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**‘A Proper Night Out’: Alcohol and risk
among young people in deprived areas in
North West England**

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**I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted for the
award of a higher degree elsewhere**

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Abstract

Young people's very visible and public performances of drunkenness have become a matter of popular and political concern. English alcohol policy, frames this type of harmful alcohol consumption as a problem of individual behaviour, which is underpinned by conceptualisations of risk and rationality. Thus positioning the individual as a rational, risk adverse, decision maker. Consequently, interventions focus on risk factors and individual harm reduction models, despite there being little evidence to suggest that these type of interventions are effective. This thesis moves away from this focus by using a social practice theoretical framework, to explore the contemporary drinking practices of young people from socio-economically deprived areas and to reconceptualise risk in relation to these practices.

This study draws on data from three mixed gender friendship groups of twenty-three young people from deprived communities in the North West of England during a 14-month period. This study focuses on the alcohol consumption of young people from deprived communities in northern England because they are the group whose drinking has frequently been the most problematised in English alcohol policy. In addition, people living in disadvantaged communities have been shown to suffer from more alcohol attributable harms than those living in more affluent communities. During the study period, data was collected from three to four in-depth group interviews with

each group and from the social media content of each young person. The study draws on the theoretical frame of the three element model of social practice together with 'doing gender' and conceptualisations of Bourdieu's capital, to undertake an empirical enquiry of alcohol consumption, that explores the unequal and varying performance(s) of the practice. This study illustrates how a specific material arrangement of alcohol, the corporeal, spaces, finance and mobile phones; combines and interconnects with social and symbolic meanings of social recognition, sociability, caring and group belonging and with competences relating to the consumption of alcohol and staying safe. By doing so, a recognizable practice-as-entity is identified, which is framed as a *proper night out*.

The study re-conceptualises risk as routine, ordinary and normalised within young people's intoxicated drinking practices. Thus, risk is viewed as being complex, multi-layered and fluid and knowledge about moderating and navigating hazards and uncertainties is part of the (un)conscious, embodied know-how of the practice.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 About the study

This research study is about the drinking practices of young people living in socially and economically disadvantaged circumstances. This thesis outlines the findings from a qualitative study, which explores the ways in which young people living in deprived communities engage in, navigate and manage alcohol consumption practices. The study draws on the narratives of young people elicited during group interviews, and their social media content posted over a 14-month period.

Alcohol is viewed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as the third biggest risk for the world's health (Stevens et al. 2009) with the acknowledgement that alcohol is the cause of over sixty health conditions and diseases, including cancer, stroke, hypertension, liver disease, heart disease, injury, mental and behavioural disorders, reproductive disorders and pre-natal harm (ONS 2013a, Anderson et al. 2012). Data from the Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC) shows alcohol related health harms in England have been increasing since the post-war years, particularly hospital admissions and mortality (HSCIC 2016). Increases in alcohol related health harms, which doubled between the mid 1950s and 1990s have largely been attributed to both an increase in the consumption of alcohol in this period and to patterns of alcohol consumption (Brown 2016, Thom et al. 2016, IAS 2013).

The starting point for this research study is the observation that current English alcohol policy frames harmful alcohol consumption as a problem of individual behaviour that is underpinned by conceptualisations of risk and rationality which position the individual as a rational, risk adverse, decision maker (Kelly and Barker 2016).

Consequently, interventions focus on a risk factor epidemiology and a privileging of individual harm reduction models, supported by social interventions to reduce accessibility and demand (Lyons et al. 2014a). This is despite there being little evidence to suggest that these type of interventions are effective (Martin et al. 2013, Foxcroft et al. 1997, Foxcroft et al. 2003). Both practice theorists who advocate making social practice the unit of enquiry and public health advocates, who support population level interventions have challenged this type of approach (Shove 2010, Maller 2015, Nicholls 2012). By focusing on the individual, and not focusing on drinking as a social practice, with associated social meanings, values and social context (Lyons et al. 2014a, Shove 2010) the dominant behaviour change approach has been reflected in English alcohol policy with an associated focus on individual harm reduction measures (Thom et al. 2016).

In addition, the concept of risk is problematic as it is understood and applied in different ways both through its use in everyday life as well as its varied usage within the field of public health. Within public health the notion of risk is conceptualised as the possibility of a negative health outcome happening or as risk behaviours, risk exposures or risk factors. In addition, individuals are often referred to as being 'at risk' of negative health outcomes (WHO 2017). In everyday usage risk is usually referred to as a threat, danger, hazard or a harm (Lupton 2013).

A premise of this thesis is that the notion of risk and how and when it is used is subjective, political and situated within the specific social practice that it is located. In this way then, risk within alcohol consumption practices is viewed differently

throughout the study. For example, as the possibility of a negative health outcome as a result of excessive alcohol consumption or the risk of having a drink spiked.

By way of an introduction, this chapter provides background and context to the alcohol consumption practices, which are addressed in this study. This is followed by a rationale for the study and a section explaining how the document is structured to guide the reader through the content of this thesis.

1.2 Drinking practices

Since humans first started cultivating cereals and grapes, excess drinking or intoxicated drinking has been evident throughout history (Berridge et al. 2007, Barr 1998). Descriptions of intoxication and drunkenness similar to modern descriptions of bingeing are found throughout English history, and similar to contemporary conceptualisations of binge drinking, they were frequently accompanied by a Government and societal response (Barr 1998, Clark 1983, Berridge et al. 2007). Barr (1998: p25) notes that as early as the eighth century missionaries and writers were lamenting the vice of 'drunkenness' and by the 1500s the first licensing act was introduced, in an attempt to control what the legislators viewed as the '*abuses and disorders*' of alehouses (Nicholls 1958). In the eighteenth century it was the turn of the so called gin craze to be a source of concern (Barr 1998, Nicholls 1958, Abel 2001). Berridge et al. (2007) view the response to the gin crisis as a response to the excessive alcohol consumption of the poorer classes, whilst the heavy drinking of more affluent groups, went unquestioned. Women too, were a cause for concern as they were regarded as being 'corrupted' by the gin which was considered to be detrimental to family life (Berridge et al. 2007). In the 1980s, young working class men were

demonised as 'lager louts' when drinking to excess and violence were perceived to be linked (Berridge et al. 2007, Nicholls 1958).

What a brief look at history shows, is that drinking to intoxication is not new and neither is the demonising of marginalised groups, in relation to these episodes of excessive drinking (Cohen 2002, Berridge et al. 2007). There is a long tradition of ritualised drunkenness amongst men in the dominant classes, which generally does not provoke the same level of moral condemnation and revulsion as the drinking practices of working class young people, especially young women (Day et al. 2004, Skeggs 2004, Griffin et al. 2013). This is bound up with notions of respectability and constructions of gender that view women's excessive drinking as unfeminine (Griffin et al. 2013) and constructions of class that view working class alcohol consumption with horrified outrage and disgust (Nayak 2006). This is particularly apparent in the manner in which young working class women are often viewed as excessive immoral and out of control (Skeggs 2005)

Young people's alcohol consumption has frequently been problematised within alcohol policy with their involvement with extreme drunkenness such as binge drinking (d'Abbs 2015, Nicholls 2010, Niland et al. 2013). For example, the first English alcohol strategy '*Alcohol harm reduction strategy for England*' stated that "*young people in particular need to better understand the risks involved in harmful patterns of drinking*" (HM Government 2004: p5). Discursive themes throughout successive Government alcohol strategies have also focused on the alcohol consumption of young people as the most pressing problem (HM Government 2004, 2007, 2012). An example is found in the 2007 alcohol strategy, '*Safe, Social, Sensible. The next steps in the national*

alcohol strategy', where young people (18 to 24 year olds) are constituted as 'binge drinkers' with a propensity for violence and irresponsible behaviour (HM Government 2007, Hackley et al. 2008). This is not to suggest that young people do not suffer from alcohol attributable harms, as the literature shows that they do experience them. For example, rates of liver cirrhosis are increasing whilst at the same time the average age of those diagnosed with liver cirrhosis is decreasing (Leon and McCambridge 2006, Hackley et al. 2015). In addition, young people who consume alcohol are more likely to sustain an alcohol related injury than other age groups and short-term health risks, such as these, are increasing (Newbury-Birch 2009, Department of Health 2015, Brown 2016). However, young people are the group least likely to consume alcohol in England (ONS 2016a) and the proportion of young people who reported drinking alcohol fell by 40% between 2005 and 2013 (ONS 2016a). Similarly, the proportion of young people who reported that they drank excessively in one session fell from 29% to 18% in the same period (ONS 2016a). Thus the data on alcohol consumption shows that there are large numbers of young people who do not drink, or who have never got drunk or experienced any alcohol-related problems (ONS 2013b, Newburn and Shiner 2001). However, this is not a homogeneous or straightforward picture with data also showing that half of all young people in England drink alcohol (ONS 2016a) and young people are the most likely age group to drink excessively in one drinking session (Seaman and Ikegwonu 2010, Percy et al. 2011, Brown 2016). In addition, those young people who do drink are drinking more than ever before (Smith and Foxcroft 2009, Westlake and Yar 2006, Department of Health 2004, Fuller 2013). Young people are also more likely than any other age group to drink more than the weekly maximum amount of 14 units in one day and 23% of young people are reported to drink more than 14 units of

alcohol per week (ONS 2016a, Brown 2016). The data also shows that 17% of 16 to 24 year olds drink more than 14 units of alcohol in one day (ONS 2016a). Within policy discourses, it is this type of drinking, which is frequently described as 'binge' drinking or 'drinking to get drunk', which has been considered the most problematic of drinking behaviours (HM Government 2004, 2007, 2012). Recent data also shows that only 3% of English young people drank alcohol on five or more days compared to 20% in the age group 55 to 74 years (Brown 2016). In summary, the data is not straightforward, however what it does indicate is that young people who do drink, are drinking more than previously, and they tend to drink more than other age groups in a single occasion. It is this type of drinking therefore that this thesis will concentrate on.

In addition to both the amount of alcohol consumed and to patterns of consumption health inequalities have been shown to play an important part in the variation of alcohol attributable health harms (Erskine et al. 2010, Beard et al. 2016). Health inequalities are the systematic differences in the health outcomes of groups of people who occupy different and unequal positions in society (McCartney et al. 2013). Differences in health outcomes within society or different population groups are not always the result of health inequalities, it is when these differences and variations are deemed to be unfair or stemming from some form of injustice that they are considered to be the result of different and unequal positions (Kawachi et al. 2002). Most variations and differences in health outcomes across social groups, such as socio-economic status and gender, are unfair because they mirror the unequal distribution of the underlying social determinants of health which relate to social, economic and environmental contexts and access to resources (Marmot 2010, Commission on Social Determinants of Health CSDH 2008). These inequalities include access to power,

goods, services, educational opportunities, employment, health care, as well as the differences in the conditions of employment, homes and places within which people live (CSDH 2008).

Alcohol research has shown a key link between alcohol attributable harm and health inequalities although the picture is somewhat complex and has therefore has been termed the alcohol harm paradox (Smith and Foster 2014, Beard et al. 2016, Bellis et al. 2016). The alcohol harm paradox is a term that is used to refer to the observation that individuals from groups with lower socio-economic status consume less alcohol than individuals from higher groups, but they experience more alcohol attributable harms (Beard et al. 2016, Bellis et al. 2016, Marmot 1997). The complexities of this paradox are further demonstrated by Beard et al. (2016) who found that different measures of socio-economic status appear to influence whether the alcohol harm paradox is seen as linear across different socio-economic groups or is associated with the most disadvantaged. The paradox is also observed as being more concentrated in males and younger age groups (Beard et al. 2016).

The drinking patterns of young people like those of the rest of the population differ by location, socio-economic position and gender. In 2015, drinkers in northern England were more likely to drink excessively on one session than their peers (HSCIC 2015). Drinkers in the north were 60% more likely to drink more than 4 units for men and 3 units for women at least once a week (Brown 2016). Historically, women have been lighter drinkers than men although the amount that contemporary young women are drinking is converging with that of young men (Lyons and Willott 2008, Hunt et al. 2015). Young women between the ages of 16 and 24 years are the age group with the

highest proportion (42%) of drinkers who reported drinking more than 6 units in a single day (Brown 2016). The differences between the drinking practices of young women and men are thus not now as apparent as they have been in the past, which has been interpreted by some commentators as evidence that young women have become more at risk of alcohol related harms (EUCAM 2008, Armitage 2013, Smith and Foxcroft 2009, McCreanor et al. 2013). Although it is middle aged men who are still the most likely group to suffer an alcohol related death (ONS 2016b), the changes in drinking practices of young women may alter this in the future. In summary, a variety of factors or health inequalities have been associated with alcohol related harms (Marmot 1997, Room et al. 2006, Grittner et al. 2013), including socio-economic status and gender (Smith and Foster 2014, Beard et al. 2016, Bellis et al. 2016, Room et al. 2006) providing justification for why deprivation and gender are a focus for this study.

Although the term binge drinking is in common usage in both policy and everyday discourse to describe one particular drinking practice, it is a poorly defined term and the use of this term is frequently confusing (McAlaney and McMahon 2007, Measham 2004, Haydock 2014c, Herring et al. 2008). Historically, the term 'binge' has been used to refer to drinking until drunk or intoxicated over an extended period, sometimes over a number of days (Berridge et al. 2007, Herring et al. 2008). More recently binge drinking has been used to describe forms of extreme drinking (Measham and Brain 2005), such as a single drinking session with a high alcohol intake (Szmigin et al. 2008), or drinking which exceeds the government's 'safe' daily limits (Hackley et al. 2011), or a drinking episode when an individual intends to get drunk or intoxicated (Guise and Gill 2007). Other common terms for this type of drinking practice have included 'Risky

Single Occasion Drinking' (Gmel et al. 2011), episodic, sessional (Murgraff et al. 1999, Smith 2014) and hazardous drinking (Martinic and Measham 2008). Finally, Measham and Brain, (2005) coined the phrase '*drinking to intoxication*' as an alternative to binge drinking to describe the phenomenon of achieving a desired and pleasurable pharmacological effect from alcoholic substances (Martinic and Measham 2008). However, these phrases do not seem to adequately recognise alcohol consumption as more than just a pharmacological effect and they fail to acknowledge the way in which drinking practices are constituted by the young people who participate in them (Measham et al. 2011, Griffin et al. 2009, Brown and Gregg 2012). For those young people who drink, they are more likely to engage in drinking to intoxication in one session than any other age group, and this drinking is characterised by weekday restraint and weekend excesses during Friday and/or Saturday nights (Measham and Brain 2005, McCreanor et al. 2008, Engineer 2003, Percy et al. 2011, Fry 2011).

1.3 Rationale for this study

Responsibility for alcohol related harms within policy discourse is positioned at the individual level, with individuals (namely young people) who drink too much, frequently viewed as being the cause of the problem (Adebowale 2014, d'Abbs 2015, Niland et al. 2013). At the same time, it calls for a collective effort; for example from the police, the alcohol industry, local Government and retailers to resolve these issues and create an environment in which individuals can and should become 'responsible' drinkers (Haydock 2014c). The 2007 alcohol strategy for England, positioned and conceptualised 'binge' drinking, 'drinking to get drunk' and excessive public drunkenness, together, as a part of a national 'drinking culture' (Haydock 2014a). This

problematization of socially acceptable drunkenness as part of English culture continued through into the government's 2012 alcohol strategy (HM Government 2012). Alongside this, the link between 'binge' drinking and 'risk' behaviours was foregrounded in the Government alcohol awareness campaigns titled 'Know your limits' (HM Government 2006) and 'Would you' (HM Government 2008). These alcohol awareness campaigns depict drunk young people as being irresponsible and reckless, for example by jumping off scaffolding when intoxicated (Haydock 2014a). Successive national Governments have associated excessive drinking with putting both oneself and others at risk, whilst at the same time constituting 'binge' drinking as part of a wider cultural norm. Despite this construction, there is little evidence that Government strategy for England has attempted to tackle widespread social change through population level measures (Hawkins and Holden 2013). Indeed, by privileging individuals as the problem, the focus is on behaviour change and individual harm reduction to the detriment of other potential intervention areas.

However, responses to social and economic inequalities have in the main failed to materialise in English alcohol policy. Instead, young people and risk have become intertwined in government policy discourses (Goldson 2001). In doing so, policy has ignored the way in which drinking practices are constituted as pleasurable, fun and sociable by those young people who participate in them (Measham et al. 2011, Griffin et al. 2009, Brown and Gregg 2012). Young people living in northern England are the group most likely to drinking excessively in one session. Socio-economic status has been shown to play an important role in the variation of alcohol attributable harms and the focus of alcohol policy on young people is the rationale behind why this thesis is focusing on the drinking patterns of young people living in deprived communities.

Specifically, this research study explores the drinking practices of three groups of young people, who live in deprived communities. The study explores how their drinking practices relate to risk, and in doing so aims to provide fresh insights for those responsible for public health policy. The theoretical approach to the study is to locate the social world in practice and to approach young people's alcohol consumption from a social practice theory perspective. Social practice theorists have been critical of the type of individualistic approaches and associated understandings of intervention and change (Twine 2015) that have been prominent within English alcohol policy making it a useful theoretical frame for this study.

The intention of this thesis is to understand how reframing alcohol consumption from an individualised approach to one that is practice orientated, may afford new insights into processes and relationships that are obscured by behaviour change explanations (Blue et al. 2016). Similarly, to other studies that have applied social practice theory, the intention is to move beyond the individualistic assumptions of behaviour change, and instead situate excessive drinking as an alcohol consumption practice with health implications that is situated within the social, temporal, economic and cultural organisation of young people's everyday life.

Consequently, the aim of this research study is to use social practice theory to provide fresh insights into the alcohol consumption practices of young people living in socially and economically deprived communities, and to reconceptualise risk in relation to these practices. The project has sought to address this aim by addressing the following research objectives:

1. To apply a theoretical framework of social practice theory to the alcohol consumption practices of young people living in deprived communities;
2. To develop understandings of the routinised actions of young people in relation to alcohol consumption and risk and the processes through which they become routinised;
3. To explore 'risk' in relation to the ways in which gender is performed and regulated within young people's alcohol consumption practices; and
4. To identify implications and recommendations for policy and practice.

1.4 Thesis structure

This chapter has so far, introduced the study and briefly contextualised the study within current English public health policy discourses. The current chapter has outlined the dominant framing within English alcohol policy which emphasises individual harm reduction and reflects on how conceptualising alcohol consumption as a social practice potentially brings a broader perspective.

Chapter 2 begins with an exploration and critique of the dominant framings of risk in alcohol policy and explores alternative ways of theorising risk. The next section of chapter 2 expands upon the theoretical understandings of the study related to social practice theory and particularly the three element model of social practice theory (Shove et al. 2012). A review of alcohol literature, through the lens of social practice theory follows in the next section. This is followed by an exploration of the usefulness of the notion of capital from the work of Bourdieu (1984) as conceptual tools in exploring drinking practices and risk. Chapter 2 continues with an explanation of how

this research study understands gender as ‘doings’ which are negotiated, constituted and reconstituted through repeated shared performances of practice (Paechter 2003).

Chapter 3 outlines the research design, methods used, recruitment strategy, data analysis strategy and details the theoretical assumptions which underpin them. This chapter also reflects on the research process and addresses the ethical challenges encountered during the study in this chapter.

Chapter 4 reframes one type of excessive drinking practice that the study participants engaged in as the social practice of a *proper night out* and provides a detailed picture of the practice. Brief background information on the study participants is also given in chapter 4 in order to familiarise the reader with the participants’ background. This chapter illustrates how previous independent practices have come together to form a bundle of practices, and subsequently the practice framed as a *proper night out*.

Chapters 5 through to 8 provide the analysis of the data and present the study findings with chapter 5, 6 and 7 each detailing and analysing one of the three elements; materials, meanings and competences that make up the practice. Chapter 8, then draws the analysis from the previous three chapters together to provide an understanding of the practice of the *proper night out*, its sub-practices, the three elements that constitute the practice, and details how the practice relates to risk.

Finally, in chapter 9, the key findings of the study are brought together and discussed alongside the relevance of and contributions to current theoretical and research knowledge. The final chapter, chapter 10, presents the main conclusions of the research and draws together some of the key overarching themes that span across the five analysis chapters. This chapter also highlights some limitations of the research,

considers the emerging findings that warrant further exploration, and makes recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to locate young people's alcohol consumption within the English policy context and the wider literature on risk theories, social practice theory, alcohol research and inequalities. This chapter is important in contextualising both the methodology chapter and the findings that form the rest of the thesis. This chapter also serves to offer an alternative paradigm for exploring the drinking practices of young people living in deprived communities, in order to reconceptualise how these practices, relate to risk. The use of sociological approaches to understanding young people's alcohol consumption has been less prominent than epidemiological, cognitive and anthropological explanations (France 2000, Zajdow and Lindsay 2010, Lunnay et al. 2011, Abel and Plumridge 2004). This is despite recognition within research and public health that a move away from methodological individualism and risk factor epidemiology to theoretical approaches that recognise the importance of the structural, social and environmental context is desirable (Maller 2012, Ioannou 2005). This thesis contributes to the body of research that uses sociological approaches by using a social practice framework to research alcohol consumption as a social practice and explore how this theoretical change affects understandings of 'risk'. Despite the potential for social practice theory to offer a broader insight into health behaviours, empirical enquiries of health related practices, using social practice as a theoretical frame have been rare (Holman and Borgstrom 2016). This is despite recognition, that the social practice theory has much to offer the field of public health,

in terms of developing understandings of (un)healthy practices (Blue et al. 2016, Kelly and Barker 2016).

This chapter first offers specific comment and critique on alcohol policy with regard to alcohol consumption in England. This is followed by an exploration and consideration of the relevance of risk theories and their potential in contributing to informing understandings of the interplay and connectedness between risk and alcohol consumption practices of young people. This chapter then examines the potential for applying social practice theory to young people's alcohol consumption, and explores, reviews and brings together previous studies in the alcohol research field, using the lens of social practice. Finally, this chapter provides an insight into how issues relating to inequalities can be explored by combining one specific account of social practice theory with Pierre Bourdieu's conceptualisations of capital and the theoretical framework of 'doing gender'.

2.2 English alcohol policy context

This section reviews current English alcohol policy and considers the challenges faced by public health policy makers in developing future policy and strategy. In common, with many other European countries the UK has introduced a number of policy measures and strategies relating to public health since the 1990s (Baggott 2012, Hunter 2007). The devolution of some legislative duties to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland means that these policy measures and strategies are not universal across the UK and therefore this study will focus on reviewing policy, strategy and its implementation as it relates to England¹. A decline in communicable disease at the

¹ References to alcohol policy within this thesis relate to England where possible. Where English only references are not available, reference may be made to Great Britain or the United Kingdom and are indicated as such.

same time as a rise in epidemics of non-communicable diseases has led to a focus on the latter (Cohn 2014, WHO 2012a). These have been framed as 'lifestyle' conditions that are associated with risk behaviours, such as smoking, alcohol consumption, sedentary lifestyles and poor diet (Blue et al. 2016, Holman and Borgstrom 2016).

Paradoxically, the most important determinants of individual health status are known to be social, economic and structural conditions (WHO 2008) with the link between both poor health and reduced mortality, with low socio-economic status being well documented (Marmot et al. 2010, Di Cesare et al. 2013, Acheson 1998). The strongest determinants of the health of young people are structural factors including socio-economic status, and access to education and wealth (Viner et al. 2012). It is also widely recognised, that the (un)healthy practices of young people are influenced by their cultural, legal and economic context (Michaud et al. 2009, Viner et al. 2012). Despite this, reducing the gaps in social inequalities and tackling the broader social determinants of health has, largely, failed to materialise in either English public health policy or legislation (Baggott 2012, Glasgow and Schrecker 2015). The picture for alcohol policy in England in the main, mirrors this overarching approach to public health and successive English alcohol strategies (HM Government 2004, 2007, 2012), have not acted on the link between alcohol related harm and inequalities (Anderson et al. 2012, Hart 2015). This is despite social and economic inequalities having been shown to play a significant role in relation to alcohol related harms (Public Health England 2014). People with lower incomes, who live in socially disadvantaged areas, experience higher levels of alcohol attributable health harms from the same amount of alcohol, than those who are economically, more privileged (Anderson et al. 2012, Erskine et al. 2010, Schmidt et al. 2010). Furthermore, although more affluent groups

consume alcohol on more occasions than lower income groups, the latter group consumes more alcohol during a single drinking occasion (Cerdá et al. 2011, Casswell et al. 2003). People with lower socio-economic status have fewer resources to reduce risks such as hiring a taxi after a night out. They are also more likely to drink in unsafe and public settings with heightened risks such as being noticed by the Police, social disorder, injuries from violence or accidents, alcohol poisoning and exposure to some infections (Schmidt et al. 2010, Room 2004).

The very existence of alcohol policy is indicative that alcohol consumption is being problematised in some way (Room 1999). Successive alcohol policies have referred to both health and social harms including anti-social behaviour, and more recently, economic problems or social costs, such as absenteeism from work, lost productivity and public order offences, have also been included (Bacchi 2015). At least three public health harms are identifiable within alcohol policy (Kelly and Barker 2016). Firstly, the latest Government guidelines issued by the UK's Chief Medical Officers (2015) advises that there is no safe alcohol amount, in what is a move away from previous guidelines, which advised on safe, sensible, maximum amounts. This change in guidance means over half of all adults in England are considered at risk of alcohol attributable health harms (Public Health England 2014). Secondly, for regular heavy drinkers who have been consuming alcohol over a prolonged period, there is a likelihood of serious organ damage. Finally, for young people who engage in excessive or 'binge' drinking in a single drinking episode there is a risk of negative health outcomes including head injuries, fractures, facial injuries and scarring (Department of Health 2015).

Despite this recognition within policy discourses that alcohol attributable health harms, are associated with a range of drinking patterns, one type of drinking practice has been particularly prominent within the policy context, that of, binge drinking (Adebowale 2014, Berridge et al. 2007). Within the policy context young people have frequently been portrayed by policy makers, whatever their political persuasion, as being the most problematic of drinkers with their involvement in so called binge drinking, anti-social behaviour and associated alcohol related harms (Adebowale 2014, d'Abbs 2015, Nicholls 2010, Niland et al. 2013). For example, the Labour Government (1997-2010) in successive alcohol strategies stated that binge drinkers were young people between 18 and 24 years of age (HM Government 2004, 2007). Likewise, David Cameron, former Prime Minister (2010-2016) claimed that *"binge drinking is the issue"* and further emphasised that *"so far as public policy is concerned, young people are the issue"* (HM Government 2012: p2). Hence, young people's involvement in binge drinking and alcohol risk factors, such as involvement in violence and associated alcohol attributable harms have been at the forefront of government policy (Herring et al. 2014, Herring et al. 2008, Niland et al. 2013). This view of England as a nation of young 'binge drinkers' has been heightened by a media discourse that focuses on pictures and stories of drunken young people fighting on the streets or sprawled across pavements (Toole 2010, Smith 2014, Johnson 2011). This prominent problematisation of young people in alcohol policy and popular discourses is due in part to this greater visibility of young people's drunken behaviour in the night time environment (Adebowale 2014, Eisenbach-Stangl and Thom 2009). However, this problematisation within alcohol policy, of directing attention towards young people and binge drinking is to the detriment of other ages of drinkers, such as middle-aged men, who are more

likely to suffer alcohol related harm and even death, and who are frequently overlooked in policy discourses (Anderson et al. 2012). Indeed, Griffin et al. (2009) contend that young people's public displays of drunken behaviour assist in framing the similarly excessive (but more private) alcohol consumption of the middle-aged, middle classes as both refined and moderate.

Popular discourses have also focused on the harm or the potential for harm to others by intoxicated young people (Johnson 2011), and on a 'ladette' culture of drinking where young women are viewed as unfeminine (Day et al. 2004, de Visser and McDonnell 2012). Drinking and getting drunk have long been associated with masculinity and masculine behaviours (Griffin et al. 2013, Willott and Lyons 2012). Young women who are seen to be drunk in public are presented as rejecting traditional feminine values such as caring and respectability (Jackson and Tinkler 2007). Newspapers have frequently drawn on discourses of "*natural femininity, motherhood and sexuality to present those who drink as transgressing gender norms in that they were considered unfeminine or overtly masculine*" (Brown and Gregg 2012: p360). However, to dismiss this, as a moral panic is too simplistic, as there are undoubtedly associated health and social harms associated with the consumption of alcohol (Smith 2014, de Visser 2015, Morleo et al. 2011, Erskine et al. 2010, Riazi and MacLean 2016). The dominant picture presented by policy (and popular) discourses is that of one, single drinking culture; that of excessive alcohol consumption in a single drinking episode (Berridge et al. 2007, Kelly and Barker 2016). This is in contrast to alcohol research, which shows that young people consume alcohol in a variety of ways and some do not drink at all (Kelly and Barker 2016).

Despite the acknowledged importance of social, political and economic context within English policy discourse, Government policy frequently positions social change at an individual, behaviour change level (Williams 2003, Pound and Campbell 2015b) targeting interventions at at-risk groups and not the population as a whole (Thom et al. 2016). This response is situated within a broader context of what has been described as a 'neoliberal paradigm' (Harrison et al. 2011, Smith 2014). Neoliberalism is a much used term with different interpretations (Mudge 2008). This thesis equates neoliberalism with Governmentality, that is, both a political discourse about rationalities of rule (Bacchi 2015) and a set of practices, including, minimalist state, free market economics and individual choice that facilitate the governing of individuals from a distance (Larner 2000, Dean 2010). This interpretation of neoliberalism suggests that alcohol policy requires individuals to understand and take responsibility for their own health as responsible consumers (Haydock 2014b), and to monitor and regulate their exposure to an array of risk factors as presented as such, by scientific and health experts (d'Abbs 2015, Harrison et al. 2011, Baum and Fisher 2014). This response is not surprising as a common sense view is one where, risk behaviours, such as smoking, poor diet, alcohol consumption and sedentary lifestyles are the cause of non-communicable diseases (Kelly and Barker 2016). It has been suggested that the prioritisation of individual lifestyles and risk factors over acting on the social determinants of health (Mackenbach 2011, Hunter et al. 2010) is because these type of interventions fit better with government neoliberal and individual ideologies and free market economics (Baum and Fisher 2014). Also, that individual harm reduction interventions appear to be easier to operationalise (Zimmerman 2013). At the same time as appealing to a common sense view (Kelly and Barker 2016).

Individual harm reduction discourses are evident within successive alcohol strategies, through the framing of alcohol consumption messages, as there is a 'normal' and 'desired' way to drink alcohol which is moderate, sensible and ultimately rational, and an abnormal way, which leads to health and social harms, such as ill health and criminality (Szmigin et al. 2008). This latter type of drinking practice has been constituted as harmful, dangerous and risky and the individuals who engage in these practices are condemned as lacking in judgement and as being irresponsible (Hackley et al. 2008). In an attempt to encourage a change in behaviour, successive alcohol strategies and policies have developed guidelines to moderate alcohol consumption levels, with such guidance frequently expressed in terms of units of alcohol (de Visser 2015, Kerr and Stockwell 2012, Ritchie et al. 2009, Niland et al. 2013). Earlier guidelines recommended a maximum daily amount, with later guidelines also including a period of abstinence every week (HM Government 2004, 2007, 2012). Government alcohol consumption guidelines previously recommended a maximum intake of 21 units for men and 14 units per week for women, spread over three days or more (Anderson 1996). Although following a change in guidance in 2016, no alcohol consumption levels are now considered to be safe and the maximum weekly low risk intake for men has been reduced to 14 units (NHS 2016)². Lower risk alcohol consumption guidelines were designed to appeal to rational individuals who it was hoped would take notice of this advice and reduce their alcohol intake accordingly (Niland et al. 2013). Consequently, individuals are erroneously positioned within alcohol policy as rational thinkers who will critically and rationally appraise all relevant risks and will then change their

² Units are used to show how much pure alcohol is in an alcoholic drink; one unit equals 10ml or 8g of pure alcohol.

behaviour to something less harmful (Kelly and Barker 2016, Kemshall 2014). In this way, within policy discourses the individual is highlighted, both as the problem (engaging in risky practices), and the key to the solution (by changing behaviour to something less risky) (Hackley et al. 2011).

The most recent alcohol strategy (HM Government 2012) refers to individual responsibility whilst simultaneously focusing on the financial and economic cost of irresponsibility to the taxpayer through health, policing and lost productivity costs (Smith 2014). The strategy focuses on a partnership between the Government, the drinks industry, health, police, individuals and communities to reduce alcohol related harm through the promotion of 'sensible' drinking and behaviour change (HM Government 2012, Hackley et al. 2008). A neo-liberal rationale underpins these strategies suggesting that building partnerships and working collaboratively leads to an environment within which everyone can and should make (the right) rational, informed and balanced lifestyle choices and avoid health related, risky behaviours (Haydock 2014c). In other words, English alcohol policy discourse, focuses on individual lifestyle directing attention towards health as an individual responsibility (Baggott 2012, Kelly and Barker 2016). This focus on harm reduction at the individual level has been despite a public health vision, advocated by a coalition of non-governmental organisations public health advocates called the Alcohol Health Alliance, which promotes tackling alcohol attributable harms by reducing alcohol consumption at a population level (Thom et al. 2016).

One of the difficulties of this behaviour change approach, is that 'appropriate' drinking is poorly described in policy; the focus is on stopping or reducing existing alcohol

consumption rather than trying to shape a credible alternative in something other than deficit terms (Harrison et al. 2011, Lovatt et al. 2015). Another issue identified from the literature, is that concepts of sensible drinking are at odds with many alcohol consumption practices of (young) people (Lovatt et al. 2015, Measham 2006). For some young people research suggests a pattern of drinking that reflects weekday restraint and weekend excess, and where intoxication is constituted as fun and pleasurable (Measham 2006, Nicholls 2010, Hackley et al. 2015). In other words, individuals may not frame themselves in the same way as policy makers, and their behaviours may be in contrast to those envisaged by decision makers (Harrison et al. 2011). The difference between actual practice and drinking norms, and desired practice inherent in policy discourses, may well have affected the credibility of sensible and moderate drinking guidelines from the perspective of young people (Hackley et al. 2011, Lovatt et al. 2014, Measham 2006, Lovatt et al. 2015). This gap between actual and desired drinking practice, effectively constitutes young people's normative drinking practices, as 'bingeing', 'risky', 'irresponsible' and 'problematic' (Haydock 2014b) which is at odds with the findings of alcohol research studies presented later in this chapter.

This individualisation of alcohol consumption problems within policy discourse, has however been situated, within the context of a wider social norm (Hawkins and Holden 2013). For example, the 2007 alcohol strategy positioned and conceptualised 'binge' drinking, 'drinking to get drunk' and excessive public drunkenness together as having become socially acceptable and a part of national 'drinking culture' (Haydock 2014a). The problematisation of socially acceptable drunkenness, as part of English culture continued, within policy discourse into the government's 2012 alcohol strategy (HM

Government 2012). In challenging these wider social norms, alcohol policy makes reference to enabling wider social change (Nicholls 2012). For example, the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy For England (HM Government 2004) included a discourse of changing national drinking culture (regarded as a 'binging') to that of a Mediterranean café style drinking culture (regarded as sensible and moderate drinking). However, how this new style drinking culture would look in practice was poorly described (Lovatt et al. 2015). The second alcohol strategy moved away from this conceptualisation of an ideal type of drinking culture, that of a Mediterranean café style culture, preferring instead to promote a 'sensible' drinking culture (HM Government 2007). The strategy claimed that the *"problem lies in English drinking culture"* (HM Government 2007: p10). Criticism of the 2004 alcohol strategy, for its failure to deliver on its commitment to develop a café style drinking culture was evident in the 2012 alcohol strategy, and instead this latest strategy promoted a culture of responsible drinking (HM Government 2012).

That is not to say that public health policy has made no attempt to tackle social change but that there is little evidence to suggest that it has been widespread or successful in the English context (Ally et al. 2016, Nicholls 2012, Hawkins and Holden 2013). Examples of attempts to effect social change include, alcohol control measures at the population level, such as regulating purchasing hours, introduction of a legal minimum age for purchasing alcohol and associated tax measures (d'Abbs 2015, Osterberg 2012). A more in-depth example is taken from the 2012 alcohol strategy, which committed to the introduction of a minimum unit pricing, although a Government U-turn resulted in this policy commitment not actually being implemented in England (J McCambridge et al. 2014). Minimum unit pricing, is relevant here, because it has been

viewed as both a wider social intervention making small reductions in alcohol attributable harms across society, and as a targeted intervention aimed at heavy drinkers and those drinking at harmful levels (Nicholls and Greenaway 2015, Sheron et al. 2014). The failure to introduce minimum unit pricing has been regarded by some commentators as a missed opportunity to introduce a population level measure targeting social change (J McCambridge et al. 2014, Thom et al. 2016, Hawkins and McCambridge 2014).

The importance then of social change has been a recurrent discourse within government alcohol policy discourse (Hawkins and Holden 2013). Despite this, interventions have in the main been reduced to behavioural change, whilst giving the Government responsibility for introducing legislation and providing information on the risks associated with excessive alcohol consumption (Hawkins and Holden 2013). Accordingly, successive Governments individualised the problem of alcohol related harms (Kelly and Barker 2016), while at the same time constituting 'binge' drinking as part of a wider social norm (Nicholls 2012).

Three potential reasons for why widespread social change has proved to be so difficult can be found in the literature. Firstly, there is what appears within policy as a fundamental contradiction between the references to a problematic minority of (young) drinkers, and the requirement for widespread social change (Hawkins and Holden 2013). Secondly, by privileging individuals as the problem and focusing on 'risk' factors, attention is directed towards people's behaviour leading to subsequent interventions that focus on individual harm reduction (Berridge 2013, Williams 2003). This is to the detriment of other potential intervention areas, such as, population level

measures and does not take account of the social and structural context within which alcohol consumption takes place (Kelly and Barker 2016). These wider public discourses surrounding alcohol and young people's drinking practices serve to provide a framework and a structure within which young people perform these practices. This does not assume that young people just accept (or otherwise) Government discourses around alcohol consumption, but that these discourses provide a background and structure within which young people negotiate and renegotiate their drinking practices (Haydock 2014c). Finally, the interests of the alcohol industry have had an impact on policy and decision makers through their positioning as partners, in attempts to prevent alcohol attributable harms (Nicholls and Greenaway 2015, Jim McCambridge et al. 2014). McCambridge et al. (2014) highlight the following reasons why, the alcohol industry in England has been successful in positioning themselves as partners in policy making. The industry emphasises its economic importance in terms of offering both employment and receipts from taxation (Jim McCambridge et al. 2014). In addition, dovetailing with the favoured neoliberal paradigm, the alcohol industry rejects wider population level interventions by claiming any new policy measures should be directed at a small problematic minority (Nicholls and Greenaway 2015, Jim McCambridge et al. 2014, J McCambridge et al. 2014). Lastly by emphasising the industry's own corporate social responsibility activities and a belief in their capacity for self-regulation, the industry positions itself as part of the solution not the problem (Sengupta and Hoyle 2005). However, if this all fails, the alcohol industry lobbies key decision makers and politicians on key issues, and can use their considerable resources to pursue their own agenda through legal challenge and invoking provisions from the World Trade Organisation (Bacchi 2015, d'Abbs 2015).

Public health discourses then have a tendency to frame the problem of alcohol attributable health harms as a problem of individual behaviour linked to risk factors (Williams 2003, Pound and Campbell 2015b). Concepts of 'risk', 'risk behaviours' or 'risky behaviours' have played and continue to play an influential and central part in English public health policy discourse (Williams 2003, Cockerham 2005) and alcohol related policy (Hackley et al. 2008, Bacchi 2015). These conceptualisations of 'risk' are dominated by cognitive approaches that focus on individual rationality and view risk as undesirable, irrational and as something negative (Rhodes 1997, Zinn 2015). This type of conceptualisation is what leads to interventions that privilege both the individual and behaviour change. The following section critiques these cognitive approaches of 'risk' that provide the theoretical underpinnings to so much of English public health policy.

2.3 Risk as a prominent conceptualisation within public health policy

The concept of 'risk' as discussed in the previous section, has become ubiquitous within public health policy (Williams 2003) and this corresponds with its emergence as an identifying construct of late modernity, by which individuals, organisations and social groups are organised, monitored and regulated (Douglas 1992, Turnbull and Spence 2011). Both public and private realms have been transformed from previous dominant associations with faith-based beliefs and perceptions of fate and chance, to a world more associated with risk management, control, rationality, probability and danger (Green et al. 2000, Lupton and Tulloch 2002, Douglas 1986, 1992, Mitchell et al. 2001).

The notion of risk in policy discourse categorises individuals as 'at risk', as 'risk-takers' and as 'risk-makers' (Turnbull and Spence 2011, France 2008). This is particularly relevant to young people who occupy paradoxical positions in policy (Gilbert et al. 2013), being positioned as both a "*treasured resource*" and as "*endangered and dangerous*" (Sharland 2006: p 247-248). This risk experience is frequently gendered with young men being viewed as "*youth as trouble*" and young women as "*at risk*" or "*youth in trouble*" (Day et al. 2004, Elliott 2008). Being "*at risk*" and being a '*risk-taker*' are however, both deemed as resulting from inappropriate personal choices (Phipps 2006, Abrahamson and Heimdahl 2010). For example, the literature suggests that young women are frequently blamed for putting themselves at risk, if they are victims of sexual violence after consuming alcohol (Brooks 2008), and young men are viewed as risk-takers who actively pursue risk as a way of achieving pleasure and excitement (Mitchell et al. 2001).

No longer considered a neutral term, risk has become associated with morality and is linked to unacceptable behaviour (Wildavsky and Dake 1990, Douglas and Wildavsky 1983). Douglas claims that deliberations on risk are akin to religious debates where 'risk' becomes the modern, non-religious version of 'sin' (Wilkinson 2001). She contends that the language of religion no longer has the appeal it previously had, and this new language of risk from scientific experts has come to the fore (Douglas 1992). This is particularly apparent within public health discourse (Williams 2003). Health promotion messages warn the public about 'health risks', based on the belief that raising awareness and increasing knowledge of the dangers and hazards associated with various lifestyles, will lead to a change in behaviour (Turnbull and Spence 2011). These cognitive conceptualisations of risk underpin a number of influential health

behaviour models that feature in public health policy and are discussed in more detail in the next section.

2.3.1 Rational theories of risk and policy

The dominant discourses in both risk research and alcohol policy are cognitive in essence, grounded in economic theory (Taylor-Gooby 2000) and assume that changing attitudes will lead to a positive and rational change in behaviour (Williams 2003, France 2000). Within a cognitive perspective, risk is viewed as an objective hazard, a danger, or a threat that can be measured independently from social and cultural processes, (Lupton 2013, France 2000) and is viewed as something that should be avoided (Zinn 2015). Proponents of this perspective, privilege scientific or expert opinion over the layperson, and judgements are made about what is (un)healthy individual behaviour (Lupton 2013, Starr 1976, Zinn 2015).

The influential paradigm of rational choice theory (Starr 1969, 1970, 1976) sits within this theoretical framework, and is based on the premise that an individual's default position is to make rational choices, following an assessment of all available information and the weighing up of the benefits and costs, of a perceived course of action (Gorman 2013). This approach assumes that an individual's rational choice is both healthy and risk free and that people indulge in risk behaviours because they are poorly informed about any danger (Bloor 1995, Rhodes 2002, Duff 2003, Douglas 1986). In this way, risk perceptions and understanding the consequences of certain behaviours on health outcomes, and particularly delayed onset health outcomes, have been an important part of public risk discourse and health models (Lupton 1993).

