth workers, were existing longstanding acquaintances of mine, these relationships could actually present themselves as barriers to fieldwork opportunities with young people in the community. For example, one youth worker requested that for the 'safety of myself and the young people, I should not pursue fieldwork with the Alternative young people outside of the Sparrow Youth Club'. Whilst acknowledging that fieldwork outside of the setting of the youth club with the Alternative young people would have been highly valuable; opposing this individual may not just have led to damaging my relationship with that individual but could also have led to this individual preventing further opportunities to meet other potential young research participants in other community settings.

Additionally, as encountered in fieldwork, adopting an intimate insider position was not always possible, and so, in some circumstances, I had fleeting moments and surface level relationships with some of the research participants in fieldwork. This was evident in fieldwork conducted in schools, drug and alcohol services and local youth services which did not always allow for longitudinal research to occur. Nonetheless, even short moments with research participants in fieldwork contributed to data to inform analyses regarding pleasure, agency, space and place in this study.

6.8. Future research in the context of alcohol studies and UK policy and strategies

This ethnography has discovered that in young people's pursuit of pleasurable social and cultural activities linked to excessive alcohol consumption, young drinkers in this study often exploit the contemporary culture of intoxication through varying levels of agency against the backdrop of the principles of neoliberalism which prioritise access, choice and opportunity. In this pursuit of pleasure, whilst young drinkers attempt to display levels of 'calculated-intoxication' to balance intoxication and pleasure, they can and often do, face negative social, cultural and health outcomes as a result of excessive alcohol consumption alongside friends and peers. As demonstrated in Chapter One, youth exploitation of the culture of intoxication is contributed by a 'siren call to intoxication' displayed by the alcohol industry and forms of contemporary popular culture (Measham and Brain, 2005). However, instead of government, media and social discourse placing responsibility upon these industries in tackling negative

outcomes associated with young people's excessive consumption practices, blame is placed upon young people through 'binge' drinking discourse. For example, young adult drinkers in this study demonstrated how they actively used local community knowledge to obtain alcohol cheaply and easily to pursue calculated intoxication. However, if policies such as that of Minimum Unit Pricing produced even pricing, then this could reduce opportunities for young people to exploit the local alcohol industry and engage in excessive consumption. This thesis argues then that alcohol policies and strategies should revisit notions of 'sensible' and 'responsible' drinking focusing their attention on the industries that promote intoxication as opposed to blaming young people.

As articulated throughout this thesis, 'binge' drinking is also at the heart of UK alcohol policies, strategies and discourse, including drug and alcohol education. However, this is not terminology that young people relate to or associate themselves with because it is linked to problematic and not pleasurable consumption; and so, it does very little to tackle negative outcomes linked to excessive youth alcohol consumption. Therefore, future policy and strategies should move towards more meaningful, authentic and credibly policies that young people can relate to and identify with. As demonstrated in Chapter Three of this thesis, when local drug and alcohol educational approaches embraced authentic harm reduction strategies rather than abstinence and prohibition approaches, this had more opportunity to have a lasting influence upon youth drinking practices and values. Such approaches to policy and strategies which acknowledge pleasure can empower young people to make decisions about their consumption practices and values; which as this thesis has identified is what young people desire. Therefore, policies and strategies also have the capacity to acknowledge agency in youth drinking, a priority of which has underpinned this thesis.

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APPENDICES

Appendix One: Youthful alcohol products

Image One: POPS Bellini ice lolly (available via Ocado).
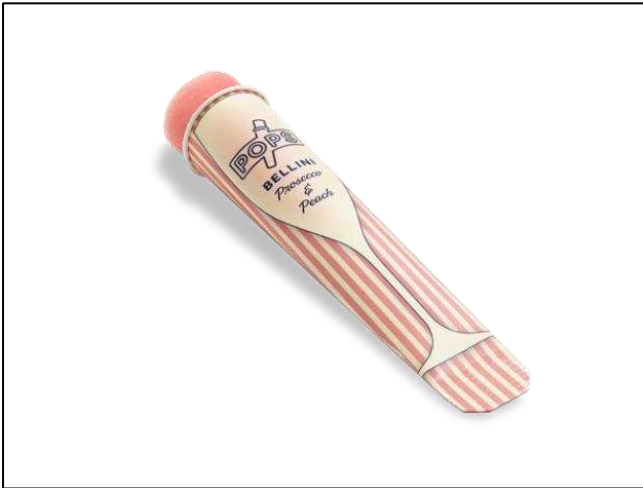
Source: http://wearepops.com/ (Accessed: 10.02.2017).