However, by privileging cognitive decision making, this approach fails to account for the wider social, institutional, political or cultural factors that make up an individual's social world (Lupton 2013, Bellaby 1990, Zinn 2015), or indeed the specific setting of an individual, or how individuals relate to new and different experiences (Rhodes 1997, Wilkinson 2001). In other words, rational choice theory fails to take account of the cultural, environmental and social world within which an individual's decision-making is located (Lupton 2013, Rhodes 1997, Douglas 1992, Sjöberg 2006). For example, Maticka-Tyndale & Tenkorang (2010) concluded that HIV risk reduction models based on rationality theories depend too heavily on cognitions and perceptions, whilst ignoring structural and environmental influences. In contrast, using a social practice lens to explore HIV transmission, would privilege the everyday lived experience of the participants in the study, by exploring the practices that they engage in, that makes them more or less vulnerable to contracting HIV. These shortcomings led theorists such as Paul Slovic, Baruch Fishhoff and Sarah Lichtenstein (1981a) to develop an alternative cognitive theory; namely the psychometric paradigm. They argued that risk perception cannot be understood independently of psychological, social, institutional and cultural factors (Slovic et al. 1981b, Sjöberg 2006) and viewed individual perception of risk as being far more complex, multi-faceted and involved (Slovic 1992).

Despite an attempt to include contextual factors, the psychometric paradigm has been criticised for not doing so adequately (Sjöberg 2003, Turner and Wynne 1992, Lupton 2013). Furthermore this theoretical paradigm has been criticised for reducing risk perception to just two factors; those of dread and novelty or unknown risk (Rippl 2002, Sjöberg et al. 2004). The 'dread' factor, for example, has been challenged for its

conceptual lack of clarity, as to whether it is a consequence, of a perceived risk or a cause of it (Sjöberg 2003). The use of averages in statistical calculations within the paradigm has also been criticised for obscuring variations between individuals, and ignoring 'intra-individual' perception processes (Sjöberg 2003). Consequently, the paradigm provides little insight into the mind-sets of how individuals understand risk, making it more of a difference between hazards, rather than risk perceptions (Jackson et al. 2006, Siegrist et al. 2005, Sjöberg 2006). That is to say, despite claiming otherwise, the psychometric paradigm seems to take little account of cultural, social and socio-demographic factors including age, gender and ethnicity (Bellaby 1990, Lupton 2013, Cutter 1993, Joffe 2003, Rippl 2002).

These cognitive theoretical frameworks of risk rationality are at best, only able to provide a "*snapshot*" of risk judgement, which sits outside of the specific social context of people's lives (Blum et al. 2001, Henwood et al. 2008). This is despite recognition, that risk perceptions are not static and that they change according to the specific setting an individual is in, and in relation to new and different experiences (Wilkinson 2001, Rhodes 1997). The qualitative work of Leaker & Dunk-West (2011) with female, street based, sex workers illustrates this point through a move away from privileging the individual, to examining the risk of violence through a broader socio-cultural lens that takes into account the complex relationships between gender, power and individual intentionality. In addition, Whittaker & Hart (1996) draw attention to the role of material resources and the power relations that they give rise to, in determining a range of health outcomes in their research with sex workers. Social location, socio-economic status and structural factors such as gender, class and ethnicity were found to be integral to the way sex workers negotiate risk (Whittaker and Hart 1996).

Accordingly, risk rationality theories are not adequately accounting for cultural and structural factors, which are important for offering a more complete and complex understanding of individual action in people's everyday lives (Green et al. 2000, Crawshaw and Bunton 2009).

Green et al. (2000) point out that although female risk-taking behaviour receives less attention than the very visible risk-taking of men, one cannot and should not presume that young women do not take risks. However, they may not be, and are frequently not the same risks as their male peers. Notions of gendered practice and gendered ideology highlight the limitations of rational approaches to understanding risk, which obscure these wider social and cultural structures and the make-up of the social world (Leaker and Dunk-West 2011, Eiser et al. 2012, Joffe 2003).

Despite a plethora of challenges to the validity and methodological failings of rational choice theory (Maticka-Tyndale and Tenkorang 2010, Steinberg 2008, Otway and Cohen 1975, Green and Shapiro 1994, Larsman et al. 2012), this theoretical framework has been hugely influential in the field of public health as a way of exploring health related actions (Kippax and Crawford 1993, Pound and Campbell 2015b). Notwithstanding both the empirical and theoretical challenge detailed previously (Rhodes 2002), these risk rationality frameworks have had considerable impact on public health policy (Williams 2003, Cockerham 2005) including alcohol policy (Hackley et al. 2008, Bacchi 2015). As such rationality theories have acted as a conceptual and theoretical foundation, for a range of education and harm reduction programmes, designed to change behaviour (Rhodes 1997, Toumbourou and Gregg 2002, Dietze 1998); such as the Health Belief Model (Janz and Becker 1984), the theory of reasoned

action (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975) later developed into the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen 1991), self-regulation theory (Kanfer 1970), and subjective culture and interpersonal relations theory (Triandis 1977). It should however be noted, that these models have adapted to and responded to criticism and purport to encapsulate social influences through the conceptualisations of normative beliefs and subjective norms (Larsman et al. 2012). However, the foundation for these theories and models is that a link between risk perception and behaviour exists, and that individuals will make the normatively correct choice if they have adequate relevant knowledge and information (Taylor-Gooby 2000).

These cognitive underpinnings to risk understandings are relevant to this thesis as they underpin public health policy and associated individual harm reduction and education programmes that attempt to change the behaviour of young people (Williams 2003, Millstein and Halpern-Felsher 2002). This is despite studies of health risk behaviours that illustrate that knowledge of such risks does not necessarily change behaviours. Kemshall (2014) has termed this the 'rationality' mistake. For example Ruston and Clayton's (2002) study of women's risk perceptions of coronary heart disease and Thirlaway and Heggs' (2005) study that explored women's understanding of, and responses to health messages, both demonstrated that having knowledge of risk does not necessarily change behaviours. The literature does not make the case that behaviour change interventions are effective (Martin et al. 2013, Foxcroft et al. 1997, Foxcroft et al. 2003) which encourages an alternative theorisation of 'risk', one which views risk as an integral part of the social world (Williams, 2003, Lupton, 1993). The next section explores alternative theories of risk and seeks to explore if they can offer a more useful way of understanding risk as it relates to alcohol consumption.

2.3.2 *Alternative theories of risk and their usefulness in understanding health actions*

Alternative conceptualisations of 'risk' are offered from sociocultural perspectives such as risk society, cultural theory and situated rationality theory. These theories, unlike cognitive theories, locate risk-taking behaviours in the social world (Lupton 2013). Ulrich Beck (1992) defined risk as a *"systematic way of dealing with the hazards and insecurities induced and introduced by modernisation itself"* in what he termed the 'risk society' (Beck 1992: 921). Beck theorised that modern society had changed from a society characterised primarily by class and socio-economic inequalities, to one where the primary hazards are both environmental and global, for example nuclear and chemical, which span traditional class inequalities. In other words, Beck made a connection between what he perceived to be a proliferation of new risks, concerned with technological change and advances, and the production of wealth as a product of modernity (Lupton 2013). Society, within this theoretical framing is conceptualised as being infused by danger and uncertainty, risks and threats are viewed as global and threaten the entire population (Green et al. 2000). In the writings of both Beck (1992) and Giddens (1984) (who also referred to the risk society), a process of individualisation has taken place; individuals are portrayed as being anxious about, and fearful of risk, eager to acquire knowledge so as to best avoid becoming a victim. Green et al. (2000) in their study exploring young people's perceptions of risk, agree that in many ways young people in contemporary society, are indeed facing a very different world from previous generations, with less certainty in the labour market and an increasing demand for educated workers. The study authors suggest that, young people 'normalise' risk and uncertainties as part of their everyday lived experience,

and the researchers stress the continuing importance of social and structural processes of exclusion and marginalisation. This finding is in direct contrast to Beck's (1992) assertion that class and socio-economic inequalities are less important in post-modernity following the disintegration of traditional institutions, such as, the family and the church. Of note however, is the finding of a counter discourse of risk-taking as pleasurable and as something that transcends the mundane existence of the everyday lived experience (Green et al. 2000).

Research by Factor et al. (2013) builds on the concept of risk-taking as a positive phenomenon, suggesting that taking risks has become a feature in the everyday lived experiences of '*non-dominant minority groups*', such as African Americans. These forms of risk-taking are theorised as a way of expressing dissatisfaction with the dominant group. This type of social resistance fits with a risk society view that individuals are "*competent reflective agents*" (Elliott 2002: p293), who are specialist in both coping with and managing risk (Beck 1996). Lupton and Tulloch's (2001) in-depth qualitative exploration of Australian adults' relationship to risk found evidence of heightened awareness of risk, and that perceptions of risk were not related to traditional ties, but that risks were unequal according to factors of class, gender, age, ethnicity and sexual preference. However, the authors concluded that the risk society theory is not sufficiently grounded in individual lived experience (Lupton and Tulloch 2001). In this regard, Beck's risk society thesis has been compared with rational choice theory in that individuals are perceived as rational and calculating, and there is little recognition within the theoretical frame of ways in which individuals draw upon their own situated knowledge's (Lupton 2013, Elliott 2002). In summary then the Risk Society is thought to be of limited use to this thesis, as a result of its narrow framing

of “risk”, as a rational and reflective response to technical and environmental risks as unforeseen consequences of industrialisation (Zinn 2009).

Furthermore, Beck’s theoretical framework ignores both the continued influence of social structure and power issues, for example, gender (Sharland 2006). As highlighted by the studies by both Green et al. (2000) and Tupton and Tulloch (2001), this constrained view of risk seems to be insufficient for explaining the complexity of risk as it relates to the everyday lived experiences of marginalised groups of young people. It is therefore not considered within the context of this thesis to be a helpful conceptual tool for studying young people’s alcohol consumption practices and how they relate to risk. However, the theorising of risk-taking as a way of expressing dissatisfaction for marginalised groups and viewing risk-taking as potentially pleasurable are interesting conceptualisations for this thesis. For example, the concept of risk-taking as pleasurable fits with the literature on alcohol that has found that excessive drinking is associated with pleasure (MacLean 2008, Measham et al. 2011, Brown and Gregg 2012, Murphy et al. 2016).

In contrast, the cultural theory of risk, championed by Mary Douglas, views risk perceptions as largely being determined by social context and cultural adherence to socially shared world views (Wildavsky and Dake 1990, Oltedal et al. 2004, Rippl 2002). Cultural theorists recognise that *“individual perceptions and social interactions are influenced by social context and network norms”* (Rhodes 1997: p216). Collective cultural groups are identified which perceive and define risk differently according to that particular group’s culturally bounded norms (Douglas 1992). Socio-cultural perspectives construct risk in relation to the ‘self’ and to ‘others’, who threaten the

unity of a social group (Douglas 1992). Distinguishing between 'self' and 'other' is a way in which identities are both constructed and maintained. The 'other' is inhabited by those who are on the periphery or outside of the group and are judged in some way to have transgressed the group's cultural norms (Olofsson et al. 2014). The 'other' is viewed as a risk or is viewed as causing the risk (Olofsson et al. 2014). Whilst at the same time, the act of protecting against the 'other' supports group integrity and cohesiveness (Douglas 1992). Risk perceptions according to this theoretical framing cannot be reduced to concerns about danger but are interwoven with each group's culturally bounded norms (Tansey and O'Riordan 1999, Douglas 1992). Thus perception of risk is set within cultural relationships and within the '*expectations and value systems*' of each of the distinctive groups identified (Tansey and O'Riordan 1999: p71). In summary, cultural theory offers a social explanation of individual perception focusing on the importance of group and cultural norms (Wildavsky and Dake 1990). 'Othering' is potentially a useful conceptual tool that could support a wider analysis of young people's risk activities and actions as they relate to alcohol consumption.

Rhodes (1997) also highlights the importance of gender and behavioural norms (habituation) in perceptions of risk and harm. Behaviours which are routine and considered normal by a group are just 'done'; there is not much thought given to them and it is unlikely that there is any assessment of risk (Cockerham 2005, Mayock 2005). Rhodes (1997) also points out that the distribution of 'power' in social networks and between people may also affect an individual's decision making, and not all choices or decisions will be equally available to all individuals. Sociocultural theories suggest that an individual may make a rational and informed choice based on their situation, which may still be framed as 'risky' by the dominant culture (Lupton 2013, Larsman et al.

2012, Reyna and Farley 2006, Douglas 1992). For example, in a study of couples where one partner was HIV positive, Rhodes (1997) discovered that couples made an informed choice to have unprotected sex, because they privileged their relationship over preventing HIV infection, as was necessitated by the dominant cultural paradigm. Consequently, Wilkinson (2001) contends that theorists such as Beck and Douglas only offer a partial account of the social perception of risk, and that they too fail to appreciate the complexity of the reality which they seek to understand and the everyday lived experiences of individuals. Although Beck (1992) himself noted that inequalities in class and within the risk society can and do overlap and interact with each other, he did not examine further the differences between class, gender and ethnic groups (Green et al. 2000).

Rhodes (1997) draws our attention to situated rationality theories, which unlike the previous theoretical approaches discussed, conceptualise risk-taking as being both 'socially situated' and 'fluid' (Sharland 2006, Mayock 2005). By conceptualising risk in this way these theorists seek to understand how individuals experience their world as an 'interpretive reality' or a 'lived experience', through referring to socially shared, common sense meanings and knowledge's which differ from context to context (Lupton 2013). For example, in a study of young people's experiences of risk, Mitchell et al. (2001) found that the way young people made sense of discourses of risk frequently differed from experts. Individual definitions of risk were situationally grounded within the structural and social context within which they experienced the risk. A value of this theoretical framework is that individuals are portrayed as constructing their own risk meanings as part of their interactions with others and within their social location at that time, within a broader structural frame.

Unlike cultural theories, situated risk rationalities are theorised as being embedded in place and time (Lupton 2013), and risks are weighed up in relation to each other to determine which are the most immediate and important (Pound and Campbell 2015b). That is to say, the way an individual assesses risk depends on their relative situation. Rhodes' (1997) qualitative research with illegal drug users demonstrates how risks associated by health professionals with illegal drug use, such as sharing needles, are perceived by drug users themselves in the context of other risks and hazards which may be considered more immediate and/or more important (Nygren et al. 2015). For example the risk of overdose was of more concern than the risk of contracting HIV, and was therefore given a higher priority, suggesting that risk is relative and countering the view of risk-taking as irrational (Rhodes 2002, Pound and Campbell 2015b). This 'relativity' of risk is also notable in the work of Moore and Oppong (2007) who examined sexual risk behaviours among people living with HIV in Togo, and found that having children took precedence over the risk of HIV infection. Similarly, Oakley et al. (1995) found that even though young people were aware of the risk factors for cancer, they did not act on them. The young people's decision making was constrained by their everyday lived experiences and the family socio-economic circumstances, as access to material resources directly impacted on access to preventative measures such as a healthy diet.

Although cultural and situated rationality theories account for wider contextual and structural factors these theoretical frameworks still privilege cognitive processes over other forms of social action (Pound and Campbell 2015b) and do not recognise some risk-taking as enjoyable or pleasurable (Mayock 2005, Cockerham 2005). For example, within cultural theory there is no recognition that some actions framed as risky by the

dominant culture are routinized and normalised (Green et al. 2000, Katainen et al. 2014). This was highlighted by Green et al. (2003) in a study of food choice that found that the Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) crisis, had not disrupted routine patterns of food choice and consumption. It follows that the routines of everyday life enable individuals to disregard risks where they compete with their everyday habits (Zinn 2015).

'Edgework theorists' have associated some forms of risk-taking with what could be generally considered positive outcomes, for example, pleasure, fun, escapism and excitement (Mahaffy 2007, Austen 2009), and theorise the risk-taking experience as being the attraction (Lyng 1990, Lyng and Matthews 2007, Lupton and Tulloch 2002). These voluntary risk-taking activities, are associated with a 'high' or a 'buzz' from overcoming fear or danger, associated with 'living on the edge' (Lyng 1990). Examples of Edgework often cited include skydiving, rock climbing and other extreme sports. The 'edge' is conceptualised as any boundary where an individual can potentially lose control and harm themselves. The controlling of this boundary underpins this conceptual framework (Miller 1991). According to Lyng (2012) "*Edgework involves a balance between wanting to experience the intense thrill engendered as part of engaging in dangerous activities but also acknowledging the presence of fear and seeking to exert mastery over this fear which in turn heightens feelings of being in control*" (Lyng 2012: p3).

However, because of its association with extreme sports (that are most popular with middle class, white men), Edgework is viewed by some researchers as being disproportionately relevant to this group, and it has been suggested that there is a

need to more carefully consider gender and class (Miller 1991). Olstead (2011), in a small scale study with just four female participants, aimed to do just this. Findings from the study highlighted how gender influenced the women's experience and negotiation of Edgework, with affective experience being used to develop and communicate desirable risk identities; also how risk and gender intersected, to act as a form of social regulation of their risk activities. Newmahr (2011) therefore, argues that it is the activities themselves that are gendered rather than the theory. The challenge she argues *"is to understand where and how women are working the edge"* (Newmahr 2011: p685) as opposed to limiting analysis to masculinised spaces (Newmahr 2011, Parker and Stanworth 2005). Laurendeau (2008) is in agreement and argues for a more nuanced consideration of the relevance of gender in voluntary risk practices, and how the construction of risk and gender are interwoven.

Despite these critiques Cho et al. (2010) contend that Edgework is a useful theoretical position for understanding young people's experiences of excessive drinking, and used this framework as a basis for exploring fraternity drinking with college students in America. In Edgework terms Cho et al. (2010) considered excessive drinking to be a leisure experience and control of this experience emerged as a key finding of the study. The researchers sought to understand the ways in which fraternity members constructed problems of, and found solutions to, excessive drinking. Young people in the study perceived drinking to be problematic when their friends lost control. Although group members were encouraged to drink excessively this was controlled by knowing their own intoxicated limits.

This theoretical frame has moved on and developed, since its original conception, to include more diverse voluntary risk-taking behaviour, such as drug use (Reith 2004), criminal behaviour (Ferrell 1999) and motorcycling (Murphy and Patterson 2011). The 'edge' in some of these studies is easy to visualise (Cronin et al. 2014), for example crashing a motorbike at high speed (Murphy and Patterson 2011). However, conceptualising the 'edge' of more mundane behaviours, such as alcohol consumption and some criminal behaviours can be less easy to visualise. Cronin et al. (2014) contend that the 'edge' in these instances is constructed as a trajectory and theorised these more mundane risks as 'creeping Edgework'.

Lupton (2012) contends that Edgework can be used to understand and explain how socially disadvantaged groups compensate for inequality, by engaging in risk activities, and cites criminality as an example. She views involvement in crime as one of the few avenues that enable people from lower socio-economic groups are able to seek out risky pursuits, for example, taking a car without the owner's consent and driving at high speeds. Lupton (2012) theorises this type of risk-taking as a means of escaping some of the everyday banalities of life. In the context of the current study, Edgework may help explain some aspects of risk-taking as a way in which individuals from marginalised groups can counteract disadvantage and maintain some control (Zinn 2015). However, it is important to acknowledge that activities initially undertaken for their novelty and excitement, can themselves become routine, mundane in nature, boundaried and normalised (Lupton 2013, Cohen and Taylor 1992, Parker and Stanworth 2005). Despite these challenges to using Edgework, some elements of this theoretical framework seem to fit this study including the underpinning principle of controlling the 'edge'. Furthermore, drinking practices can be considered a leisure

experience. However, the difficulties associated with the use of this paradigm include; risk-taking not being central to drinking practice and the individualisation of risk-taking not being compatible with young people's alcohol practices, which are social activities (Brown and Gregg 2012, Stepney 2015).

2.3.3 Summary of risk theories

In summary, risk is a problematic term both for empirical research studies and for public health. This review of risk theories highlights the dichotomy between a consideration of risk as a hazard or uncertain event and understandings of risk that view it as situated and acknowledge the importance of social, cultural and economic factors.

Risk is conceptualised by the dominant cognitive rationality theories as being largely static, cognitive, and quantifiable and privileges individual rationality. This makes them particularly problematic as a way of understanding health practices. Notwithstanding this observation, the dominant discourses in risk research and in alcohol policy are cognitive in essence and assume that changing attitudes, by influencing perceptions of risk, will link to a change in behaviour (Taylor-Gooby 2000, Turnbull and Spence 2011). This is despite there being scant evidence to support this approach (Kemshall 2014, Martin et al. 2013). In contrast sociological approaches such as, socio-cultural theories of risk have attempted to move away from cognitive individual explanations and to explore risk within a wider cultural and social perspective (Lupton 2013). However, these approaches are also problematic as they do not recognise either the fluidity of risk or the routinised nature of some risks (Green et al. 2003, Zinn 2015). Although, the concept of 'othering' from socio-cultural theories is a potentially useful

tool for exploring young people's risk-taking actions as it serves to identify those different from the normative 'self' and to locate risk with the 'other' (Douglas 1992). In this way, meanings of risk are both constructed and maintained and are culturally bounded by the group. Drinking to intoxication is potentially one strategy young people use for being accepted into a group and not being the 'other'. This requires further exploration in the context of drinking practices of young people from lower socio-economic groups who may experience being the 'other' in many aspects of their lives.

Socio-cultural theories of risk enable a partial understanding of risk to be achieved, but this review highlights the complexities of conceptualising risk particularly around fluidity, routinised and habitual behaviours and structural determinants (Williams 2003). Williams (1995) suggests that if health related risk behaviours cannot be explained using theories of rationality, and if social theories are only providing a partial explanation, we need to expand and develop these frameworks further. In addition, there has been some encouragement for theoretical work on public health, to move away from focusing on individual behaviour and methodological individualism, to understand risk-taking by focusing on concrete practices and routine activities (Holman and Borgstrom 2016, Rhodes 1997, Crawshaw and Bunton 2009, Lindsay 2003, Green 2009). Any attempt then to understand young people's drinking needs to be understood in terms of their own rationality, knowledge and beliefs which are grounded and embedded in their everyday lived experience, routinised actions and social circumstances (Rhodes 1997, Mitchell et al. 2001, Pound and Campbell 2015a).

Edgework, with its focus on voluntary risk-taking, control and excitement, has been used to explore young people's drinking to intoxication (Cho et al. 2010). Similarly, to the concept of 'othering', Edgework has been used to explore how marginalised groups such as young people use risk-taking experiences to take some control over their lives (Lupton 2012). In this context, risk-taking becomes a strategy for gaining acceptance and belonging. Potentially, Edgework also provides a framework for understanding young people's drinking practices as a leisure experience, that is about excess consumption, but at the same time about staying in control of the experience. Theorists such as Factor et al. (2013) and Green et al. (2000) contend that marginalised groups use risk-taking as a strategy for showing their dissatisfaction and have highlighted the high levels of uncertainty young people today experience in relation to changes in the workforce (Green et al. 2000). However, risk is not conceptualised as being voluntary and similar to cognitive theories, risk perceptions are regarded as rational and thought through (Elliott 2002). This macro-approach to risk, similar to other risk theories does not recognise that risk-related practices or habits do not always involve conscious deliberations, but rather can be experienced as routinised or habitual (Binkley 2009). Because the theories of risk that underpin English alcohol policy are very individualistic and are preoccupied with individual perception there is tendency to view risk as inherently individualistic. Thus the challenge for this thesis is to move away from this view and instead to consider risk as a concept that only has meaning with respect to the specific social practices with which it is associated. In order to develop understandings of risk within the context of young people's alcohol consumption, this study will use a social practice theory framework to support and enable an exploration of risk related routine and habitual actions, voluntary risk-taking

and controlled intoxication which are identified in this study as gaps in knowledge. Conceptual tools taken from socio-cultural perspectives and Edgework, such as 'othering', situating risk-taking and controlling the edge will enhance this theoretical exploration. This study also recognises that structural factors such as gender and class also make a difference, and by ignoring these factors there is a danger of presenting an affluent male perception of risk (Leaker and Dunk-West 2011, Olstead 2011, Hannah-Moffat and O'Malley 2007). Thus, an understanding of the social meanings as they relate to risk and risk actions in which individuals participate is of benefit and in order to support effective public health interventions. Exploring young people's alcohol consumption through the lens of social practice theory will enable an exploration of voluntary and non-voluntary, and routinised and habitual risk-taking practices, and explore them in relation to structural factors and inequalities.

It is not young people's perceptions of risk or their decision-making rationalities around risk that is of interest in this study but how risk links and interrelates to the drinking practices young people engage in. This study therefore moves away from risk research that studies perceptions of risk and risk assessments to research that explores risk by seeking to understand how (young) people engage in and shape responses to uncertainties and events and how uncertainties and hazards (re)configure their drinking practice.

2.4 Social practice theory

Proponents of social practice theory have critiqued the type of individualistic framings, that are so dominant in alcohol policy, enabling a fresh perspective to be given to an area that continues to provide challenge to policy makers and public health

practitioners (Shove et al. 2012, Twine 2015). The use of social practice theory, however, is not without its challenges, as there is no one school of thought, but rather a number of different strands within this theoretical framework (Warde 2005, Røpke 2009). Practice theorists have come from a number of disciplines including: philosophers such as Wittgenstein and Dreyfus; social theorists including Bourdieu and Giddens; cultural theorists such as Foucault; and technology theorists including Latour and Rose (Schatzki et al. 2001). Also identifiable within the practice literature are two generations of theorists (Pink 2012); the first generation (Bourdieu 1977, Foucault 1979, Giddens 1979) built the conceptual underpinnings of practice theory. However, it is the second generation of practice theorists (Shove and Pantzar 2005, Southerton et al. 2012, Reckwitz 2002, Blue et al. 2016) who have applied the theory to a wide range of contemporary practices particularly in the consumption field (Brauchler and Postill 2010, Pink 2012).

Across these differing positions, there are commonalities; firstly, the central concept within all practice theory is that of the 'practice' itself. Within this approach 'practices' are treated as the primary unit of social enquiry, not the individual (Shove et al. 2012, Reckwitz 2002, Hargreaves 2011). A practice in this sense is an activity, a 'doing' or an entity (Schatzki et al. 2001) which emerges from the social organisation of everyday life (Twine 2015). Schatzki (2012: p14) describes a practice as an *"open ended, spatially-temporally dispersed nexus of doings and sayings"*. Secondly, individuals are conceptualised as carriers of the practice (Shove et al. 2012); and it is the individuals (or carriers) that facilitate the existence of practices through their practice performance in their everyday lives (Shove et al. 2012, Warde 2005).

In terms of application, the theory of social practice has been used in the main to build up a body of work on sustainability that challenges the dominant discourses around environmental and climate change policy (Hargreaves 2011, Shove 2010, Gram-Hanssen 2011). This theoretical frame has also become increasingly influential in consumption studies (Arsel and Bean 2013, Epp et al. 2014). A practice approach to excessive drinking is opportune, as some social practice scholars have more recently turned their attention to using practice theory to better understand health related practices such as smoking, snacking and cycling (Blue et al. 2016, Spotswood et al. 2015, Twine 2015), and more recently to alcohol consumption practices (Ally et al. 2016, Supski et al. 2016). Ally et al. (2016) in their study of different typologies of alcohol consumption practices recognise that more research is needed into these practices that are constitutive of mixed drinking locations, and the authors recommend developing understandings of how risk relates to different drinking practices. Supski et al. (2016) suggest that a social practice framework can encourage more sociological modes of public health intervention that focus on elements of drinking practice, rather than viewing patterns of drinking as an issue of individual choice and control.

Following on from the studies of Spotswood et al. (2015), Supski et al. (2016) and Kuijer (2014) this study uses the three elements model of social practice theory as conceptualised by Shove et al. (2012) to explore young people's alcohol consumption. According to this theoretical framing, individuals do what they do because of the relationship and combination of three interdependent social practice elements: **Materials** (stuff, things, technologies and tangible, physical entities), **meanings**

(symbols and images) and **competences** (skills, know-how and techniques) (Shove et al. 2012, Shove and Pantzar 2005).

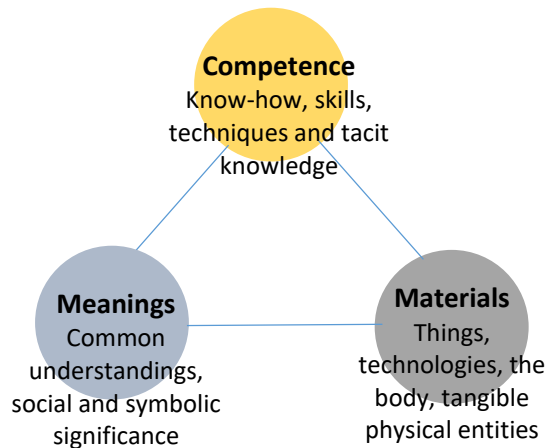


Diagram 1: Three element model of social practice theory (Shove et al. 2012)

Using this theoretical framework widens the range of components that co-create practices including social and economic environments, spaces, places and things, rather than viewing them as either external or contextual factors (Maller 2012, Orr et al. 2016). Thus, the framework supports a conceptual move away from models of individual behaviour change whilst enabling consideration of the wider economic, social and structural determinants (Rhodes 1997, Crawshaw and Bunton 2009).

The three elements are not clearly bounded in relation to each other but are interconnected and embodied in individuals (Røpke 2009). The material element includes the 'things' or 'objects' that are involved in a practice and importantly, for any discussion of pharmaceutical substances, such as alcohol this includes the body (Wallenborn and Wilhite 2014). The body as well as being a material item, also relates to the other elements through embodiment; for example, through embodied knowledge or emotion (Røpke 2009). Embodied 'knowledge' builds on the

conceptualisations of Bourdieu (1986) and Shilling (2012) and refers to physical dispositions and cognitive processes, which bodies acquire through past social experiences and which become deeply embedded as routines and habits (Sahakian and Wilhite 2013). In this way, knowledge and practice know-how can either be implicit and tacit, or explicit and conscious (Røpke 2009). The inclusion of the body within this theoretical framework moves risk understandings on from a mind/body dualism, that privileges the mind over the body in the way that cognitive and rationality theories have been shown to do (Kelly and Barker 2016). Individual actions can be a more automatic and un-reflexive response to environmental and social stimuli (Marteau et al. 2012). A social practice framework also supports an exploration of alcohol consumption through embodied encounters and affective experience, such as pleasure and pharmacological intoxication from excess alcohol consumption (MacLean 2008). In these ways the body is not considered to be a natural, fixed entity or solely an object on which the social is constituted (Wallenborn and Wilhite 2014). Rather, human bodies are transcended and transformed by the practices in which they engage and their lived experience (Shilling 2012).

The individuals involved in a practice are conceptualised as 'carrying', or hosting the practice meanings, when they perform a practice, although the meanings themselves, are associated with the practice (Røpke 2009). Practice meanings relate to making sense of the practical actions, and refer to understandings, emotions and beliefs about practices (Jaeger-Erben and Offenberger 2014, Røpke 2009). By way of an example, young people who participate in excessive alcohol consumption practices share understandings and beliefs associated with pleasure and sociability (Measham et al.

2011, Brown and Gregg 2012), whereas the shared understandings associated with alcohol policy making practices, relate rather more to harm and risk (Goldson 2001).

The competences or skills of a practice are theorised as the bodily and mental routines of the practice, and which are learnt through the doing or the performance of a practice (Kuijer 2014). The competences of a practice involve a shared knowledge about what is appropriate and acceptable and what is not (Shove et al. 2012). Knowledge and meanings are interconnected and result in some actions (the things that people do) being unconscious (habitual), routine, tacit and un-reflexive (Wallenborn and Wilhite 2014).

It is the combination of the three elements and their potential to come together, to be sustained or broken that supports the emergence, persistence, change or disappearance of social practices (Shove et al. 2012). Furthermore, practices may change and adapt in reaction to a crisis, for example, the absence of relevant materials for performance (Epp et al. 2014). There is also a distinction between practice as an entity (the nexus) and practice as a performance; which describes the practice as it is carried out or performed (Maller 2015, Warde 2005). It is this performance that ensures its continual reproduction (Shove et al. 2012). There are multiple ways of doing practices as performances because understandings, values, and enactments differ (Warde 2005) and these performances are impacted on by unequal access to practice participation (Shove et al. 2012). In other words, access to the competences, materials and meanings on which participation depends are unequally dispersed through society. Bernard et al. (2007) cite the example of unequal access to supermarkets which offer a variety of healthy foods at affordable prices.

'Performance' as described by Maller (2015) is the practice as it is enacted by its practitioners. So when a practice is performed the actions involved in that moment of performance are observable (Maller 2015). Performances associated with alcohol consumption practices, particularly those referencing pharmacological intoxication from excessive consumption, feature frequently in the literature on alcohol (Smith 2014, Bancroft et al. 2015, Lyons et al. 2014b, Emslie et al. 2012).

All social practices have historical trajectories or careers as minor changes are made to the practice. Individuals adapt, improvise and change how any given practice is performed, and as a result the combination and connections of, and between, elements changes over time (Warde 2005). The links and the interconnections of practice elements are themselves rooted in the past and from past inequalities (Blue et al. 2016). In other words, all practices have a history which informs their current make-up and all practice elements are themselves influenced and structured by history, traditions and culture (Harvey et al. 2012). As different elements within the social practice change, the practice can become more or less risky (Maller 2012) and some practices, for example drinking to intoxication, can be framed as risky by a dominant culture but may, to their practitioners, be culturally logical (France et al. 2013).

Social practice approaches seek a comprehensive and multifaceted insight into social phenomena through exploring the implicit and embedded influences which impact on everyday lives and practices. This is particularly relevant to this thesis as this framework can be used to explore risks that are both habitual and routinized in the everyday lived experience, which was a shortcoming identified earlier in this thesis

within other risk theories (Lupton 2013). Practice theory, through the integration of both social structure and individual intentionality, provides a conceptual tool that links risk-taking and risk avoidance with the reproduction of existing social structure through embedded and routinized dispositions (Zinn 2015). Lupton (2013) explains that risk responses are developed through membership of social groups, access to material resources and where individuals are situated within the life course as well as structural determinants. Social actions relate to lifestyle, values, dispositions and expectations that are acquired through the activities and experiences of everyday life, which in turn can provide a way of exploring the habitual acculturated nature of risk related actions (Lupton 2013). Risk-taking and risk avoidance within a social practice theoretical framework can therefore be both reflexive and un-reflexive, and is linked to particular practices and institutionally embedded power structures, such as gender and socio-economic group. Risk and the management or avoidance of risk as viewed through the lens of social practice theory, becomes part of everyday practices (Maller 2015). There is an element of 'normalisation' of risk here, where 'risks' or 'threats' are 'taken for granted' or are viewed as 'ordinary' in the participants' everyday lived experiences (France et al. 2013). In other words, individuals are theorised as developing an array of practical knowledge and tacit understandings to guard against perceived threats and challenges to themselves, and to enable them to continue with their practices. Within this theoretical framework, it is not presupposed that actions will be healthy and harmless if individuals have access to sufficient information. This approach expands our understanding of 'risk related actions' by illuminating how 'practice' is influenced by cultural and social determinants, which are embedded and implicit in the everyday lived experiences (Zinn 2015).

Crawshaw and Bunton (2009) using Bourdesian inspired practice theory describe these risk related actions as routine risk rituals whilst Maller (2012) coined the phrase 'practices of interest' to describe them. What they have in common is, understanding risk taking and risk avoidance as an everyday experience, and what is commonly seen as individual responses to risk are actions integrated within a specific practice, which are themselves characterised by the culture and history of their communities. Moore and Burgess (2011) explain that individuals can become detached from the risk itself. In other words, as a practice transforms and evolves, these adaptations become embedded in the practice and form part of the tacit knowledge that is constitutive of the practice (Nettleton and Green 2014). Within social practice theory a change in methodological language has supported this shift, and to illustrate this point, Maller (2012) does not use the terminology of 'risk behaviours' in relation to (un)healthy practices, instead she makes reference to "*health and wellbeing outcomes*" which result from different social practices. This supports a move to a more integrated and nuanced understanding of the dynamic between social structures, human intentionality and health related harms. In a further change to methodological language, Reckwitz (2002) moves away from conceptualising individual actions as 'behaviour' to using the term 'praxis' to encompass human action. A further methodological shift away from individualising risk would be to explore the praxes that young people are engaged in that can be perceived as ways of moderating risk. By way of an example, Maller and Strengers (2011) consider '*practices of interest*' in the context of individuals moderating their vulnerability to heat. These practices included: preparation in advance for hot weather, ensuring availability and increasing intake of fluids, using technologies and artefacts, adjusting windows and blinds, changing

clothes, seeking support and seeking communally air conditioned spaces (Maller and Strengers 2011) . In a similar way, a social practice framework will be used in this thesis to explore the 'risk related actions' of young people in relation to alcohol consumption.

Nettleton and Green (2014) argue that understanding how and why people act as they do can be outside their individual "*cognitive and rational understanding*". In situations where people are comfortable in any given social practice – their perception of that particular environment becomes "*more practical than it is theoretical and more tacit than it is explicit*" (Nettleton and Green 2014: p241). That is to say, it is not always clear to individuals why they act as they do. Thus in order to comprehend the 'how' and 'why' of any given practice, consideration needs to be given to understanding the 'shared' and 'taken-for-granted', tacit knowledge which frames any narrative (Nettleton and Green 2014). Some researchers have critiqued social practice theory stressing an under-emphasis on individual choice and free will (Rouse 2007). However, Crawshaw and Bunton (2009) note that it should not be suggested that practice is 'mechanistic', but the potential responses or actions within a given situation are limited and become normalised by an individual's lived experience. In other words, the dualism of structure and individual intentionality is reconfigured by the social practice theoretical framework, (Orr et al. 2016) in which practices become the "mediating concept" between structure and individual free will (Røpke 2009, Jaeger-Erben and Offenberger 2014).

This next section defines key concepts relevant to the study through an overview of the literature.

2.5 Key concepts; inequalities, class and gender

The lived experiences of young people and the social practices they are engaged in, including their drinking practices have been shown to be shaped by their position in society and are situated within their localised context (McCulloch et al. 2006, Lawler 2005, Ringrose and Walkerdine 2008, Skeggs 2004). In addition, the social, economic and environmental context in which people live and work has been shown (see introductory chapter) to be important as people living in more deprived communities as they are likely to experience more alcohol attributable harms than more affluent groups from the same amount of alcohol (Beard et al. 2016, Bellis et al. 2016). These differences in the health outcomes of different population groups which occupy different and unequal positions in society are known as health inequalities (McCartney et al. 2013).

There is a body of research that has explored young people's drinking practices, some of which directly addresses issues of class. Some of this work, for example, Measham and Brain (2005) has focused on what has been described as a new 'culture of intoxication'. This new culture is viewed as the antithesis to more traditional drinking culture which was based on working class masculinities, a manufacturing economy and community public houses (Measham and Brain 2005, Hayward and Hobbs 2007). Within the culture of intoxication, drunkenness is not only accepted but expected and normalised within young people's social lives (Mackiewicz 2015). However, it is also a space where gender and class distinctions interlock to shape notions of suitable and acceptable performance (Johnson 2013, Mackiewicz 2015, Waitt and De Jong 2014).

Popular discourses relating to young people's drinking practices have been shown to relate and employ ideas of class to seek to structure drinking behaviour through models of respectability (Jayne et al. 2010, Haydock 2014a). For example, in the 1980s young working class men were demonised as lager louts when drunkenness and violence were perceived as being linked (Berridge et al. 2007) and the shaming and pathologising of young working class women through the so-called 'ladette' culture (Payne-James and Rogers 2002, Redden and Brown 2010). According to Nayak (2006) these discourses are bound up with notions of class that view working class alcohol consumption with horrified outrage and disgust.

Debates on the meaning, relevance and conceptualisations of class are continual and ongoing (Savage et al. 2005, Crompton 2006). The emergence of the neoliberal paradigm and commodified leisure spaces has increasingly led to class being theorised as a constitutive part of this new neoliberal order (Smith 2014, Lawler 2005), all of which is in contrast to definitions of class anchored in seemingly fixed attributes such as occupation or education (Weis 2008, Lawler 2005, Tyler 2015). Instead, the neoliberal subject has been theorised as a free and autonomous individual who is unburdened by the constraints of traditional societal expectations (Ringrose and Walkerdine 2008, Smith 2014).

Individuals are required to be rational thinkers who take responsibility for their own actions and monitor and regulate their own risk-taking behaviours within a consumer driven environment (Baum and Fisher 2014, Bauman 2007). In this way, concepts of responsibility and rationality, traditionally associated with the middle classes have become the normative default position, that all individuals are appraised by (Skeggs

2004, Savage 2015). Within this context and in relation to alcohol consumption young people are exhorted to 'let go' and experience the pleasures of intoxication (Measham and Brain 2005). However, alongside this picture of bounded pleasure are the experiences of many (young) people of inequality and inequity based around class and gender (Nayak and Kehily 2013). The neoliberal subject is arguably constitutive of the middle classes, that is moral and restrained self through and against which classed 'others' are appraised (Tyler 2015, Skeggs 2005). (Working class) young people's normative practices of drinking to intoxication are in opposition and are constituted as flawed, abject, reckless and irresponsible consumers and are subject to both sanction and regulation (Hackley et al. 2008). These framings as has been discussed are evident in both popular and political discourses (Skeggs and Loveday 2012). This thesis is not concerned with the classification of groups of people as such but is based on the work of Tyler (2015) with the consequences of popular systems of class and classification and with how these are operationalised themselves in drinking practices in the forms of practice meanings, know-how and judgements. The process of class distinction within this thesis is understood to be embodied within young people's drinking practices (Bailey et al. 2015).

Alcohol consumption practices are also highly gendered with gender playing a crucial role in how these practices are performed and experienced (Lyons 2009, de Visser and Smith 2007, Bailey et al. 2015, Stepney 2015, Willott and Lyons 2012). Critical men's studies and feminist theory have been highly influential in building a body of work that has explored these gendered alcohol practices.

Alcohol consumption generally and drinking excessively in particular have long been linked with men and masculinity (Hunt et al. 2015, de Visser and Smith 2007). Research shows differences in the consumption practices of men and women, with men drinking more than women, as well as drinking more frequently (HSCIC 2016, Brown 2016, Lyons et al. 2014a). Drinking excessively in public and drinking specific types of alcohol such as beer, have traditionally been associated with both men and masculinity (Peralta 2007). Alcohol research has drawn on concepts of hegemonic masculinity to explain these practices (Brain 2000, Campbell 2000, Mullen et al. 2007). Hegemonic masculinity is conceptualised as a culturally specific, dominant ideal of masculinity that is constructed in relation to subordinate masculinities and femininities (Connell 2005). Hegemonic masculinity in western cultures is typically characterised by “*whiteness, heterosexuality, disembodied rationality and expertise and success in the economic sphere*” (Steven Roberts 2013 p: 673). However, there is not just one type of masculinity, rather masculinities are numerous, fluid, hierarchical, and constructed in opposition to femininity (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, Dempster 2011). Masculinities in the field of alcohol studies have been linked to drinking excessively whilst controlling the intoxicated and embodied effects of this type of alcohol consumption (Campbell 2000, Peralta 2007, Lemle and Mishkind 1989, Willott and Lyons 2012) characterised by what Campbell (2000) termed ‘*drinking fitness*’. Being able to consume excessive amounts of alcohol has been linked to the assertion of traditional masculinities, male identity (Lemle and Mishkind 1989) and masculine traits such as risk-taking, physical toughness, strength and aggression (de Visser and McDonnell 2012, Gefou-Madianou 2002, Gough and Edwards 1998, de Visser and Smith 2007). That is to say, drinking practices are sites where notions of appropriate

and by default inappropriate masculinities are performed and negotiated (Leyshon 2005, Peralta 2007) although appropriate configurations of the practice varies between different social settings and with different social groups (Connell 1993).