Image Two: Smirnoff Raspberry Sorbet frozen cocktail (available in multiple supermarkets).

Source: https://groceries.asda.com/search/Frozen%20Cocktails (Accessed: 10.02.2017).

***Image Three: Tesco's Mojito pre*-mixed alcoholic cocktail**

Source: http://www.tesco.com/groceries/product/details/?id=291397568 (Accessed:

10.02.2017).

Research Participant Name	About the participant	Connections to researcher
The Rafters		
A local drug and alcohol misuse service for young people in Sutton.		
Steven	Coordinator at The Rafters	
Cameron	Coordinator at The Rafters	Existing connection via local voluntary organisation.
Christian	Coordinator at The Rafters	Existing connection via local voluntary organisation.
Birches High School group who attended The Rafters drug and alcohol programme		
Birches High School is a local secondary education High School in Sutton.		
Stephen	Male student from Birches High School who attended The Rafters.	
Barry	Male student from Birches High School who attended The Rafters.	
Julian	Male student from Birches High School who attended The Rafters.	
Jacob	Male student from Birches High School who attended The Rafters.	
Jackson	Male student from Birches High School who attended The Rafters.	
Saul	Male student from Birches High School who attended The Rafters.	
Trevor	Male student from Birches High School who attended The Rafters.	
Andrew	Male student from Birches High School who attended The Rafters.	
Cedar High School group who attended The Rafters drug and alcohol programme		
Cedar High School is a local secondary education High School in Sutton.		

Jonathan	Male student from Cedar High School who attended The Rafters.	
Joshua	Male student from Cedar High School who attended The Rafters.	
Zachery	Male student from Cedar High School who attended The Rafters.	
Michael	Male student from Cedar High School who attended The Rafters.	
Damien	Male student from Cedar High School who attended The Rafters.	
Harrison	Male student from Cedar High School who attended The Rafters.	
Willow High School group who attended The Rafters drug and alcohol programme Willow High School is a local secondary education High School in Sutton.		
Chantelle	Female student from Willow High School who attended The Rafters and interviewed about alcohol/drug use at Willow High School.	
Toby	Male student from Willow High School who attended The Rafters and interviewed about alcohol/drug use at Willow High School.	
Mason	Male student from Willow High School who attended The Rafters and interviewed about alcohol/drug use at Willow High School.	
Savannah	Female student from Willow High School who attended The Rafters and interviewed about alcohol/drug use at Willow High School.	
John	Male student from Willow High School who attended The Rafters.	
Seb	Male student from Willow High School who attended The Rafters.	
Leanne	Female student from Willow High School who attended The Rafters.	

Cole	Male student from Willow High School who attended The Rafters.	
Hazel	Female student from Willow High School who attended The Rafters.	

Teachers from Willow High School

Willow High School is a local secondary education High School in Sutton.

Miss McPherson	Teacher at Willow High School.	
Miss Hughes	Teacher at Willow High School and attended The Rafters with the Willow High School group.	
Mr McCloud	Teacher at Willow High School.	

Sparrow Youth Club

The Sparrow Youth Club is a local youth service for young people in Sutton.

Lacey	Sparrow Youth Club worker, Outreach worker and management role at The Rafters.	Known through family acquaintance prior to fieldwork.
Lizzy	Manager of Sparrow Youth Club.	
Hailey	Youth worker at the Sparrow Youth Club.	
Manuel	Youth worker at the Sparrow Youth Club.	
Henry	Young male who attended Sparrow Youth Club at the Alternative Night sessions. Aged 17.	
Seth	Young male who attended Sparrow Youth Club at the Alternative Night sessions. Aged 17.	
Sian	Young female who attended Sparrow Youth Club at the Alternative Night sessions. Aged 17.	
Jean	Young female who attended Sparrow Youth Club at the Alternative Night sessions. Aged 17.	