Research has also linked the alcohol consumption practices of men with uncaring behaviours and sexual risk-taking (de Visser and McDonnell 2012). However more recent research has shown young men enacting an embodied masculinity which was narrated as both less controlled and less constrained (Thurnell-Read 2013) than the more traditional masculinities associated with heavy drinking (Campbell 2000). Some young men were also found to celebrate an intoxicated loss of control, such as, vomiting, passing out and fighting (Thurnell-Read 2013).

Little research was undertaken on women's experiences of alcohol consumption until the 1970s and thus the normative view of alcohol consumption were shaped by men's experiences (Ellaway and Emslie 2013). However, more recent research has shown that young women are drinking more and the amount they are drinking is similar to that of young men (Lyons and Willott 2008, Hunt et al. 2015, Brown 2016, Bailey et al. 2015). Changes within the night time economy with a shift away from the traditional pub to bars and clubs, alongside the introduction of new alcoholic beverages have all contributed to young women's participation in intoxicated drinking practice (Bailey et al. 2015, Measham 2006, Szmigin et al. 2008). In addition alcohol marketing is now targeting young women depicting them as pleasure seeking agents who consume products that depict independence, fun and freedom drawing on postfeminist discourses of sexual empowerment and autonomy (Watts et al. 2015, Bailey et al. 2015). This contrasts with the type of excessive drinking previously seen to be

associated with traditional masculinities and which is not associated with performing acceptable femininities (Bailey et al. 2015). Paradoxically, normative femininities around heterosexual attractiveness and respectability remain within the night time economy (Guise and Gill 2007, McRobbie 2008, Griffin et al. 2013). Women's drinking is frequently perceived within popular discourses as more problematic than that of men (Thurnell-Read 2016, Atkinson and Sumnall 2016). In post-modern times new constructs of femininity have emerged which condemn young white, working class women as the excessive, drunken, out of control 'other' (Griffin et al. 2013, Redden and Brown 2010). Research has found that young women regardless of class attempt to distance themselves from this classed 'other' and the alcohol practices associated with it (Bailey et al. 2015, Griffin et al. 2013, Stepney 2015). This is in the context of a night time environment that is not only highly gendered but also sexualised (Laurie et al. 1999, Valentine 2014) where young women are called upon to enact excessive or hyper-sexual forms of femininity (Griffin et al. 2013, Bailey et al. 2015).

The hyper-feminine image is characterised by high heels, low cut tops, fake tan, heavily made-up, drawn on eyebrows, slimness and short skirts all of which is accompanied by drinking to intoxication (Mackiewicz 2012). Navigating a contemporary hyper-feminine appearance, whilst also participating in drinking excessively, produces positions of risk for young women. This is particularly apparent with the contradictions that hyper-sexual and normative femininities present and which have been found to be negotiated through discourses of controlled drunkenness that fit within a discourse of responsible and respectable femininities (Demant and Järvinen 2011, Measham and Østergaard 2009). Drinking specific types of alcohol such as wine and cocktails are also ways of doing femininity in a masculine environment (Nicholls 2016, Lyons and Willott

2008, de Visser and McDonnell 2013). A responsible and respectable femininity is also constructed by Government and popular discourses with a focus on staying in control, staying safe and reducing vulnerability to male violence (Sheard 2011, Brooks 2008, Payne-James and Rogers 2002). Becoming the victim of sexual violence whilst intoxicated then becomes the result of impaired judgement (Bogren 2006, Brooks 2014, Brooks 2008) whilst also being judged as lacking the feminine trait of self-control (Lyons et al. 2014a, Nicholls 2016).

Whilst a body of research is emerging on both young men's and young women's alcohol consumption few studies have incorporated both constructs of masculinities and femininities (Nayak and Kehily 2013).

This next section reviews the current literature on alcohol using the conceptual frame of social practice theory to determine the gaps in knowledge and literature as viewed through this theoretical lens.

2.6 Practices of alcohol consumption

Throughout this thesis, the consumption of alcohol is conceptualised as a social practice. However this is not just one practice; there are a variety of different ways of consuming alcohol, for example, at a dinner party, drinking on the street or drinking alone at home (Blue et al. 2016, Ally et al. 2016). This thesis will focus largely on the type of drinking practice that has been the dominant focus of policy interventions, that of 'binge drinking' or 'drinking to intoxication'. The theorising of this type of alcohol consumption as a social practice and exploring its' relationship to risk, using the lens of social practice theory, will contribute to the literature on the study of young

people's alcohol consumption, practice theory and its application to empirical data and to risk studies.

A social practice approach offers the opportunity to move away from conceptualising intoxicated drinking as a behavioural or lifestyle issue, enabling instead a different way of thinking about how drinking practices are performed and reproduced, and to potentially offer new modes of intervention (Blue et al. 2016, Maller 2015). A recent quantitative study by Ally et al. (2016) using a practice based typology, is one of only two studies found during this study that uses a social practice theoretical framework to explore alcohol consumption. The other being a study of student drinking practice in Victoria, Australia by Supski et al. (2016), which is discussed in more detail later on in this section. The study by Ally et al. (2016) identified a typology of alcohol consumption practices or occasions, that comprised of eight different occasions or episodes. Types of drinking occasions ranged from '*mixed location heavy drinking*', to '*a get together at someone's house*', to '*light drinking at home with a partner*'. This research study stresses the importance of using a practice based approach within public health to develop understandings of the stability of drinking practices that persist over time and to identify the constraints they place on individuals (Ally et al. 2016). A finding from the study is the wide diversity of what the authors classify as high risk alcohol consumption practices, where risk is defined by quantities drunk in a single drinking occasion, and high risk is defined as over 12 units for women and over 16 units for men. These findings are of relevance to this study as the authors include '*young people's big nights out*' as a high risk drinking occasion. Another notable finding from the research is an association that the study authors found between high alcohol consumption levels with drinking practices that include on and off trade locations, or

as they describe them 'mixed drinking locations'. This finding is of relevance to this study as this is a feature of young people's alcohol consumption practices which frequently includes pre-drinking at home before going out in the night time environment (Foster and Ferguson 2014, McCreanor et al. 2015, Waitt and De Jong 2014, Ally et al. 2016). Ally et al. (2016) concluded that more research is needed into alcohol consumption practices that are constitutive of these mixed drinking locations and into developing understandings of how risk relates to different drinking practices. This study will seek to explore these under researched areas by focusing on how risk relates to young people's intoxicated alcohol consumption practice, which is constitutive of on and off trade locations. Using what some describe as 'the lens' of social practice theory, this section examines the components of and recent changes to young people's intoxicated drinking practices. It does so by, exploring what can be taken to be the materials, competences and meanings of alcohol consumption practices and in doing so seeks to identify gaps in the literature on alcohol. It should be noted that the decision making process regarding what constitutes an element is grounded in a particular interpretation of significance and relevance and that other researchers may make different decisions.

2.6.1 Materials

In terms of the materiality of the practice of drinking to intoxication, much of the literature points to the changes made to alcoholic beverages themselves. These changes are seen as a response by the alcohol industry to the dance and rave culture that pre-dated them (Measham 2006, Newcombe et al. 1995, Measham and Brain 2005). *"The alcohol industry needed to reposition alcohol as a consumer product which*

could compete in the psychoactive night time drugs economies which developed from the late 1980s onwards.” (Measham and Brain 2005: p267).

These new alcoholic beverages included so called ‘alcopops’ (sweetly flavoured alcohol drinks) (Griffin et al. 2013, Hackley et al. 2008), ready to drink spirit mixers and high strength lagers that were designed to appeal to a wide and young audience (Measham and Brain 2005). An increased alcohol content in drinks and the development of new ‘buzz’ drinks that incorporated legal stimulants such as caffeine replicated the effect of psychoactive drugs (Brain 2000).

In addition, as the traditional male-only pub setting became less attractive to young people intent on dancing and raving, the alcohol industry undertook a radical redesign of licensed premises, to appeal to a wider group of young people and to both men and women (Measham 2006). Changes to the drinks industry, alcohol advertising, marketing and the retail trade all contributed to a shift towards more ‘female-friendly’ drinking spaces (Szmigin et al. 2008, Griffin et al. 2013). Traditionally beer and community pubs had been the preserve of the industrial, working class, man but the decline of heavy industry and manufacturing changed both the class and gender base of the workforce, which in turn transformed the public spaces within which alcohol is consumed (Brain 2000). Although women’s drinking in public spaces has become increasingly normalised there remain gendered differences in the types of alcohol consumed with a distinction between men’s and women’s drinks (Nicholls 2016).

Another major change in the materiality of the practice came about through the liberalisation of English licensing laws and the relaxation of closing time in favour of more relaxed ‘Mediterranean culture’ of 24 hours licensing (Szmigin et al. 2008, Bellis

and Hughes 2011, Chatterton and Hollands 2003, Measham 2006), alongside alcohol deregulation (Szmigin et al. 2008, Emslie et al. 2012, Measham and Brain 2005). In other words material items in the form of alcohol became more affordable and available than they were pre-1980 (Measham 2006, Nicholls and Greenaway 2015).

Towns and cities were also undergoing major changes in what has become known as the night time economy (Mackiewicz 2012). Smith (2014) points out that only as recently as the 1980s city centres were seen as failing and the post shopping period was a time of desertion. This is no longer the case, with one practice blending into the next, with both shoppers and workers extending their day, and the start of the night time economy merging with post shopping or after work, drinks and food (Smith 2014). So whilst more traditional community pubs in working class areas are closing (Markham 2013), the multitude of businesses in the night time environment such as bars, clubs, restaurants and casinos are thriving (Smith 2014). The move from manufacturing to service industries as the mainstay of the economy has resulted in a move from city centres based around production to centres embedded in consumption, and an increasing commodification of leisure and pleasure (Smith 2014, Chatterton and Hollands 2003, Measham and Brain 2005, Hackley et al. 2011). In other words, the spaces in which young people drink have changed. The spaces where young people consume their alcohol, who are under 18 years of age and not legally able to purchase alcohol, has also changed. The number of these young people drinking in outside public spaces has reduced year on year from 2006 and they are more likely to drink in private rather than public spaces (Henderson et al. 2013). At the same time mixed drinking locations through the combination of pre-drinking in a private space

and going out (public space) has become an integral feature of the drinking practices of young people over the age of 18 years (McCreanor et al. 2015, Ally et al. 2016).

2.6.2 Meanings

The meanings of intoxicated drinking practices in contemporary society have been shown to be reflective of the contemporary neo-liberal context and in particular of consumerism (Smith 2014). The night time economy and drinking to intoxication is thought to be deeply embedded in a culture of consumption and individualism (Smith 2014, Chatterton and Hollands 2003, McEwan et al. 2010). Branding has become not only a way of marketing and creating brand loyalty but also in creating identity, social status and differentiation (Chatterton and Hollands 2003). The consumption of different types or brands of alcoholic drinks within public spaces, including social media, is a way of communicating inclusion within a distinct group and not within others (Smith 2014, Measham and Brain 2005). Alcohol advertising campaigns have increasingly linked alcohol brands with aspirational lifestyles (Measham 2004, Atkinson et al. 2014). This postmodern process of individualisation and consumerism and a move towards a cultural and symbolic economy, is illustrated within the culture of celebrity, which displays a very visible consumption of the symbols of social status (Smith 2014, McCreanor et al. 2013, Atkinson et al. 2014).

Alcohol studies have linked the growth of a recreational, illegal drug use culture and its divergence within popular youth culture to a rise in hedonistic lifestyles where pleasure and intoxication are interlinked (Measham 2004, Szmigin et al. 2008, Keane 2012, Niland et al. 2013). At the same time, there has been a move from a largely masculine based drinking custom to a broader phenomenon associated with fun,

hedonism and lifestyle (Measham 2004, Chatterton and Hollands 2003, Mackiewicz 2012, Murphy et al. 2016).

Intoxication and its associated drinking habits have become an accepted part of youth leisure culture, which has gained a level of unprecedented cultural importance, acting as a facilitator of friendships, aspirations and values (Measham 2004, Sande 2002, Fry 2011, Gordon et al. 2012). The literature on the drinking patterns of teenagers and young people show that they are the least likely age group to drink alone (Seaman and Ikegwuonu 2010). *“For most [young people] it is the 'group' aspect of the drinking session that makes getting drunk so much fun”* (Engineer 2003: p33). In other words, teenagers and young people experience alcohol consumption as a socially shared experience and predominantly their drinking is undertaken within close friendship groups (Engineer 2003, Seaman and Ikegwuonu 2010, Percy et al. 2011, MacLean 2015, Henderson et al. 2013). Meanings associated with young people’s intoxicated drinking practice relate then to the experience as being a shared, social experience (Brown and Gregg 2012, Szmigin et al. 2008, Percy et al. 2011, Lyons and Willott 2008, Stepney 2015, MacNeela and Bredin 2011).

Caring for drunken friends has also been found to be constitutive of the practice (Jayne et al. 2011, Vander Ven 2011). Alcohol studies have shown that drinking practices replicate normative patterns about gender and friendship, with young women more likely than young men to be close and intimate during the drinking experience (Campbell 2000, Leyshon 2005, de Visser and Smith 2007). The drinking experiences of young people socialising and ‘going out’ are frequently shared within friendship groups and wider friendship sets through the use of social media sites, such as

Facebook, Twitter and Snapchat (Brown and Gregg 2012). Studies show that there are high levels of social networking site (SNS) use with young people using SNS to communicate and interact with their social networks (Wilson et al. 2012). Although these postings could be viewed as a practice in its own right (Woermann 2012), the sharing of alcohol related content on SNS has become an integral and even expected part of young people's alcohol consumption experience (Atkinson et al. 2014, McCreanor et al. 2013, Ridout et al. 2012). Polished and posed experiences (Moewaka Barnes et al. 2016) are shared with a virtual audience through the posting of content to SNS which provides opportunity for gaining social recognition and status (McCreanor et al. 2015, Berridge et al. 2007, Lunnay et al. 2011).

The posting of photographs relating to alcohol practices has been found to be highly gendered with young women valuing and participating in these practices more than young men (Atkinson et al. 2014, Moewaka Barnes et al. 2016, Tonks 2012). Young women use SNS to portray a glamorous femininity through both the drinking context and the choice of drink (Atkinson et al. 2014). Fry (2011) contends that drinking identity is reinterpreted in the post-consumption phase through story telling of the previous night's adventure or previous drinking events. Communicating the drinking experience illustrates the fun associated with drunkenness frequently shared on social media sites (Brown and Gregg 2012). Fry (2011) found that drinking narratives frequently focused on events that may well be considered risk outcomes of excessive drinking. However, she found that young people, particularly males, viewed the outcomes of excessive drinking as "symbols of valour" and vomiting, hangovers or 'not remembering the night' were viewed as proof of a 'good night out'. This serves to reconstruct negative experiences through the use of a 'bad' but 'good overall'

discourse (Fry 2011, Niland et al. 2013, Szmigin et al. 2008). Stories reconstructing the drinking experience appear on a variety of social media sites and these are then shared with wider friendship sets reinterpreting the drinking experiences. Storytelling post hoc is just as important as the drinking experience, in that the narrative allows the intoxicated pleasure zone experience to be enhanced, repeated and solidified (Fry 2011), effectively extending the Friday/Saturday night experience. Thus, the post-consumption narratives are a key part of the practice and need to be included in a study of drinking practices.

2.6.3 Competence

Much of the available literature on young people and drinking to intoxication associates this type of bounded drinking as constitutive of a type of drinking practice, referred to as a 'controlled loss of control' (Measham and Brain 2005, Griffin et al. 2009, Szmigin et al. 2008, Measham 2006, Measham and Østergaard 2009), 'controlled hedonism' (Keane 2012, Niland 2014), 'bounded hedonism' (Brain 2000) and 'calculated hedonism' (Featherstone 1991, Parker and Williams 2003). That is to say, young people are seen to be drinking to intoxication in pursuit of their own pleasure, whilst controlling (or attempting to control) negative impacts (Szmigin et al. 2008). The literature points to young people's pursuit of intoxication as being both calculated and a strategically managed process and this requires competence, skills and know-how. However as Harrison et al. (2011) highlight, these attempts to control the intoxicated experience do not look like the dominant framing of sensible drinking inherent in neo-liberal health education. That is to say, there is a dominant conceptualisation of 'sensible' and 'moderate' as detailed in the section on policy, but also a version of 'controlled' alcohol consumption as it is understood by some young people. The young

people's version is a more emic understanding that does not dovetail with the formal view. Instead the idea of controlled drunkenness is found through regulatory, social and normative restrictions on alcohol consumption (McCreanor et al. 2015, Demant and Järvinen 2011).

How 'control' is operationalised by young people is not clear from the existing literature (Kobin 2012). The literature refers to the restraints to drinking in excess on weekdays compared to the less constrained space, time and social situation associated with the weekend (Brain 2000, Szmigin et al. 2008, Niland 2014). In other words, drinking to intoxication is arguably constrained by an appropriateness of when, where and with whom (Roche et al. 2007, Fry 2011). Control is arguably related to performance; which is about achieving a balance between drinking in the 'right' way as viewed by other young people and its related social positioning (Demant and Järvinen 2011) and considerations around culturally defined norms and roles (Featherstone 1991, Engineer 2003, Hayward 2004, Gordon et al. 2012).

The details of more nuanced considerations of the ways that young people exert such control when drinking is not clear from the literature. A limited number of strategies, however, have been identified as ways in which young people exert control: drinking in groups, staying away from less favoured venues in favour of 'safe' venues, eating prior to drinking, drinking water (Harnett et al. 2000), monitoring consumption (Szmigin et al. 2008, McCreanor et al. 2015), monitoring the physical effects of drinking alcohol such as walking in a straight line, room spin and nausea (McEwan et al. 2010), caregiving by friends (Hackley et al. 2011, Elliott 2015), preloading and banking alcohol for later (McCreanor et al. 2015) and peer group sanctions (MacNeela and Bredin

2011). However, more attention needs to be given to 'how' this 'control' operates and in what forms it exists.

Drinking or being seen to drink 'in the right way' (Demant and Järvinen 2011: p10) is central to the gaining and accumulation of status. Social gains can then be made by consuming alcohol in the semblances valued by the dominant group which in turn bestows on the individual a sign of distinction (Lunnay et al. 2011). The alcohol consumption performance influences young people's identity and position in social hierarchies and has the possibility of changing their position according to how that performance is valued (Lunnay et al. 2011, Groves et al. 2015).

2.7 Defining alcohol consumption as a practice: conceptual challenges

Social practice theory has not been without criticism, and if this thesis is to use this lens to advance understandings of risk and alcohol consumption it is important to not only acknowledge these conceptual challenges, but to address them. Firstly, social practice theory has been challenged on a conceptual level, regarding what is a practice? And, how the boundaries of a practice are delimited? (Shove and Spurling 2013). Secondly, the ability of second-generation theoretical frameworks to account for and consider social differentiation and inequalities including gender and class in empirical work has been questioned (Shove and Spurling 2013, Shove and Walker 2010, Gram-Hanssen 2015).

In response to the former challenge, Warde (2013) offers three indicators for identifying a practice. Firstly, that it can be identified by others as a recognisable entity in its own right? Secondly, is there a correct and acceptable performance of the entity? Finally, is the entity social? In that it is shared by a collective of individuals, although

this does not always mean together and at the same time, as the example of daily showering demonstrates (Shove et al. 2012). Further advice is given by Kuijer (2014) who advises to delimit a practice into something, that is identifiable as a recognisable doing, which can then be used as a unit of enquiry, and compared with other recognisable doings. She also recommends taking care to ensure that any proposed framing is specific enough to identify a sub-group of carriers making the practice easier to capture and thus analyse. In this way delimiting and labelling something as a practice is an analytical task in itself. This challenge is met in this thesis as part of the data analysis where the framing of a practice for investigation in the study, is discussed, in detail in chapter 4.

Meeting the theoretical challenge of incorporating issues of inequality and power whilst using the three element theoretical frame of social practice theory in empirical research, has been somewhat neglected. Indeed, during the time frame of this study only two empirical studies were found that explored issues of inequality and framed the primary unit of enquiry as practice rather than individuals or institutions (Twine 2015). Namely, an empirical study by Cox (2016) which bridges the gap between gender theory and the three element model of social practice. Within the study, the author explores the interactions of materials, skills and gender identity through examining DIY practices in New Zealand. It bridges this gap by demonstrating the importance of DIY skills to conceptualisations of gender performativity (Butler 1990) and explores how masculinities and femininities are produced and negotiated within the home through routine activities. A second study (Walker 2013) combined social practice conceptualisations of practice-as-entity and practice-as-performance with Sen's capability framework. This framework enables issues of disparity, inequality and

consumption to be explored based on a theoretical position that what individuals achieve, and are able to do and be, is what is important. The study sought to highlight inequalities in global financial markets through combining a multi-level theoretical framework, which supported the analysis of niche settings within a wider set of institutions, with a social practice perspective.

Within a social practice framework patterns of inequality are understood by some practice theorists to be *“the outcomes of and to be central to the lives of practice”* (Shove and Spurling 2013: p 11). Accordingly, Bourdieu (1977, 1990), for example, conceptualised a set of *“structuring structures”* which serve to organise the social world and that are constituted and reconstituted by embodied agents. For Bourdieu power is continually legitimised through the interplay of individual free will and structure and socialised norms and dispositions (Waquant 2005). Inequalities in social class are legitimised, reproduced and reflected by access to or lack of access to various forms of capital.

Some practice theorists regard patterns of inequality as being central to and an outcome of social practice (Shove and Spurling 2013). As this research shows, detailing these relations calls for forms of analysis and conceptualisations that take us beyond a simple account of the ‘elements’ of practice. Therefore, this study draws on the conceptual tool of Pierre Bourdieu’s capital (Bourdieu 1984), and the theoretical framework of Butler’s (1990) ‘doing gender’. These theoretical framings and how they will be used in this study are discussed in more detail in the next two sections.

2.7.1 Capital as conceptual resources for this study

This thesis borrows from the work of Bourdieu in understanding class difference through the conceptual tools of capital and the access to and availability of goods and services (Bourdieu 1984). Social capital is conceptualised as the 'who you know'; the social networks that an individual is a part of and the social relations they have formed (Haydock 2014a). Economic capital refers to both income and wealth (Bourdieu 1984, Beagan et al. 2015, Williams 2003). Cultural capital includes qualifications, education, and knowing the 'right' things and also the "*subtle non-material inheritance bestowed (usually by one's own family) to the next generation*" (Willott and Griffin 2004: p55). Bourdieu (1986) identified three forms of cultural capital; objectified, institutionalised and embodied. Objectified refers to cultural goods such as instruments, books, pictures etc. Qualifications and specialised knowledge are cultural capital in its institutionalised form (Bourdieu 1986). The embodied form of cultural capital concerns the forms of knowledge that is linked and incorporated within the individual, for example, language, accent, body, physique, traditions etc. In his earlier works Bourdieu identified embodied cultural capital as a form of physical capital (Bourdieu 1977), which has been much less theorised than other forms of capital (Shilling 2012). Physical capital can be seen as encompassing physical attributes and abilities that are embodied through social practice.

These heterogeneous forms of capital exist within a system of exchange (Harker et al., 1990); when they are accepted as legitimate, they are accumulated and can be converted into symbolic capital as prestige and social honour (Williams 2003, Skeggs 2004). Unequal access to both these resources and the opportunities to accrue and convert each capital type differentiates social groups, for example, by gender and race (Mellor et al. 2010, Skeggs 1997a). Bourdieu theorised that 'taste' or aesthetic

preference is crucial to the way in which class groups value and recognise symbolic capital and distinguish themselves (Bourdieu 1984, Weininger 2004). In other words, aesthetic preference reflects class position (Cappellini et al. 2015) and cultural capital is recognised by the dominant classes aesthetics or tastes (Haydock 2014a). Thus the societal legitimation of taste and the conversion of other forms of capital into symbolic capital within a society is controlled by the dominant group or class (Weininger 2004). Opportunities to accumulate and exchange capital are as a result, unequal, and in this way, inequalities are maintained and perpetuated through the control of the dominant class (Mellor et al. 2010). Working class young people are often lacking in symbolic capital and opportunities to accumulate all forms of capital are rare (Skeggs 1997a).

Physical capital can be exchanged into other forms of capital, for example, economic capital through exchanging physical labour for a wage and to social capital through elite sports participation. In relation to this study, as we will see, the body is important to some drinking practices (through vomiting, passing out, and a lack of physical control) as is gender appropriate embodiment (Coffey and James 2016). This importance identifies the body as a site in which physical capital can be both acquired and exchanged, primarily for working class young people, to cultural or social capital which are both more accessible than symbolic capital (Coffey and James 2016).

Bourdieu theorised social capital as comprising valued relations with significant others which are generated through resources, networks and group membership. Social capital, in addition to including social networks, was seen by Bourdieu (1986) as including 'sociability', which he perceived to be a continuous relationship which reaffirmed these personal networks (Barry 2011). Criticised for its lack of conceptual

clarity (Sullivan 2002), the concept of social capital has since been theorised as being either normative or non-normative. Non-normative, social capital is described as 'bonding' social capital (Fukuyama 2001), which is more private than normative or 'bridging' social capital (Boeck et al. 2006). Bonding social capital has been conceptualised as benefits arising from intimate relations within a close-knit group, whilst bridging social capital is that which is gained from traversing across less cohesive groupings (Putnam 2001). Of particular relevance to this thesis is a study by Bohn et al. (2014) who found that the use of, and regular communication on, social media enhanced access to both types of social capital. This thesis will operationalise social capital as a resource that is both private (bonding) and public (bridging). It is in the former context (bonding) that social capital accumulation has been much more accessible to young people from lower socio-economic groups although the increasing use of social media makes public or bridging social capital much more accessible (Bohn et al. 2014). The sharing of alcohol related content on SNS provides an opportunity for the careful crafting and management of online identity (Atkinson et al. 2014). The display of alcohol consumption practice materials such as particular brands, venues or bodies play an important role in the creation of online identities which are valued for their aesthetic and symbolic value (Bourdieu 1984, McCreanor et al. 2005). Through these online displays of practice materials, young people are able to project specific tastes and identities and by doing so acquire and accrue capital and status (Atkinson et al. 2014). Thus, Bourdieu's theorising of capital and taste offers useful conceptual tools for this study. Within this thesis it is assumed that economic, cultural and social capital when legitimated by society can be exchanged or converted to prestigious symbolic capital and also that economic and cultural capital when legitimated by a

smaller cultural reference group can be converted or exchanged for social capital. This position is based on the premise that maximising capital resources and being valued or becoming a subject of value (Skeggs and Loveday 2012) is of importance. Thus, gaining status and recognition within this study is simply theorised as the exchange or conversion of capital(s) into more prestigious forms.

2.7.2 'Doing gender'

This thesis has highlighted how intoxicated drinking patterns are normalised, and how differences in the drinking patterns of young men and women have narrowed (Bailey et al. 2015, Armitage 2013, McCreanor et al. 2013). However, these alcohol consumption practices are not straight forward and has been discussed, earlier in this thesis, they are highly gendered practices undertaken in a traditionally masculine domain (Bailey et al. 2015). Risk has also been understood within this thesis as being highly gendered with constructions of risk and gender being interwoven (Leaker and Dunk-West 2011, Olstead 2011, Hannah-Moffat and O'Malley 2007). Thus finding the conceptual tools to understand how gender, as a key organising concept of practices (Robinson and Richardson 2015) which relates to the lived experience of alcohol consumption is important for this study. This section explores how the theorising of 'doing gender' can enhance this study's empirical analysis followed by an illustration of how developments in gender theories have played an important role in developing understandings of the part the body plays in practice. This section does not seek to provide an analysis of gender theories or to analyse their relevance or otherwise to social practice theory. The section does however seek to examine the possibilities afforded by concepts taken from the theory of 'doing gender' (Butler 1990) and

combining them with the three element model of social practice for the purposes of this study. The reason for this approach is that the conceptualisation of 'doing gender' has the potential to integrate (Rouse 2007) with social practice theory, as both theoretical framings are concerned with 'doings' and reproduction through performance (Butler 2011, Shove et al. 2012). This integration can then be applied to the empirical data in this study to support the empirical analysis.

Within a theoretical framework of 'doing gender', gender is understood by 'what you do', at a particular time, within a particular practice, rather than a universal 'who you are' and in this way is viewed as more than just expression or identity (Reddy and Dunne 2007, Nayak and Kehily 2013). It therefore follows, that gender is not fixed but is continually negotiated, constituted and reconstituted through repeated shared performances of practice (Paechter 2003, Wohlwend 2009). Thus men and women participate in gender practice or 'do gender' in response to situated expectations about masculinity and femininity.

Early theories on gender and sex had focused on biological differences between men and women (Robinson and Richardson 2015, Nayak and Kehily 2013), with gender regarded as a biological fact, that was predetermined by genitalia at birth. Through the 1970s and 1980s, feminist scholars, challenged these theories, by separating sex as determined by birth, from gender which they theorised as a social and cultural construction (Jackson and Scott 2002, Witz 2000). Gender at this time was theorised as being concerned with social distinctions about what it means to be a man or a woman, and the characteristics and identities embodied within each of these social groups (Jackson et al. 2010). For example, women are caring and men are aggressive

(Robinson and Richardson 2015). It has since been argued that sex is also socially constructed alongside gender, as one cannot be understood without the other (Hood-Williams 1996) as illustrated by Cream's (1995) work on intersexed bodies. It is important therefore to not entirely deny the pre-social, and to acknowledge that although sex is based on bodily features, the attributing of both sex and gender is social (Jackson et al. 2010). To prevent a revisiting of the sex/gender binary it is useful to distinguish between the corporeal materiality of the body and the conceptualisations of gender as a social construct (Jackson and Scott 2002, Witz 2000). In this way then, the body is both an object and a subject of gender processes; with both being socially constructed but *"remain as wilful agents that participate in their own making and that of others"* (Nayak and Kehily 2013). Thus, both the role and the agency of the body and its corporeal activities can be recognised and incorporated into this research study. This way of conceptualising the corporeal materiality of the body fits with the earlier discussions in this chapter of social practice theoretical understandings of the body as a material element and embodied understandings (Shilling 2001, Sahakian and Wilhite 2013).

This thesis does not assume that there is one masculinity and femininity, rather the inference is that these relational concepts are fluid and that there are therefore multiple masculinities and femininities in any given social context or situation, and across any structural position, such as race, class, age and sexuality (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, Budgeon 2013, Nayak and Kehily 2013). Hegemonic masculinities are theorised as representing the overarching configuration within which different configurations of masculinity practice exist, some of which are subordinate or marginalised with appropriate configurations of the practice varying in different

social settings and within different social groupings (Connell 1987, Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Hegemonic masculinity then is the 'ideal' or the normative type of masculinity, which is culturally dominant in a given setting and against which all other masculinities and femininities are constructed and performed (Connell 1993, Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). This is despite not many men actually enacting this ideal (Paechter 2006, Connell and Messerschmidt 2005).

Hegemonic masculinity is theorised as the dominant discourse of masculinity and is characterised within Western society by toughness, risk-taking, heterosexuality, drinking to excess and wage earning (de Visser and Smith 2007). Thus, certain ways of performing masculinity and femininity are privileged, and some ways of doing femininity or masculinity have traditionally been deemed more appropriate than others and these are continually reproduced (de Visser and Smith 2007, Willott and Lyons 2012). However, it has traditionally been more difficult for young people from lower socio-economic groups to access both more dominant femininities and masculinities (Skeggs 1997b, Lyons 2009, Day et al. 2003). This is largely due to the way gender intersects with class (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, Fiaveh et al. 2015) which makes it difficult for working class young people to access these more dominant forms of masculinity and femininity. For example, respectable femininities are usually the preserve of the more privileged middle class and are associated with caring, co-operation, dependency, weakness, vulnerability and virtuousness (O'Connor and Kelly 2006, Fiaveh et al. 2015, Skeggs 1997b). Traditional or respectable femininity, then is tied to the management of physical risks and the performance of effective 'safekeeping' strategies (Campbell 2005). Women are charged with taking responsibility for their own safety and may be subjected to blame or alienation if they

are seen to have made themselves 'vulnerable' to risky situations through failing to adhere to standards of appropriate feminine behaviour (Brooks 2008, Hannah-Moffat and O'Malley 2007).

Gender within this thesis is understood as being situated in everyday lived experiences, social relations, activities, embodied experiences and social practices (Crawford 1995, Nayak and Kehily 2013). Butler (1990) provides a framework within her theory that understands gender as a 'performance'. Gender is continually (re)created and resisted through repetitive and shared social practices (Paechter 2003) and is viewed as performative (Butler 1990). The meanings and the shared understandings of alcohol consumption practice are tied up in the rewards of the practice which stems from the performance and its contribution to symbolic capital (Groves et al. 2015). This theorising of performativity would appear to dovetail well with a social practice perspective as it challenges the idea that gendered identities are always there. Instead individuals are understood as constantly being gendered through performance (Robinson and Richardson 2015).

The practice performance then, is heavily gendered with various gendered practices being enacted through versions of masculinity and femininity (Lyons et al. 2014b). By way of an example is Campbell's (2000) study of working men's drinking in rural New Zealand; masculinity is performed by demonstrating competence in drinking large amounts of beer and by displaying knowledge of local affairs.

Despite the undoubted advances in gender theory, research generally, and alcohol research in particular, has tended to focus exclusively on either men or women with few taking a more holistic approach by integrating work on masculinities and

femininities (Nayak and Kehily 2013, Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Connell (2005) points to the need for more attention to be paid to the interplay between femininities and masculinities. The concern of this thesis then is not to compare and differentiate the actions of the young men with the young women but instead to focus on how gender is (re)created and performed through alcohol consumption practices. In this thesis, men and women's engagement in d practices and 'risk' activities are recognised as an active part of 'doing gender' (Butler 1990). Thinking about gender in this way will enable an empirical exploration of how 'doing gender' is embedded and resides in the meanings, materials and competences of alcohol consumption practices and risk activities and how they are performed, enacted and contested.

2.8 Conclusion

'Risk' has had and continues to have a central role in English alcohol policy. Risk is understood within policy as a real category of a danger or a hazard that is considered detrimental in some way, and that should be avoided. Within public health policy, individuals are required to be rational thinkers responsible for their own health who are responsive to information and knowledge on health harms and consequently choose to change their behaviours to something that is less risky. However, the existing literature suggests that this individualistic behaviour change approach has failed to deliver wide scale social change and change drinking culture.

This thesis takes the view that an alternative approach of risk is required that moves the focus from individual choice, rationality and from viewing risk as objective and

knowable to understanding it as fluid and constructed and situated by the social, cultural, localised and material context within which it is or is not understood, and within which, it is or is not responded to. In this way, by using a social practice theoretical frame this thesis seeks to address some of the limitations identified within the existing literature on risk, notably reconceptualising risk by linking it with the reproduction of social practices through embedded, routinised and habitual actions. Other gaps in knowledge, that this thesis seeks to address include; situating risk in the everyday lived experience and understanding how pleasure interconnects with risk-taking activities. In addition, it is hoped that understanding alcohol consumption as a socially shared practice, will enable different sites and routes for intervention affecting social change, to be identified.

A further gap identified in the literature is an exploration of young people's excessive alcohol consumption across mixed drinking locations. This study therefore offers an original contribution to the alcohol studies field by using social practice theory to explore mixed location, excessive drinking practices of young people. Furthermore, in response to the gaps in knowledge identified, an understanding of how this practice type relates to risk and how issues of inequality overlap, and intersect with each other to affect the practice performance are included in the study.

Despite the link between social and economic inequalities and alcohol related harms, there is currently a paucity of literature on qualitative sociological studies that focus on drinking as a social practice and inequalities and inequity. This thesis will seek to address this gap by integrating concepts of capital and from gender theory with the three element social practice theoretical model.

Alcohol research has shown that although drinking excessively is not a new phenomenon, there have been changes in the 'how' and the 'where' as well as the socially shared meanings of these practices over time. Contemporary alcohol research that has been informed by gender theory and/or sociological thinking has deepened understandings of alcohol consumption. However, these approaches often neglect a holistic understanding by focusing on only one area within these practices. For example, how drinking practices relate to socially shared meanings of friendship, or to geographical space. This study therefore contributes to the alcohol literature by seeking a fuller and more holistic understanding of young people's alcohol consumption, by making the practice the unit of enquiry rather than the individual. Findings from the alcohol literature have been used to identify some of the components of the constitutive elements of excessive drinking practices using the three element model (Shove et al. 2012) of materials, competences and meanings. This study will seek to identify any components not previously identified that are constitutive of the practice and understand how the elements link together and interconnect. In addition, young people are seen, from the literature, to be drinking to intoxication in pursuit of their own pleasure, whilst attempting to maintain some control (Szmigin et al. 2008). Thus, the literature points to young people's pursuit of intoxication as being both calculated and a strategically managed process which requires competence, skills and know-how. However, the detail of this control is missing from the literature, a gap that this study will seek to address.

In summary, this chapter has identified a number of gaps in existing knowledge of young people's alcohol consumption. These include the absence of a detailed understanding of excessive drinking, mixed location alcohol consumption practice and

how 'control' of the intoxicated experience manifests. Additionally, this review has identified a lack of social practice theoretically informed empirical studies that incorporate issues of inequalities and inequities. Further gaps in existing knowledge highlighted in this chapter include a detailed understanding of the embedded, routinised and habitual nature of risk, how risk is situated in the everyday lived experience and how risk interconnects with pleasure. This study seeks to address these knowledge gaps and in doing so provide a richer and fuller understanding of alcohol consumption practice of young people from lower socio-economic status groups.

However, the use of social practice theory is not without challenge as its use in empirical studies away from sustainable consumption and environmental change, particularly within public health research has been scarce (Holman and Borgstrom 2016). The following chapter therefore details the research design, methods used, recruitment strategy, data analysis strategy and the theoretical assumptions that underpin them.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This thesis contributes to the field of alcohol studies, by exploring the way in which mixed location, excessive drinking practices are negotiated and participated in by young people from lower socio-economic status groups, using social practice theory. The study also explores how issues of inequality affect young people's alcohol consumption practice. In addition, the study will contribute to risk theories by exploring embedded, routinised and habitual actions within young people's drinking practices to develop understanding as to how these relate to risk.

In this chapter the first section outlines the research aims, followed by an account of the theoretical viewpoint and a consideration of the ways in which using a social practice theory lens informs the methods used. A section on the research methods including design, recruitment, data collection process and ethical considerations follows. The final methods section details the data analysis strategy and process. Finally, the chapter explores the reflexive journey of the researcher.

3.2 Research aims and objectives

Whilst there is a growing body of research into young people's consumption of alcohol and related risk actions, there remains a lack of sociologically informed qualitative research that offers an alternative to the dominant cognitive discourses in risk research. Current risk research assumes that changing attitudes or values will change young people's alcohol consumption behaviours (eg. Janz and Becker 1984, Ajzen 1991, Kanfer 1970). In order to move away from these types of individual behaviour change models and gain a deeper insight into these practices, this study explores

young people's drinking practices and how they relate to 'risk' using a social practice theory framework. The main aim of the research is to use social practice theory to provide fresh insights into the alcohol consumption practices of young people from deprived social and economic communities, and to reconceptualise risk in relation to these practices.

The research aim is underpinned by the following objectives:

1. To apply a theoretical framework of social practice theory to the alcohol consumption practices of young people living in deprived communities;
2. To develop understandings of the routinised actions of young people in relation to alcohol consumption and risk and the processes through which they become routinised;
3. To explore 'risk' in relation to the ways in which gender is performed and regulated within young people's alcohol consumption practices; and
4. To identify implications and recommendations for policy and practice.

3.3 Theoretical viewpoint

This study adopts a social practice ontology where the social world is understood as being populated and organised by social practices (Moloney and Strengers 2014). Social practice offers a distinct social ontology where the social is '*a field of embodied, materially interwoven practices centrally organised around shared practical understandings*' (Schatzki et al. 2001: p12). This ontology contrasts with ontologies that privilege the individual (Hargreaves 2011) or social structures (Ho 2015); instead there is a focus on the dual nature of individual intentionality and social structure (Giddens 1979, 1984). What distinguishes practice theory from other cultural theories

is that the unit of analysis is practice and not the mind, discourse or interactions (Reckwitz 2002). Epistemologically, this study is informed by a social constructivist approach which views society and knowledge as being actively and creatively constructed and involves multiple systems of understanding that occur through social and cultural experiences (Gordon 2009, Scott and Marshall 2009, Lyons et al. 2014a).

3.4 Methodology

Unlike other theoretical approaches, social practice theory does not demand a distinct methodological strategy (Warde 2005, Harvey et al. 2012). Indeed, there has been considerable debate within the field about the usefulness or otherwise of conventional qualitative social science methods, such as interviews and focus groups for studying practice (Thrift and Dewsbury 2000, Boddy and Smith 2008, Martens et al. 2014). A frequent criticism levelled at the effectiveness of these methods within a social practice framework is that study individuals (or carriers) are thought by some commentators to be unlikely to be able to comment on the routines and habits (the invisible set of structures) of everyday practices (Hitchings 2012, Nairn and Spotswood 2015). In other words, embodied knowledge is thought to not easily lend itself to verbal communication (Martens et al. 2014). Jenkins (1994) argues that the researcher is required to get around the 'official account' that is given by the research participant. He argues that this is because the account omits the obvious, for example, gender performance and has the potential to offer a distorted view through a desire to attempt to explain to or to please the researcher. Another way of seeing this is that the account itself represents a performance, in much the same way as the practice does.

Despite this criticism, prominent social practice theorists such as Blue et al., (2014) and Gram-Hanssen (2015) have argued that qualitative methods should have a place within social practice theory. Indeed, a robust defence of interviews as a research method for practice-based research has been articulated by Spotswood et al. (2015) and Hitchings (2012). These commentators have argued that discussion between researchers and study participants is an appropriate way of exploring practices and the structure of linkages between the elements of a practice (Martens 2012). Furthermore Martens (2012) reasons that this is on the grounds that the researcher can and does get some idea of practical activity through linguistic articulation. Taking this forward she suggests that verbal insight could be further enhanced by a research context that seeks to stimulate the nucleus of the practice; for example, by combining observation and talk. This study therefore uses a qualitative methodology which combines talk based methods and observation of social media content. A qualitative methodology is consistent with a social constructivism approach (Braun and Clarke 2013), which enables a focus on individual 'doings' and 'sayings' and builds on the precedence of other social practice research studies that have also used a qualitative methodology (Nairn and Spotswood 2015, Spotswood et al. 2015, Warde 2005, Epp et al. 2014).