Luke	Young male who attended Sparrow Youth Club at the Alternative Night sessions. Aged 18.	
Stuart	Young male who attended Sparrow Youth Club at the Alternative Night sessions. Aged 17.	
Seb	Young male who attended Sparrow Youth Club at the Alternative Night sessions. Aged 17.	
Graham	Young male who attended Sparrow Youth Club at the Alternative Night sessions. Aged 17.	
Katie	Young female who attended Sparrow Youth Club at the Alternative Night sessions. Aged 18.	
Jessie	Young female who attended Sparrow Youth Club at the Alternative Night sessions. Aged 18.	
Aidan	Young male who attended Sparrow Youth Club at the Alternative Night sessions. Aged 18.	
Sutton Youth Bus The Sutton Youth Bus is a detached outreach service for young people in Sutton.		
Jade	Detached youth worker for Sutton Youth Bus.	
Jackie	Detached youth worker for Sutton Youth Bus.	
Robin	Young male who attended the Sutton Youth Bus detached service. Aged 16.	
Eddie	Young male who attended the Sutton Youth Bus detached service. Aged 16.	
Morgan	Young male who attended the Sutton Youth Bus detached service. Aged 16.	
Jimmy	Young male who attended the Sutton Youth Bus detached service.	
Kate	Young female who attended the Sutton Youth Bus detached service.	

Danny	Young male who attended the Sutton Youth Bus detached service.	
Gavin	Young male who attended the Sutton Youth Bus detached service.	

Sutton Street Pastors

A local Christian charity/voluntary service which supports consumers of the Sutton NTE.

Matthew	Head of the Sutton Street Pastors service.	
Terry	Volunteer for the Sutton Street Pastors.	
Karen	Volunteer for the Sutton Street Pastors.	

Sutton Life Centre

The Sutton Life Centre is an educational and community facility in Sutton.

Selina	Manager of the Sutton Life Centre.	
Stephen	Life Skills Zone tour guide / co-ordinator.	
Carly	Life Skills Zone tour guide / co-ordinator.	

Friends and acquaintances in the NTE

Helen	Gender: Female Age: 21 years old Occupation: Health/ pharmaceuticals Other: Helen is Liam's sister.	Acquaintance via friendship with Liam.
Kelly	Gender: Female Age: 23 Occupation: Office work	Attended school with Kelly.
Stephanie	Gender: Female Age: 23 Occupation: Health and beauty worker. Other: Stephanie is Rosie's sister.	Attended school with Stephanie and friends.

Owen	Gender: Male Age: 23 Occupation: Finance Other: Owen and Stephanie are in a relationship.	Friends via Stephanie.
Amelia	Gender: Female Age: 23 Occupation: Office worker. Other: Amelia and Tony are in a relationship.	Attended school with Amelia and friends.
Rosie	Gender: Female Age: 19 Occupation: Vetinary /animals. Other: Rosie is Stephanie's sister.	Friends via Stephanie.
Sadie	Gender: Female Age: 23 Other: Sister of Tony and in a relationship with Mike.	Met via Amelia and Tony.
Jane	Gender: Female Age: 23 Occupation: Office worker	Attended school with Jane.
Alice	Gender: Female Age: 21	Met via David and James.
Louise	Gender: Female Age: 24 Occupation: Finance / office worker.	Previously worked together and friends.
Cara	Gender: Female Age: 22 Occupation: Finance / office worker.	Friends via Louise and Malik.
Jenna	Gender: Female Age: 24	Previously worked together and friends.

	Occupation: Student	
Malik	Gender: Male Age: 26 Occupation: Food and hospitality	Previously worked together and friends.
Martin	Gender: Male Age: 26 Occupation: Public services / local authority.	Previously worked together and friends.
Tony	Gender: Male Age: 24 Occupation: Cars and mechanics Other: In a relationship with Amelia.	Friends via Amelia.
Mike	Gender: Male Age: 23 Other: In a relationship with Sadie.	Met via Sadie.
Leo	Gender: Male Age: 23 Occupation: Food and hospitality	Previously worked together and friends.
Justin	Gender: Male Age: 26 Occupation: Public services / local authority Other: Brother of Gina and Ella.	Previously worked together and friends.
James	Gender: Male Age: 23 Occupation: Physical health	Attended school together and friends.
David	Gender: Male Age: 23 Occupation: Education	Attended school together and friends.
Harry	Gender: Male Age: 23	Attended school together.

Liam	Gender: Male Age: 22 Occupation: Health/ pharmaceuticals Other: Brother of Helen	Attended school together.
Edward	Gender: Male Age: 24 Occupation: Trade, electrician	Attended school together.
Dean	Gender: Male Age: 23	Attended school together.
Sam	Gender: Male Age: 23	Attended school together.
Tim	Gender: Male Age: 23 Occupation: Media	Attended school together.
Paul	Gender: Male Age: 24 Occupation: Office work.	Attended school together and friends.
Daniel	Gender: Male Age: 24 Occupation: Trade	Attended school together.
Gina	Gender: Female Age: 27 Occupation: Office work Other: Sister of Ella and Justin.	Friendship via Justin.
Ella	Gender: Female Age: 23 Occupation: Hairdresser Other: Sister of Ella and Justin.	Friendship via Justin.