3.5 Research methods

This section details the methods used for this qualitative research enquiry. This is followed by a section detailing the recruitment of young people to the study and the data collection process including the rationale for group interviews and using content

from social networking online sites (SNS). Finally, this section reflects on the ethical challenges encountered and an explanation of the data analysis strategy and process.

3.5.1 Research design

The study was an in-depth qualitative project in which data from young people's narrative accounts given in group interviews and the content they posted on SNS relating to both their alcohol consumption and associated practices were collected and analysed. The study focuses on the drinking experiences of young people from deprived communities and it was this group of young people that were targeted for recruitment to the study. As with most qualitative studies, the empirical findings are specific to the research context though they provide useful insights into young people's alcohol consumption practices at both a theoretical and conceptual level. The study findings also help to developing an understanding of the usefulness of social practice theory in researching these social practices.

3.5.2 Recruitment

Recruitment was undertaken via contacts known to the researcher, through a previous job role in health and social care applied research. The contacts acted as gatekeepers to groups of young people. Two of these contacts proved very productive; a tutor at a local college and a youth worker. Meetings were held with both individuals to discuss the research and identify ways in which the study might proceed with their help and approval. Access to venues and to meetings with groups of young people was negotiated and additional approvals, when required were sought. Arrangements were then made to meet with two to three friendship groups of young people at each venue to discuss the research. Three friendship groups of young people aged between

sixteen and twenty-one years of age (twenty-three participants in total) subsequently agreed to take part in the study. Three friendship groups consisting of twenty-three young people were considered sufficient for the study as a large amount of data was generated from the social media content requiring intensive analytical work (Anderson 2010). In addition, Cresswell (2013) warns against including too many cases as the data can become unwieldy resulting in superficial analysis.

A purposive sample of young people was chosen as it was thought that a trusted gatekeeper acting as an introduction to groups of young people may help to alleviate any concerns they may have about participating in a research study. Some of the young people may have been concerned about admitting to under-age drinking or to other illicit activity and some may have been concerned about how their drinking practices maybe perceived by others. Despite the introduction from trusted gatekeepers', attempts made to recruit some groups of young people were unsuccessful, with three groups who were spoken to, making the decision not to participate.

3.5.3 Recruitment sample

Young people were recruited to the study from vocational and apprenticeship courses at two training organisations, within the north of England, both of which were located within the 10% most deprived areas in England (DCLG 2010). Research has shown that young people on vocational education and apprenticeship courses delivered in deprived areas are likely to be from lower socio-economic groups (Whitfield and Wilson 1991, Payne 2001). Socio-economic status has in the main been defined by an individual's position in the labour market, education status, home ownership, car ownership, social grade and/or income, which makes it extremely difficult to

determine the socio-economic status of young people unless the study has access to parental information (WHO 2012b, Beard et al. 2016). This study did not have access to parental information and the young people were not asked to obtain this information as it was thought this may impact on the rapport established between the researcher and the groups (Thornton 1995). This purposive sampling approach instead draws on socially situated investigations (Rhodes 2009) which target recruitment to research based on a specific location and education level, with the presumption that individuals recruited in that specific area are likely to be from the desired target group. This approach draws on the work of other researchers that have applied a similar approach (Smith 2014, Hall and Winlow 2007). By way of an example, is a study by Crawshaw and Bunton (2009) who investigated the risk discourses of young working class men. The researchers targeted recruitment at young men who lived in an impoverished former industrial town thus achieving the desired objective of recruiting young men from working class backgrounds. The specific locations were chosen as the data shows that alcohol related problems and harms are greater in individuals from lower socio-economic groups (Marmot 1997). The study draws on the work of Skeggs (1997b) who advocates that gathering as much information as possible helps to make sense of participants' positions. For this reason, this study sought information from SNS content and group discussion on relevant background information such as the participants' home location, education, social networks and family backgrounds and from this data each participant was identified as being from a lower socio-economic status group. A more detailed description of the young people is given in section 4.4.

3.5.4 Data collection process

Data were collected over a 14-month period, from July 2014 to September 2015. Three group interviews were undertaken with two of the groups and one group was interviewed four times during the data collection period. During this period the researcher also kept field notes based on initial impressions, thoughts on each of the discussions and any observations that were made about the participants (Braun and Clarke 2013). SNS content was collected from a variety of social media; Facebook³, Twitter⁴ and Instagram⁵ depending on the favoured social media of each participant. The young people agreed to allow the research project access to the SNS that they used with the exception of Snapchat⁶ which some of the young people denied the project access to. Although some young people did agree to the project accessing their Snapchat there were two issues with including it as a data source, and therefore the decision was taken not to include it in the project. Firstly, the young people who had agreed to include their Snapchats could censor which posts to share with the project and secondly, the temporary nature of the content meant that data collection would have to be undertaken manually every 24 hours for the duration of the project. This was disappointing as Snapchat is thought by some researchers to have overtaken Facebook in terms of popularity with young people (Rushton 2015). The appeal of

³ Facebook users develop a prolife and personal timeline on the website. Each user can link to family, friends, colleagues and strangers through sending a 'friend' request or responding positively to a friend request. Each profile has a News Feed and timeline (formerly known as the wall), which appears on every user's homepage and highlights information including profile changes, upcoming events, and posts of the user's friends. Posts are not space limited and can include photos and other visual images. Friends can 'like', 'share' or 'comment' on a post to show they have connected with it.

⁴ Twitter is an online microblogging social media service. It enables users to send and receive short 140-character text messages and or visual messages, called "tweets". Users can group posts together by topic or type by use of hashtags; words or phrases are prefixed with a "#" sign. Tweeters can tweet their own messages or can retweet messages from other users; the email equivalent of 'forwarding'. Other users can designate tweets as 'favourite' to show they connect with a tweet. Users can connect to other users by 'following'

⁵ Instagram is an online mobile image sharing (photographs and video) social networking site. Users share images either publicly or privately.

⁶ Snapchat is a mobile app that allows users to send and receive images (photos and videos) that automatically disappear after a short timeframe.

Snapchat is it is quick to use, it is intimate as you can choose who you share content with and exists only for a short moment in time (Madrigan 2013). This type of sharing means that content does not need to be as polished as other SNS where content is permanent, loggable and traceable (Madrigan 2013). Whilst not being able to see these posts and use those as data were undoubtedly a limitation of the research, discussions with the participants revealed the types of images and stories that were posted on this online media. Facebook content was collected every three or four weeks and involved accessing the Facebook timeline (formerly known as the wall) of each participant and converting the information to an adobe PDF document. This method was preferred to accessing data via the research profile newsfeed as Facebook controls and edits the information a user's newsfeed receives (Facebook 2016c). Twitter and Instagram content was accessed via the research profile every three weeks and content was saved in a pdf format.

Each group interview took approximately one hour and each participant was invited to contact the researcher, following the interview, if they wished to add to anything further. In addition, one face-to-face interview with one young person who could not make the time of the final group interview was undertaken. The interviews produced in-depth narratives of the participants' drinking practices. The SNS content provided a visual and narrative performance of the participants' social lives that ran parallel to these accounts, providing additional data for the study and data that could be discussed further in the group interviews (Niland 2014, Atkinson et al. 2014).

When conducting group interviews a formal interview schedule was not used, but a list of topics was covered (time permitting) allowing participants to express

themselves freely (Nairn and Spotswood 2015). This flexibility allowed the young people to share their drinking stories, enabled discussion of SNS content and enabled the researcher, to pick up and probe on points that were considered to be of importance. The resulting data offered the opportunity to explore the structure of their drinking practices.

3.5.5 Rationale for friendship group interviews

Silverman (2003) noted that interview accounts offer a cultural story about the participant's social world. It is this cultural story of the practice performance that is of interest in revealing the constitutive elements that make up young people's drinking practices, and to identify some of the different and various ways in which the practice is performed. Unearthing cultural stories about the practices, was considered to be an informative way of exploring the norms and elements that are constitutive of the practice. Indeed, interviews represent another performance of social life (Denzin 2001). Thus, interviews were considered to be a favourable data collection tool for this study.

The researcher was also mindful of research that has explored alcohol consumption experiences through the shared storytelling of research participants in group interviews (eg. Kitzinger 1994, Lyons and Willott 2008, Emslie et al. 2012). Young people's drinking practices have been shown to be an activity, which in the main, is undertaken with friends (Seaman and Ikegwuonu 2010, Percy et al. 2011). It therefore makes sense to explore the practice within friendship groups of the young participants. An existing group of friends also have an established rapport and are likely to be more comfortable in sharing their experiences, contradicting each other, as well as having

shared experiences to draw on (Lyons and Willott 2008, Niland 2014). Friendship group discussions may also encourage participation from people who may be reluctant to be interviewed on their own (Kitzinger 1995). Browne (2016) found that shared laughter and humour within group interviews could also be employed as a way of creating a safe place to talk about sensitive and shameful topics that is less likely in one-to-one interactions. This shared laughter and humour from the telling of amusing stories can help to cement the participant's community of practice with group members co-authoring these stories (Haydock 2014c).

Group interviews offered this study the potential to uncover particular ideas of shared routines and cultural conventions, and identify challenges to these social norms through inconsistencies highlighted between participants. Group interviews also offered the study the potential to highlight the different performances of a practice, identify the materiality, meanings and knowledge (elements) of the practice, and the connectivity between these. Finally, group interviews also enable a reflection on the habitual practices and routines that underpin young people's drinking practices.

Talking to the study participants about their experiences of consuming alcohol was not challenging. As is noted later on in the thesis (Chapter 4), the storytelling of a night out is an important part of the accrual of capital, and as such there was no shortage of 'stories' among the participants. However as identified by other researchers, it was far more difficult to encourage a narrative of the routine (Nettleton and Green 2014, Spotswood et al. 2015). A narrative of routinised actions was encouraged by the telling of funny stories, the participants' challenges of each other's accounts and finally by

the researcher challenging the participants to recall the smallest details and the taken-for-granted parts of a narrative.

The challenge for this thesis was to understand how risk relates to young people's alcohol consumption and how they navigate and negotiate risk within these practices using the lens of social practice theory. In a theoretical point of departure from other studies which have sought to identify how young people perceive risk (Moloney et al. 2015, Mayock 2005), rather this study used the group discussions and peer challenge, to stimulate the participants' own meaning or sense making of risk (Wall and Olofsson 2008). Thus interview questions intentionally refrained (where possible) from using the term 'risk' (Green 2009). Instead, questions and topic areas were related to the detail of their alcohol consumption practices.

Meeting with each friendship group, three or four times, was an opportunity for building rapport with the research participants and allowed both the participants and the researcher time between meetings to reflect on what we had previously discussed. The researcher was able to reflect on the participants' talk and performance and develop the next set of topic areas around particular perhaps more mundane aspects of their drinking practices. In this way, the focus was on the elements of the practice identified as being worthy of more discussion, rather than listening to more funny stories or even the retelling of the same stories that had already been heard. Within two of the more established friendship groups in the study, the participants challenged each other's views and occasionally even rejected outright the other's assertions.

However, there are limitations to this approach. Friendship groups can elicit conformity with some participants withholding things that they might not be

comfortable talking about in a group (Morgan 1997:15). Furthermore, as the point of group discussion is that participants talk to each other, the researcher has little control over the interaction other than keeping the participants focused on the topic. This was certainly the case in this study. Sometimes participants so enjoyed the retelling of a story it was difficult to keep them on track, or in the case of one group, when other friends strolled in to the room joining in the story telling even though they were not part of the study.

It is also important to note that the researcher will have an effect on the interaction of the group and the performance of group members. Particularly relevant to this study is how the researcher is positioned by oneself and how they are positioned by the group. Position is conceptualised here as how the researcher's moral and personal attributes and subjective approach to the topic are perceived (Reventlow and Tulinus 2005). It is likely that this researcher was positioned as a figure of authority by the participants and as such the researcher was aware that she needed to counter this by adopting a non-judgemental approach to the conversations. However it is impossible to neutralise the researcher effect altogether (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995) and in the context of the interview as performance it is not desirable either. It was therefore useful to try to understand how the researcher influenced the discussions.

3.5.6 Rationale for the use of SNS content

The use of SNS has rapidly been assimilated into contemporary society with research suggesting that users of these sites visit them frequently (Morgan et al. 2010, Joinson 2008, McCreanor et al. 2013, Atkinson et al. 2014), and that users are living their lives online and publicly on these sites (Subrahmanyam and Greenfield 2008). Content from

SNS provided an additional data source exploring how young people performed their drinking practices to a wider social network in an online environment, and represented an alternative performance of the practice to that given in the group interviews (Drew and Guillemin 2014, Atkinson et al. 2014).

It is important to note that SNS content was not collected as an attempt to triangulate the data or with the aim of getting close to a truth (Braun and Clarke 2013). Rather, photographs, internet memes and postings provided an insight into the participants' experiences of events at which the researcher was not present, and thus can be seen as a way of enhancing the research context (Martens 2012)⁷. The use of SNS as a data source enhanced the scope of the study by providing a less obtrusive approach to the data collection (Hewson 2015). Although, there has been some resistance to the use of online content as a data source as some commentators have thought that people have a propensity to not be honest and authentic online, data from validation studies has shown this not to be the case (Hewson 2015).

Each young person was 'friended' and/or 'followed' on the SNS they were users of and in this way the practice performances were captured on social media (for example, post-night out story telling; the performance of hangovers on Facebook). Friends on a SNS cannot be defined in the same way as more traditional understandings of the term friend. Instead Facebook combines all social relationships into one single category of Friend, including parents, work colleagues, casual acquaintances, romantic partners and friends of friends (Boyd 2010). The use of discussion groups combined with content taken from SNS as study data is not without precedent. A study of young

⁷ An internet meme is an activity, concept, catchphrase or image which is spread from person to person via SNS

women's drinking norms in Australia undertaken by Brown and Glegg (2012) used this methodology as did more recent studies by Atkinson et al. (2014), Niland (2014), Hutton et al. (2016) and Moewaka Barnes et al. (2016). This type of data is congruent with a social practice theoretical approach as it enhances the research context (Martens 2012) by combining a narrative (from the group interviews) with an observation of online practice performance.

3.6 Ethical considerations

The study was guided by a situational ethical approach which advocates following flexible ethical guidelines (Social Research Association 2003, British Sociological Association 2002) rather than absolute rules that should then be interpreted within the context of the study (Norris 1993, Wiles et al. 2006). In addition, the Faculty of Health and Medicine research ethics committee at Lancaster University provided advice and ethical scrutiny. The University research ethics committee gave ethical approval for this study on the 21st May 2014 and ethical approval for study amendments in December 2014.

Social research guidelines advocate a set of ethical principles including a commitment to participants' rights, respect for participants and research, generating and sharing knowledge and finally, protection for the researcher (Wiles et al. 2006, Smyth and Williamson 2005). Social research is regarded as being very setting specific where rigid rules cannot always fit the precise context of the research (Goodwin et al. 2003, Punch 1998). Thus researchers are allowed to interpret them as they see fit, in what Wiles et al. (2006 p:284) describe as a 'situational' approach. Using this approach ethical decisions are made on the basis of the issues which are applicable to that individual

research project using the social research principles as a guide (see British Sociological Association, British Sociological Association 2002, Social Research Association, Social Research Association 2003). Although potentially more difficult to manage from an institutional perspective, from a researcher perspective, this would seem to be both an ethical and an effective way to manage a research project, subject to legal frameworks, regulation and ethical scrutiny by the institutional ethics committee. The ethical challenges that were encountered during the course of this study related to consent and confidentiality, the use of SNS as a data collection tool and finally the provision of incentives.

3.6.1 Consent and confidentiality

Ethical researchers have a responsibility to protect research participants from harm which covers a host of factors including minimising risk, informing participants of risk and the right of the participant to withdraw from the study (Braun and Clarke 2013). All study participants were provided with an information sheet (see appendix 1) and were involved in discussions about potential research related risks and the right to withdraw during the recruitment meeting and all subsequent meetings. Information was also shared which detailed sources of support in the case of any participant suffering any distress as a result of their involvement with the study (Niland, 2014) including helpline numbers, addresses and websites of relevant support organisations. Protection from harm includes emotional harms and respecting the values and judgements of the research participants (Babbie 2013, Hadjistavropoulos and Smythe 2001). This can be exceptionally challenging as Schwalbe (2002) asserts, the researcher may encounter issues or opinions that are morally opposite to the researcher's own

beliefs and morals. It was found that using questioning such as *“why do you think/say that?”* enabled a non-judgemental approach to the interviewing to be maintained and gave the researcher the time needed to think about how to react to participant’s statements. This approach appeared to work, best demonstrated, when one participant explained to another, who had been outed by the group, as being a regular, illegal, drug user *“It’s all for research. As if she [researcher], hasn’t met someone before that’s been on drugs; it’s fine.”* This comment was made, despite it being the first time illegal drug use had been discussed in the group interview and the group had no knowledge of the researcher’s own personal opinion on illegal drug use.

Research participants may experience discomfort, shame or even trauma from talking about events that they consider embarrassing or where they suffered some emotional harm (Hadjistavropoulos and Smythe 2001). Some participants during the group interviews did mention briefly, events that appeared to have been traumatic or embarrassing. In these cases, an individual judgement was made as to whether questioning should continue or the conversation should be moved on. This was frequently informed by the rest of the group. Where the incident may have been embarrassing, but was known about within the group, it was generally considered that there would be less risk to the participant. When the group did not already have knowledge of the story, it was generally assumed it was safer to change the questioning. By not probing further valuable data may have been missed. However, in this handful of cases the participants’ emotional wellbeing was judged to be more important than the collection of data.

Preserving the anonymity of research participants is considered a fundamental element of protecting research participants from harm (British Sociological Association 2002, Social Research Association 2003). In practical terms this means that any identifiable information about individuals collected during the study will not be disclosed (Wiles et al. 2008). The participants in this study were assured that every effort would be made to anonymise information that they shared during the study (Braun and Clarke 2013). Each participant was given a pseudonym as was anybody else mentioned in discussions or SNS content, despite some participants declaring they did not mind being identified. For reasons of anonymity, the city that is the focal point of many of the participants' nights out is not named and neither are the names of locations and venues divulged except where they are part of a large chain, which can be seen in many large cities. Preserving anonymity was made particularly challenging by the use of SNS content and is discussed in more detail later in this section.

Another important element in protecting the researched from harm is obtaining informed consent to participate. Opinion on the capacity to consent for children and young people (under 18 years old) has changed over recent decades (Williams 2006). There is now general consensus within social research that young people should be allowed to give (or not) consent provided they have the capacity to do so, and if the research is not particularly contentious (Alderson and Morrow 2004). Whilst age should not necessarily be the only determinant, guidance suggests that most young people age 16 years and above have the capacity to consent, and whilst many under this age also have this competence, some do not (Williams 2006). It was therefore deemed appropriate for any potential participant over the age of 16 years to consent to their own participation in this study. Any young people under the age of 16 years,

who were recruited to the study, would be subject to an assessment of their capacity to consent. Capacity to consent would be appraised through discussion and reflection on their; capability to choose, and ability to demonstrate knowledge about the risks and understanding that consent is voluntary and can be withdrawn at any time (adapted from the Fraser guidelines (NSPCC 2014)). Recording of assessments would then be in a written form. However, the youngest participant in the study was 16 years of age and therefore any assessment of capacity to consent was deemed unnecessary.

The safety of participants is of paramount importance in any research (Buchanan 2012, Leyshon 2002) but particular ethical considerations arise with this study and the online environment. For example, it was likely that the SNS posts would show participants who were younger than the legal drinking age consuming alcohol and there was a possibility that other illegal or illicit practices may also be exposed. The use of SNS as a data collection tool also has the potential for revealing practices which may show the participants and/or others at risk of harm (Moreno et al. 2011). As such the researcher like other professionals working with young people had a duty of care and must respond accordingly (British Sociological Association 2002). The ethical challenge of deciding what responding accordingly looks like has previously been recognised and discussed by other researchers (Barnes et al. 2015, McKee 2013, Johnson et al. 2013). Barnes et al. (2015) during their research made decisions on a case by case basis and used the knowledge and experience gained by their lead researcher as a school teacher to support their decision making. Similar to Barnes et al. (2015) these type of decisions are often made anyway by researchers in the field as situations unfold (Yates 2004). This study used this type of situational ethics, which involved assessing situations as they arose on an individual basis on the likelihood of harm happening,

and assessing the seriousness of any illicit activity. Participants were informed of the limits to confidentiality, and that should it be deemed that there was a likelihood of serious harm, then the researcher would be obligated to report it. In making the decision whether significant harm was likely the following were taken into account; who else was aware of the situation, such as, venue staff, parents, police, the support the young person had at the time from friends and family, and whether the young person was in imminent danger. Thankfully, no incidents were deemed serious enough to require an intervention to secure personal safety.

3.6.2 Use of SNS as a data collection tool

An increasing number of researchers are undertaking studies using social networking sites (McCreanor et al. 2013, Brady and Guerin 2010, Yoo and Kim 2012, Atkinson et al. 2014). However, these new data sources have emerged so quickly, have particular affordances and change so quickly, that it has been argued that ethical practice, guidance and scrutiny is not keeping up (Johnson et al. 2013, Woodfield et al. 2013). In this section, three ethical challenges are highlighted relating to the use of social media as a data collection tool: informed consent, safeguarding of participants online and protecting the data, the researcher and the gatekeepers within the virtual world. In keeping with the guidelines from the BSA (2002) and the SRA (2003) the researcher was committed to respecting participant's rights and ensuring that participants were as fully informed as possible about the study. This included informing potential recruits on how the data would be used, what their participation would involve, and obtaining informed consent for participation. Gaining informed consent is a process that ensures research subjects comprehend what the study is about, what their participation means

for them, and highlights any potential risks that may be encountered (Social Research Association 2003). The following ethical challenges relating to consent and the use of SNS were highlighted during the course of the study; how and when consent was given by the study participants and what SNS data could be used.

Similarly to other researchers who wish to gain institutional ethical approval, internal guidance for a formal, paper based consent procedure, which included accessible information and consent materials for potential participants was followed (see appendix 2). However the ethics committee in line with other researchers (Morrow 2008, Edwards and Alldred 1999) noted that children and young people in a group situation may consent to participate in a research study even if they do not wish to participate. Ethical approval was therefore conditional on written consent being given at an initial meeting with participants, followed by confirmation of consent within twenty-four hours. Corroboration of consent was accomplished with the use of social media within the agreed timescale with no participants declining. All the young people recruited to the study had the researchers contact details and were encouraged to get in touch with the researcher with any concerns they may have had, or if they wanted to withdraw from the study for any reason. However, the BSA (2002) recommends that where the research is over a longer period of time than just a one off event, as was the case for this particular research study, consent should be regarded as a process, which requires renegotiation throughout the period of the study. *"It should also be borne in mind that in some research contexts, especially those involving field research, it may be necessary for the obtaining of consent to be regarded, not as a once-and-for-all prior event, but as a process, subject to renegotiation over time."* (British Sociological Association 2002 p3).

In practice it was this type of ongoing negotiated consent (Crossan and McColgan 1999) that was the most meaningful (Dockett and Perry 2011). At the beginning of each meeting with the research participants, the aim of the research and their involvement was discussed and then they were asked to confirm their continuing participation. Revisiting their consent in this way was of particular importance as their lives were continually observed via the use of social media over the 14-month period. The importance of renegotiating consent became apparent when one participant was contacted to arrange a meeting, and the issue of her 'falling out' with a friend who was also a participant in the study was raised. The reason for raising this issue was to enquire how the participant wanted to proceed with meeting but the participant was confused as to how the researcher knew about the incident, until she was reminded that she had posted about the disagreement on Facebook. The reason for highlighting this discussion is to demonstrate that the participant had either forgotten that the information was posted or had not remembered that she was connected to the researcher via social media. Either way this incident demonstrates the importance of continually revisiting and contextualising consent (Dockett and Perry 2011, Parsons et al. 2016).

In practice, none of the young people withdrew their consent to participate in the study. Rather those who no longer wished to continue, simply chose not to turn up at the pre-arranged times or did not commit to even arranging a meeting time. The latter option was the case with a complete friendship group of seven young people who all participated in a first meeting, signed consent forms, re-consented 24 hours later and accepted 'friend requests' on social media, but never committed to meeting up again. Their silence in this respect was interpreted as them withdrawing their consent to

participate in the study and that meaningful informed consent had not actually been given (Bourke and Loveridge 2014, Lewis 2010). As this was relatively early in the process their data could be withdrawn from the study. However, young people that had given informed consent and then participated in at least one friendship group discussion before absenting themselves from later discussion groups were considered to have consented to participate in the study. This assumption was confirmed through social media conversations when reasons given for leaving included leaving the college where the discussion groups were held, and no longer being in friendships with other participants. Thus, although they did not participate in any more group discussions data already collected for the study was not withdrawn.

A further ethical challenge associated with the use of social media in research is the abundance of data that the researcher can become connected to, and deciding what data are ethically useable for the research study and what is not (Barnes et al. 2015). A distinction has been made between what is public information and what is private by some researchers (Robards 2013, Zimmer 2010). Posts on Facebook and Instagram are regarded by some researchers as private (accessible only to accepted friends on some privacy settings). On the other hand Tweets, which are microblogs and are in the public domain, and are accessible by anyone even without a Twitter account, are in the main considered public (Lafferty and Manca 2015, Woodfield et al. 2013). Using the participants' own tweets, Facebook posts and Instagram posts as data were considered ethical for this study as the participants had given their informed consent for this.

By virtue of the linking nature of Facebook that links third parties to each other through a known contact, the project had access to data posted by participants' wider social networks on participants' Facebook pages (Barnes et al. 2015, Wilson et al. 2012, Robards 2013). This data included comments responding to participants' status updates and also status updates by friends who were tagged or connected to participants. This data potentially gave a deeper insight into the participants' own postings but poses ethical challenges around its use in research studies. This challenge emphasises the complexity of research on online environments. In response to this challenge James and Busher (2007) and Henderson et al. (2013) ask the question who owns the posts and the associated postings? Facebook's own terms and conditions state that the user owns their own content and has control over how that content is shared; *"You own all of the content and information you post on Facebook, and you can control how it is shared through your privacy and application settings"* (Facebook 2016a).

However, Facebook also collects and uses information from posts for its own purposes. Information and posts that are shared by other users about another person is not under the control of the person it is about (Facebook 2016a). In addition tagging of friends makes them visible to other members of a social network, essentially connecting users whom would not have been connected otherwise (Johnson et al. 2013, Elovici et al. 2014). There are differences then between data that is posted by participants and data that has become available from their friends by virtue of tagging or commenting on a post (Altshuler 2013). This issue was addressed in the study by including data from other users only when it directly related to the research

participants' online performance of drinking or competing practices, and when the identity of the user posting the comment or image could be protected.

As discussed previously a commitment to anonymity for all participants was desirable. However, a review of the literature shows how difficult this can be in relation to the use of SNS content (Dawson 2014, Zimmer 2010, Côté 2013). One of the issues associated with maintaining anonymity is the traceability of comments, posts and quotes (Johnson et al. 2013, Beaulieu and Estalella 2012, Woodfield et al. 2013). Search engines have become so effective that it possible to trace almost any post back to its original using a simple search function (Henderson et al. 2013, Roberts 2015). This traceability highlights the potential for identifying both the online profile of the user and consequently their offline identity (Zimmer 2010).

One option to prevent this identification of research participants advocated by Black (2005) and outlined within guidelines from the BPS (2013) is to change or paraphrase parts of quotes or posts that are obviously searchable such as names, places and sometimes text (McKee 2013). Battles et al. (2010) argue against this, reasoning, that this can change the meaning of the original post and can affect the authenticity of the reporting (Johnson et al. 2013). The debate on the issue of traceability is further complicated by being relevant not just to text but also to images. For example Facebook now uses facial recognition software to identify individuals (Facebook 2016b). Metadata such as location and author that is stored in some images can also be traceable (Johnson et al. 2013).

In an attempt to prevent a breach of anonymity from using SNS content whilst maintaining authenticity and meaning in this study, the following actions were

undertaken. Firstly all names, places, faces and other obvious searchable terms in any posts used in the study were blanked out and images were checked for metadata (Black 2005, British Psychological Society 2013). This action was intended to preserve anonymity whilst not changing meaning or affecting authenticity. Secondly at the beginning of the study participants were informed about the risk of being traced from any quotes used and participants were then asked for consent to use their SNS content in the study write up (Dawson 2014). Random searches of the edited quotes that were planned to be used were conducted using two different search engines and the users were not subsequently identified (Barnes et al. 2015). However, the changing nature of online technologies raises the possibility that it will be traceable in the future. Both Dawson (2014) and Beaulieu & Estalella (2012) point out that data from SNS is so very traceable and the changing nature of online technologies may mean that promises of anonymity to research participants should not be made.

A further ethical dilemma was how to protect the integrity of the SNS research data, whilst protecting the online identities of gatekeepers and limiting the possibilities for harm to the researcher. Approval from the ethics committee was dependent on the creation of an online research project identity, which was considered to be an effective way of protecting the integrity of the data and reducing the likelihood of harm to both participants and the researcher. However, creating an online research project identity created both practical issues and further ethical dilemmas. Practically and ethically creating a unique research account for both Twitter and Instagram was easily accomplished as both sites support the use of pseudonyms and the only requirement is a valid email address not currently linked to an alternative account. A research project identity could therefore be created on Twitter and Instagram via a link to a

university email address. The participants were informed of the pseudonyms for the SNSs and both accounts were closed on completion of the study.

Two options were investigated for setting up a project based Facebook account. The first option was setting up a Facebook page similar to that of a business or company. However, this was not deemed feasible, as there was no facility for accessing participants' posts or newsfeed from the page. The second option was setting up a personal profile using a fake account. This had the desired outcome of meeting the ethics committee requirements but raised the ethical dilemma of contravening Facebook rules as using a fake account is against Facebook policy (Facebook 2016d). The use of a fake identity also raised the ethical dilemma of potentially misleading the research participants as to the identity of the researcher (Carter et al. 2016). Furthermore Elovici et al. (2014) argue that fake accounts create unnecessary costs for the provider in their policing of this policy and has the potential to lead to a prosecution. However, following the triggering of an automatic alarm when connecting with participants, Facebook froze the fake research profile account and the research project was back where it had started; with no method of collecting research data from Facebook.

The only option left was to use a personal Facebook account. However, this led to further ethical challenges; research data could be compromised and the identity of the researcher's friends, family and 'gate keepers' for the research project are exposed as they would become visible to the research participants. This is a result of users who may not want to be connected becoming connected via the researcher as a third party (Elovici et al. 2014). This makes visible what would have previously been the private

lives of people connected to the project to others and vice versa (Johnson et al. 2013). It was proposed to solve this ethical challenge by unfriending all existing Facebook friends and only accepting research participants as new friends. However this unearthed a further ethical complication, as it was, and is unclear whether research participants would have access to historical data thus again compromising the privacy of unfriended friends and new friends (Facebook 2016a). The researcher closed their own personal Facebook profile, opened up a new profile using the researcher's real identity but including details of the fake research identity as a nickname. This new profile only accepted research participants as friends.

This was not a solution for all the ethical dilemmas raised. For example, research participants were still visible to each other and therefore anonymity was not completely preserved. As Hammersley (2009) points out, the various ethical considerations need to be weighed up against one another, and the context, considered before a judgement can be made. The decision made in this case provided a solution to the quest for maintaining integrity of the data, whilst at the same time protecting the researcher and the researchers' connections from identification from participants. At the start of the project the knowledge or expertise was not available to determine the most ethical and safe way to collect Facebook data. However, as the project continued the researcher's knowledge improved and more informed ethical decisions were able to be made which were then communicated to the ethics committee, who scrutinised and then agreed them.

3.6.3 *Incentives*

The provision of incentives or a 'thank you' payment for research participants is a contested area in social research (Heath et al. 2009). Some researchers have argued that the paying of participants or rewarding their involvement alters the nature of the research. It can be viewed as coercive especially when the participants are on low incomes as their consent may not freely be given (Alderson and Morrow 2004). However this would seem to apply to large payment amounts (Heath et al. 2009). Some researchers are of the view that it is important to acknowledge participants' contribution, time and effort (Braun and Clarke 2013). In line with guidance from Braun and Clarke (2013) who advise keeping any thank you small and practically orientated, all participants were offered a £10 high street voucher and travel expenses for each discussion group they attended.

3.7 Data analysis strategy

Interpretation of the data involved the integration of all source data and analysis was undertaken with the combined data set. Within a practice theory perspective, practices are the starting point of analysis, not the individuals, and an integration of the whole dataset supported this approach. The analysis presented here builds on previous studies that have used thematic analysis within a social practice theoretical framework (Nairn and Spotswood 2015, Cohen et al. 2011, Spencer et al. 2015).

Thematic analysis is a method utilised to identify and analyse patterns of meaning in a dataset through the organisation of data into detailed themes (Braun and Clarke 2006). A theme refers to a specific pattern of meaning within the data. It can be something that is directly mentioned by participants in an interview and is thus explicit

or is something that can be inferred from the data and is implicit (Joffe and Yardley 2004). A theme can also be theoretically or data driven. Both are useful; theoretically driven themes allow for the replication, extension or refutation of existing theories or studies, whilst data driven themes bring new knowledge to the study (Boyatzis 1998). In this way then, thematic analysis is used to generate theoretical insights from the data (Braun and Clarke 2012). Thematic analysis is a flexible analytical technique which can be used with a variety of different theoretical frameworks and epistemologies (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane 2008, Moscovici and Farr 2000).

The analysis of the visual images and SNS posts draws on the work of Banks (2008) who proposes the notion of an internal narrative which focuses on content and an external narrative which refers to the context in which the image is observed. As stated earlier the epistemological stance of this thesis is one in which there is no objective truth or reality and this equally applies to visual images and SNS posts. The work of Drew and Guillemin (2014) is influential here, who argue that images may have numerous meanings, and that these meanings may change over time. This analysis process drew on the work of Rose (2016) and Gbrich (2013) to generate a series of analytical questions which included: What are the components of the image? What do the components signify? How does the image convey meaning? What social signifiers are linked to the images? In addition, how does the image reflect or depart from dominant cultural values?

3.7.1 Data analysis process

Each of the friendship group interviews was recorded and then transcribed. Transcription followed an orthographic or verbatim approach which involved

transcribing the spoken word and other sounds such as laughter into the written word with minimal cleaning up (Braun and Clarke 2013). Although transcribing is a time consuming and lengthy task, by undertaking this task, the researcher was immersed in the data from the start. This early familiarisation meant initial themes were identified early in the study and connections made (O'Reilly 2005) from an early stage, which was of particular help later on when specific text extracts were searched for.

SNS postings were collected on a bi-monthly basis, through screen shots of individual participant Facebook news feeds, Twitter posts and individual Instagram photographs (see appendix 3 for example SNS data). Each document was then edited for material that was deemed appropriate for the study. Data associated with alcohol, drinking practices, nights out and competing practices were deemed relevant and included within the analysis.

The analysis presented (in chapters 4 through to 8) proceeded through the following six stages adapted from Braun & Clarke's principles of thematic analysis (2006) and was supported by NVivo data analysis software. In order to grasp the visual as well as the written, visual thematic analysis was based on the principles outlined by (Clarke et al. 2014), of exploring both the internal narrative and external narratives of an image.

The six stage of analysis followed were:

- 1) Familiarization: This first stage involved immersion in the data, reading and re-reading the transcripts and SNS content, listening to the recordings and viewing and reviewing the visual images (Sampson et al. 2014);
- 2) Open coding: Interesting features of the data were coded first in a systematic fashion with nodes. At this stage, codes were principally theoretically driven with

some codes emerging from the data. Examples of theory driven codes at this stage were; drinking practice, competing practice, material element, competence and meaning (Nairn and Spotswood 2015);

- 3) Identifying themes: Themes were identified from the emerging codes (data and theory driven) and using NVivo a hierarchical code labelling system was developed with senior, junior and further sub codes. A theme was identified if it captured something that was important about the data in relation to the research aim and objectives (Braun and Clarke 2006). For example, young women's experiences were compared with meanings of femininity and then those identified as such were labelled with a senior femininity code label. Further junior code labels were then generated that summarized the various ways that young women performed femininity for example traditional, hyper, failed, respectable, responsible and normative (Bashayreh et al. 2015);
- 4) Coding on: This review phase involved checking the data and coding, combining codes, adding additional data driven codes and redefining codes where necessary for example a theory driven code of 'drinking to intoxication' later became a data driven code of a 'proper night out' (see chapter 4 for a full explanation) (Debbiche et al. 2014). This stage also involved a generation of thematic map of the data with the breaking down of some of the themes into smaller sub themes to offer a more in-depth understanding and deeper insight (Nairn and Spotswood 2015);
- 5) Defining and naming themes: This stage involved the continual ongoing analysis of the data with the refining of the themes, understanding the essence of these themes and then naming the themes for example the theme of 'time-outs' developed from codes of eating, dancing, toilet visits etc., these junior codes were

combined to form a theme that involved a time when the study participants were not consuming alcohol, hence, the code 'time-out' (Bazeley 2009);

- 6) Reporting: This was the final stage in the analysis and involved writing up the data in an analytical narrative.

In practice, these stages ran into each other and analysis frequently involved jumping back a couple of stages when the analysis was not judged to be as in-depth or as analytical as it may have been and therefore had to be revisited.

3.8 Reflections on my role as a researcher

In this section I will focus on the impact of the various roles that I assume whilst undertaking this research and how they were managed; firstly, as an individual, then as an analyst and finally as a theorist. Finally, I will reflect on the validity of the research.

The city that is the focus of the night time economy within this study is a typical northern former industrial town. It is also the city that I first started drinking in, was also a university graduate in and is still, the city, which I choose to spend my leisure time in. As others have noted (Chatterton and Hollands 2003, Smith 2014) there is a certain uniformity to the night time environment regardless of which city you are in. However, having some understanding of the 'what' and the 'where' that the study participants talked about was useful, as with the exception of some of the more obscure venues I was familiar with the places being discussed.

It is important to acknowledge and consider my own role within the process. My practice in terms of my research is affected and structured in much the same ways as the drinking practices of the young people in this study. In terms of analysing my own

background I am a white, middle-class, mother of three. I have entered the research process with lived experiences of being a woman, someone who enjoys drinking alcohol and someone who [still] enjoys going out. I do not have the experience of being a working class, woman although I am informed by literature and my own considerable experiences of applied research. As a mother during the time period of this study, I have watched my eldest son and his friendship group engage in their first drinking practices which have similarities to the experiences narrated by the young people in this study.

I was also aware that as an older woman and also as a mother I may appear to be a figure of authority. I was therefore aware I needed to establish rapport and connection with the young participants. Having worked with young people most of my adult life I was not worried about the age difference between myself and the participants and I found it easy to connect with the participants. I did not change my style of dress for meeting the young people but in an attempt not to appear as an authoritative figure I dressed casually during our meetings. Furthermore, my own personal profile photograph was taken on a night out. In all my meetings and during online interactions I communicated with the young people respectfully and with an interest in what they had to say. I always thanked them for their time and answered their questions about my research and my life. Thus, I was able to develop a level of rapport with the participants.

However, there was a sense of my gender affecting the way in which participants related to me; sometimes participants struggled to find the right words to express themselves, as they did not wish to offend me. In other company, they may have found

the words more easily. As an example, Mark explained that he didn't want to add me on Snapchat, because as a "*bird*" [woman] I may be offended. However as previously touched upon some participants were open and candid with me and explained to others that they could be as well.

As an analyst, I acknowledge that my interpretation of participants' experiences will probably differ from the young people's own interpretations. Indeed, as I am seeking to understand their taken for granted knowledge and routines then it makes it more likely that there would be a difference. I did find that participants did not always fully explain all their experiences, as they did not always, in the first instance, articulate their 'taken for granted' knowledge. I relied on in-depth questioning and challenges from other group members to uncover the obvious. One way, in which I elicited these accounts was to follow the advice of Becker (1998), who suggests asking 'how' rather than 'why', to encourage descriptions of process and doings.

I emphasise that I have tried to make the process of interpreting my data as explicit as possible by the inclusion of quotes from the participants and visual images in the data analysis chapters. The research process required a constant and deliberate effort not to make (un)conscious judgements about the participants' experiences. It was particularly important that I did not impose my values onto the participants. I did this by undergoing a continuous process of self-scrutiny, review of interview recordings, challenge from my supervisors and developing my questioning from this process.

For the most part, adopting a social practice theoretical approach provided a useful framework for this study. Nonetheless, adopting a theoretical framework that has not previously been used to explain young people's alcohol consumption was not without

its challenges. Notable amongst them was the lack of a distinct methodological strategy. However, the methods I have used are based on a strong rationale informed by the literature and as such enabled me to develop an overview of the participants' drinking practices and some of their performances. Nevertheless it has been difficult not to lapse from my chosen theoretical stance and be influenced by the influential behaviour change paradigm (Cohn 2014). However, by not travelling this theoretical path I am able to explore an alternative theoretical perspective on young people's alcohol consumption and develop a new interpretation of the phenomena.

Drawing on the work of Delamont (2002) this thesis has sought to demonstrate the rigour of the research study by providing a clear account of the processes which have been undertaken and by reflecting on the effect that these may have had on the outcome of the research. At each stage, all thinking has been shared with the researcher's supervisors who have challenged and questioned the interpretations.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter explains that the approach to this study is informed by an approach that locates the social in practice and is informed by an epistemological view of social constructivism (Hargreaves 2008, Halkier and Jensen 2011, Martens 2012, Halkier 2011). This study therefore does not a search for an objective truth or reality but rather this epistemological position informed the choice of a methodology that would generate knowledge to help improve understandings of young people's situated experiences of consuming alcohol. This in turn informed the choice of a qualitative methodology as it offers an in-depth and nuanced insight into the practices that young people are engaged in. In this study, qualitative data was collected from group

interviews and SNS content. Similar to other social practice research studies, thematic analysis, that was both theory and data driven, was used to interrogate the data collected.

The use of SNS content as a data source in the study raised a number of ethical challenges that have been detailed in this chapter. This is to ensure that the challenges and the responses are fully understood, and that the study has been conducted in an ethical manner. This chapter has sought to provide a full and honest account of the research study in order to demonstrate rigour in the process.

Chapter 4: Framing the practice as a *proper night out*

4.1 Introduction

This chapter begins by offering a rationale for framing young people's alcohol consumption practice as a *proper night out*. This is followed by an examination of the co-existing sub-practices that exist within it, and the different elements that make up those sub-practices (Shove et al., 2012). The final section of this chapter places the participants' drinking practices in the broader context of their lived experiences. The practice-as-entity and the practice-as-performance are studied indirectly, in this case through group interviews, storytelling and content sharing on SNS. In taking this approach, the chapter provides a foundation for the analysis detailed in the following three chapters which seeks to identify interconnected elements of the practice labelled as materials (chapter 5), meanings (chapter 6) and competences (chapter 7) (Shove et al., 2012) and explore how different forms of risk are negotiated and regulated (or not) within the practice. Each chapter ends with a summary of the findings. Chapter 8, concludes by drawing together the findings from all the previous chapters of analysis to provide an illustration of a drinking practice framed as a *proper night out*.