Drinking Setting	Location Type	Additional Notes
Amelia and Tony's home	Home (private)	Based in Sutton
Justin's home	Home (private)	Based in Sutton
Liam, Edward and Dean's home	Home (private)	Based in Sutton
The Star	Pub	Based in Sutton
The Sportsman	Pub	Based in Sutton
The Bell	Pub	Based in Sutton
The Kings Arms	Pub	Based in Kingston-upon-Thames
The Bulls Head	Pub	Based in Wimbledon
Voodoo Lounge	Bar	Based in Sutton
Canon Bar	Bar	Based in Sutton
Anarchy	Bar / Nightclub	Based in Sutton
The Vineyard	Bar	Based in Sutton
Harry's Bar	Bar	Based in Wimbledon
Haze	Nightclub	Based in Sutton
The Project	Nightclub	Based in Sutton
Twilight Club	Nightclub	Based in Wimbledon

Appendix Four: Recorded interviews in fieldwork

Interview No	Participants	Location
1	Louise and Cara	Researcher's home
2	James and David	Researcher's home
3	Helen	Helen's home
4	Tony, Leo and Justin	Researcher's home
5	Amelia, Rosie and Stephanie	Researcher's home
6	Savannah	Willow High School
7	Toby, Mason and Chantelle	Willow High School
8	Robin, Eddie, Morgan and Jimmy (with Jade and Jackie present).	Sutton Youth Bus
9	Henry, Seth, Stuart and Seb	Sparrow Youth Club
10	Luke, Graham, Sian and Jean	Sparrow Youth Club
11	Jessie (Luke later joins)	Sparrow Youth Club
12	Aidan and Katie	Sparrow Youth Club
13	Lacey	The Sycamore School
14	Steven (later joined by his colleague Darren).	Local sport and community centre in Sutton

Appendix Five: 'Bomb' shot drinks

Bomb drink name	Description
Jägerbomb	Shot of Jägermeister dropped into a glass of energy drink.
J-Bomb	Shot of Jägermeister dropped into a glass of Dr. Pepper.
Fruit Bomb	Shot of fruit flavoured alcohol (typically vodka based) dropped into a glass of energy drink. Variety of flavours include: apple, apricot, strawberry, cherry, raspberry etc.
Skittle Bomb	Shot of Cointreau dropped into a glass of energy drink.
Glitter Bomb	Shot of Goldschlager dropped into a glass of energy drink.
Dr Pepper (bomb)	Shot of Amaretto dropped into a glass of Stella Artois lager with a dash of coca-cola.

Appendix Nine: Educational drinking games

Educational Drinking Game	Description
Beer Goggles[34] Games. Sub varieties of this competitive skills related game include:	
• Drink-driving	This entails wearing beer goggles and racing an electronic racing car round an obstacle course. The person with the quickest lap time is the winner.
• Beer goggle race / obstacle course	This entails wearing beer goggles whilst having to manoeuvre around a real-life obstacle course race. The person with the quickest lap time is the winner.
• Drunken love	This entails wearing beer goggles whilst attempting to successfully put a condom on a plastic penis. The person who achieves this in the quickest time and in the most 'competent' manner is the winner.
• Drunken drink-pouring	This entails attempting to pour a pub standard single or double measure of 'alcohol' (water is used as a substitute) into a glass whilst wearing beer goggles. The person who pours the measure most accurately is the winner.
Quizzes. Sub varieties of this competitive, knowledge and skills related game include:	
• Pub Quiz	This entails getting into teams and answering questions relating to alcohol and/or drugs. Questions were geared around social, cultural and economic factors relating to alcohol/drugs. The team who answers the most questions correctly are the winning team.
• Units System Quiz	This entails getting into teams or as individuals to answer questions about the Governments Units System. The team/individual with the most correct answers is the winner.
Other games: General games.	
Alcohol measures and units game	This skills and knowledge game entails attempting to pour a pub standard single or double measure of 'alcohol' (water is used as a substitute) into a glass. The person must then guess the number of units within the measure poured. The person who pours the measure most accurately and judges the number of units correctly is the winner.