4.2 Framing the practice as a *proper night out*

Before analysis of a practice can be undertaken, attention needs to be given to a framing of the practice that determines the limits or boundaries of that practice (Maller 2015, Kuijer 2014, Røpke 2009, Twine 2015). Kuijer (2014) recommends care should be taken not to frame the practice too narrowly, or on the other hand, too broadly, thereby enabling the practice to be identifiable and comparable with other

framings. There has been considerable debate (see chapter 2) on the most useful framings and definitions for young people's high risk drinking practices. Terms used within public policy, research and media discourses have included 'binge drinking' and 'drinking to intoxication' (McAlaney and McMahon 2007, Measham 2004, Haydock 2014c). However, this terminology is considered too narrow for this study, as neither phrase acknowledges the diversity of actions and praxes young people are engaged in. For example, friendship (Niland et al. 2013) and drinking spaces (Valentine 2014) when drinking excessively or the risks they encounter (Marion Roberts 2013). Conversely 'alcohol consumption' is too broad, encompassing different typologies of drinking; including 'going out for a meal' and 'light drinking at home with family' (Ally et al. 2016).

Although there are likely to be benefits to researching various drinking practices, the scope of this thesis will not extend beyond a detailed exploration of one drinking practice. That is, to concentrate on the practice that is most often associated with young people, that which is characterised by a very public excessive drinking performance on a night out, and has previously been related to risky drinking practices (Adebowale 2014, Eisenbach-Stangl and Thom 2009, Toole 2010, Smith 2014, Bailey et al. 2015). The rationale for focusing on this type of drinking practice was three fold, firstly young people's nights out have been found to be a high risk drinking occasion (Ally et al. 2016, Measham and Brain 2005, McCreanor et al. 2008). Secondly these high consumption levels are associated with a mixture of private and public locations; a feature of young people's risky alcohol consumption practices (Ally et al. 2016, Fry 2011, Foster and Ferguson 2014, McCreanor et al. 2015). Finally, the emerging data from this study connected young people's determined drunkenness with sociability

and social recognition as a social practice that the study participants could identify with.

The framing of the practice as something more than drinking to intoxication or high risk drinking is reinforced in the study participants' narratives. Although not explicitly asked in the interviews to label this practice, the phrases "going out" and "night out" are used frequently by all three groups when discussing their drinking practices. However, both these descriptions are used for a variety of social gatherings where alcohol is consumed in different ways. This is illustrated by Amy from college group 1 (CG1) who distinguishes between different types of nights out; those where getting drunk is not part of the accepted conventions of the practice, and nights out where it is both accepted and expected.

Amy *It's like more if you are going out for a drink and you don't want to get, like, you know. It's more for like atmosphere type thing rather than on a night out type thing.*

Amy explains that there are (at least) two different types of nights out involving alcohol, the latter has an emphasis on drinking ("*a night out type thing*") and the former may involve drinking but it is not a requirement (*you don't want to get, like, you know*). This quote demonstrates how the phrases 'night out' and 'going out' do not narrow the practice enough to frame a useful unit for analysis. However, the term '*proper night out*' was also used by two of the groups and this provides a more suitable and more compact framing of the practice. The term is broad enough to encompass the praxes of young people on a night out, but also emphasises the determined drunkenness (Measham and Brain 2005) which is an integral part of the practice. The

quotes below from Amy and Charlotte from (CG1) demonstrate how a *proper night out* is constituted as a drinking practice that involves determined drunkenness and friendship, but has other integral parts that need to be identified for a more nuanced understanding of the practice.

Amy *I don't know like because when people go to town they have more like got the intention to get really badly drunk cos most people don't go out that much so it's like a **proper night out** but if you are just going to like a bar and its dead casual and you are just sitting in there just like having a little drink and speaking to your mates so people are going to be like social [different]!*

Charlotte *Will probably like stay in the student bars cos that's not like a **proper night out** if we go there. It's just like to talk and stuff like that.*

Emily from the apprenticeship group (AG) also uses the term *proper night out* to describe an experience that is distinct from other drinking practices. Emily described her 'going out' experiences between Christmas and the date of the research interview as going to friend's houses and to the local pub, neither of which she regarded as constitutive of a *proper night out*.

Emily *I don't think I have had a **proper night out** since Christmas.*

As was foreseen from the literature the young people rehearsed different types of alcohol consumption practice (Percy et al. 2011, Berridge et al. 2007). The participants described having a couple of drinks with friends or family in both public and private

places or consuming alcohol with a meal or after work with work colleagues. Intoxication may occur on these nights but the success of these alternative nights was not described by them as being dependent on achieving drunkenness. In other words, pharmacological intoxication was not an essential element of these other social practices whereas it was integral to the success of a *proper night out*.

By using the phrase *proper night out* Amy, Charlotte (CG1) and Emily (AG) are all framing the practice as something more than just going 'out' and becoming intoxicated. The word 'proper' is used as an intensifier to emphasise the 'night out' and distinguish it from other types of occasion. Using Kuijer's (2014) conceptualisations then, by focusing on a '*proper night out*', the unit of enquiry is sufficiently narrow to enable an in-depth investigation, but broad enough to enable an exploration of the complexities of determined pharmacological intoxication and associated aspects. A *proper night out* is therefore situated as an alcohol consumption practice that is located within the social, temporal, economic, gendered and cultural organisation of the everyday.

There was no consensus on the frequency of going out on a *proper night out* although it was sometimes linked to a celebration such as a birthday or award night. Participants in the study talked about participating in the *proper night out* on usually a Friday and/or Saturday and for some it was a weekly occurrence and for others, more infrequent, sometimes once a month or every other month.

A participant's involvement in the practice was constrained by their limited time resources and bounded by the impossibility of being involved in more than one competing practice at any given time (Røpke 2009). Although there was no specific

duration identified by participants for the practice, there was a general consensus that it was carried out over a considerable number of hours frequently into the early hours of the following morning, or as an all-day event. Andy from college group 2 (CG2) referred to getting the first train home in the morning after a night out and in a similar vein Claire (CG2) described getting the last train to the city centre at about 23:15. Mark (AG) recounted a story of walking home the following morning in the previous night's clothes referred to as the "*walk of shame*". Competition from other practices for time resources affected the timing and frequency of the young people's participation. For example, only two groups gave an example of participating in the *proper night out* on a weekday evening. From CG2 Andy told a story about going to a party on a Thursday night, however this was during a period when he had finished school and there was no practice competing for time resources the following day. Similarly, Mark, Leah and Emily described participating in a *proper night out* during the week shortly after starting on their apprenticeship scheme. However unlike Andy, they were in work the next morning and their work performance was thought by them to have been affected. As they became more accustomed to being in paid employment, they explained that their participation in the practice on a weekday evening had lessened to the extent when the competing practice of work meant that it was no longer viable.

Participation in the practice was not a solo performance; it involved a 'coupling' with at least one other person. Demonstrated by James (CG1) who stated, "*I could go by myself which I never would cos I'm not sad*". However, the number of group members involved in each practice performance varied, ranging from just two to much larger groups, and participating groups could be all male, all female or mixed gender groups.

4.3 A *proper night out*: practice-as-entity

Further analysis of the data reveals that the practice of the *proper night out* consists of a number of sub-practices that have come together to form the practice. These sub-practices are themselves distinct practices which can either be undertaken independently from a *proper night out* or as part of another practice (Røpke 2009). For example, many practices are planned and arrangements made prior to participation. However, it is the coming together of these sub-practices that forms the *proper night out*. Distinct sub-practices that have linked together to form a complex of practices is conceptualised by Shove et al. (2012) as an integrated combination. It is an integrated combination of sub-practices that have cemented together to form the *proper night out* (Twine 2015). These different sub-practices are integral to the practice and are performed by all carriers to a greater or lesser extent. For all three groups in the study a *proper night out* followed a similar configuration, and six sub-practices were identified. Firstly, participants engaged in *planning* and arranging the event; this typically preceded the day of the event. On the day, preparation of self was integral to a *getting ready* stage. *Pre-drinking* either followed getting ready or combined with it and was undertaken either in one of the participant's homes or a cheap bar (or both). These stages were then followed by '*going out*' either in the night time economy or to a party. The final stages of the *proper night out* were *getting home* and *storytelling*; where highlights of the night are shared with a wider social circle usually after the event. This is not to provide an objective, factual description of the practice but rather to enable an understanding of the practice and its constitutive elements to be developed.

Leah neatly summarises the sub-practices (not including planning or story telling) in this statement “*So we would get dressed have drink at ours first, have our music on, get a taxi. We would do the rounds in town and then we would probably go back to mine.*” Leah identifies the sub practices of ‘getting ready, ‘pre-drinking’, ‘going out’ and ‘getting home’. Following the story telling, the practice starts again with the planning of the next *proper night out*.



Diagram 2: Sub-practices of a proper night out

The next section details each sub-practice in turn and identifies the various components required.

4.3.1 Sub-practice 1: Planning

Planning and making any necessary arrangements was a critical part of the night out and took place over the preceding day, days, weeks or even months depending on the occasion. The more special the occasion was deemed to be, the longer the planning time, as illustrated by this quote from Amy (CG1) “*.. but when you are like planning*

like a birthday then it's like a month in advance". Although the participants did engage in unplanned drinking the *proper night out* with its different sub-practices was planned and arranged. Planning involved choosing a date, who to invite, choosing the location and then the actioning of these decisions. For those young people who went out less frequently on a *proper night out* the selection of the date was important, as potentially the performance would be talked about for some time to come, therefore it was important to be a part of it. This was less risky for those young people who went out more regularly as if they missed one event there would be another opportunity in the not too distant future and their status within the group was more secure.

Arrangements could range from the elaborate, for example Mark's 21st birthday (AG) which involved booking a room in a hotel, to the 'usual' arrangements that a friendship group made for a *proper night out*. Liam (CG1) explains "*Like cos erm basically we had a surprise birthday and it was massive party for like my best mate. So obviously you would organise that differently to how you would organise like a regular going out*". A *proper night out* requires planning and arranging to make these nights extra special and differentiate them from other types of nights out. Examples included planning nights away from home or the wearing of fancy dress. James (CG1) explained during an interview that "*going out is tactical – you have to plan it*". Being tactical in the planning was also a way of regulating risk. This was particularly evident for planning the 'getting home' sub-practice. The specifics of these arrangements differed from group to group but each of the participating groups had a strategy for getting home safely from a *proper night out*.

4.3.2 Sub-practice 2: Getting ready

Group messaging using social networking sites (SNS) was routinely used in the '*getting ready*' stage particularly by female participants to discuss outfits and appearance prior to the event. The young women in the study drew on a discourse of an appropriate look for the *proper night out*. This look was highly gendered, highly sexual and feminine in appearance with a fully made up face, hair stylised and the wearing of heels which was considered an absolute necessity. Charlotte from CG1 explains that "*If we are going into town it would be like heels, full face of make-up, dress and hair completely like curled – everything!*"

SNS were used to share potential outfits and hairstyles with other group members, allowing them to comment on possible assemblages. This sharing and commenting by group members made it less likely that that an error would be made in getting the 'right' look. This was carefully managed as illustrated by Amy's statement which suggests that offering a few options for comment reduces the risk of wearing an unsuitable outfit: "*If normally a suggestion is made about what you are going to wear there is like normally a few options [shared with the group on SNS] so you can go for the one that's, like, is the least like you know 'I don't like that' type of thing.*" The finished 'look', before drinking, would then be shared on SNS usually through posting a photograph. The wider social network is then invited to appraise the look by 'liking' the image and to make positive comments.

The *getting ready* stage could however be constrained by competing practices. In the example below Claire and Becky (CG2) both work during the day on a Saturday, which limits the time available for *getting ready*. Therefore, the two young women meet up

with their respective boyfriends during the getting ready stage, and then meet for *pre-drinks* at the local pub.

Researcher: *Do you get involved in pre-drinking?*

Claire: *We always have a certain pub we go to before we get the last train [on way to town].*

Researcher: *Ok so your pre-drinking is in a pub? And you?*

Becky: *We go pre-drinking together – me and Claire.*

Researcher: *So that's in the pub. So you wouldn't get together before you go to the pub?*

Claire: *No cos we are at work.*

Researcher: *So you go straight from work?*

Claire: *No I get ready – get a shower and stuff.*

Researcher: *And you don't meet up with anybody else before the pub?*

Claire: *Yes, I get ready and then we meet.*

Becky: *Ye at like 7.00.*

Researcher: *So all your pre-drinking is in the pub? You wouldn't have a drink whilst you were getting ready?*

Becky: *Yeh I'd have a drink when I am getting ready. But that's just like a little drink whilst you are getting ready.*

Researcher: *Ok so a little drink whilst you are getting ready. And then that's just you on your own getting ready?*

Becky: *No there's my boyfriend. He usually comes round.*

The '*getting ready*' stage was so routinised within the practice that the participants were not clearly articulating this stage. The tacit, routine and habitual nature of the *getting ready* stage is observed within the excerpt above. Demonstrated by the eventual admission that the boyfriend is also present and that alcohol consumption is embedded in the practice. The young men in the study narrated a part in '*getting ready*' only when they were participating in the practice in the company of female friends. Mark (AG) for example explained that "*either I'll go to Emily's to get ready or she'll come to mine and we'll get ready. And we will just take our time getting ready*".

The young men who participated in the practice in all male groups did not narrate stories of getting ready together as a group of friends in the same way as was portrayed by all female groups or mixed groups. However, they did participate in the '*getting ready*' sub-practice as evidenced by the images posted on SNS relating to the *proper night out* which are of well-groomed young men, illustrated by the photographs below. In addition, the images posted of groups of young men (see below) show similar dress styles in group photographs indicating some degree of co-operation with decision making or a tacit understanding of what to wear.

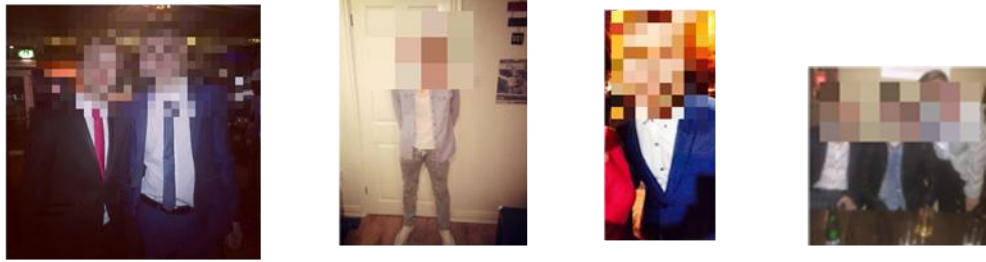


Illustration 1: Visual SNS content of young men on a proper night out

The lack of stories relating to this sub-practice by the male participants suggest that it is the planning sub-practice where decisions are made on what to wear and ‘getting ready’ is a solitary but image conscious sub-practice. It is not until the next stage that the young men meet up with their peers. This illustrates how the performance of this sub-practice is gendered with the all-male groups positioning their masculinities in relation to more conventional masculine traits such as independence to justify their male grooming.

4.3.3 Sub-practice 3: Pre-drinking

As was foreseen from the literature, *pre-drinking*, enabled the social group to come together, bond and cement their friendships as well as providing an opportunity to consume alcohol cheaply, in order to reach their desired intoxication levels (McCreanor et al. 2015, Forsyth 2010, Measham et al. 2011). In contrast to the existing literature on pre-drinking (McCreanor et al. 2015, Forsyth 2010), the research participants undertook this sub-practice in both public and private settings. However, public spaces for pre-drinking were away from the main night time environment or party venue frequented in the ‘going out’ stage, although they were often *en route*. For example, a local pub or bar close to a train station or on the edges of the city centre.

Pre-drinking was gendered and performed differently by the young men and women in the study; the young women would frequently drink together in small groups during the 'getting ready' stage. The smaller groups at this stage enabled the young women to still be able to concentrate on getting ready and have access to the essential material elements for this stage, power sockets for hairdryers and straighteners, mirrors, good lighting, makeup, fake tan etc. However *pre-drinking* was not solely the province of young women, all-male friendship groups were also involved in pre-drinking as the following discussion demonstrates.

Researcher: *So Andy what about you? Do the lads get together before they go out?*

Andy: *Yes at someone's house. Yes. For pre-drinks.*

Researcher: *So does everybody bring something? How does it work?*

Andy: *It depends how many there are. If there are only a few then we might just get a litre of vodka between us all just for a pre-drink – between four of us.*

The young men on the other hand did not (usually) combine their social sub-practice of pre-drinking with getting ready; they were two distinct sub-practices. Pre-drinking for young men was performative in nature giving them the opportunity to 'catch-up' with friends and to consume sufficient amounts of alcohol to enable them to reach their desired intoxication levels.

4.3.4 Sub-practice 4: Going out

This sub-practice and the following stage; 'going out' and 'getting home' stages, frequently form the most visible and public part of the practice (Niland et al. 2013, Chatterton and Hollands 2003, Marion Roberts 2013). The 'going out' stage was typically performed differently in different locations depending on whether the participant was under the legal drinking age or was of legal drinking age i.e. 18 years of age or older. Liam, from CG1, who is 16 years old, stated, "*I just like house parties*". In other words, two locations were identified from the study for the sub-practice of 'going out'; bars or clubs in the night time economy or a party venue. Under 18s in the study favoured house parties over frequenting bars, in the main because of the issues associated with proving their age with photo identification. The issue is demonstrated by Olivia below who no longer goes out into the night time economy after not being allowed entrance to a licensed venue.

Researcher: *What about yourselves? What do you like to do?*

Olivia: *I used to go to xxx all the time but I am only 17 and I started getting KBd [rejected] and I was like oh no tara. And just didn't go again*

Participants that were over 18 years of age expressed a preference for bars and clubs in the city centre (colloquially known as 'going to town') or bars in a local town centre. The importance of the materiality of the practice is demonstrated during this stage. Each friendship group that went into 'town' for a proper night out had a set of preferred bars and clubs. This preference depended on; the type of music played, perceptions of the atmosphere in a venue and the perceived likelihood of knowing other bar/club goers. A number of bars would be frequented during this stage with

participants expressing a dislike for staying in one place, although the order for visiting was not usually decided beforehand. However, each member of the group would be familiar with the preferences of their group and typically, these were the bars that would be visited. Lauren and James (CG1) discuss how their preferred venues have a client group that knows each other and is familiar with each other.

Lauren: *Everyone knows each other anyway it's like a huge family in xxx.*

James: *I think that's why a lot of people are attracted to the same bars cos you know everyone there... And like I know the vast majority of people in a certain bar. So it's all really familiar.*

New bars would be visited when participants were enticed by special offers or persuasive street promotions. These bars could then be added to the preferred list of bars or alternatively not visited again. Knowledge about which bars were 'good' was passed on from older siblings or friends as Harry (CG2) explains.

Harry: *We went there because it was the most places people went and kept on talking about. And that's when we thought we might as well try that.*

This finding draws on the concepts of social and cultural capital in illuminating how going to certain bars or house parties and not others create group identities and group membership. This is further shared with the wider community through SNS status updates and 'check-ins' enabling valued drinking spaces to be shared with a wider group.

Let's get this party started! xxx — at xxx Hotel xxx Street

Mmmmmmm Mark xxx — at xxx

Paradoxically, there was a difference between the narratives shared in the group interviews of bars frequented and the types of venue appearing on the participants' SNS postings. Similarly, to pre-drinking in public environments, some participants talked about going to bars that were known to serve cheaper drinks such as bar chains and bars on the fringes of the town or city centre. These types of bars were not shared on SNS as these type of cheaper venues were viewed as being less than desirable. It is also interesting to note in the extract below, that Emily had to be reminded of the time the group had visited a particularly noteworthy less exclusive venue described by the group as 'divey'. It is possible that she had forgotten their visit as it was not part of the shared memories and storytelling on social media.

Mark: *And when we got up to town we normally go to like the divey cheap places.*

Researcher: *What are the divey, cheap places?*

Leah: *Like xxxx.*

Emily: *Oh no, I don't go there!*

Leah: *Remember when we went there? And we went into where was it? Where was it? What's that club on the corner – xxx! We paid £25 for a round and went into xxx and it cost us £6 for the same round. So we stayed there.*

Emily: *Oh yes, [laughs] all bloody night.*

Staying in one place was not usually part of the performance. In the example above, an exception was made because of the cheaper availability of alcohol and other venues

had already been visited. Moving from one bar to another was part of the routine of the evening. Staying in one venue was considered 'boring' and movement created a sense of excitement to both the practice and to the storytelling.

4.3.5 *Sub-practice 5: Getting home*

Getting home was an important aspect of the *proper night out*. It featured heavily in discussions around the planning of the night out. The young women in the group worried about their vulnerability at this time and had strategies in place to ensure they got home or to a place of safety in a safe manner. Although the young men did not discuss getting home in terms of their own safety they did narrate a planned journey home and a safety story around ensuring any female friends got home safely. Similarly, to the young women this sub-practice featured strongly in the planning by the young men.

Strategies for getting home included; getting a lift from a family member, paying another young person with access to a car to pick them up, getting the first train home in the morning or getting a taxi. The getting home strategy was dependant on how far away the young people lived from the drinking location and the availability of financial and other resources.

4.3.6 *Sub-practice 6: Storytelling*

The storytelling was another version of the practice as performance as was the participants' narrations in the group interviews. The narrations of the *proper night out* on SNS were often focused on the telling of humorous experiences and stories of intoxication, brand association, attendance at various events, drinking locations and contexts, often accompanied by photographs all of which served to consolidate and

build physical, cultural and social capital. These selective narrations or performances also provide a way of conforming to social group values, whilst distinguishing the self from others for example other age groups, the opposite sex, consumers of particular alcoholic drinks and patrons of particular bars. The affordances of the digital environment enable young people to act out individual and group identities to different social audiences by 'checking-in' on Facebook, posting statuses, tweeting and posting photographs of their *proper night out* during other sub-practices. It therefore follows that there are a number of different audiences for the performance, the friendship group themselves who have shared the experience, the different SNS users who access different virtual performances, and the interview group and researcher. It is interesting to note that the SNS content was shared with a number of social networks not just peer networking as identified in a study by Atkinson et al. (2014). In this way the performances of the practice are layered in nature and different according to the different audiences. Examples of storytelling on Facebook and Twitter:

Am I arsed no! #foreveramess

Hangover food FTW! xxx — at xxx's Italian

Dog rough xxx

If there's ever a reason I shouldn't drink this is it #absolutestate

Every time.....you can guarantee



Illustration 2: Storytelling on SNS

The retelling of stories, either virtually or otherwise, served to cement the friendship and group belonging giving a shared identity, experience and status. This is best demonstrated by Ava's story:

Ava: *The people I go out with there is always something stupid or funny that happens. When we were in Amsterdam we were in this club and we were just like – I can't remember who was dj'ing but it was someone proper famous. We were all drunk and we were in the club and literally for some strange reason we were all talking to each other and this like weird sort of cloud – like gas/cold air went shhhh down and we were all talking and it went in our mouths and we couldn't see anything and it was like all in our mouths. And it's just like weird and it makes weird memories doesn't it. I have never ever experienced anything like that before in my life and I was like why are they like choking people?*

Researcher: *So that becomes a talking point for afterwards does it?*

Ava: *And when you get back from your holiday you are like – oh my god this happened. And there are a million other stupid stories that happen as well. Its good isn't it – I like that.*

Researcher: *So it's about the retelling as well as the actual night?*

Ava: *Yes*

As noted above reliving the performance of the *proper night out* through story telling was a key sub-practice which occurred throughout the practice. What is key to the story telling, as Ava explains, is that there needs to be something that differentiates it from the sobriety of the everyday, to give the story telling credibility. In the example above would the same reaction have happened if Ava and her friends had not been intoxicated, would it have been less amusing and more scary? These type of incidents are not just 'things' or 'actions' that happened but are what makes a night out memorable and even gives it a mythical status. The stories are told and retold and in this way create shared memories and meaning. The group also support each other in the retelling of the drinking episode on SNS by reframing the episode as funny and humorous rather than risky and dangerous. This discourse serves to minimise issues when things do go wrong and supports the continuation of the practice of a *proper night out*.

4.4 Situating the participants' drinking practices

As discussed earlier in the chapter, the study participants were recruited from vocational training courses and an apprenticeship scheme that were located within

the 10% most deprived lower super output areas⁸ in England. The young people were not asked for detailed demographic information as this may have affected the researcher/participant relationship (Skeggs 1997b). However, information on school attended, residential area and family educational backgrounds was collected from their social media and group discussions and used to determine that each group of young people were resident within a deprived area.

This section seeks to place the participants' drinking practices in the broader context of their lives. Therefore, a brief overview of the three friendship groups that participated in the study is offered in this section, and the information that was gathered during the year-long study on the wider context of the young people's lives. They do not and are not meant to represent all young people but serve as interesting cases that serve to develop our understanding of young people's drinking experiences. Understanding their backgrounds also gives us the opportunity to understand how their performativity of drinking is within an economically challenging situation and a gendered social structure.

4.4.1 The apprenticeship group (AG)

This group were recruited from a community centre in a deprived inner city area. The group met when they started on the same apprenticeship scheme. The scheme was set up to support young people not in education, training or employment and unlike more traditional apprenticeship programmes, the scheme provided mentoring, coaching and personal development as well as skill based training. Four young people

⁸ Lower super output areas are geographical locations used for the collection and publication of small area statistics. They are used on the Neighbourhood Statistics site and across National Statistics in England.

were recruited from the scheme to participate in the study (two young women and two young men). This group were lacking in all forms of capital. They particularly struggled for economic capital; the group were all on the apprenticeship minimum wage of £2.73 per hour at the time of the study, and three of the group lived independently in their own (rented) homes. This form of capital is linked with more than simple purchasing power or rather lack of it. Their lack of qualifications impacted on their cultural capital, although Emily and Mark did go to the theatre during the study which is high in terms of conventional capital. The group's socialising was locally based or in the city centre, they tended to not have access to influential social networks outside of their local area, which limited their access to social capital. One of the young women was a single parent and during the period of the study, she entered into a relationship with another man whom she became pregnant by. Mark was considered the 'classy' one of the group as he was only one from a conjugal family. Emily was the only member of the group originally from outside the area having come to the city with a former boyfriend and decided to stay after the relationship broke up. Unlike the other members of this group Leah was not a big drinker, she did not drink alcohol until she joined the apprenticeship scheme and then she did not drink at all whilst she was pregnant. The few times Leah had drunk provided her with stories that she could repeat for the post drinking narrative experience and these she told at regular intervals.

With the exception of the final meeting with Mark, group discussion were held in the apprentices' workplace, this added to the informality of the discussion as other apprentices would wander in and out, although this did not seem to affect the

openness of the apprenticeships. However, it did result in other young people occasionally joining in the discussions, creating an ethical dilemma.

4.4.2 College groups

The remaining two groups were both recruited from students attending post 16 years vocational training courses in a college situated in a deprived urban area. The college groups were first (CG1) and second year (CG2) students and both these groups were more fluid and larger than the AG. Both groups were mixed with both young men and young women participating, although more young women than men participated. Data extracted from their SNS content shows that all the group except one member live in socially and economically deprived areas and all had attended secondary schools with high numbers of pupils on free school meals. This data indicates the group are living in socially and economically constrained circumstances.

The group identified in the study as CG1 was initially very large consisting of twelve young people. As the year, progressed two of these students dropped out of the course and no longer participated in the face-to-face meetings reducing the number present for group discussion at the final meeting. CG1 had the youngest participants in the study, with ages ranging from 16 years to 18 years. For example, Liam was 16 years of age at the start of the study. This younger age range was reflected in their drinking practices with many of the under 18s and some of the recently turned 18 year olds spending their drinking time at friend's houses and house parties. These young people tended to have favoured friends' houses that they frequented for these drinking sessions usually because parents were away from the house working night shifts. None of the group members had parents educated to degree level.

CG1 when they started the study were the least established as a friendship group, and their performances within the group discussions gained or lost them social capital within the group. During the first group discussion, this was extremely evident with those who shared a narrative of partying and drinking alcohol frequently, publicly and excessively were loudest in discussions and the major contributors. It was also evident by the groups' dismissive responses to those who were thought to be less likely to socialise within the peer networks.

Only one of the young people, Maria, shared that she did not drink or at least drank moderately and did not participate in big nights out and parties. This immediately distanced her from the rest of the group and the other group members were dismissive of her comments. There was a sense of Maria not belonging and her actions were not deemed acceptable by the rest of the group as she was excluded from many group activities. In contrast, Chloe, James, Sophie, Olivia and Liam all came across as very eager to share their stories of nights out and relay humorous anecdotes. Each story received approval from the other group members and the storyteller accrued 'bonding' social capital from their performance (Fukuyama, 2001).

The CG2 group were on the second year of the same course as the members of the CG1 Group. The group had seven members, five young women and two young men. All members of this group were over 18 years and all reported drinking alcohol, enjoying house parties and going out in the night time environment. The group appeared confident and comfortable with talking about their drinking experiences. They seemed to have a good rapport in the group and challenged each other in group discussions. Only Leanne did not live in the family home but lived with her boyfriend

in a flat in the city centre. CG2 presented as a much more established friendship group as they had known each other for over a year. This was demonstrated in the ways they challenged each other and when they felt it necessary to move the conversation on. Two group members were the first members of their family to secure an offer for a university place, and gained additional cultural and symbolic capital from this.

4.5 Summary

It is the very visual and public performance of young people's drunkenness that has been at the centre of concerns around their alcohol consumption (Adebowale 2014, Eisenbach-Stangl and Thom 2009, Bailey et al. 2015). However, this chapter has sought to explain that although young people's consumption of alcohol is constitutive of many different practices, determined drunkenness and intoxication is not essential to all of these. Drawing on the study data the practice most associated with determined drunkenness has been framed as a *proper night out*. A *proper night out* is bounded and delimited by the competitive practices that prevent participation, the co-participation of other individuals and the determined drunkenness that is constitutive of the practice. That is not to say the young people do not get drunk when participating in any other social practice rather, that other social practices do not require drunkenness for competent and meaningful engagement. The lengthy duration of the practice (frequently all night) means that a considerable temporal resource needs to be invested in the practice. This places the practice in direct competition with other practices such as familial and work practices by colonising resources.

The competition from other practices for the temporal resource required affected both the frequency and the timing that young people participated in the study. The

practice was pre-dominantly undertaken on a weekend when there was less competition for time resources from education or work. Other weekend practices such as weekend work and family activities did compete and in turn affected how frequently the young people would be involved in the practice. The young people also constructed a *proper night out* as a highly social activity. Competent and meaningful engagement within the practice requires the co-participation of at least one other individual and frequently involved the participation of a group of friends.

A *proper night out* was made up of six interrelated sequential sub-practices; 'planning', 'getting ready', 'pre-drinking', 'going out', 'getting home' and 'storytelling' that themselves can be participated in, independently of this practice. By way of an example is the sub-practice of pre-drinking which is a drinking practice usually undertaken in a private space whilst consuming off trade purchases. The practice takes on new meaning when it integrates together with the other sub-practices that of reaching a desired level of intoxication. Thus, the six sub-practices have come together over time as an integrated combination to form the practice of a *proper night out*.

By framing young people's determined drunkenness as a *proper night out* this study moves beyond definitions of alcohol consumption as pharmaceutical intoxication or as binge drinking. Rather the term is broad enough to encompass the praxes of young people on a *proper night out* but still emphasise the determined drunkenness, which is an integral part of the practice. This reframing aims to enable an understanding of the practice, its constitutive elements and its relationship to risk to be developed.

This framing provides a foundation for the analysis in the following three chapters which seek to identify the interconnected elements of the practice labelled as material

arrangement (chapter 5), shared meanings (chapter 6) and competences and know-how (chapter 7) (Shove et al., 2012). The elements identified are not new elements and indeed are not novel to this practice and they have a separate existence beyond the practice of a *proper night out*.

Chapter 5: Material aspects of a *proper night out*

5.1 Introduction

The materiality of a practice includes “things, technologies, tangible physical entities and the stuff of which objects are made” (Shove et al. 2012; p14). A wide range of materials that were integral to the practice emerged from the group discussions or were communicated via SNS content and have subsequently been classified into five material items. Although the material components identified may be shared by other practices they are all constitutive and integral to the practice of the *proper night out*, and the absence of any of the identified material items will affect and alter the practice. The first material type relates to the alcohol that is consumed during the practice including brands, type of glass and types of drink consumed. Second, the materiality of the body was evident through the presentation of self which related to getting the ‘right look’ and the corporeal aspects of the drinking experience and the subjective, physical body (Brown et al. 2011). The third material is spaces, external and internal. The penultimate material is financial resources and the final material is technological items, which were predominantly mobile phones. Mobile phones were the means by which the young people could plan the night, post their content to SNS and to tell the story of their *proper night out* to their wider social networks.

5.2 Alcohol

The practice of a *proper night out* is fundamentally connected to pharmacological intoxication and thus to the consumption of alcohol. The young people described how the practice revolved around alcohol consumption, which was essential for a competent performance of the practice. Alcohol consumption could be found in three

of the sub-practices that make up the practice including 'going out', 'pre-drinking' and for some but not all participants in 'getting ready'.

The study participants narrated contradictory discourses about the types of alcohol they drank on a *proper night out*. Firstly, the participants narrated a discourse of not being particularly concerned about what type of alcohol they were drinking, illustrated by Kate, from college group 1 (CG1), who when asked what she drank, she responded with "*anything really*" and Becky, college group 2, (CG2) who replied "*give me any [thing]*". Sophie (CG1) stressed that the practice was about just drinking as much alcohol as she could and Liam (CG1) talked about drinking "*cheaper stuff*" enabling him to consume more. This type of purposeful or functional drinking as a means to an end is given more importance than 'liking' what they were drinking. For example, Mark from the apprenticeship group (AG) explained that he would hide the taste of vodka by mixing it with something sweet "*I think with vodka it's got quite a bitter taste where if it's mixed with lemonade you can't taste it*". Emma (CG2) discussed drinking vodka red bull "*I am pretty sure it [red bull] tastes worse with the vodka but I just don't care. It doesn't faze me then*". Finally, Claire and Becky (CG2) would just order a mix of shots rather than choosing ones they liked the taste of "*We just like ask them for mixed. They've got like a big shot board – like loads of different ones*". Claire constitutes the drinking of shots as being important with no necessity for making an active choice of flavour implying the function of becoming intoxicated, overrides taste pleasures.

However, despite the narrations of a discourse of '*any alcohol will do*', the relationship between the materiality of alcohol and the practice itself is much more nuanced than this. The materiality of alcohol impacted on the performance and the enactment of

the practice. In other words, the type of alcoholic drink, the alcohol brand and the vessel containing the drink were all part of the practice performance. Thus whilst young people explicitly described in the group interviews drinking ‘any’ and all types of alcohol an alternative performance was seen by the wider audiences on SNS. Exclusive, expensive or exotically branded alcoholic drinks associated with style, prosperity and notions of gender featured in the participant’s social media content, implying that the functional drinking performance is not acceptable for sharing with their wider social networks.



Thank you and xxx for the grey goose went down a treat in the hotel! Xxx
Your more than welcome xxx
Yeah grey goose + me+ xxx = bad idea hahaa xxx
(Mark (AG))

Illustration 3: Examples of SNS content featuring exotic or expensive alcoholic drinks

The discourse of ‘*any alcohol will do*’ was also contradicted by the normative gender practice meanings associated with different types of drinks. An example is the discourse of preference for masculine and feminine drinks (de Visser and Smith 2007). The young women in the study narrated a preference for wine, cocktails and alcopops, feminising the drinking experience. In contrast the young men in the study expressed a preference for beer and whisky, demonstrating and endorsing their hegemonic masculinity (Connell 2005).

The participants offered a rationalised justification for why they drank some drinks but not others based on a like/dislike binary: “*I just don’t like it. It doesn’t taste nice*” (Kate CG1). This contrasts with the discussions outlined previously, when the young people described drinking, alcoholic drinks which they did not necessarily like the taste of, in

order to achieve or maintain intoxication. 'Taste' in this context is constituted as justification for young men preferring specific types of drinks and young women preferring other types of drink. In-depth probing questions elicited acknowledgement from two participants (CG1) that beer drinking was associated more with boys than girls.

Amy: *And I think it's like a boy/girl thing as well isn't- it? Like my boyfriend would drink beer cos he knows he is, like, supposed to drink beer.*

Researcher: *So are you supposed to drink beer then Liam?*

Liam: *I think that's like a stereotype. I think it's more a boy drink if you get what I mean. But I think, like, the reason why some people don't like it, is it's what you are used to drinking, as well.*

Amy offers the justification that beer is something that young men are supposed to drink and Liam agrees, beer is a 'boy drink'. Liam however follows this with an immediate justification for why this is. He constructs preference for different types of drinks as 'liking' what you know. However, he does not question how boys become 'used' to beer and girls do not. These rationales for drinking specific types of alcoholic drinks and not others serve to justify the know-how associated with who drinks which type of drink. These materials are then embedded into the practice which then provides a guide for this gendered practice on further nights out and for new recruits (Sahakian and Wilhite 2013).

Types of alcohol (in the form of girl’s drinks and boy’s drinks) are bound up with meanings of masculine identity and feminine identity, and draws on traditional values of acceptable drinking and non-drinking. Knowledge which is assimilated as young carriers are recruited into the practice (Shove et al. 2012).

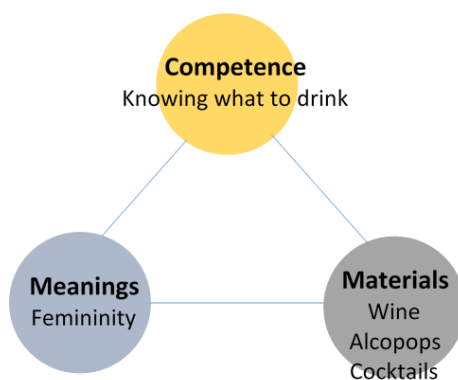


Diagram 3: Conceptualisation of young women’s drinking practices using the three element model

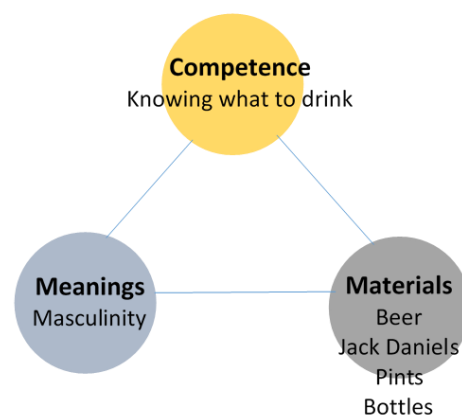


Diagram 4: Conceptualisation of young men’s drinking practices using the three element model

The young women in CG1 and CG2 after further discussion named a limited range of branded lagers that they would drink. These drinks would be accessorised to further increase their standing as acceptable materials. For example, a lager such as a Desperado (lager with tequila) or San Miguel drunk from a bottle, topped with a wedge of lime on a summer’s day, were considered acceptable materials for young women. The meanings of why young women only drink lager from a bottle is so embedded and routinized within practice that it is not questioned by the participants. Not drinking beer from a glass was justified as a glass of beer was constructed as being too much in terms of volume of liquid. However, when they were asked to explore this further and compare types of vessel containing the same volume of beer, the young women still preferred the bottle. In certain situations, locations and context, drinking lager from a bottle is regarded as acceptable; however, consuming the same drink from an

alternative vessel such as a glass makes it unacceptable. The quote from Claire (CG2) below illustrates this point.

Researcher: *So if they were same quantities – bottle of San Miguel, small can or a glass?*

Claire: *A bottle. I don't know why. When it's like a hot day and you wanna go the beach that's what I have.*

The young women (CG1 and CG2) are by only drinking specific named beer brands, from a distinct receptacle, in an appropriate space or venue and adding fruit to the drink are feminising the beer drinking experience. In this way beer drinking does not negatively affect feminine competence. In contrast drinking of beer as part of the practice of the *proper night out* was to risk being considered unfeminine and was an unacceptable transgression of the practice rules.

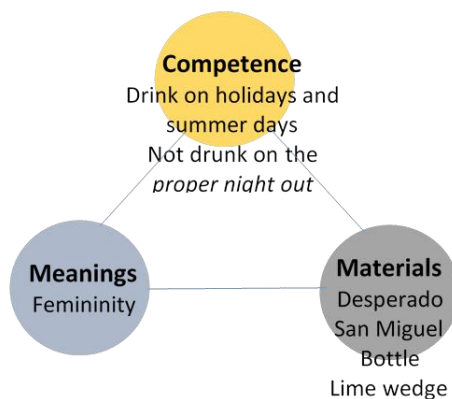


Diagram 5: Conceptualisation of young women's beer drinking practices using the three element model

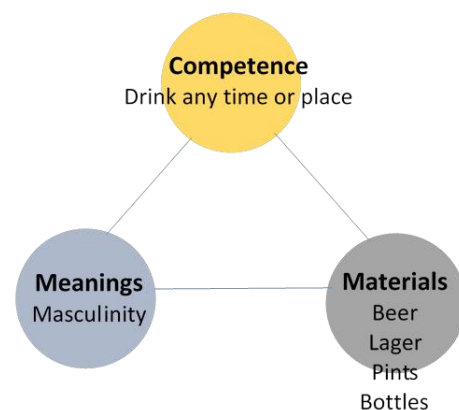


Diagram 6: Conceptualisation of young men's beer drinking practices using the three element model

The young men in the study expressed a preference for beer, whisky and other spirits which was further emphasised by online photographs. Images of young men with an

alcoholic beverage nearly always displayed pints or bottles of beer. Thus, further masculinising the drinking of beer as part of the *proper night out*.



Illustration 4: Examples of SNS content, depicting men and beer

Drink selection is also further differentiated by class and culture with wine and champagne in particular being associated with upper and middle class drinking in England (Järvinen 2012), and thought of as being somehow effete (Lyons and Willott 2008, Nicholls 2016). Some of the young men in the study mentioned drinking other types of drink particularly wine but occasionally cocktails in specific situated practices including an evening out with a woman or at a work event. This is conceptualised as a type of situational masculinities where appropriate configurations of practice vary in different social settings and with different social groups (Connell 1993). When drinking conventionally non-masculine upper class drinks the young men in the study presented an alternative working class masculinity. For example, when they were out with a young woman it was considered acceptable to consume drinks with traditionally feminine associations such as wine.

Mark: *When we [Mark and Emily] go to Weatherspoons we'll get a bottle of wine between two of us.*

The implication here is that young men perform a hegemonic masculinity within an all-male group and alternative situational form of masculinity when in a mixed group or

pairing. In this scenario the young men are trading masculine competence of drinking beer with masculinity gained from being with a young woman and perform a different version of masculinity (de Visser and Smith 2007).

The AG group during the study had a number of works nights out where the evening was paid for and therefore free to them including a number of awards ceremonies. On these occasions the drinking of wine was acceptable for the young men as the practice of consuming excessive amounts of free alcohol gave them masculine symbolic capital. SNS photographs of the events show wine and beer being drunk by the young men with all group members rehearsing a narrative of wine drinking on these occasions.



Illustration 5: SNS content depicting a proper night out with free wine

Leah: *And didn't he go to the awards night and he was the drunkest one out [about Mark]... You just get given that much wine that he can't not get drunk in those places.*

And

Jack: *They [the wine] were all at my end! We had about six bottles of wine.*

In this example the young men trade masculine competence in drinking beer to masculinity associated with consuming free alcohol and drinking excessively and gluttonously.

The functionality of alcohol in achieving pharmacological intoxication is a requisite component of the material arrangement within the practice entity of the *proper night out*. Within practice theory a practice can be considered appropriate or fitting if there are enough carriers routinely performing the practice (Spotswood et al. 2015). Within the *proper night out*, young women drinking 'feminine' drinks and young men drinking 'masculine' drinks are established habits and has become the 'right' way to perform the practice, and situates masculinity and femininity as opposites. However, this normative way of doing gender is contradicted by a contextual specificity of appropriate performance of gender such as young women drinking beer on a summers day. These alcohol consumption habits become automated and ingrained and are constantly being reproduced with new carriers being introduced to this knowledge (Warde 2005, Higginson et al. 2014).

Acceptable practice performance requires participants to know which type of drink, glassware and brands are the most appropriate.

5.3 The body

The physical body is bound up in this practice through the intoxication effect and the way in which participants perfect their body and image to get the 'right' look for the *proper night out*. Therefore, this section explores the presentation of the body followed by an exploration of the corporeal experience.

In presenting the 'right' look the young women in the study performed a femininity, that Paechter (2006) has described as a hyper femininity, a type of 'over the top' femininity. This hyper femininity exists in relation to practice materials in the form of a heterosexual, sexualised, celebrity-like performance which comprises a fully made-

up face, stylised hair, dress and crucially heels. This particular form of femininity is critical to engaging in the *proper night out* and supports the young women to maintain their femininity whilst drinking.

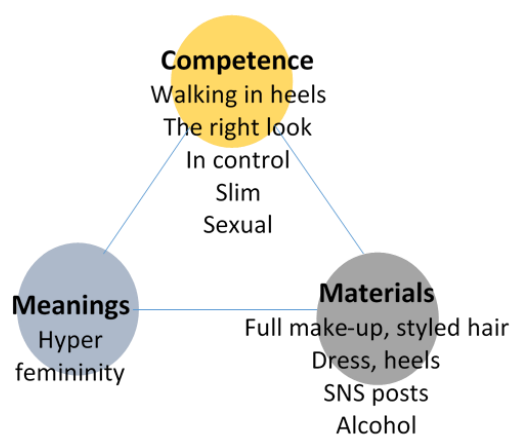


Diagram 7: Conceptualisation of the performance of hyper femininity on the proper night out using the three element model

The gaze of others was seen to evoke self-monitoring behaviour, with the fear of not conforming to the dominant codes and rules of the practice. Female participants in the study were concerned about how they presented themselves. Presenting themselves on SNS in the desired image; slim, sexual and smiling or pouting was an integral part of the feminine practice of the *'proper night out'*. This links with other work which has found that self-presentation was highly gendered and SNS visual imagery presented a polished and posed performance (Atkinson et al. 2014, Moewaka Barnes et al. 2016, Lyons et al. 2014b). This was particularly prevalent in the postings of new profile pictures where a hyper femininity was performed. It was these postings that elicited the most 'likes' on Facebook and receiving over twenty 'likes' for these postings was not uncommon. These postings demonstrate their competence performance of hyper femininity and are carefully selected to ensure that any failings are not posted. In describing and posting these images, the young women indicate an understanding of what they need to do to present and display an acceptable hyper feminine identity.

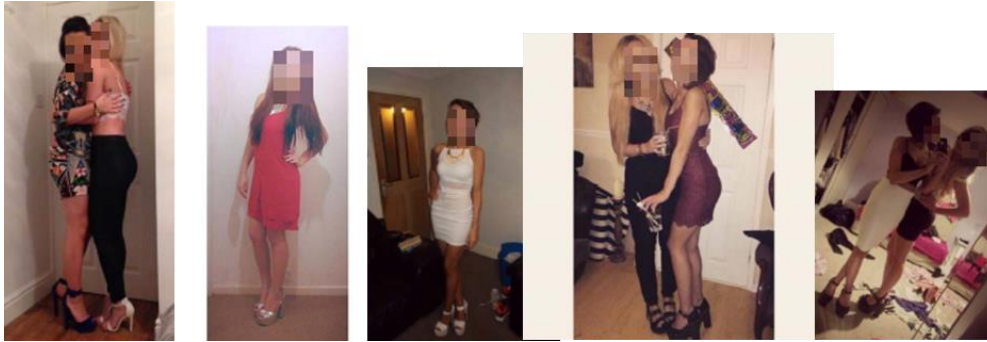


Illustration 6: Examples of SNS content, presentations of hyper femininity

Emily (AG) in her third interview described how she no longer participated in the practice because she believed she did not meet the standards of the ideal image. Previously Emily had posted or been tagged in photos where she was presenting the ‘right look’, but in the later stages of the research, no photographs were posted. Emily gave an account of trying to achieve a more desired look through embarking on a programme of dieting and exercising and non-participation in the practice of a *proper night out*.

Emily: *[By not going out] I can concentrate on losing weight and buying nice clothes and looking like I’m kind of [stops as Emily get upset].*

Leah: *She’s getting upset cos she doesn’t look like a model.*

Emily describes in the narrative below how a family wedding and in particular the accompanying hen night (*proper night out*) is adding extra pressure on her to conform to a normative femininity. As well as producing a body which in appearance is constitutive of normative femininity, Emily’s account also refers to concerns about performing appropriate femininity.

Emily: *I’m a bridesmaid but me cousin, her daughter’s chief bridesmaid, and she is very skinny and very lovely looking and she is a teacher and she*

is this and she's that and she's got her own house and the first relationship she ever walked into was bloody fantastic and amazing, and now she's getting married after being with him for however many years and they've got a mortgage, and they've got two cats and la la la and all this. And she lords it over you – how perfect. She likes to remind me how fat I am or how I am not doing good in my career. “Why aren't you in a relationship? Why can't you hold down a stable relationship Emily “?

Emily in her narrative is constructed as failing in her femininity (Allen 2014) and this construction prevents her further participation in the *proper night out*. Her account also reveals the insecurity she is experiencing during the planning stages of the *proper night out* when the rules and know-how have changed to include middle class aspirations and values.

In contrast to the young women in the study, the young men were less likely to talk about their bodies and their presentation of self, except where it involved a more unusual style such as fancy dress or an 'all-white' dress code. This reluctance to talk about their self-presentation is construed as performing traditional masculinity as preening and caring about how they look has traditionally been more associated with feminine traits. However, there is a tension between these traditional feminine traits and the embodied masculinity of social media content. This is demonstrated by the visual context posted by the young men which displays image conscious young men, compliant with informal dress codes and tones and muscular bodies.

The bodily sensations described by the young people in the study informed the practice performance including (non)acceptable bodily actions, feelings and emotions related to being drunk, and even provided the cut off point for when an acceptable drunkenness had been reached. The embodied experience of intoxication relates to the physical and bodily pleasures and sensations involved in becoming drunk and how experiences of being a physical body are intertwined with the social environment. For example, Amy (CG1) below explains that the embodied drunk experience enables her to act differently and more confidently than her sober self.

Amy: *I have always drank on a big night out. Cos I am naturally shy I couldn't go out and not drink. It would be too awkward.*

Researcher: *So having a drink gives you that confidence? To socialise and to speak to people?*

Amy: *I am fine with me mates like but when you go out and there is loads of people round you. Stuff like that and if you didn't have a drink I'd just like stand there when everyone else was dancing or whatever. So that's why I drink.*

Similarly, Emily and Leah (AG) discuss below how the embodied drunk experience gives them social confidence with stories about their dancing and about their presentation of self.

Emily: *I am really bad at dancing me but I think I am boss when I am drunk though.*

Leah: *I think we all do don't we? {Laughter}.*

Researcher: *Is it like a confidence thing? With the alcohol?*

Leah: *It boosts you up. We think how gorgeous we look.*

The participants are constructing pharmacological intoxication as building social confidence, both in terms of actions, such as conversation and dancing and with belonging. The corporeal effect of the alcohol builds confidence in Leah and Emily providing assurance that they have the 'right' look for participating in and performing the *proper night out*. The corporeal effect of alcohol on the body was also constructed as a relaxant.

Mark: *I think while I am working I can be highly strung trying to get stuff done. So it [alcohol] just sort of releases the tension I am holding throughout the night I can start to relax and it's just sort of like my level comes down and it's just like "oh that's dead nice".*

In the following extract Natalie (CG1) described reaching a 'limit' constructed as a type of cut-off point in her drinking when her embodied experience of intoxication was at its peak. At this point she constructed a discourse of stopping drinking.

Natalie: *Ye I drink to my limits so I can have a good time.*

Researcher: *What does the limit look like?*

Natalie: *It depends how I feel. I don't really count it up. I just think OK this is the right point to stop*

This was further supported by Olivia (CG1) who agreed "*Ye I know if I am drunk I will stop drinking*" although for Isla (CG1) continuing to consume alcohol was presented as

a physical impossibility when she had reached this point. *“If I want to get drunk I’ll just keep drinking. Ooh I think I’m dead drunk I’ll just have a few more and I just can’t”*.

The ‘limit’ was constructed differently by the participants and was related to the constituting know-how about the amount of alcohol that could be consumed before becoming ‘too’ intoxicated. This limit was different for each of the young people and a host of contributory and preventative factors were related to the embodied intoxication experience. For example, Emily (AG) explains that *“it hits you differently sometimes doesn’t it. I mean sometimes we can drink for hours and hours and it won’t hit you. And sometimes you have like two and it hits you straight away”*. Here Emily constructs a narrative of listening to what your body is telling you rather than reliance on limits based on quantity as demanded by policy. Andy (CG2) explained though that the approach wasn’t always reliable and that sometimes you don’t know how drunk you are until you go outside and *“it’s when the cold air hits you”* and then you realise. In other words, although some of the participants relied on the corporeal experience to recognise when they had reached a desired level of intoxication this was not always reliable and could result in a poor intoxicated performance.

Alcohol consumption was associated with an intoxicated and pleasurable corporeal experience that was integral to the practice of a *proper night out*. This embodied experience enabled a confident, socially adept performance of the practice. The body could also provide physical signals for when the desired intoxication level had been reached. However, this was not always perceived to be a reliable method of controlling the pharmaceutical intoxication effect as there was a risk that intoxication becomes too intense and not controllable. The body was also the site of the gendered ‘right’

look for the practice of the *proper night out*. Getting the 'right' look for the young women was grounded in performing a hyper femininity as part of the practice, and for young men performing a toned and groomed masculinity.

5.4 Spaces

Chapter 4 outlined how the practice as performance is performed differently according to the social, temporal, economic, gendered and cultural organisation of people's everyday lives (Shove et al. 2012). In particular, two types of performance were narrated by the young people in the study, according to whether they had reached the legal drinking age or were younger than this. Those that had reached the legal drinking age performed the sub-practice of '*going out*' in clubs/bars in the nearby city/ town centre. Those under the legal age of consumption generally performed '*going out*' in an alternative location, such as a house party or another party venue. There were some exceptions when the young people were able to appear to be of legal drinking age by using fake photo identification (ID). However, the narrations of these experiences were infrequent suggesting that their access to fake ID could be limited. Being under age and refused entry was also considered to be '*humiliating*' and relates to being (in)competent in the performance of the practice (see chapter 7).

However, the material arrangement of building and spaces was not limited to types of venue, but also includes internal spaces. Different internal bar spaces were associated with different social groups. This is best demonstrated in the quote by Amy (CG1) below.

Amy: *Cos like when I used to go to xxx there used to be like the [place name] people and there was a [place name] corner where everyone in that corner was from like [place name] and then now it's like xxx where there is the new [place name] corner.*

Similarly, Claire(CG2), below, describes a preferred internal place within a bar.

Claire: *In xxx we have like our window and when we go in, like, everyone is there and then somehow we move everyone out the way.*

Claire's use of the word 'everybody' reveals her belief that the area by the window was the most desirable internal place in that venue. 'Ownership' of this desirable internal space becomes an important purpose achieved by moving the unwanted 'other' away from the space.

The young women identified some internal spaces within the night time economy as being more 'risky', for example the dance floor was considered a place where unwanted sexual advances were experienced. Similarly, some venues were regarded as friendlier and less threatening in terms of sexual risk. Venues that were regarded as safer included 'student bars' and 'local bars' and drinking in more private spaces in the form of house parties (Bancroft et al. 2015). Amy and Charlotte below from CG1 (Interview 2) discuss what they perceive to be the more threatening environments of mainstream clubs and late night bars.

Amy: *You would always check on your mates and stuff like that so just you know like. It's probably not like that bad in you know like student bars cos like people aren't obviously as drunk but people*

in like clubs it's probably worse but just as long as you don't get too bad.

Researcher: *What do you mean by obviously not as drunk?*

Amy: *I don't know, like, because when people got to town they have more, like, got the intention to get really badly drunk cos most people don't go out that much so it's like a proper night out but if you are just going like a bar and its dead casual and you are just sitting in there just like having a little drink and speaking to your mates so people aren't going to be like as social.*

Researcher: *So those places are less predatory?*

Amy: *Yes [Charlotte nods].*

Researcher: *And you are agreeing there Charlotte?*

Charlotte: *Yes*

Researcher: *So if you are out into town for a proper night out then you kinda of know that that might happen more on one of these nights?*

Charlotte: *Yes*

Amy and Charlotte explained that they perceived some venues to be more risky than others and within the confines of a very crowded bar it was almost expected that someone would assault you. The inebriated state of these others is perceived as making the situation riskier for themselves. Engaging in practices of interest that relate to risk enabled the young women to avoid these situations or prevent them from escalating. These practices of interest form part of the skills, know-how and knowledge

that make up the constitutive element of competence and are discussed in detail in chapter 7.

Natalie (CG1) explained that house parties were usually not regarded as being threatening or dangerous as most of those attending belonged to the same friendship group:

Researcher: *So at a house party is that different or the same?*

Natalie: *Never found it threatening whatsoever. Cos everyone knows each other.*

Researcher: *And if someone new comes along that doesn't change it?*

Natalie: *No. Cos everyone will like be there on hand really.*

Natalie like other young participants reported that house parties were usually considered less risky spaces than those identified in the night time economy. The use of the word 'everyone' in this context suggests that any danger or threat could be dealt with by the number of people attending.

The localised form of the practice resulted in the use of public or private spaces and venues for the sub-practice of 'going out', which related to the ages of the groups of young people and whether they had reached the legal drinking age. These localised forms of the practice highlighted that adaptations can be made to the practice. In addition, public spaces were thought of as more hazardous than private spaces, and some internal spaces in public venues were considered to be more hazardous than other internal spaces.

5.5 Finance

Having the necessary financial resources available to participate in the *proper night out* was a prerequisite of the practice entity. Failure to secure the necessary financial resource would result in non-participation unless alternative strategies could be employed. These strategies for those that had access to them, included using credit cards, savings, and borrowing from parents. Some of the female participants also talked about getting drinks bought for them although this was regarded as hazardous due to the risk of spiking (discussed in chapter 7). Some participants also talked about going to venues where they knew the drinks would be cheaper, pre-drinking, side-drinking (drinking cheap alcohol in licensed premises purchased elsewhere) and going to venues where prices were cheaper. In an extract from Interview 1 CG2 Becky and Claire explain how they earn enough from their part time jobs to enable them to go out on a Saturday.

Researcher: *So the cost of going out is that something that affects you?*

Becky: *It's like a week's pay day after like you've bought yourself something to wear. You can spend 70 quid out and you're wages are gone.*

Claire: *And you have to wait until Sunday [pay day].*

Becky: *Yer you only have a day to wait and then its pay day.*

Claire: *Yer but you have to save your wages from the Sunday until the Saturday and then it's gone.*

Becky continues to explain how her parents would be asked to 'lend' her money if she had run out of funds by the following Saturday.

Becky: *If you had no money for drink and were asked to go out you'd ask your mum to lend until pay day.*

Leah, Emily, Jack and Mark (Interview 1 CG1) all have low incomes (the national minimum apprenticeship wage during the study was £2.73 per hour) and live independently from their parents explain the different strategies in the discussion below they use to enable them to continue their participation.

Researcher: *What about money? Is it expensive?*

Leah: *Not really no. When we drink in [pre-drinking] we get like take-aways [cheap alcohol from the supermarket] and stuff as well.*

Mark: *And normally when we got up to town we normally go to like the divey cheap places.*

The friendship group plan cheaper ways of drinking including buying alcohol from supermarkets for pre-drinks and going to cheaper bars "divey places". The use of this term, alongside Emily's denials and a lack of SNS content showing these visits suggests the group are aware that their practice is likely to be viewed as lacking in social capital and that they will be denigrated for this type of drinking. The low incomes of this group and their individual living expenses mean that their night outs are infrequent – rarely more than once a month. The SNS post below from Jack illustrates this point:

Love to know how all these dole heads afford nice cars, go on all these holidays and festivals.. I've got two jobs and can just about afford a night out once a month

Leah also described saving for her “*wetting the baby's head*” party, the budget for this was £100. She decided the best value was to buy ‘*booze*’ from ‘*the Asda*’ as off-trade purchasing was thought to buy more alcohol than on-trade purchasing. The AG group had previously discussed the importance of paying their utility bills first after they were paid. Any money left over after paying out for essentials could then be used to finance the *proper night out*. Overspending by this group was limited to Jack who dipping into his savings or the use of Mark’s credit card or a loan from his parents.

Emily: *I wouldn't mind we take big bottles of vodka out with us but we'll still buy vodka whilst we are out as well. And we'll still buy constantly.*

Researcher: *What do you do about the cost?*

Emily: *Mark has credit card!! [all laugh].*

Mark: *I go to the limit and I wake up the next day and go SHIT SHIT. I'm like that I think me card has been cloned. And I ring up and say me cards been cloned can you tell me where I spent it? And there like well you spent this much here and I'm like yes that was me.*

Jack: *I spent £220 for one night – two weeks ago.*

Researcher: *But doesn't that mean if you spend that amount of money then other things have to go? Do you have £220 that you can just spend on drink?*

Jack: *I have savings so I do.*

Mark: *And then I go to me mum and dad.*

Researcher: *So mum and dad will step in then and you've got some savings [to Jack].*

Jack: *Well I haven't no more.*

The young people's constructions of the *proper night out* are contradictory, on the one hand constituting it as inexpensive and on the other as expensive. They can be understood to be participating but in a financially constrained context which leads to them rely on other strategies to enable their participation. Reliance on these alternative funding strategies can lead to secondary risks, both immediate such as accepting drinks and risking being spiked, to more distant risks such as longer term financial issues.

5.6 Technological items

The use of technological items, particularly mobile phones and their affordances of SNS were relevant to the sub-practices. The affordances of SNS were utilised in the planning sub-practice, social groups were messaged about the proposed night out, and a SNS group or event formed. Group discussions would then follow and included proposed dates, meeting places and other arrangements. For those young people under 18 years old group messaging also served the purpose of designating someone

to buy the alcohol for the event. The affordances of SNS were also utilised for story narration. SNS content was posted to detail stories. This is illustrated below.



Illustration 7: Examples of online storytelling

The performances of the young people in the study were watched and judged by their wider social group(s) through the affordances of SNS. Judgements are displayed by the wider social network who are invited to ‘like’ or ‘share’ posts, photographs and statuses. These images and posts are not themselves passive objects but are part of the materials that make up the practice. *Proper night out* SNS content posted by some study participants had up to forty ‘likes’. New profile pictures of participants dressed up for the night out and posing for the camera, as well as photos of beverages associated with prosperity and more exclusive venues, received the most ‘likes’. Group members watched how others acted and in turn were watched themselves. Judgement is demonstrated by the following posts, about nights out and the number of ‘likes’ received, which were 12 and 6 respectively.

Champaign, cocktails and gossip X — with xx and 2 others at xx xx. 12 people like this.

WHAT WAS LAST NIGHT @xx22 @xx — with xx and xxx. Xx and 5 others like this.

The integration of mobile technology within the practice also reduced the risk of physical harm coming to individuals who may have been separated from their group by reuniting them quicker. Charlotte (CG1) narrated a story of losing a male friend on a *proper night out* who had forgotten to take his phone with him after pre-drinks. They were unable to contact their friend by phone and unfortunately whilst on his own without his phone he was mugged. Charlotte explained that they tried to find him but had not been able to and the next morning he messaged her to say “*I got my phone but I got mugged on my way home*”. Although we cannot know, there may have been the possibility that if he had had his phone with him Charlotte may have been able to meet up with him and see him safely home in the shared taxi.

SNS is a mediator through which the practice of the *proper night out* is performed and experienced, and which can be shaped and carefully crafted to provide a desired and appropriate online performance.

5.7 Summary

Analysis of the narratives of the participants and related SNS content enabled a linked set of materials integral to the practice of a *proper night out* to be identified across all three groups of young people. Materials identified were alcohol, the corporeal, spaces, finance and mobile phones. The practice itself is shaped and affected by these materials, which are themselves unequally distributed and need to be understood as broad categories that overlap with meaning, in terms of making sense of the practice and with the know-how required to use them competently and appropriately.

The practice-as-entity is reliant on these material arrangements. For example, without alcohol there would be no *proper night out*. That is to say if one of the material

elements was not present there is a risk that the young people would not be able to participate in the identified practice competently. For example, not having the financial resources necessary puts the performance at risk, and lacking mobile technology was thought to put oneself in physical danger.

The consumption of alcohol and drinking to get drunk were constituted as necessary to the *proper night out*. Drinking and drunkenness enabled the young people to have fun or at least be seen as having fun during the practice through sharing on SNS. The materiality of alcohol impacted on the performance and the enactment of the practice. For example, the drinking of alcohol was highly gendered and the 'wrong' choice of drink type or glassware could affect the young people's gendered performance of the *proper night out*.

Using the body as a way of informing when a desired intoxication level had been reached was narrated by some of the participants, but was a high risk strategy. The 'limit' was constructed differently by the participants and was related to the constituting know-how about the amount of alcohol that could be consumed before becoming 'too' intoxicated. This limit was different for each of the young people and a host of contributory and preventative contextual factors were related to how drunk they may feel on any given occasion. Going past the 'limit' for some young people is constructed as unacceptable and risky in terms of the embodied intoxication experience and being 'too' drunk. In this way excessive drunkenness was constructed as unintentional and the young people avoided being positioned as being irresponsible. The 'limit' also represents the balancing act of intoxication; drinking enough to perform the practice competently but not to put ones' physical safety at

risk or to lose bodily function. The way in which participants perfected their body and image to get the 'right' look and the sharing of this look was constitutive of the practice. Not getting the right look right could also put the practice performance at risk.

The different internal places and venues that were constitutive of the *proper night out* were constructed as more or less risky. House party venues were constructed as the least risky places whilst mainstream bars and clubs in the night time economy were constructed as the most risky. Internal spaces within venues such as bars and clubs were also constructed as more or less risky, with dance floors being perceived as being the most hazardous internal space due to the perceived risk from sexual predators.

Financial resources were necessary to facilitate participation in the practice unless other strategies could be employed to enable participation. Strategies employed in a financially constrained context including buying on credit, relying on alcoholic drinks being bought by others or side-drinking. These alternative strategies were however associated with risk including getting into debt, being spiked, and having alcohol confiscated.

The use of mobile phones and their affordances of SNS were integral to the practice. They were used in the organising, planning and the storytelling stages of the practice. The use of mobile technology enabled performances of the practice to be shared with a wider social network. This is not without risk as there is a danger that inappropriate or poor performance content is shared, and this provided a regulatory measure to the practice (Shove et al. 2012). To reduce this risk, content is carefully crafted and controlled by the participants. Any content that is judged to have not met the required

standard is either removed or 'untagged'. An awareness of the different audiences for different SNS is key, and judgements are made by the young people as to what content is appropriate for which site and its corresponding audience.

The material arrangements of the practice of the *proper night out* shape and affect the conceptualisations of risk. However, it is the use of these materials combined with meaningful engagement with them, and the rules and tacit knowledge that come together to form the practice that supports a more nuanced understanding of risk. The following two chapters then will build on the materiality of the practice by exploring the shared social meanings of the practice and the competence and know-how needed to perform the practice competently.

Chapter 6: Shared meanings of a *proper night out*

6.1 Introduction

As explained previously, meanings relate to the common understandings of the practice (Maller 2012) and to the social and symbolic significance of the practice (Shove et al. 2012). In other words, meaning is about making sense of the activity (Røpke 2009). Four sets of interconnected meanings associated with the practice of the *proper night out* were identified; firstly maintaining or gaining social recognition or status which relates to the accrual of capital and draws on the work of Bourdieu (1984). Social recognition and status were also seen to be influenced by performances of masculinities and femininities. Secondly, shared meaning identified was sociability and the reinforcing of emotional bonds through friendships echoing previous research on alcohol (Niland et al. 2013, Seaman and Ikegwuonu 2010, Hutton and Wright 2014, de Visser et al. 2013, MacLean 2015). Caring was the third set of meanings identified which connected to the previous meaning of friendship. The final set of meanings related to the *proper night out* were associated with group belonging and draws on cultural theories of risk. Young people not adhering to practice norms risked being excluded from the social group (Douglas 1992, Mackiewicz 2012, Tansey and O'Riordan 1999). Similarly, to the materials identified in the previous chapter, the shared meanings although constitutive of the practice, are not new elements and indeed are not novel to this practice, and have an existence beyond the practice of a *proper night out*.

6.2 Social recognition

The social networks of the young people were varied and consisted of different social groupings, such as close and intimate friends, less close friends, acquaintances, work colleagues and family members. These social networks were further extended via open SNS (for example Twitter) to a wider public network, and via private SNS (for example Facebook) to friends of friends through third party connections (Elovici et al. 2014), and sometimes people they were not familiar with, '*randomers*', but have since accepted as 'friends'.

Social recognition and status were acquired by the study participants through their performances of the practice of a *proper night out* virtually (on SNS or through the re-telling) and in 'real' time, where real time is the practice as performance as it happens. These different performances add a temporal element to the practice, spreading the performances across the different sub-practices of the *proper night out* and through subsequent days and weeks as the performance is shared on social media.

Accumulating or maintaining social recognition was associated with all the practice materials detailed in the previous chapter, and relates to the acquisition of capital through the performance of the practice (Bourdieu 1977). Using Bourdieu's conceptualisations of 'capital' enables an exploration of how young people gain recognition and enhance their status (Lunnay et al. 2011). When valued and symbolically recognised by their social networks, forms of capital (specifically physical and cultural capital) can be exchanged for social capital which builds social position and status. Physical capital refers to the promotion, management and transformation

of the body through practice in a manner that is recognised as having value (Shilling 2012).

Drawing on data from both SNS content and the group interviews, the participants created physical capital by managing (or not) their embodied experience of intoxication. The performance of an accepted level of drunkenness is shared and 'promoted' within their social peer networks during 'real' time, and also performed and promoted on SNS for their wider networks. Fun, social and glamorous aspects of the practice were displayed on SNS as forms of both cultural and physical capital, with the intention of gaining approval for this content in the form of 'likes', 'shares' or 'retweets'. Content sharing on the more public sites (Facebook and Twitter) was a carefully managed, polished and acceptable performance of their intoxicated selves, displayed to the numerous and varied audiences which then provided the participants with the option to accumulate physical capital. Photographs or content mentioning loss of bodily control was either not posted or referred to in posts in a humorous and thus acceptable way, as illustrated in the examples below from AG and CG1.

Probably too drunk for words

Last night's drinksssss! Such an ace night!!

#foreveramess

Discussions with the groups reveal that there are usually additional photographs and videos from the practice that are not deemed suitable for these types of SNS. Some of these photographs were shared with me during the interviews and revealed a much more vividly intoxicated image of the participants. The intoxicated images shared during the interview included photos and videos of participants' drunkenly dancing

with a balloon, falling into a wall and vomiting into a bin. These types of images could be and were shared with a close and exclusive group of friends through storytelling or Snapchat. This display and promotion of their intoxicated selves was lacking in physical capital value that was exchangeable for social capital, explaining why the sharing of these images was restricted.

Paradoxically, the display and promotion of these intoxicated images and associated loss of bodily control within their peer groups does however constitute a form of bonding social capital (Fukuyama 2001). Before the widespread use of social media bonding, social capital was a much more attainable and accessible form of capital for working class young people (Boeck et al. 2006). This relates to Bourdieu's conceptualisations of 'taste'; the manner in which people adopt various preferences and lifestyles that are rooted in material and cultural constraints (Bourdieu 1984). These images lead to admiration amongst their peers but the social capital associated with it has little exchange value, as it is not valued by the wider social networks (Shilling 2012). In other words, sharing the corporeal experiences with their close social networks gives them status and recognition within that group, even though this status is not legitimated by being extended into wider social networks.

Physical capital was acquired during the *proper night out* through the transformation of the body, for example for girls by encouraging the decoration of the body and for boys by having well-toned bodies (Shilling 2012). The female participants in the group accumulated physical capital by posting highly feminised images of themselves. Within these images they are highly groomed, tanned, dressed in evening wear frequently sexualised through low cut tops and short skirts and the wearing of high heels. This

physical capital is then converted to cultural and social capital through the number of 'likes', 'share' and retweets received for each image posted. In much the same way, male participants accumulate physical capital by posting images of themselves that embody their masculinities. These images included posed photos wearing tight fitting tops revealing toned torsos and arms, posing with young women as described previously, and images of masculine drinks such as beers. These bodily displays seem to contradict the working class 'body' image described by Shilling (2012) and Connell (1987), that manifests itself in manual labour (paid or unpaid). However, the corporeal experience they describe has little social value outside of its social class and there is little to be gained from widespread sharing of this type of imagery. The images that are widely shared therefore are an attempt to reflect the aesthetic values and tastes of the dominant classes and in this way the participants who lack economic and symbolic capital can accumulate physical, cultural and social capital. In other words, the management and display of the body is central to the acquisition of social recognition and status for the participants.

In much the same way, only the consumption of expensive or exclusive drinks and attendance at acceptable venues were posted on SNS. As a group they generally have less access to economic and cultural capital. Despite this, the SNS content shared with wider social networks only featured consumption of drinks that led to the acquisition of social or cultural capital, through their association with exclusivity, sophistication and expense. Examples included cocktails, drinks in unusual shaped glasses, the more exclusive alcohol brands and champagne. This is illustrated by the status update below (CH2). The spelling mistake in the post perhaps indicates that Champagne is not commonly drunk by the young woman.

Champaign, cocktails and gossip

During the 14-month period of the study not one participant 'checked-in' or posted on social media that they had been in what AG group described as the '*cheap divey places*'. Similarly purchasing cheaper alcohol from supermarkets was not displayed on SNS, although study participants narrated their experiences of this in the interviews. This type of content was not posted as it exposes a lack of 'taste' as conceptualised by Bourdieu (1984) and would reveal a background that is not valued by the wider society. For example, James (CG1) below:

James: *Well lots of places have got deals on ale. Like Absolute, like, your 70 cl for £13 quid in Asda and I'll go and buy like 5 of them. I bought like 6 of them last year cos they last you ages. Cos they are normally like 23 quid. You save a fortune buying in bulk.*

Cheaper alcohol bought from the supermarket was usually drunk at pre-drinks (as discussed more fully in chapter 7). However, although the '*pre-drinking*' sub-practice was posted on SNS, it was predominantly image and presentation of self that was posted. The SNS content did not feature cheap supermarket bought drinks. Where drinks were shown, unless they were exclusive branded products, the branding remained anonymous and the image was of sophisticated glassware, for example champagne flutes. This type of drinking, which is part of a working class performance of the *proper night out*, is unlikely to fit with middle class notions of taste and aesthetic preference, and therefore unlikely to lead to the acquisition of capital and status and is not shared.

The building of capital and associated social status is implicit in the taken for grantedness understandings of the social practice. SNS content relating to the *proper night out* is shared when it can be converted to capital, thus accumulating status and social recognition. Social recognition in the lived experience of these young people is achieved by participation in the practice and the sharing of this practice. Non-participation in the practice by these young people puts the accumulation of capital and social recognition at risk.

6.3 Sociability

Determined drunkenness was constitutive of the *proper night out* and was part of the shared understandings of the practice. Not drinking on a *proper night out* was constituted by the young people as 'boring' and lacking in 'fun', in other words in binary opposition to the second meaning of the practice 'sociability'. A *proper night out* was constituted as a time to relax and as a reward for a hard working week. Mark (AG) described the practice and its associations with drunkenness as being synonymous with tension relief and relaxation.

The *proper night out* is constructed as a 'planned letting go' which is a release from the constrained structure of the formalised working week (Szmigin et al. 2008). Through sharing the drunken experience and adhering to the practice norms of acceptable drunkenness, the practice becomes associated with fun, 'reinforcing emotional bonds through friendship', being sociable and a reward for a hard working week. The existing literature has identified a link between young people's alcohol practices and 'doing' friendship relationships (Niland et al. 2013, MacLean 2015, Percy et al. 2011, Waitt and De Jong 2014, Brown and Gregg 2012). The participants' desire

to reinforce emotional bonds with friends, and to manage their personal relationships are constitutive of the practice of a *proper night out* as is evident from the quotes below from Natalie and Kate (CG1):

Natalie: *We have like this little group of friends and we do like a house party every Friday.*

Kate: *I just go out [on a proper night out] with some friends*

During the group interviews the young people were asked what they thought was the most important part of the practice and what they looked forward to the most? There was a general consensus from all participants that the social aspect of the night and being with friends was an important and favoured part of the practice. Illustrated by the discussion below from CG1:

Researcher: *So when you are out for a proper night out, what do you think is the most important part of the evening?*

Kate: *Company – like who you are going with.*

Liam: *The social aspect really of things. That's the whole point a social gathering [on the proper night out] really. The drink is like only one aspect of it. It's a gathering of friends really.*

Researcher: *And what would you say. Amy?*

Amy: *It probably is just like the friends thing and you know just having a good time. Stuff like that.*

The importance of cementing and sustaining friendships through participating in the *proper night out* is further illustrated by this discussion with CG2. In the discussion

below Harry, Claire, Andy and Emma agree that relaxing with friends, having time to talk and catching up is an important part of this practice.

Researcher: *What do you look forward to on the proper night out?*

Harry: *Just a night out with friends.*

Claire: *I think it's just letting your hair down and spending time with friends.*

Researcher: *What's your favourite part then?*

Harry: *I dunno know. A night out with friends – being with friends I guess. Cos when I say I see them all the time. I see them either in college or when I go to the shops where they work. So a pub night out or a night out in xx [proper night out] you get to talk to them.*

This implicit understanding that we see in the discussion above about reinforcing friendships is deeply embedded within the practice. The material components of the practices are integral to supporting the group bonding with the provision of spaces for talking and the affordances of mobile phones for re-telling stories. The meaning is associated with the sub-practices of *'pre-drinking'*, *'getting ready'* and *'storytelling'*, which provide both the spatial and temporal opportunities for these emotional bonds to be further cemented, and for the group to bond together further in friendship. This group bonding is also expressed through sharing a 'look' by enabling group members to identify with each other through a shared image. This is best demonstrated by this quote from Charlotte (CG1) whose friendship group dress in a similar style for a *proper night out*:

Charlotte: *I suppose though that we are all individual. But I would say that you could look at us and say that they are a group of friends.*

The meaning of 'sociability' had associations with fun, relaxation and friendship and provided respondents with a release from work pressures and other responsibilities. Sociability was not simply about cementing friendships through togetherness and sharing, but also about adhering to the localised practice norms and understanding the 'rules' of the practice. There is a kind of acceptance within the groups that to achieve social recognition and status you need to have 'fun' or at least be seen as having 'fun', and this stems from how their practice performance is viewed, at least for these groups of young people anyway.

6.4 Caring

There is an understanding from many of the young people that they will care for their friends when participating in a *proper night out* and their friends, if required, will care for them. The provision of care was complicated, gendered and could damage or strengthen friendships. This practice meaning was associated with friendship and interconnected to practices of interest that were part of the routinised know-how of the practice.

The group's friendship practices are integral to the way they make sense of their drinking which is regarded as a core activity for their friendship. The young people in the study explained that participation in the *proper night out* was dependent on the participation of close friends. Drinking alone was viewed negatively and drinking, particularly as constitutive of the *proper night out*, was viewed as a social rather than individual experience. Doing and constructing friendship was associated with the

practice through a narrative of operating care provision which took the form of looking out 'for' and 'after' drunken friends. This type of risk regulation, by friends, was prevalent across the groups (Crawshaw 2002). Care provision included; supporting each other when vomiting, helping each other to get home and supporting each other through any other drink related accidents linked to the practice as well as physical protection. Claire, Becky and Emma (CG2) took comfort from being in a group with male members who were positioned in the masculine role of 'protector'.

Researcher: *Do you prefer that, going out, in mixed groups?*

Claire: *I think you feel more safe when you go out with lads cos if there's trouble then you just push them towards them. You'll be like you go and sort it.*

Researcher: *And how does that work for the lads?*

Claire: *Well there hasn't been any trouble when I've been out so.. but there's always that comforting - you've got someone to back you up.*

Emma: *I was in Amsterdam in the summer and there was only three girls and there were five boys who went and a few of the lads were, like, big big boys and when you are in a country like Amsterdam, cos it was really rough, we knew we were going there to like have really nice time and see amazing sights and stuff, but we were also going to like drink [proper night out] and when you go into somewhere really rough and you want to feel protected. And I felt*

much more comfortable going out [on a proper night out] in like a foreign place with a group of lads to like look after me. Cos I knew that they'd never like let any trouble come to us. I think it's in that sense of looking after us I think it's good.

Becky: *Yer I think like that. Not that I can get more drunk or anything it's more like if a lad pushed you, like if a lad started on you, and went to try and hit you or something rather than you not being able to do anything cos you are a girl you've got lads there that'll say stop it. So you feel comfortable.*

Researcher: *So you feel less vulnerable?*

Becky: *Yeh.*

Protection practices reflect and cement hegemonic masculinity. The discussions in the group interviews suggest this is done by both acknowledging and celebrating the protective masculine routinised habits that are embedded within the practice. Mark (AG) described the end of a *proper night out*, and how he would always make sure that his friend Emily got home safely even when this took him out of his way, as they considered this to be an integral part of their friendship.

Andy (CG2) however took exception to having the role of protector forced upon him and instead expressed a preference for going out with a group of male friends. When with male friends he did not have to step into the protector role. Instead a reciprocal caring relationship was described as illustrated in the discussion below. However hegemonic masculinity was still evident in the discussion when Andy explained that he would have to look after any young women if they were out with his group.

Researcher: *You talked a bit about if you go out with girls that that is the kind of role you take on?*

Andy: *Yes. You just feel like you have to look after them rather than worry about yourself.*

Researcher: *And do you worry about each other when you go out as group of lads. Do you take care of each other?*

Andy: *If they get in a state but you don't really need to.*

Researcher: *Do you think lads are more capable?*

Andy: *Ye it depends what state they get in if they get too drunk then you have to look after them but no one's really lightweight that I go out with. I'm the lightweight [laughs].*

Researcher: *So there is something there about - you can all drink and you can all drink quite a lot and perhaps you're the one that can't drink as much as everybody else...*

Andy: *It's weird one of them like one of my mates who is like 6'4" he is massive but he is the biggest lightweight which is weird cos you'd think that he could drink more but he gets worse. He is 6'4" and massive so I can't like pick him up or anything. I couldn't carry him or anything. We was on our way home from xx once and he couldn't walk any more he was just lying on the floor and it should have been about a half an hour walk, but it took us three hours, cos of how drunk he was. And it was pissing down as well.*

Researcher: *But you kept going. You didn't leave him? You didn't just sort yourself out?*

Andy: *No but then he's had to do it for me...*

Researcher: *So he's taken you home then so there is an expectation that you are not meant to get that drunk and into that state, but if you do..*

Andy: *But if someone does yes then.*

Researcher: *You'll look out for each other?*

Andy: *Yes.*

Researcher: *And you said as well didn't you that you like going out with the lads cos...?.*

Andy: *Cos they look after you.*

The discussion above illustrates the fluidity and equity of the construction of the role of carer in an all-male friendship group. Although caring has traditionally been associated with femininity, some researchers have conceptualised this trait in men as 'caring masculinities' (Elliott 2015). Caring masculinities are constructed as the rejection of hegemonic masculinity ideals such as protector and instead embraces values of care and interdependence (Elliott 2015, Gärtner et al. 2006, Scambor et al. 2005). The analysis in this study suggests that this rejection of traditional masculinity is not only allowed within the *proper night out*, but is also constitutive of the rules of the practice which interconnects with the consumption of alcohol. Illustrated by Andy with this statement; "*if they get too drunk you have to look after them.*" Caring masculinities was only evident in well-established all-male friendship groups. In the

example given, the friendship group that Andy is discussing had been friends since primary school.

This 'caring' construction was also evident in the discussion on all-female friendship groups as this extract (CG2) demonstrates:

Researcher: *Ye you've got that bit of ..[interrupted] does anyone else kind of play a caring protective role when you go out?*

Emma: *I'm like that I looked after Rachel when she was drunk.*

Rachel: *That was one time [laughter].*

Researcher: *Does that happen generally when you go out that there is someone?*

Emma: *There's always someone [agreement].*

As well as demonstrating that female friends also construct a role of care-giver. This extract above also illustrates how Rachel distances herself from the drunk 'other' by stating that this was the only time that she needed care. The following discussion also from CG2 demonstrates how other forms of care are provided including safeguarding of dignity and protection from harm.

Researcher: *Do you always go with a friend? [To the toilets on a proper night out].*

Becky: *Yeh I always go with a friend it's just like safety isn't it. If someone like tries to rob your bag in the toilets and you have someone with you...*

Claire: *And they do never have locks so you need to have someone there to stand by it and keep the door shut for you.*

Researcher: *And has someone tried to rob your bag?*

Becky: *Ye it happened in xxx. On like one of my first nights out.*

The extract above reveals how female friendships on the *proper night out* are associated with interdependence and safety. In the example above, protection from violence (in the form of robbery) connects with protection of dignity whilst using the toilet. In this way, traditional notions of femininity and respectability are incorporated into the practices of interest relating to risk embedded in a *proper night out*. Female friendships were however not always trusted by the young women in the study who expressed a narrative of 'looking out' for themselves. The interdependence and co-operation described in the previous extract and reinforced in the following extract was integral to the practices of interest. These practices of interest related to safety, affected how the young women used spaces in the night time environment, and were an integral element of the practice. Rachel (CG2) below, explains the importance of going to the toilet with another group member to ensure she is not left isolated and alone by the rest of the group.

Rachel: *I would only go if I needed to [to the toilet] but obviously my friend would come with me. And I would say come with me cos they never have locks on them. So she will like hold the door and that's like a communal time – that's bonding.*

Researcher: *So why wouldn't you go on your own?*

Rachel: *In case you came out and no one, was there and like, your friends had all gone or they had moved. Or they had gone to another floor or something and you can't find them. That's scary. If at least you have got one friend with you and they have all moved you have got someone with you.*

The notion of suitable care givers and those deserving of care was gendered by the study participants with young men being thought of as loyal and dependable, and young women fickle, non-dependable and emotional; the risky 'other'. This notion of women as the 'fickle' and 'untrustworthy' other is in direct contrast to idealised notions of respectable femininity that convey caring and dependability (Hutton et al. 2016). This is best demonstrated by this discussion between Andy and Becky (CG2):

Andy: *Boys are a bit more loyalish.*

Becky: *Yes definitely.*

Researcher: *So lads are seen as 'stable' and to have a protecting role on a night out. That's how you would see them [to the girls] and is that how you see yourselves [to the boys]?*

Andy: *We would just look out for each other.*

Researcher: *Well it doesn't sound like the girls do?*

Rachel: *Well I know girls who do. I know some who wouldn't but I know some who would. There's always one like especially if it's a big group. You know. Or you are about to leave and it's where is so and so? Bloody hell she has gone – can't find her.*

This dichotomy around perceptions of young women's participation in the practice on the one hand as caring and on the other as fickle and untrustworthy is indicative of how young women's drunkenness troubles social and cultural boundaries of respectable femininities. This is in direct contrast to perceptions of young men's participation which does not challenge hegemonic masculinity. This gendered double standard privileges the drunken masculinity of young men over young women's in the practice performance.