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[34] Beer Goggles (also known as 'vision impairment goggles'/ 'drunk goggles' or 'drunk glasses') are intended to simulate the effects of being drunk. Effects include: confusion, visual distortion, slowed reaction time and a lack of coordination.

Beer Pong[35]	This is a competitive skills based on the drinking game 'beer pong.' A table tennis table is set up with cups positioned at either end. There are two teams who take turns to throw a ping pong ball into the opposition's cup. If successful, a member of the opposition must consume the contents of the cup.

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[35] Beer pong is a drinking game whereby two teams take it in turn to throw a ping pong ball across a table with aim of landing the ball into cups containing alcohol. If the ball lands in a cup, the content of that cup must be consumed by the opponent team; then the cup is removed. The first team to remove all of the opponent's cups wins the game.

Appendix Ten: Youth drinking games

This is a list of the drinking games that young people in this research played during fieldwork occasions, discussed that they had played, or made passing reference to.

Drinking Game Name	Category	Description
Beer Pong	Game of skill	Competitive. A table tennis table is set up with cups positioned at either end. There are two teams who take turns to throw a ping-pong ball into the opposition's cup. If successful, a member of the opposition must consume the contents of the cup.
Battleships/'Battle Shots'	Game of chance	Non-competitive. The traditional game Battleships is a guessing game for two players. The purpose of the game is to sink the opposition's ships by guessing coordinates on a grid. In the Battle Shots version, once a ship is sunk an alcoholic shot is consumed.
Liars Dice	Game of skill	Competitive. Liars Dice is a traditional dice game for 2-6 requiring the ability to deceive and detect an opponent's deception by guessing the value of their dice in their hand. This game becomes a drinking game by consuming a shot each time the player loses a dice.
Ring of Fire	Game of chance	Non-competitive. A cup filled with a variety of alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks is placed in the centre of a deck of cards, which are face down. Each card is assigned a specific rule or penalty which may or may not be drink related. The game ends once all of the cards have been picked up by the players.
Pictionary and Piss Artist	Game of skill	Competitive. The traditional game Pictionary (a drawing game) is transformed into a drinking game by the losing team consuming alcohol when they lose their round. Piss Artist similarly involves drawing from categories and the losing team consumes alcohol.
Drunk Twister	Game of skill	Competitive. The traditional game Twister entailed attempting to keep your hands and feet on the mat provided. This game becomes

		Drunken Twister when alcoholic drinks and penalty shots are introduced into the game.
Card Games (Rummy, Pontoon, Poker, Go Fish, High Card)	Game of skill	Competitive. A number of card games were played by young people which were transformed into drinking games by introducing penalty shots when loses in the games occurred.
Drunk Jenga / Tipple Tower	Game of skill	Competitive. The traditional game Jenga was used as a drinking game, whereby penalty shots were introduced when the tower fell. Tipple Tower works in a similar manner, except certain blocks have rules or penalties assigned to them.
'Down it'	N/A	Neither a game of skill or chance; but typically competitive. This simply entailed consuming the remaining drinks as quickly as possible against others.
Beer Bong	N/A	Neither a game of skill or chance; but competitive. A beer bong is a device with a funnel attached to a tube so that alcohol (typically lager) can be consumed quickly. Each individual takes it in turn to consume a set amount of alcohol in the quickest time.
Taboo games	N/A	Neither a game of skill or chance. Although 'Taboo' was not strictly referred to by participants, this was essentially the nature of the game. In these games (rules designed by the participants), certain words, phrases or actions were not allowed. If acknowledged by other participants, the individual would have to consume alcohol as a penalty for the taboo.

Appendix Eleven: Hypersexual feminine style

Below is a list of the hypersexual feminine styles adorned by women in fieldwork settings as recorded in the field diary:

- **Footwear:** stilettos, high heels, platform, strappy.
- **Tights:** fishnets, suspender effect or other patterns typically situated at thigh level.
- **Skirts:** mini-skirts, pencil skirts, low-dip hemmed skirts.
- **Dresses:** bodycon, figure hugging, low-dip hemmed.
- **Tops:** strapless, bralette, cropped, halter, backless, peplum.
- **Other attire:** playsuits, jumpsuits, hot-pants.
- **Patterns and colours:** sheer, lace, animal print, neon, pastel, black, red.
- **Accessories:** oversized chunky jewellery.
- **Make-up:** heavy eye make-up, false eyelashes, false or painted bright nails, bright lipsticks/lip-gloss (often pink and red).
- **Hair:** Curled, back-combed, big-volume, straight, various glamorous up-styles.