The practice is associated with caring for drunken friends including supporting each other when suffering from the physical intoxication effects of alcohol, and navigating the practice safely. Caring was interconnected to a set of gendered practices of interest which are themselves constitutive of the practice know-how and included; protection, reciprocal looking after, dignity preservation and navigating the practice safely. Caring for friends within the practice is associated with a wider set of culturally embedded understandings of how masculinity and femininity should be performed and how they are contested.

6.5 Group belonging

The consequences of not adhering to the practice's norms and values could be severe and result in exclusion from the group and even being excluded from the practice. This exclusion was routinised and habitual, forming part of the tacit knowledge of the group, rather than a thought through rationale as demonstrated by this discussion (CG2). Harry started this exchange by stating that no one was left out of his group with the assertion that "*we just carry on*". However, Becky had seen Harry and his friendship group during a *proper night out* and challenged him on his recollection.

Becky: *No you lie. Right I was at the train station the other day to go to town and you were with Freya and Holly and literally she wasn't even there yet. I was waiting at xx to get the train and she was already a mess.*

Harry: *Who? Freya?*

Becky: *An absolute mess, yeh and I was like "Oh My God I am so ashamed of you". I wouldn't want to be out with her.*

The conversation continued and I asked questions of Harry which stretched him to think more about what had taken place. He conceded in the discussion below that a young woman had effectively been excluded from the group.

Researcher: *But that wouldn't stop you going out with her again and inviting her out again?*

Harry: *I haven't invited her out since actually?*

Researcher: *And why is that?*

Harry: *I just don't think of it. I tend to leave people out.*

Researcher: *OK but why? I'm just trying to get where you are going.*

Harry: *No I just haven't. I invite a load of people the main people who usually come out who don't always say no. Who I know will come out. Every time we invited Freya it was mixed opinions with her she'd say "yes" at one point and then all of a sudden make an excuse not to come out and I just gave up on her in the end.*

Researcher: *So Freya's not now one of the group, is she? And when she came out, it all went a bit wrong?*

Harry: *Can't be bothered looking after people who are going to get stupidly drunk. That's nothing to do with me.*

The discussion above illustrates how Harry's response to Freya's drunken actions and lack of competence was so deeply automated and implicit that Harry originally had no immediate recall of it. It only came to light after he was challenged by another participant who had seen them on the night out and by further challenging questioning. Freya, who was already on the periphery of the group, was ousted by Harry and the other group members for her failure to adhere to the shared group meanings around appropriate or fitting behaviour (Spotswood et al. 2015).

Engaging in intoxicating drinking practices showed oneself as socially engaged, belonging and integral to a group which is necessary for gaining symbolic capital (Demant and Østergaard 2007, Percy et al. 2011, Harrison et al. 2011). In line with other research non-drinkers were constructed by study participants as boring, unsocial, not fitting in and consequently lacking in cultural and social capital (Conroy and de Visser 2012, Regan and Morrison 2011). Not drinking was considered too risky by the study participants as they felt they would be 'othered', ostracised and excluded by the group as demonstrated by Lauren below (Interview 1 CG2):

Researcher: *If you said I'm not drinking tonight. Would that be acceptable?*

Lauren: *Its "Oh you bore you might as well go home then" [Laughter].*

In situations where people are comfortable in any given social practice – their perception of that particular environment is often tacit and habitual (Bourdieu 1977). Thus in order to comprehend the ‘how’ and ‘why’, we need to understand the ‘shared’ and ‘taken-for-granted’ tacit knowledge which frames the narrative. Answering questions about not drinking, as shown in the previous and following excerpts, was met with hilarity and laughter attesting to the ridiculous nature of the question. Within the performance of the interview any suggestion that drinking alcohol was not essential to the practice was likely to have an adverse consequence on social capital. The responses to questions about not drinking are framed in a way that construct drunkenness with belonging and having ‘fun’. Jack (AG) provides an example below where he discusses the difficulty of not drinking in a drinking environment and the pressure to belong and conform to the cultural norm.

Researcher: *Would you go out and sit in the pub and say just an orange juice?*

Jack: *No chance [laughter].*

Researcher: *And why do you think that is?*

Jack: *I dunno. It's the atmosphere I think everyone else is drinking around aren't they. So I just wanna fit in.*

In this context the risks related to not drinking within the practice of the *proper night out* or admitting to not drinking within the context of the group discussion are greater than those associated with drinking. As Crawshaw & Bunton (2009) note, the possible actions within a given situation are limited and they become routine. As such, alcohol consumption is a constitutive part of this practice.

Two of the participants (AG) described how they kept their intoxication hidden from parents or partners as they were fearful of a negative response. The practice adapted around this localised fear, with additional practices of interest incorporated. The participants explained they achieved this by not posting stories on Facebook, instead using snapchat to divulge to selected and trusted friends, not drinking with the significant others, avoiding phone conversations when intoxicated and deactivating SNS accounts. Emily (age 21 years) in her first interview explains the occasions where her alcohol consumption is kept secret:

Emily: *But I can't drink too much can I? cos if me mum...*

Leah: *To be fair you do drink too much.*

Emily: *Yeh but I have to ring her before I get drunk and say I am going to bed now and put me phone off. So she won't ring me when I am drunk. There was one time when I was proper smashed...*

Researcher: *So you don't want her ringing when you are drunk?*

Emily: *No, cos me mum she's not really a drinker is she me mum?*

Leah: *It's not that she dead strict, she's dead firm with things, like, she won't let her smoke or things like that. Cos she's been, like, a midwife, she does counselling. She not a snob. She's not one of them, but she's very firm with what she likes and what she doesn't like. What she likes Emily doing and what she doesn't like Emily doing. But she's not a snob or anything like that.*

Emily: *No. she knows that I do drink obviously but I wouldn't go up to her and be like hey mum. I would never go for a drink with me mum or anything like that.*

Drawing on their experiences Emily and Leah recognised how avoiding conversations with Emily's mum when intoxicated was important as this protected Emily from her mum's disapproval. From the conversation above Leah explains that Emily's mum has clear expectations about the actions her daughter (Emily) should and should not be engaged in. Poor health practices such as smoking cigarettes and excessive drinking are concerning to her mum. Leah suggests that Emily's mum's role as a health professional; midwife and a counsellor explains why she does not endorse these practices. Keeping excessive drinking episodes' secret from her mum is important to Emily as she doesn't want to upset her mum and is worried about displeasing her. This also extends to Emily's Facebook postings although she does not have her mother as a 'friend' on Facebook she still censors postings to limit the risk of her mum finding out from others.

Researcher: *So who do you connect with then on Facebook? Parents would you have parents? [Everyone laughs].*

Emily: *No. And I won't have anything on about me smoking and drinking on Facebook in case me mum finds out.*

The tacit knowledge is acknowledged through shared group laughter and the question is seen as being absurd as 'of course' Emily wouldn't have her mum as a friend on Facebook. Emily talks in her interviews about being a 'good daughter' and helping her mum with her cleaning and decorating. The risk is that Emily's mum discovers her

daughter drinks excessively and smokes and becomes disappointed in her. Emily is not clear what consequences any displeasure would lead to and is equally clear that she does not want to find out. Her pre-existing knowledge results in her anticipating a negative outcome and so she attempts to hide her drinking practices from her mum.

Moore and Burgess (2011) explain this type of risk related behaviour as being 'ritualistic' in nature and therefore detached from the risk. In other words, localised practice knowledge adapted in response to a perceived risk. For Emily then, she has adapted her practice to reveal a set of localised routines surrounding keeping her intoxication secret from her mum including not having her mother as a friend on Facebook, censoring photo content (in case her mum is shown them by a third party) and turning her phone off, preventing her from speaking to her mum when she is intoxicated. These routines have been embedded in the practice and are part of Emily's tacit knowledge (Nettleton and Green 2014). Although Emily and Leah are not able to articulate and possibly do not consciously know what the consequences would be of Emily's mum finding out about excessive drinking episodes, there is a shared and taken for granted assumption of negativity that frames these routine actions (Nettleton and Green 2014). Jack (AG) describes the negative impact of his drinking on his relationship with his partner and the importance of keeping accounts of his intoxication from his partner.

Researcher: *So you don't drink as a couple then?*

Jack: *There's always murder to be honest.*

Researcher: *Do you fight then if you have had a drink together?*

Jack: *Well I do anyway. No she's alright she just takes it, but I speak to her like shit I admit it. But it's probably cos I'm insecure or something.*

Emily: *Aah.*

Jack: *I am I admit it*

The conversation is continued later on in the interview:

Researcher: *So is there anything that you worry about Jack when you're drinking?*

Jack: *Me bird seeing me – that's the only thing [laughter from the group].*

Researcher: *So your girlfriend is kinda like the monitor?*

Leah: *You can see him being in a relationship on Facebook and then blocking xx [girlfriend] so he's hiding things from xx.*

Jack: *I have to deactivate her [from Facebook] don't I? When I go out.*

Jack is fearful that his drinking will result in his girlfriend's disapproval and ultimately in her ending their relationship. He adapts his localised practice to make sure she does not find out about his drunken episodes through social media, which has previously involved deactivating his Facebook account. However, Jack is clear about the consequences of being caught by his partner of being intoxicated. He describes himself as being insecure in the relationship and is worried about her leaving him. Jack expresses feelings of uncertainty and insecurity which Crawshaw & Bunton (2009) argue are typical of a threat being made to an individual's sense of order and

continuity. Drawing on theories of multiple masculinities (Connell 1987, Connell 2005) Jack is using his excessive alcohol consumption to demonstrate masculine competence (de Visser and Smith 2007) whilst also framing his masculinities differently with a blunt honesty when talking about his relationship. This is not surprising as most accounts of hegemonic masculinity do include positive actions (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005) which serve women's interests. In this case Jack's honesty about his relationship may assure his partner that he committed to the relationship.

Participants frequented familiar venues where shared understandings and ways of being, aligned with their practice understandings and ways of being. Some participants in the study expressed the tensions experienced when going to a new bar or club not previously known to them. Mark (AG) told me that care needed to be taken when going anywhere new as you could not be sure how the existing client group would perceive you and thus caution was required.

Mark: *Yes, well if we ever go to a different club, there will always be a bit cautious of how we are acting in there. Because we could just be being ourselves and someone could just take massive offense to you for some reason. So we are always a bit aware of what we are doing. But when we go to where we normally go it's sort of like we don't have to give it a second thought. Because we are so comfortable we know that's what we normally do there. So we'll just go there.*

Mark recognises that in going to an unfamiliar venue in the night time economy, where you are unrecognised and unknown you are likely to be unversed with the group codes of behaviour and may be targeted as the 'other' as a result. Mark and his group

recognise that in the bars and clubs they frequent more often they can be less cautious about being themselves, as they are familiar with the practice norms. The risk here is not of being excluded or 'othered' from his immediate social group but a wider group of individuals (patrons of the night time economy), who are not known to him.

6.6 Summary

Four sets of interconnected, shared meanings were identified as constitutive of the *proper night out*; social recognition, sociability, caring and belonging which related to the embodied understanding of drunkenness as normal and socially acceptable.

The first set of meanings was associated with the accumulation or maintenance of social status through the acquisition of capital. When the *proper night out* was valued and recognised by social networks of the participants, physical and cultural capital was accrued and converted to social capital through sharing on SNS, and the number of likes and shares accumulated. This accrual of capital builds social recognition and status and was associated with a wider set of culturally embedded understandings of performances of masculinity, femininity and sociability. To receive this social recognition, the 'rules' of the practice needed to be followed including achieving an acceptable level of drunkenness and the sharing of SNS content that fits with middle class notions of taste. Thus, social recognition and status is achieved both by participating in the practice and the sharing of exemplar practice performances. The affordances of SNS combine with practice performance to provide opportunities for social recognition. Non-participation in the practice or a poor performance puts the young people at risk of not accumulating capital and thus negatively affecting their social status.

The drinking of large amounts of alcohol was considered a matter of course contributing to the taken for grantedness of drunkenness as constitutive of the *proper night out*. Not drinking or even drinking more moderately was external to the lived experience of the *proper night out* and not part of the shared understandings of the practice. Not drinking on a *proper night out* was constituted as 'boring' and lacking in 'fun' in other words in binary opposition to the second meaning of the practice 'sociability'. Through sharing the experience and adhering to the practice norms, the practice becomes associated with friendship and being sociable. Sociability has associations with fun, play and status and provided respondents with a release from work pressures and other responsibilities.

The shared understandings of the practice mean that there is a mutual expectation that friends on a *proper night out* will care for each other. This provision of care was extremely complicated, localised, gendered and connected to the previous meaning of friendship, through how it could strengthen or conversely damage friendships. Friends were the most frequently mentioned element incorporated into the practices of interest. Friends were expected to look out for each other and support each other through the negative effects of intoxication, such as passing out, vomiting and a lack of bodily control. The young women were positioned in the study both as being in need of care in terms of protection from sexual violence and as care givers. The young men were positioned as protectors of young women and as care givers in a reciprocal care giving/receiving relationship. This lived experience of the *proper night out* serves to associate risk with being left on one's own (being vulnerable to physical or sexual violence) and experiencing the negative physical effects of alcohol pharmacological intoxication. The former connects with group belonging and stresses the importance

of adhering to the practice norms and 'rules', both as they relate to the practice performance of a *proper night out*, and to wider social networks and connected and interrelated practices.

The consequences of not adhering to practice norms and the 'rules' of the practice could be severe and in some cases resulted in being excluded from the group and further participation in the practice. This side-lining of group members who had transgressed the rules of the practice was most severe with members who were on the edges of the group and was associated with the previous meaning of sociability. Young people who were considered fun and regular participants were more likely to be forgiven for transgressions than those on the periphery of the group.

These shared and embedded meanings of determined drunkenness, social recognition, sociability, caring and belonging, are in the main unreflexive and habitual. They also bring the practice and the group together and gives a sense of what is 'right' or 'fitting' (Spotswood et al. 2015). Young people who perform these practice meanings poorly or inadequately, risk losing social status, being disapproved of, not being cared for and ultimately being excluded from the group and the practice.

Chapter 7: Competences of a *proper night out*

7.1 Introduction

Competences are understood to mean “multiple forms of understandings and practical knowledgeability” (Shove et al. 2012; p23). Competences incorporate shared knowledge about what is good, acceptable and appropriate (and what is not), rules and learned skills, and know-how to perform the practice. Two sets of competences were identified as integral to the practice. The first set of competences identified relates to alcohol consumption and consists of the following three sub competences; drinking to get drunk; controlled drinking and finally acceptable not drinking. The second set of competences relate to having the skills and knowledge to navigate the performance of the *proper night out* safely. For most of the young women in this study, they narrated a performance that was in the most part governed by practices of interest relating to safety and self-performance. The young men in contrast negotiated the practice by constructing a masculine identity through the provision of protection, displays of physical toughness and loss of bodily control. That is to say, the competences of the drinking practice are situated within different gender performances.

7.2 Alcohol consumption

The first section in this chapter is organised around the competences that relate to alcohol consumption. Drinking to get drunk was a common theme in discussions with the participants when discussing their participation in a *proper night out*. However, this drinking was clearly gendered and is discussed first. For some of the young people there was a line which they did not want to cross in terms of their intoxication. This

type of controlled drinking is then considered and finally occasions when it is acceptable not to drink are discussed.

7.2.1 *Drinking to get drunk on a proper night out*

The link between drunkenness and a successful performance of the *proper night out* was undisputed by the participants, even by those who considered themselves to be infrequent participators in the practice. In other words, the embodied experience of intoxication was an essential component of the practice. However, this intoxication experience was highly gendered in that different practice performances were enacted by the young men and women.

Being able to consume excessive amounts of alcohol is linked to the assertion of traditional masculinities, male identity (Lemle and Mishkind 1989) and masculine traits such as risk-taking, physical toughness and aggression (de Visser and McDonnell 2012, Gefou-Madianou 2002). That is to say, drinking practices are sites where notions of appropriate and inappropriate masculinity are performed and negotiated (Leyshon 2005, Peralta 2007).

The young men in the study rehearsed a narrative of drinking large amounts of alcohol, best illustrated by Jack who stated “I was fxxxing bladdered” when describing a night out. Liam and Harry constructed a ‘keep on drinking’ narrative unless they were prevented from continuing, for example by running out of money. This typical framing of a *proper night out* by male participants reflects this masculine gender norm of consuming excessive amounts of alcohol. Stories of determined drunkenness as meaningful masculine practice were narrated at every interview and were reflected in

SNS content. A good practice performance then is achieved by young men when intoxicated.

Similar to the findings of Thurnell-Read (2013) and Kimmel (2008), the young men enacted an embodied masculinity which was narrated as less controlled and less constrained than traditional masculinities associated with heavy drinking (Campbell 2000). The *proper night out* in these stories was embodied through the loss of bodily control; falling over, passing out, violence, vomiting and other effects of intoxication. This failure to control drunkenness and restrain the corporeal is both celebrated and praised within their immediate peer networks, and is illustrated by Mark (AG) and Andy (CG2) in the quotes below.

Mark: *Well I was out last Friday with people from work and that ended very badly. I ended up in A&E. I fell down the stairs.*

Andy: *I think it was about 8.00 in the morning one time and we had just drank through the night and I was sitting on one of those [electric boxes] throwing up with school kids walking past. It was a morning that was probably about the worst I've been. It was quite embarrassing. I got in and I couldn't walk up the stairs he [friend] had to take me up the stairs and I went the toilet and collapsed on the bathroom floor.*

Enjoyment of this loss of control is expressed and seems to be associated with the retelling of the story and the reliving of the experience which then becomes both pleasurable and frequently humorous. The telling of the story becomes part of the performance of gender construction. This construction of a proper night out is associated with masculinity and a pleasurable loss of control which is both

universalised and normalised in the retelling. In other words, alcohol induced loss of control is performative of a young masculinity and is part of the 'know-how' for appropriate performance of the practice.

This performance of young masculinities is frequently both self-policed and regulated by other group members. As carriers of the practice, the young men have gained the knowledge that within the situated practices of the *proper night out*, excess alcohol consumption is something that is 'just done'. For instance, Liam explains that there is no direct pressure to drink. However, his description of the '*feeling*' and '*atmosphere*' of the night combine with his description of feeling '*awkward*' if he didn't drink constitute part of the tacit and unspoken rules. These rules determine that drinking alcohol is the most appropriate and only acceptable way of performing the practice.

Liam: *No one would put any pressure on you or anything. You would feel awkward but if everyone else was sort of like drunk.*

Researcher: *And have you done it? [not got drunk].*

Liam: *Not personally. I have always had drink.*

Researcher: *So there might not be pressure as such but...*

Liam: *There is just a feeling that you've got to.*

Researcher: *So that's what you've got to do, on that kind of night [proper night out].*

Liam: *Yer pretty much. It's the feeling of the night and the atmosphere really.*

Drinking excessively has commonly not been regarded as performing acceptable femininity (Bailey et al. 2015). Rather drinking excessively has been linked to unfeminine behaviours including risky sexual and uncaring behaviours (de Visser and McDonnell 2012). Despite this, the young women in the study frequently referenced drinking alcohol excessively and constituted it as an important function within their social lives. Thereby referencing a tension between their social selves, drinking pleasure and performing conventional femininities.

Some of the young women rehearsed a narrative similar to the young men in the study of drinking to excess with no control. For example, Sophie (CG1) stated that she just drunk as much as she could and further emphasised that although she knew when to stop she chose not to. Emily (AG) also constructed an intentional out of control drunkenness. However, these discourses are context specific and both Emily and Sophie employed practices of interest to regulate situated risks contradicting their own earlier narratives, and demonstrating, a more controlled loss of control (Measham 2006, Hackley et al. 2008). Examples of practices of interest included taking it in turns to be extremely drunk, having a plan for getting home and 'coupling' with a male friend. The latter example also legitimises the drunkenness of both Emily and Sophie by situating it as unintentional.

Other young women in the study narrated a discourse of a more controlled drunkenness (Demant and Järvinen 2011). For example, Amy (CG1) explains below how she is the "sensible one" who drinks less and is therefore able to look after her friends and her 'caring role' means she has legitimate time out from alcohol consumption (see section 7.2.2).

Amy: *I am like the most sensible one ...would always check on your mates and stuff, like that, so, you're just you know like not drinking as much.*

And Phoebe (CG1) in a similar fashion talked about drinking within her limit which she defined as “*like tipsy but not drunk*”. This is a contraposition with her previous description of participating in pre-drinks and then drinking five pitchers of cocktails (20 units). Phoebe’s narrative is constitutive of controlled drinking using a practice of interest incorporating drinking cocktails where she knows what her desired intoxication state is and how much alcohol she can drink not to go over this limit and lose bodily control. By constituting her intoxication as ‘tipsy’, Phoebe is rehearsing a respectable femininity within the discussions that distances her intoxicated self from the working class drunk depicted in popular discourses (Haydock 2014c). In this way then, drunkenness is not in binary opposition to conventional femininities as responsibility around controlled drinking and risk management are a part of the practice performances.

Similar to the practice of the young men, the drunk performances of the young women were watched and judged by other group members. This watching and judging was both classed and gendered. Claire (CG2) described a situation where a young woman who was on the outer fringes of the group, contravenes the group norms, by crying over something Claire considers unimportant.

Claire: *If someone’s crying I would just tell them to shut up. I am quite a harsh person unless it’s important and I would obviously be interested. But if it’s like some stupid girl that tags along!*

In this regard, the care giving on a night out is boundaried and only close friends are considered deserving and thus afforded the luxury of being looked after. Those on the periphery of the group are considered the most undeserving of care and described as “stupid” or “always crying”. Claire distances herself from the young women in her story based on notions of femininity but also by the use of the word “stupid” which is constitutive of class (Lawler 2005, Roberts 1999). By using the term ‘stupid’ Claire distances herself from the young woman’s actions by positioning her as the working class ‘other’ as unintelligent and uncultured (Holt and Griffin 2005). By not drinking responsibly or managing her drunkenness the young woman’s actions as described by Claire resonate with the young working class binge drinker depicted in Government and media discourses, which Claire has distanced herself from.

Emma (CG2) also told a story about a group member who was thought to get drunk too quickly, not be able to walk properly and was considered a ‘moaner’.

Emma: *There’s like one girl in my friends groups, she gets like, well she doesn’t eat very much so she gets drunk, really, really quickly. But she gets like really bad and she can’t walk like after three drinks and we’ve stopped inviting her out now cos she moans like all the time and it’s like a burden on other people. I know it sounds horrible but.. [tails off].*

Claire: *It wrecks your night doesn’t it?*

Emma: *Yer it wrecks every ones night if there’s like twenty of us in a group and she is sat on the floor moaning and doesn’t want to go anywhere then*

someone has to take her home and somebody has to look after her so it is a bit annoying.

This extract illustrates that social acceptance from the group is dependent on one's ability to consume alcohol whilst maintaining a level of drunkenness that does not spoil or prevent the practice for other group members. These regulatory judgements are not restricted to their own social group, but are also made about other young people. The extract below from Emily (AG) illustrates how the group talk about the drunken 'other':

Emily: *They start dropping like flies. Like "oohh" and crying and domestics and stuff like that. And someone's kicking off cos she can't find her shoes.*

In this way, Emily is cementing the practice norms and embedding herself in the group by distancing herself from the unfeminine 'other'. The excessive drunkenness of the 'other' is constituted as unfeminine through her aggressive behaviour, constituted as 'kicking off' and her lack of footwear. Other participants made similar statements for example James, Chloe and Isla from CG1 in their first interview and Becky from CG1 in the second interview.

James: *I've got a friend who will cry that much that we have to put her in a taxi cos she's just bit too tipsy and I'm like you're not coming out with us.*

Isla: *She [a friend] will just like pass out. And you just can't do that.*

Chloe: *I prefer going out with the lads – I'm not going to lie [laughter]. Girls always cry don't they? It's dead funny they always want a heart to heart. Girls can never walk in their heels neither.*

Becky: *People spilling their drinks cos they can't walk in their heels. That's really annoying.*

The young people portrayed the 'other' as drunken young women, who are characterised as being out of control, incompetent and unfeminine. In this way they denigrate specific young women who are excessively drunk as unattractive (for example, by crying or moaning) and unfeminine (for example, by not being able to walk in heels). They also draw upon a generalising discourse that 'other' women act in this manner. For example, Chloe's statement drew confirmatory laughter from the rest of the group, possibly arising from her narration of the self-evident. This is summarised in this statement from Claire from CG2 in interview 2.

Claire: *Its girls I just hate them – they just stress me out. They are either crying or knocking me over. I was on the stairs the other day and this girl fell over and it caused like a dominoes effect and she was just like a mess. Then she just got up and was laughing and I was "what are you laughing for"?*

Researcher: *You are talking about girls as though you are not a girl?*

Claire: *No. But I am not like that I am not that bad. I probably am but I don't see myself as being.*

In this example Claire articulates the 'other' as 'messy' girls. When questioned about how she distanced herself from this young woman she did this by narrating a discourse of "it's not me it's them". It is surprising that the young women in the study join in with the young men in constructing other young women as unattractive and messy.

However, by doing so Claire is creating a distance between her own 'drunken self' and the unfavourable but dominant public discourse of irresponsible and unfeminine young working class women drinkers. However, this type of positioning is highly complex as illustrated by Claire's last sentence. While she ridicules drinking practices, denigrated by Government and media discourses, there is also recognition that she is a part of those practices on the other.

The following extract illustrates how the young women's drinking performances are policed by their boyfriends.

Leah: *And were not just going to kick off when it comes like us three. But it's different when it's all other lads and things like boyfriends. I could not go to town with my boyfriend it's just a no go. Because they'd get jealous, people will look and obviously people will look in town they always do. The only reason for going to town for single people is to pull. Do you know what I mean? So if you're there with your boyfriend and someone is looking and your boyfriend starts arguing then and starts fighting and then they start this snarling business. Before you know it they are outside fighting so if I was to go out it'd be with the right company. Not boyfriends, not lads that are dead boisterous and get dead jealous dead easy and are protective. You just go to have a nice time, it's not for people to be snarling and fighting.*

Leah draws on a discourse of hegemonic masculinity to explain the difficulties with participating in the practice of a *proper night out* with her boyfriend. Leah explains that going out with her boyfriend will end up in a fight as the heteronormative nature

of the performance will result in other men looking (at her), and her boyfriend responding with violence or the threat of violence. Going out with friends other than her boyfriend enables her to escape this policing and to have fun. Leah's account is in direct contrast to Sophie's earlier account where she uses her boyfriend's presence to legitimise her drunkenness in the night time economy.

7.2.2 *Controlled drinking*

In this section the actions and habits that the young people use to support and continue their performativity whilst managing and negotiating risk are identified. Time periods during the practice when the young people were legitimately able to take a 'time out' from consuming alcohol, thus engaging in a controlled drunkenness are also conceptualised and discussed.

Participants described their awareness of the expectation that they would drink and referred to being drunk as a normative experience. Not drinking was considered unacceptable when on a *proper night out* (Piacentini and Banister 2009). However the use of practices of interest in an attempt to maintain a desired level of intoxication was acceptable within this discourse of controlled drunkenness (Niland 2014). The following five practices of interest were identified; drinking cocktails, alternating alcoholic drinks with water, sharing drinks, topping up levels and drinking the same amount as friends. These practices were presented as a way of controlling intoxication allowing the participants to fit in (by being drunk) and present an acceptable performance of a *proper night out* (Niland 2014, Measham and Brain 2005, Fry 2011).

As we have seen the perception that drinking cocktails as a way of limiting the amount of alcohol drunk was common, particularly in the two college groups, as this excerpt with CG1 demonstrates:

Researcher: *What kind of amounts would you be drinking?*

Phoebe: *Well you can get two pitchers for ten pounds at Weatherspoon's – cocktails and stuff and each one gives four glasses and I have like four or five of them.*

Researcher: *Glasses or pitchers?*

Phoebe: *Pitchers.*

Researcher: *4 or 5 pitchers for you? Ok and that's not drinking very much?*

Phoebe: *No not really. Cos it's like it doesn't really affect you.*

Charlotte: *I don't think they put that much actual alcohol in there do they? It's mainly like fruit juice and stuff.*

Phoebe: *Yer but they taste nice.*

The perception here is that cocktails are not as intoxicating as other types of alcoholic beverage. The use of the phrase *"It's mainly like fruit juice..."* possibly relates to the inclusion of a non-alcoholic mixer making it appear to be less strong than a non-mixed equivalent. The use of the term *"stuff"* is thought to be a reference to the large amounts of ice and fruit, which frequently appear in cocktails. The ice slowly melts into the drink diluting the taste of the alcohol perhaps masking the strength of the drink. Either way it would appear to be a practice that is somewhat flawed, as a considerable

amount of alcohol could be drunk unintentionally, which is concerning from a self-regulation drinking point of view.

Government 'sensible' drinking guidelines suggest swapping an alcoholic drink with a soft drink or with water (NHS 2015). Some of the young people's practices resonated with this advice best illustrated by Becky (CG2), below:

Becky: *But then I have a glass of water for every drink I have. After I've had a drink I'll have a glass of water. Cos I get dehydrated.*

However, similar to the previous risk practice this convention can be flawed as demonstrated by Emily (AG) in the quote below. Emily narrated a story of not feeling well on a night out and as a result she switched to drinking water. However, despite feeling that she wasn't intoxicated she re-counted how she vomited from being drunk. The drinking of water gave the illusion of managing her intoxication and demonstrates the precariousness of embodied management of pharmacological intoxication.

Emily: *But its dead funny cos when we went out at Christmas I was thinking that I was sober drinking water. I was like yeh yeh I'm fine. You're the one that's drunk [to friend] cos I had heartburn and then we got home and I just puked everywhere and I was like nooo I'm drunk. I'm really drunk. I'm really, really drunk. So, It's weird isn't it?*

Emily's narrations reveal a poor performance of the management of her intoxication levels as she had deceived herself into thinking she was controlling her drunkenness by switching from drinking alcohol to water. However, her discourse serves to avoid being positioned as an irresponsible drinker as the outcome was unintentional. Her

intoxicated state and loss of bodily control becomes acceptable as it was 'clearly' unintentional.

Although not hugely prevalent amongst the groups, another practice of interest described below to negotiate control over levels of intoxication is the 'sharing' of drinks. Claire (CG2) explains below, how she and her boyfriend share their drinks, constructing 'drink sharing' as less intoxicating, cheaper and a way of maintaining a desired intoxication level rather than increasing it.

Claire: *Then you go the xxx and its 2 for 1 so we'll get like. What do we normally get – the tequila ones? It's like desperados (tequila flavoured beer) but it's not desperados and they're 2 for 1 so it's like £3 for two drinks so I'll probably just share one. I usually share with my boyfriend and then he'll get the next one and we'll just take it in turns.*

Sharing of drinks was restricted to intimate pairings of young people for example girlfriend and boyfriend in the quote above, or to larger units of drink such as a bottle of wine or vodka. Amy and Charlotte (CG2) discussed limiting the amount they drank during pre-drinks and then later in the discussion they talked about using alcohol to top up their intoxication levels later on in the night.

Researcher: *So how much do you think you drink when you are getting dressed and ready?*

Amy: *I don't know I don't drink that much.*

Charlotte: *Neither do I.*

Amy: *Ye like the whole night I probably don't drink as much as my mates.*

Charlotte: *It depends how much like time you have to actually get yourself ready as well. And then get over to xxx.*

Researcher: *So what do you drink when you are getting ready?*

Amy: *Like vodka and lemonade.*

Researcher: *So would you just say oh I will just have a couple? You would a put a limit on that? Would you?*

Amy: *I would just like have a glass or two. So it's not too much before you go out.*

We should be wary of assuming that Amy and Charlotte have consumed only a limited amount of alcohol as they do not provide a definition of how much alcohol is likely to be in a glass of vodka and lemonade. Charlotte explains that drinking large amounts of alcohol in the clubs of the night time environment is not feasible because of the expense, and because safety fears around spiking mean that the young women consume their drinks quickly. Rather, any drinks bought in bars and clubs are drunk quickly.

Charlotte: *When you are out in the clubs you don't really want to drink that much because a) they are quite expensive and b) you can't keep hold of them. And like on Friday. It's normally like just like a shot like every hour or something. But I only spent like £4 when I went out.*

These controlled drinking practices are all gendered with either the young men not engaging with these practices on nights out or not discussing them in the context of the mixed gender group discussions. Engaging in controlled drinking or even discussing controlled drinking may adversely affect the young men's masculine competence and affect the various forms of capital associated with their participation in the practice. The next practice of interest is the exception and one in which the young men did engage.

Matching the alcohol intake of your friends can be constructed as performing a legitimate masculinity, which Campbell (2000) termed 'drinking fitness'. However 'drinking fitness' can only be achieved with practice over time (Willott and Lyons 2012), so this practice can therefore be used to enable the young drinkers to judge their own levels of drunkenness. This is illustrated by Andy (CG2) who describes the lads' pre-drinks session, where they all drink the same amount of alcohol.

Researcher: *So you all roughly drink the same?*

Andy: *Up until a certain stage yeh.*

Researcher: *So does everybody bring something?*

Andy: *It depends how many there are. If there are only a few then we might just get a litre of vodka between us all just for a pre-drink – between 4 of us.*

A similar story is narrated by some of the young women in the study. Becky and Claire (CG2) below, match each other's drinking, and drink the same quantity of alcohol. In this way are able to track their own drinking in relation to each other, and not therefore have to rely on their own judgement to manage their intoxication levels.

Becky: *Well we normally go to xxxx and get 10 shots at the bar to start.*

Researcher: *So that's ten shots between you so that's five each and a cocktail.*

However, similar to the previous practices of interest identified from the data, drinking the same amount as friends could be flawed as a technique for self-regulating intoxication levels. As discussed in chapter 4 'the limit' maybe different for each person and is context specific.

Other studies have framed young people's drinking as 'bounded pleasure' or a 'controlled hedonism' (Szmigin et al. 2008, Niland 2014, Griffin et al. 2009). This is evident in the 'time out' practices of the participants in this study which enabled the young people to endeavour to control their intoxication. 'Time outs' are an important part of the practice of a *proper night out* and form part of the tacit and practical knowledge that enables an intoxicated participation that does not disrupt the practice. Without these 'time outs' from drinking the young people can become too intoxicated, lose control and not competently perform the practice. 'Time outs' serve the purpose of controlling pharmacological intoxication (or seeking to, anyway), and of providing space for other aspects of performance. These are legitimated because they too are approved practices. In other words, the practice has adapted in response to the 'risk' of becoming too drunk, which may interrupt or prevent the performance. These adaptations were routinised and formed part of the tacit knowledge leading to competence in the practice.

'Time outs' from drinking alcohol tended to be away from the main scene and were frequently material in nature and included eating spaces, toilets and dance floors. These material 'time outs' involved a break in drinking when other activities were

undertaken in the spaces; dancing, preening and 'care-giving' thus legitimising the time away from alcohol consumption during the performance.

CG1 participants co-constructed a narrative of a common understanding around 'tactical' drinking: Eating 'time outs' were an important part of the tactics employed to enable them control their levels of intoxication. This is illustrated in the extract below (CG1) where the group describe visiting fast food outlets during the *proper night out*.

James: *But it's one of those, like, if your falling asleep on the stairs just get up and you'll be fine. Have a bit of water. Or have a tactical chicken mcsandwich [McDonalds]. That's the one. Between bars.*

Researcher: *So is the idea that you can soak up a bit of the alcohol through a McDonalds?*

James: *Ye a tactical chicken burger. Sound! carry on!*

Charlotte: *It's probably one of the things I look forward to, as well, knowing, that I get to eat something. I always feel so much better.*

Lauren: *I love Mackie's breakfasts.*

James: *Its cos you're human. It's a Mackie's breakfast.*

Lauren: *I always leave everywhere early just so I can get me Mackie's.*

James: *Ye what time do they stop?*

Lauren: *I don't know.*

James: *It's tactical. You see going out is tactical – you have to plan it. You have to make sure you get it?*

Lauren: *Ye but the subway is 24 hours.*

Here the group reflect on eating 'time outs' as part of the practice. The growth of the night time economy and the availability of 24 hour eateries has afforded them the opportunity to take a break from the bars and clubs as the need arises. The participants recounted these eating time outs as a time away from alcohol but also as a social space. It afforded them the opportunity to catch up and talk away from the extreme noise levels of the bars where talking is practically impossible. Charlotte demonstrates the importance of these eating time outs with her statement "*It's probably one of the things I look forward to*".

The importance of a food 'time out' was also discussed by AG members, here they discuss a 15-hour drinking session that included three food 'time outs'.

Emily: *Oh my god when we went for that 15-hour or 12-hour [drinking session]. What was it 15 hours?*

Mark: *15!*

Leah: *Didn't you go to mackies [McDonalds] three times?*

Emily: *Yeh we had a three course meal we had two mackies and a subway [laughs].*

Whilst participating in a lengthy drinking occasion, Emily and Mark maintained a calculated level of intoxication during the extended session. Three food 'time outs'

were integral to their management of their intoxication during this event. In this way their participation in the *proper night out* was able to continue for fifteen hours.

Food 'time outs' were not limited to those participants whose intoxication occurred in the night time economy, but instead this practice travelled across drinking contexts. Liam below explains that obtaining food supplies was part of the preparation for a *proper night out* and Natalie (CG1) explains another option for getting a food 'time out', by ordering in.

Liam: *Occasional trips out to Mackie's. But it's only occasional cos we have already stocked up on microwave burgers and stuff like that.*

Researcher: *Oh so you think about food before the start of the night?*

Liam: *Someone is always going to be hungry. So we just like get something in advance and save the trouble later so ye we per plan that.*

Researcher: *So that's on your shopping list is it? With your alcohol - your food?*

Liam: *Ye, microwave chips and burgers*

Natalie: *That [food] always happens at a house party cos everyone is looking for food at a certain point. Depending on how bad they are and it is usually about 3 o'clock in the morning and you have to go and find somewhere and all the chippies are closed. Try and find a takeaway? Go online? Order a dominoes. Or I don't know sometimes the places that we go to there is a McDonalds down the road.*

In contrast to their counterparts drinking in the night time economy, food time outs for young people at house parties did not necessarily remove them from the drinking environment (unless they left the venue). At house parties the eating practices enabled group members to maintain their desired levels of intoxication by “*soaking up the alcohol*” with food. In this context, there was not necessarily a legitimate ‘pause’ in alcohol consumption. The affordances of 24 hour eateries enable participants of the practice within the night time environment a legitimate break from alcohol consumption that is not readily available to those whose practice is undertaken in private spaces.

7.3 Acceptable not drinking

As explained in the previous chapter, the determined drunkenness associated with the practice of the *proper night out* was interconnected to the meaning of sociability. However, there were occasions when not drinking was accepted as a legitimate part of the practice. Similar to other research findings, ‘not drinking’ was accepted by the groups when then the non-drinker was able to adopt the actions of the drinker, and was perceived as not ‘boring’ but ‘fun’ and ‘sociable’ (Piacentini and Banister 2009), or was engaged in a socially acceptable competing practice. For example, James (CG1) noted that that the actions of most people when not intoxicated are different to those who are, and this creates a division in their sense of being.

James: *I think it's only because you can tell when someone's not feeling it at all. A lot of times when someone's not drinking, sometimes not everyone... cos like, I can go out and not drink and still have a good time, but some people you can see it on their face and everyone's*

coming up to you – especially when they're pissed "saying what's the matter?", "What's the matter?" and it just like creates a bit of an atmosphere.

James explains how this division between drinkers and non-drinkers does not apply to him, although he was the only participant to do so. He described his sober self as still being able to participate in the *proper night out* and be seen to have a 'good time' when others are presumed to be unable to. James's 'strong character' and effervescent personality allowed him to take on the actions and confidence of an intoxicated person and to give a competent performance of the practice, permitting non-drinking, to be a viable option. Whilst others in the group, who are less outgoing are likely to be judged as not performing the practice in an acceptable way, if they do not reach a desired level of intoxication (Banister et al., 2013).

Engaging in a socially acceptable competing practice that excludes drinking, such as taking antibiotics, being pregnant or driving was accepted by the group and legitimised as a viable option for not drinking. These were deemed acceptable competing practice whereby an individual could participate in the *proper night out* without drinking alcohol and not risk being excluded or ostracised by the group. 'Driving' as a competing social practice is described by Piacentini & Banister (2009) as assuming a particular social role, such as the nominated driver. This is evident in the following extract from CG2 in their first interview:

Researcher: *Does anybody else drive?*

Amy: *Ye I would and sometimes as well I don't really feel like drinking and it's a good excuse to say "oh I'll drive" and everyone's like "that's a good idea".*

Researcher: *So that's acceptable then to say "I'm not drinking tonight because I'll drive".*

Amy: *Yeh.*

Not drinking on a *proper night out* interconnects with the embodied experience as discussed in chapter 5, and is only acceptable when an intoxicated like practice performance is enacted or an individual has an acceptable social role that legitimates the sober self.

7.4 Failure to manage intoxication

Percy et al (2011) warns that attempts to manage alcohol intake should not be considered strategies or techniques to reduce overall alcohol consumption. Instead, they argue that drinking habits and customs are used *"to achieve their overall drinking purpose and desired level of intoxication"* (Percy et al. 2011: p42). In other words, practices of interest relating to risk and alcohol consumption are focused on maintaining a desired intoxication level, and not an attempt to be less intoxicated. These practices of interest engaged in by the study participants illustrates this point. For example, 'drinking cocktails', 'sharing drinks' etc. is not undertaken to reduce consumption but to maintain intoxication levels.

Poor management of the intoxication experience, such as experiencing negative physical effects and nonacceptable bodily actions could lead to further adaptations to

the practice and even abandoning the practice all together. In the example below, Andy (CG2) explains that pre-drinks could be extended or vomiting induced if the intoxication experience was mismanaged in the early sub-practice stages.

Researcher: *Do the lads get together before they go out?*

Andy: *Yes at someone's house yes. For pre-drinks. Which is not always the best idea cos it means that sometimes we don't all make it [Poor management]. Like Saturday, Simon had to try and sober himself up a bit so he could come out.*

Researcher: *So that's someone over doing the pre-drinking. How would you manage that?*

Andy: *It's usually Simon all the time. We have to wait for him to sober up a little bit before we go out or make himself sick. That usually works.*

The practice is adapted to respond to the 'risk' which in this discussion is evident that the practice performance is under threat as Simon is deemed too intoxicated to go out into the night time economy. These practice of interest identified as ways of 'sobering up' are part of the tacit knowledge that the group have for reaching and maintaining their desired level of drunkenness (Percy et al. 2011) and completing the performance. The know-how and competence involved in drinking to intoxication and maintaining that intoxication is not precise. When the competence and the embodied know-how of how much can be drunk is flawed then we see examples of the performance being disrupted. Examples where management of the intoxication process is flawed and the

practice is disrupted included an account from Natalie (CG1) who stated, *“I was not well [drunk too much] at that time! I was sleeping”* and an account from Emily about Mark (AG), *“I heard a big bang in the bathroom and he has knocked himself unconscious so I have to try and drag him out the bathroom”*. However, it is Leah (AG) who gives the most vivid account of how not having the required ‘know-how’ for the practice can impact on its performance. Leah recounts her first experience of the *proper night out* when she had received her first pay packet from her apprenticeship.

Leah: *My first pay packet I spent it all in the xxx cos someone told me you could pay with your debit card and that was the worst thing anyone could have done cos I started buying drinks for everyone with my card. And when I went the bank the next day it [money] was gone.*

Leah did not have the know-how as a new recruit to the practice to control her spending and ended up in her intoxicated state arbitrarily buying drinks for everyone. Leah spent her entire first month pay packet on the practice and in the process created financial difficulties for herself and her family.

A poor performance then is where the practice is incomplete, disrupted or has a notable impact on another practice or the young person’s lived experience. The stories recounted of poor performance versus good or acceptable performance highlight the tension and precarious balance between the poorly regulated or controlled drinking experience, and the associated flawed performance and the acceptable ‘out of control’ performance. In this way, the narratives in themselves become a performance strategy (Langellier 1999) in which they carefully construct themselves as responsible and controlled drinkers or out of control drinkers having fun.

7.5 Navigating safety

Government and media discourses construct a responsible and respectable femininity with a focus on staying safe and reducing vulnerability to male violence (Sheard 2011, Brooks 2008, Payne-James and Rogers 2002). Participants have acquired know-how and practices around staying safe which affects how both the young men and women negotiate the practice of a *proper night out*. Three hazards are identified: predators, spiking and fighting.

7.5.1 Predators

In the highly gendered and sexualised environment of the night time environment (Laurie et al. 1999, Valentine 2014), female participants regarded predatory males as a hazard of the *proper night out* that needed to be negotiated, although a certain amount of harassment was seen as inevitable. Practices of interest and tactics were employed to manage risk associated with the threat of male violence including changing venues, moving away from the threat and seeking protection from other group members. Amy (CG1) described how she dealt with unwanted male attention below:

Amy: I am just too awkward and I don't have the confidence I would just like try and get away as soon as possible cos I wouldn't want to speak to them.

Amy suggests that moving away from the perceived threat was her best option as she felt unable to speak to the perpetrator and let him know his attentions were unwanted. In this example, Amy enacts normative and conventional femininities of a non-confrontational and non-aggressive response. Implicit in Amy's description is that

the man is unaware of how uncomfortable and threatened she feels. Claire, Becky and Ava (CG2) also rehearsed a normative femininity by employing a protective male narrative:

Researcher: Before you talked a bit about men being predatory. Is that a common occurrence?

Claire: Yeh they make me sick.

Becky: My boyfriend is very protective so if a man looked at me – he has to make a show of me. He has to kiss me to prove that I am with him and stop them from coming near me. And I have to move away before there is trouble. It's very stressful.

Ava: My friend group is like four girls and the rest of them are all boys. So we are quite protected. When I was in Berlin and I was out with the same group of friends there was only three girls and the rest were boys and there was this really like weird guy who looked a bit like Ricky Martin [singer] and he had this liked slicked fringe. It was horrible and he kept dancing towards us and the guys just made a barrier around us and kept us safe.

The young men were described as engaging in routinised and habitual actions relating to hegemonic masculinity that protected the young women by asserting their physical dominance. For example, there is no narrative of a discussion between Ava's friends when they felt threatened by a man who persistently approached her and her female friends. The young women moved into the middle of their mixed gender friendship

group and the young men to the outside, thus protecting the female group members whilst enacting normative masculinities and femininities.

The young women participants identified some spaces within the night time economy as being particularly hazardous and threatening, for example, the dance floor was highlighted as being a more risky space. These findings are consistent with those of Crawshaw (2002) and Hutton (2004). On the other hand, some venues within the night time environment were regarded as friendlier and less threatening in terms of gendered risk, those included 'student bars' and 'local bars'. Drinking in more private spaces in the form of house parties was also considered less threatening (Bancroft et al. 2015). Amy and Charlotte below (CG1) discuss the more threatening environments of mainstream clubs and late night bars.

Amy: *You would always check on your mates and stuff like that so just you know like. It's probably not like that bad in you know like student bars cos like people aren't obviously as drunk. But people in like clubs it's probably worse but just as long as you don't get too bad.*

Researcher: *What do you mean by obviously not as drunk?*

Amy: *I don't know, like, because when people got to town they have more, like, got the intention to get really badly drunk cos most people don't go out that much so it's like a proper night out but if you are just going like a bar and its dead casual and you are just*

sitting in there just like having a little drink and speaking to your mates so people aren't going to be like as social.

Researcher: *So those places are less predatory? Is that what you are saying?*

Amy: *Yes [Charlotte nods in agreement].*

Researcher: *And you agree Charlotte?*

Charlotte: *Yes*

Researcher: *So if you are going out for a big night out then you know that that might happen more on one of these nights?*

Charlotte: *Yes*

Researcher: *Than if you were just going to a local bar [murmurs of agreement from Amy and Charlotte]? And are there any ways that you have to deal with that?*

Charlotte: *Not really its normally, like, cos you are normally so squished in a club you are bound to get people, like, feeling you so you just shift the other way a little bit or swop with someone else so they can be .. Normally I go out with Joel [boyfriend] so it's like you don't get that much attention when you go out with a lad.*

Researcher: *Is it normally when you go out with the girls? Is that the same for you then Amy?*

Amy: *Yes it's just like move to a different place or just like move altogether and go somewhere else.*

Amy and Charlotte both explained that some venues are more risky than others, and within the confines of a very crowded area it was almost expected that someone would direct unwanted attention towards you and try to *'feel you'*. Previously Ava highlighted that within venues in the night time economy there are more risky spaces such as dance floors. Safekeeping strategies are a part of the routinised actions within the practice as it is performed in the night time economy.

Natalie (CG1) explains that house parties are frequented by young people belonging to a particular friendship grouping or young people that are known to at least one member of that group. This familiarisation of the participants makes it less threatening than a venue within the night time economy. House parties were also regarded as less masculinised spaces and to have less gendered risks relating to associated male violence, and the sense of vulnerability associated with the night time economy is therefore not apparent:

Researcher: *So at a house party is that different or the same?*

Natalie: *Never found it threatening whatsoever. Cos everyone knows each other.*

Researcher: *And if someone new comes along that doesn't change it?*

Natalie: *No. Cos everyone will like be there on hand really.*

This narrative of men as sexual predators and as perpetrators of sexual violence positions the young men in the study as either *'protectors'* or *'perpetrators'*. The young men in CG2 were quick to separate themselves from the predatory type of man discussed previously.

Researcher: *And how does that make you guys feel when the girls talk about these kinds of predatory males? Coming on to them?*

Andy: *It doesn't bother me. I'm not like that so.*

Harry: *I'm not like that either.*

Andy: *I think it is quite cringing when you do see like lads just trying it on.*

In distancing themselves from these predatory practices and positioning themselves as 'protectors', both Harry and Andy are performing a protective and reflective masculinity within the discussion group. However, later in the group discussion they spontaneously raised the subject of conducting a romantic liaison during the *proper night out*. This was possibly to assure both the researcher and the young women in the group of both their masculine identity and hetero-sexuality. However, in order to maintain their positioning as non-threatening to women Harry and Andy both constructed a masculine narrative where women would approach them. Best illustrated by Harry's comment, "*Well if some girl starts talking to me then I'll talk back*".

In contrast, both Jack and Mark from AG positioned themselves as being sexually available during these nights out and narrated a more proactive approach to attracting women. Emily explained that Mark "*goes up to all the girls and goes, you're gorgeous you are, you're gorgeous*". It is not clear how, if at all, threatening this may seem to the young women he approaches. Emily explains that these young women invariably end up apologising to her as they think she is romantically linked with Mark by virtue of being with him. Jack narrated a performance that could be deemed threatening to

young women and to other young men who may have viewed him as a threat to their own masculine competence in their own roles as protectors. This is illustrated by the quote below.

Jack: *It was some bird. Some bird came over to me and I was dancing with her or whatever and didn't you [to a friend] elbow one of the fellas in the head or something? Cracking wasn't it? And then we were scrapping outside.*

By constructing a narrative of a young woman approaching him, Jack is positioning himself as sexually available and not as a predator, but is still regarded as a threat by her male friends. Jack then rehearsed a story of the situation leading to a fight between himself and the young women's 'fella' further cementing Jack's masculine identity.

7.5.2 Spiking

The young women in the study constructed a risk of drinks being spiked. They rehearsed narratives of drink spiking with date rape drugs despite evidence on the frequency of 'drink spiking' being inconclusive (ACPO 2006, Beynon et al. 2005, Sturman 2000) and alcohol considered the most widely used date rape drug (Payne-James and Rogers 2002). The young women in the study narrated a performance of safekeeping strategies that were embedded in the practice. No group members, in either of the three groups, challenged the view that drink spiking during the *proper night out* was a constant threat to young women's well-being requiring vigilance at all times. These strategies did not interrupt the *proper night out* but paradoxically when they involved alcoholic drinks being drunk very quickly to prevent them being left

unprotected they speeded up the intoxication effect. Emily and Mark (AG) describe how Emily navigates having drinks bought for her and the practices she embraces to protect herself from drink spiking.

Emily: *But I don't like blokes buying me drinks though in case there's anything in it.*

Mark: *But it's alright to take them off me though?*

Emily: *Ye but you're not going to put anything in it.*

Researcher: *So you are thinking a bit about your own safety?*

Emily: *Unless the actual bartender passes me the drink I won't take it.*

However, as discussed in chapter 4 financing of the *proper night out* was frequently difficult and Emily is reluctant to pass up the chance of a free drink. Emily provides a narrative of a situation where she will accept a stranger buying her a drink if the bar staff pass the drink direct to her to minimise any threat. Interestingly, there is no acknowledgement from any of the young women in the study that the most likely perpetrator of sexual violence would be known to them (Sheard 2011). The acts of protecting against the violent 'other' supports group bonding and cohesiveness (Douglas 1992). Claire and Becky describe (CG2) how they also view drink spiking as a potential threat on a night out and substantiate this by giving examples of drink spiking that they have heard about.

Researcher: *What is the most important thing you can do to protect yourself?*

Claire: *Keep your hand or your thumb over your drink.*

Becky: *Definitely.*

Researcher: *Because you are worried about being spiked? [Nods] Do you know anyone who has been spiked?*

Claire: *Ye most of my friends.*

Becky: *xxx she was from xxx she got spiked and died she was only about 15 [years old] and I knew her cousin as well. I always used to hang around with her cousin. It was really hard for them.*

Researcher: *That makes you wary then?*

Becky: *Ye but I also know someone else who got spiked but I think that was like her own fault cos it was off a stranger and she was with her boyfriend and she went to Ibiza or something and a man came over and said "Can I buy you a drink"? But her boyfriend said don't let anyone buy you a drink while I go the toilet and she let him [stranger] buy her a drink and the boyfriend didn't drink the drink cos he went the toilet obviously. And she drunk the drink and then an hour later she was jumping in the pool and accusing her boyfriend of raping her and all this cos her drink had been spiked. But she didn't know she was doing it.*

Although the sad tale of the death of a young girl was referred to by Becky in the discussion above who claimed to know the family well. The narrative given in the interview is the narrative co-constructed by the young girl's friendship group in the immediate aftermath of her death. The inquest found cause of death to be an

overdose of the illegal street drug MDMA (ecstasy) (Barlow 2013). By constructing a narrative of spiking, the friendship group protected the victim, themselves and the person who sold her the illegal drugs. A discourse of 'victim blaming' and its associations with traditional femininity is also evident in the second example given. It is implied by Becky that women who do not adhere to the safety practices of interest and take responsibility for their own safety are responsible for negative consequences.

The study participants co-constructed a narrative of drink spiking as a common occurrence and safety practices to prevent drink spiking was widespread within all three groups. These practices of interest included: not leaving a drink unattended, not accepting drinks from strangers, drinking from bottles or narrow neck glasses, which can be more easily protected, remaining vigilant or drinking shots, which can be drunk quickly, removing threat of vulnerability. The concerns about 'spiking' are clearly gendered and are implicitly related to the fear of sexual assault. Within all the study groups it was understood that spiking of drinks was more of a threat to women than men, with men deemed to be the most likely perpetrator. The group's constructed their own risk meanings as part of their interactions within the night time economy.

The participants co-constructed a narrative of threat and danger influenced by a wider discourse that uses 'spiking' as a preferred narrative to illegal drug use. The construction is also influenced by a wider societal discourse of 'victim blaming' if the victim is thought to have failed to prevent an attack. The young women's fear of spiking is rooted in the gendered fear of sexual violence and culturally embedded safety concerns.

7.5.3 Fighting

Only one participant, Jack admitted to participating in violence during the *proper night out*. Jack's gendered and classed experiences provide an illuminating case study of the practice. His narrations of a *proper night out* enact a traditional working class hegemonic masculinity; excessive drinking, occasional drug taking, violent encounters, sexual activity and minor criminal behaviour. His narrations reveal a discourse of gendered actions, reflecting masculine ideals of danger, toughness and strength in this performative process (Gough and Edwards 1998, Connell 2005, de Visser and Smith 2007).

Jack presented unbounded drinking practices from his younger self and identified 'dangerous others' as contributing to constructing his risk environment (Crawshaw and Bunton 2009) in the extract below in the form of older men from his local neighbourhood.

Jack: I think I've just grown up. I used to go out every weekend and get arrested and come home battered and bruised and whatever but yes I think it just depends on who you go out with as well. Cos I used to go out with older people so if they were fighting and stuff you just seem to get dragged in to it. Well now to be honest I only go out like if it's me brother or a couple of lads from around that are the same age as me so it's better now like.

The risks as presented by Jack (above) from violence are experienced as routine and every day. Jack links the reduction in his involvement in violence with a change in his friendship group. New friends are drawn from a wider pool than previously, where friends were drawn from his local neighbourhood and local pub. During the year-long study his friendship groups reflected the different elements of his life; his apprenticeship scheme, football and his girlfriend.

In this context, the risk of not participating in a fight and the resulting potential exclusion from the group is deemed more substantial than any risk from participating in the violence. Here we can see how the impact of gender on everyday practice requires Jack to perform a 'tough' working class hegemonic masculinity (Connell 2005, Crawshaw 2002). Jack acts out the practice performance that is routine and necessary for him even though his actions (fighting) are constituted as risky and unacceptable by policy makers. *"If shit comes to you, you're not just going to stand there, are you?"*

Jack's account confirms the importance of masculinity to getting and keeping social capital. Before gaining a place on the apprenticeship scheme Jack had struggled to maintain employment. Due to his poor employment record Jack found himself marginalised, lacking in economic and social capital (Hanlon 2012, Goodwin 2002, Connell 1987). Rather than capitulate to a non-masculine identity Jack's endorsement of a classed hegemonic masculinity enabled him to use other traditional working class masculine activities to counter the negative impact of being out of work. In other words, Jack compensated for his lack of economic capital with other masculinities notably violence, heterosexual activity, illegal drug taking and drinking excessively.

Thus asserting and demonstrating his traditional working class masculine identity (Willott and Lyons 2012).

7.6 Summary

The know-how required to perform the practice of a *proper night out* relates to two sets of interconnected competences associated with alcohol consumption and navigating the practice safely. Although determined drunkenness is constitutive of the practice, the tacit rules of the practice proscribed different performances for the young men and women. The young men enacted an embodied masculinity through an intoxicated loss of bodily control experience. This corporeal experience was both celebrated and praised within their friendship group and was performative of a young masculinity.

The young women's narrations of determined drunkenness were constructed as either a 'controlled' drunkenness or as an unintentional 'out of control' drunkenness. However, a set of practices of interest were requisite for the competences which managed situated risk, such as turn taking for out of control drunkenness, being able to get home and positioning a male friend as a protector. In this way the performance of drunkenness of the *proper night out* was underpinned by conventional femininities.

Practice competence involved drinking to a desired drunkenness level and then maintaining that level throughout the 'going out' sub-practice. Practices of interest and routines for the young men and women were part of the tacit knowledge that was used to sustain a competent performance of a *proper night out*, and to maintain an acceptable level of drunkenness. The practices and routines included controlling drinking by drinking cocktails, alternating alcoholic drinks with water, sharing drinks,

consuming top up drinks only and drinking the same amount as friends. These practices of interest were not engaged in by all the participants and the young men in the study were reluctant to participate in conversations around controlled drinking with the exception of the latter; drinking the same amount as their friends, as this could be viewed as 'matching' their friends drinking and thus performing masculinities of drinking fitness (Campbell 2000). Engaging in controlled drinking or even discussing controlled drinking may have a negative effect on the young men's masculine drinking competence and subsequently affect the various forms of capital associated with their participation in the practice.

Levels of drunkenness were also maintained (or an attempt was made to do so) by the young people taking 'time out' from alcohol consumption as a legitimate part of the practice. 'Time outs' from drinking alcohol tended to be away from the main scene and were frequently material in nature and included eating spaces, toilets and dance floors. These material 'time outs' involved a break in drinking when other practices were undertaken; eating, dancing, preening and 'care-giving' thus legitimising time away from alcohol consumption whilst still participating in the practice. This tacit knowledge served to maintain intoxication levels rather than reduce alcohol consumption. Mismanagement of the intoxication experience however could lead to a poor performance of the practice and adaptations were occasionally made to the practice.

The second set of competences identified relates to staying safe on a *proper night out* and affected the performance of both the young men and women. The performance of the 'going out' sub-practice of a *proper night out* in a private space, for example at

a house party, was considered to be less risky than going out into the night time environment. However, within the night time environment more risky and less risky venues were identified by the participants and within these venues internal spaces were perceived to be more risky and less risky. For example, a mainstream bar or club was considered more risky for physical violence than non-mainstream venues, and dance floors were considered a risky place for young women who were deemed to be at risk of sexual assault.

The young people identified sexual and physical dangers or hazards on the *proper night out*. These dangers or hazards were clearly gendered with young women fearing sexual violence and the young men positioned as protectors. Various practices of interest were employed by the young women to deal with harassment and unwanted sexual attention including changing venues, moving away from the threat and seeking protection from other (male) group members. All the participants regarded drink spiking as a tangible risk which was related to the fear of sexual assault for the young women. Interconnected practices of interest included not leaving a drink unattended, not accepting drinks from strangers, drinking from bottles or narrow neck glasses which can be more easily protected or drinking shots which can be drunk quickly, removing any vulnerability associated with keeping a drink for too long. The majority of study participants did not engage in violence although when stories were told it was a male domain. The localised variation of the practice is demonstrated by one of the young men who constructed a masculine identity through being involved in violence during the *proper night out*. Fighting on a regular basis within the practice was less risky than the possibility of being excluded from the practice and his group for not fighting.

The rules of the practice enable practitioners to adapt the practice where there is a socially acceptable competing practice using the same temporal resource. Examples given by the young people included not consuming alcohol as a result of being on prescribed medication, being pregnant or taking on a social role such as nominated driver. However, the practitioner was still required to perform appropriately and not be 'boring' or lacking in fun.

This analysis frames the avoidance of risk associated with *proper night out* as the competences needed are for an appropriate performance rather than as a mechanism for individual responsibility.

Chapter 8: Cross cutting themes

8.1 Introduction

This chapter draws together the findings from the previous three chapters to build an understanding of the drinking practice framed delimited in this thesis as a *proper night out*. This thesis has drawn on social practice theory, 'doing gender' framework and the conceptual tool of capital to explore young people's alcohol consumption and its relationship to risk, in order to include an understanding of economic and social differences. Alcohol consumption has been found to be constitutive of many different practices, although determined drunkenness and intoxication is not essential to all these practices. Drawing on the study data, the practice most associated by young people with determined drunkenness was that of a *proper night out*. By focusing on the *proper night out* this analysis has provided an insight into intoxicated drinking practices which are performed within a context of unequal access to capital.

8.2 A *proper night out*: practice-as-entity

The practice of a *proper night out* has evolved through the sequential coming together of six previously distinct independent practices; 'planning', 'getting ready', 'pre-drinking', 'going out', 'getting home' and 'storytelling' that themselves can be participated in, independently of this practice. The materials, competences and meanings of these sub-practices have been integrated into the practice of a *proper night out* and reconstituted and reconfigured as the practice has evolved. This study has shown how a specific material arrangement of alcohol, the corporeal, spaces, finance and mobile phones combine and interconnect with social and symbolic meanings of social recognition, sociability, caring and group belonging and with the

competences of alcohol consumption and staying safe to produce a recognizable entity, framed as a *proper night out*.

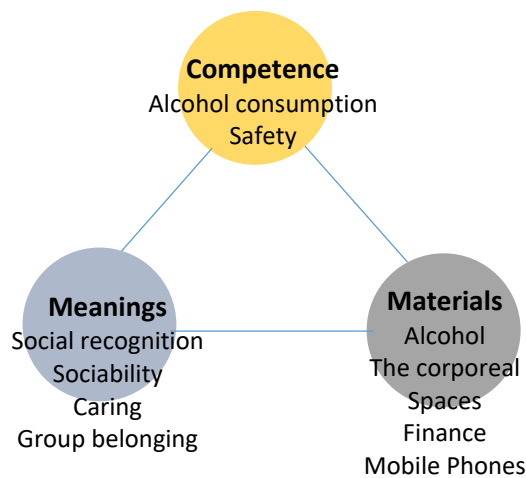


Diagram 8: Conceptualisation of the *proper night out* using the three element model

8.3 A *proper night out*: practice-as-performance

There is no single acceptable way of performing the practice, rather performativity relates to localised practice, gender and class. In this way, performances are both fluid and adaptable. In addition, there are different performances of each *proper night out* for the different audiences of the practice, including the real-time performance and virtual online performances. The study has found that a competent practice performance requires reaching and maintaining an acceptable level of intoxication, and that not drinking (or the moderate consumption of alcohol) leads to what is considered to be either a poor or unacceptable practice performance.

This group of young people like many young people living in socially and economically deprived circumstances lack symbolic capital. However, both the real-time and virtual performances of the *proper night out* provided the participants with the opportunity to accrue physical and cultural capital through sharing the performances on SNS could be converted into bridging and bonding social capital. Although the young people were

not in a position to legitimise this accrual of capital through their conversion to symbolic capital, the practice afforded the young people an opportunity to acquire both status and social recognition. The affordances of SNS then enabled this status and recognition to be shared across a wide and varied social network. Participation in the practice and its constitutive intoxicated corporeal experience are thus interconnected to social status.

For the young women in this study their gendered performance required a performance of controlled drunkenness that was normative of respectable femininities. This normative gender performance was also constitutive of feminising the intoxicated experience, by drinking feminine drinks and appropriating a hyper-feminine look. This performance in real-time could sometimes go wrong and the young women could become too intoxicated, for example, by losing bodily control. In these cases, an attempt was made to maintain femininity through discourses of unintentional loss of control, and a careful and well managed re-crafting and re-shaping of the performance on SNS.

The young men's participation in the *proper night out* was performative of localised masculinities. A good performance of *proper night out* is where the young men displayed masculine traits of physical toughness (protector role), drinking excessively, drinking masculine drinks and heterosexuality. A good performance for the young men could involve a loss of bodily control, which was shared and celebrated within their close peer group but not their wider social network. In this way, working class physical capital could be accrued and converted to bonding social capital but not converted or legitimised to other forms of capital. However, bridging social capital could be accrued

by the telling of a humorous version of the story and carefully constructed performances for the different SNS audiences.

Narratives of the *proper night out* can be told and re-told, by both the young men and women, time and time again, at least until the next *proper night out*, but frequently even after that. This continual retelling provides more opportunities for practice performance and accumulating social recognition and status, and is demonstrative of their sociability. These narratives also serve as an additional function that acts as a form of 'social glue' for the group. From a practice perspective, not participating in the practice or performing poorly would put at risk the accruing or accumulating capital and status.

8.4 Interpretations of risk

The young people offered no narratives relating to long-term health risks; rather their risk narratives related to gendered and situated practice hazards. Threats and hazards narrated by the young people also related to their ongoing participation and performance in the practice. For example, becoming too intoxicated and losing bodily control too frequently, particularly when the young person is on the periphery of the group may threaten their continued participation, or result in them being excluded by the peer group from further practices.

Situated risks were also evident in all the sub-practices. Constitutive of the '*planning*' sub-practice was constructing strategies for sub-practices where participants may consider themselves to be vulnerable. For example, young people planned how they would return home. The '*getting home*' strategies included taxis, lifts and early morning trains. The planning sub-practice was also the time when decisions were

made about who was included in the group and who was excluded. Young people were included in the practice when they were considered an integral part of a friendship group and when they had not contravened the practice rules sufficiently during previous participation to warrant being excluded. *'Pre-drinking'* gave the young people the opportunity to achieve the desired level of intoxication, whilst ensuring (or attempting to ensure) that they were not too intoxicated to prevent their continued participation in the practice. *'Going out'* particularly for those young people that participate in the night time economy and the *'Getting home'* sub-practices were the stages where a sense of vulnerability was most embedded in the practice.

Embedded within the practice were gendered routinised risk responses to negotiate and negate hazards and uncertainties. An embodied drunk experience is a prerequisite for young women to participate in the practice. However, participating in a practice that is constitutive of drinking to intoxication, which is closely associated with masculinity, creates a tension for the young women in the study. This tension relates to a paradox: the extent to which young women can perform an embodied intoxicated experience and yet also perform acceptable femininities. This tension is woven into the performance and relates to ways in which young women from lower socio-economic groups have few alternative performances that are valued. In order to maintain social capital and maintain feminine competence they perform a feminised embodied experience. This experience included drinking 'girly' drinks, adopting a hyper-feminine presentation of their practice self and controlling their intoxication.

Conventional feminine competence and respectability was put at risk during the practice from an out of bodily control performance, which included, failure to walk in

high heels, passing out, vomiting and persistent crying and moaning. Practices of interest embedded within the practice facilitated a controlled drinking experience for the young women. If the controlled drinking experience was not successful, a respectable femininity was sought by eschewing or 'othering' excessively intoxicated young women whilst distancing their drunken selves from the 'other' by positioning themselves as unintentionally 'out of control'.

The analysis highlights how some of the strategies that young people employed to manage uncertainties created secondary risks. Some of these could be more distant although still impactful and some more immediate. In this respect these situations, lead to the young people engaging in secondary safety practices of interest. Practice know-how and competence incorporated a set of practices of interest related to safety that supported the young women to manage any risk of male violence and harassment in public spaces. Assuming responsibility for their own safekeeping was again embedded in their gendered practice. The young women remained vigilant for any type of sexual threat including protection against drink spiking, moving away from males deemed a threat and utilising male friends as 'protectors'.

In contrast, to the performance of the young women, the young men in the study were more unlikely to engage in discourses around fear or vulnerability. For the young men in the study, determined drunkenness was also constitutive of the practice. However, they were less likely than the young women to narrate a performance of controlled drunkenness, but rather their intoxication experience was performative of a young masculinity embodied through vomiting, passing out and falling over. The young men avoided a narrative within their group interview performance of many of the practices

used to control drinking. This is possibly due to any such narrative adversely affecting their masculine competence in the group discussions, rather than that they did not participate in them. One notable exception to this exclusion of a narrative of practices of interest was the inclusion of a narrative of 'time-outs'. The young men as well as the young women narrated a performance of moving around the night time environment from bar to bar and visiting fast food outlets as part of the practice, legitimising time spent not drinking.

However, by losing bodily control the young men are putting their drunken selves at risk which was counteracted by some of the young men who participated in the practice in close and well-established friendship groups. These groups engaged in a localised performance of 'caring masculinities' with a role of carer being integrated into and constitutive of their practice, which is then shown to be both fluid and changeable. The young men adopted strategies that are traditionally masculine, for example protection, and others that are traditionally more feminine, for example caregiving, in order that they can negate a perceived hazard or threat. Thus, tensions were created around performing a traditional masculinity of excessive drinking and a loss of bodily control and a young caring masculinity that was constitutive of 'looking after each other'.

The narrative by the young women in the study of men as sexual predators positions the young men in the study either as perpetrators of sexual violence or as protectors from sexual violence. Although physical violence was not something that all the young men claimed to be engaged in, this positioning resulted in a discourse of physical toughness if needed from the young men and a display of traditional masculine

competence. Thus, different, localised and gendered practice performances of the proper night out were appropriate and acceptable.

8.5 Conclusion

This chapter has drawn together the findings from the previous four analysis chapters and in doing so has sought to construct an understanding of a drinking practice, framed as a proper night out. The analysis presented in this chapter has provided an illustration of how the complex interrelating of materials; alcohol, space and technology together with the practice competences required, of drinking to an acceptable intoxication level and use of technology interconnect with the associated symbolic meanings of care, belonging, sociability and gaining social recognition to from a drinking practice. This chapter has also provided an illustration of what an acceptable gendered, classed and localised performance of the practice looks like. Finally, this chapter has drawn together the different and various ways risk has been viewed and interpreted by the researcher. The following chapter discusses these findings and considers the contributions made by this empirical study.

Chapter 9: Discussion

9.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of this research study and considers the contributions that are made, to researching and understanding young people's intoxicated drinking practices, and the theoretical contributions to risk theory. Section 9.2 and sub sections 9.2.1 and 9.2.2 address the first study objective, by considering the contribution of this study to the field of alcohol studies from the application of a social practical theoretical frame to the intoxicated drinking practice of young people. Specifically sub section 9.2.1 responds to an identified gap in the literature by discussing the explorations of mixed location, intoxicated drinking experiences as a practice-as-entity. This is followed, in section 9.2.2 by an exploration of the practice-as-performance. Section 9.3 addresses the second research objective and considers the routinised actions of young people in relation to alcohol consumption and risk. This section engages critically with the dominant risk theories and considers the ways that reconceptualising 'risk' through a social practice framing of alcohol consumption offers an alternative understanding to individual, harm reduction approaches. In this way, this thesis adds to existing knowledge on risk and contributes to understanding risk related practices as embedded, routinised, habitual and situated within the drinking practices of young people from lower socio-economic groups. In addition, contributions to the existing knowledge base within the alcohol field are made by exploring how 'control' of the intoxicated experience manifests itself during the practice. Section 9.4 considers the ways in which space and technology are integral to

the drinking practice and can be seen as being integral to the regulation, maintenance and control of the intoxicated experience.

Section 9.5 of this chapter addresses the third study objective and explores the way in which gender is performed and regulated within alcohol consumption practice. The chapter concludes in section 9.6 with an exploration of the potential of this study to inform future practice and policy and as such responds to the final research objective.

9.2 Conceptualising the *proper night out* as a social practice involving alcohol consumption

Reframing one type of young people's 'risky' drinking practices as the *proper night out* offers an alternative way of conceptualising alcohol consumption, from the dominant framing in policy discourse which places responsibility for excessive drinking at the level of the individual (Adebowale 2014, d'Abbs 2015, Niland et al. 2013). In analysing the consumption of alcohol in this way, this thesis has sought to explain intoxicated drinking practices as more than simply a matter of individual choice and an irrational disregard of known risks (d'Abbs 2015, Kelly and Barker 2016).

9.2.1 Conceptualising the *proper night out* as a practice

The study echoes some of the findings from previous alcohol studies, but unlike previous studies, views these findings through a social practice lens. In this way, findings from this study and previous studies are brought together as constitutive parts within the material, competence and meaning elements of one drinking practice, that of the *proper night out*. For example, the embodied pleasure of intoxication is central to competence of the drinking practice (d'Abbs 2015, Brown and Gregg 2012, Measham 2004, Murphy et al. 2016) and venues and spaces are integral to both the

material element and the practice performance (Valentine 2014, Duff 2003). Furthermore, intoxicated drinking practices are bound up in meanings of friendship (MacLean 2015, Niland et al. 2013), care and protection (Griffin et al. 2009, Niland et al. 2013) and sociability (Lyons and Willott 2008, MacNeela and Bredin 2011).

The practice entity of a *proper night out* has been shown to be made up of a specific material arrangement of alcohol, the corporeal, spaces, finance and technology in the form of mobile phones. This material arrangement combines and interconnects with both social and symbolic meanings relating to social recognition, sociability, caring and group belonging and with the competences of reaching and maintaining a desired level of intoxication, whilst staying safe.

What is also of interest is how the elements interconnect with each other and how the practice connects and competes with other practices for resources (Shove et al. 2012, Emslie et al. 2012). For example, the competition for temporal resources between practices, results in less frequent participation as the young people move on in the life course to participate in practices of employment and parenthood. These practises compete with the practice of a *proper night out* for both temporal and economic resources both of which constrain the frequency of involvement in the practice. This way of conceptualising suggests that the act of drinking excessively is embedded in both drinking practice and the everyday social worlds of (young) people. Consequently, change is likely to be complex and difficult.

In identifying the different elements of the practice the study analysis illustrates that social practice theory has considerable potential for understanding young people's alcohol consumption (Supski et al. 2016). By arguing that alcohol consumption and the

practice of the *proper night out* are interrelated there are methodological implications. For instance, it suggests that those interested in studying any type of alcohol consumption would benefit from contextualising it within the practice(s) it is constitutive of. Acknowledging excessive alcohol consumption as an integral part of a wider drinking practice, involves accepting that intoxication is interconnected with, and determined by practice. This in turn has implications for public health policy discussed later in this chapter.

9.2.2 Conceptualising performances of the *proper night out*

This study has shed light on the practice of a *proper night out* and in establishing what a successful or at least an acceptable practice performance looks like. Achieving a successful practice performance is dependent on knowing how to enact the practice in the context of shared and common understandings of proficiency (Warde 2013, Shove et al. 2012). This empirical study has demonstrated how achieving a successful or acceptable performance of the *proper night out* is interconnected to achieving and maintaining an acceptable level of intoxication. However, the shared and common understandings of the normative specification of how this acceptable level manifests itself was varied and localised within different groupings. For example, for some groups of young men in the study, an acceptable and even successful intoxicated performance could include loss of bodily control whereas for other groups in the study, a loss of bodily control was constitutive of a failed performance. This understanding further highlights the importance of not only understanding alcohol consumption as part of social practice but also in understanding the performance as situated within shared, localised understandings of the practice (Warde 2013, Shove et al. 2012).

This study has also shown how in the context of the *proper night out*, being seen in the virtual world is a ubiquitous part of the practice. Although the posting of social media content including images, postings and memes could be viewed as a distinct practice in its own right (Woermann 2012), the findings from this study would suggest that within the practice of a *proper night out* the associated social media content is viewed as a virtual online performance of the practice. Online performances were an essential part of the sub-practice of storytelling and served to differentiate intoxicated drinking practice from the sober and more mundane nature of everyday life (McCreanor et al. 2013, Ridout et al. 2012). However, as the study shows there is not just one singular online performance but multiple performances for the different audiences associated with the various online communities, that the young people belong to. For instance, Snapchat postings of the *proper night out* were shared between an intimate and close-knit peer group whilst Facebook and Twitter content were for more public consumption and wider social networks of family, friends, colleagues and strangers. By posting content the performance is authenticated as successful by a shared understanding of what constitutes a proficient performance demonstrated by the likes, shares, retweets received from the online community (Atkinson et al. 2014, McCreanor et al. 2013). In this way, the success or otherwise of the different performances of the practice is situated in the online performances of the practice.

This research suggests that practice performativity relates to both real-time and virtual online worlds with the potential for each performance to have different understandings of what is a successful acceptable practice. The online performance is therefore carefully crafted, managed and aestheticized in an attempt to ensure a successful performance of the practice. By virtue of the social media content the

performance also becomes longer lasting (or even permanent), something that the young people are very aware of. The identification of multiple online practice performances also has implications for social practice itself, perhaps most importantly recognising that practice-as-performance plays out differently and variously in the multifarious virtual worlds.

Through the lens of practice theory, if a successful or acceptable performance is related to knowing how to and then enacting the practice in the context of shared, common, situated and sometimes localised, understandings of proficiency, then risk is about failing to perform the practice in a way that can be read as acceptable or correct. The risk of failing to perform in a more (or less) acceptable way is situated in both real-time and virtually within the online social world.

9.3 Conceptualising risks in relation to social practices

This study has distanced itself from risk research that views risk taking as a result of individual rational choice. This study does not attempt to understand risk, as it perceived by the participants or understand risk as a social reality but alternatively to understanding risk as fluid, constructed and situated (perceived or otherwise) and is embedded within social practice. Practices of interest are conceptualised in this thesis as the risk related actions that are integral to a social practice. Within the group interview settings, it was notable that the young people did not narrate their drinking practices in terms of risk, instead prominent discourses related to fun, pleasure and enjoyment. That is not to say that thinking about risk was not evident in the discussion as hazards, vulnerabilities and uncertainties were narrated by the young people. However, their discussions focused on the management and minimising of these

hazards and vulnerabilities. Similar to findings from Green et al. (2003) and Katainen et al. (2014), the young people's practice of a *proper night out* was largely presented (in the group discussions) as routine, with hazards and threats accepted as things that were just there; ever present, in other words. These narrations highlight risk as ordinary and normal and as a part of the everyday and routine social lives of young people. In this way, a case is made for a broader understanding of risk-taking actions that are seen to be rooted in the social, material and structural conditions of everyday social practices. Central to this positioning is the usability of social practice theory to enable this broader understanding of risk. The use of social practice theory is appropriate as it supports an understanding of risk as the uncertainties, threats and hazards that are embedded in different social, cultural, gendered and localised social practices (as distinct from being understood as constitutive of individual rationalities). Importantly the use of social practice theory to understand risk in this way supports and maintains a move away from a risk factor or risk behaviour approach and subsequently individual harm reduction interventions.

The study findings present a picture of a drinking practice, which is at odds with the policy perception, that risks are calculated through a rational assessment of weighing up of costs and benefits, and that knowledge of these risks will change excessive drinking patterns (Williams 2003, France 2000). Discussions around threats to physical safety, vulnerability to harm and challenges to status and recognition, as well as uncertainties, relating to the ongoing participation in the practice performance, were highlighted as areas that needed to be negotiated and navigated during the course of the practice performance. Successful negotiation of these uncertainties was found to be integral to the practice and constitutive of practice embodied know-how.

As has been noted elsewhere, drinking to and then maintaining intoxication, is essential to some types of drinking practice that young people are involved in (Chatterton and Hollands 2003, Measham and Østergaard 2009, Mackiewicz 2012). This type of alcohol consumption has been described as both a 'controlled loss of control' and 'controlled hedonism' (Measham and Brain 2005, Griffin et al. 2009, Szmigin et al. 2008, Fry 2011) and was found in this study to be constitutive of a *proper night out*. In this study, the management and maintenance of the intoxicated drinking experience was notable, by the challenge it presented to the participants in achieving a successful practice performance. However, a nuanced understanding of how young people control (or attempt to control) their intoxication has largely remained unexplained in the literature to date (Kobin 2012). This study builds a picture of an intoxicated drinking practice that is regulated; through the embodied intoxicated experience providing a 'cut off' point, by controlled drinking actions which were embedded in the practice, and through a break in the consumption of alcohol in the form of 'time outs'. These practices of interest were part of the embodied know-how and tacit knowledge of the practice and were linked with shared understandings about what an acceptable performance of the practice looks like.

Government and policy messages on risky drinking practices and how to reduce risk provide a background and structure to young people's alcohol consumption (Haydock 2014c). This study found some of these risk reduction messages had been reworked and incorporated into the practice as part of the embodied know-how of practices of interest. This is illustrated by advice from NHS choices (2017) to drink water between alcoholic drinks as a strategy for drinking less alcohol. However, the study findings demonstrate that although this knowledge was incorporated into the practice, it

serves to maintain intoxication levels, and its incorporation did not change the practice and notably did not reduce the amount of alcohol consumed.

Controlled drinking practices and legitimate 'time-outs' from alcohol consumption were embedded within the practice enabling participants (for the most part) to accomplish an acceptable, intoxicated performance. These insights build on previous studies that demonstrate that intoxicated practice is controlled and managed (Harrison et al. 2011, McCreanor et al. 2015), and is in contrast to policy discourses that position young people as irrational, binge drinkers (d'Abbs 2015, Niland et al. 2013). Thus, analysis using the theoretical frame of social practice recognises the salience of previous conceptualisations of controlled hedonism (Szmigin et al. 2008) and controlled loss of control (Measham 2004), whilst providing a more nuanced understanding of the boundedness of young people's intoxicated practice. However, it needs to be recognised that if the requisite competence and know-how was lacking this could lead to a poor intoxicated performance which in turn could place the continued participation of the young people in the practice at risk, by virtue of being excluded from future performances.

This controlling and managing of the intoxicated experience could be viewed and has been viewed and theorised as managing the 'edge' (Cho et al. 2010, Cronin et al. 2014). This study found young people who engage in excessive drinking, but at the same time seek to control their intoxication, were not found to participate in intoxicated practices as thrill seekers or risk takers (these are not part of the practice meanings), rather risk was routine and normalised within the practice. However, the embeddedness of these practices of interest enabled the young people to feel they had some control over the

intoxicated experiences (Cronin et al. 2014), even if this control is different from etic understandings. The challenge then for Edgework is that this theoretical framing does not recognise embodied knowledge, for example embodied know-how of intoxication or the routinised and habitual nature of practices of interest and time-outs or of structural factors that limit individual choice. Seen through a practice theory lens embodied practice competence and know-how are integral to the practice as opposed to the type of individualised decision-making associated with Edgework (Lyng 2012).

A further set of practices of interest were evident from the data, which were associated with safekeeping. These are illustrated by the actions that afforded protection from having a drink spiked. These practices of interest relating to risk were absorbed into the practice competence and know-how even though their functionality and efficiency in reducing risk could be questioned and it was acknowledged by participants that they could also lead to secondary or further hazards. This study has shown that knowledge of hazards and dangers perceived as known are passed on from carrier to carrier, and are accepted as part of the drinking experience and that the practice adapts in response to them. In other words, risks and avoidance of risk helps to shape the practice. Therefore, raising awareness about risks is unlikely to lead to social change or reduce young people's involvement in drinking excessively. This directly opposes the types of rational decision making that is privileged in alcohol policy and risk theory, which assume individuals will make a rational and healthy choice, once presented with all relevant information (Kemshall 2014, Taylor-Gooby 2000, Zinn 2015). In addition, the adaptations and small modifications in the trajectory of the practice (Shove et al. 2012) resulting from a response to the hazards and uncertainties did not lead to fundamental social change.

Economic inequalities have been shown in this study to affect the distribution of and access to the three elements on which participation in the *proper night out* depends. Young people who live in financially and socially constrained circumstances where determined drunkenness is normalised found themselves participating in the practice in a financially constrained way. This was particularly challenging for the young people as drinking to, and maintaining intoxication, requires access to economic resources. Lacking the requisite economic resources to participate was a primary risk to participation. Attempts to participate in the practice in a financially constrained way also sometimes led to secondary risks (Nygren et al. 2015). Further practices of interest were then embedded within the practice to manage these secondary risks. This analysis reveals how risk is multi-layered and situated, with an immediacy about some risks, and other risks that could be considered to be more distant, despite the possibility that there could be a considerable impact in the future.

Conceptualisations of the 'other' and 'othering', borrowed from cultural theories of risk (Douglas 1992) have also been used in this study. Firstly, to help explain the risk to young people to young people of being excluded from further participation in the practice for a failed performance. Secondly, as a conceptual tool to explain the cementing of the practice meanings and secure further practice participation.

Analysing excessive alcohol consumption in the ways discussed, supports a move away from privileging 'risk' as an individual responsibility and re-conceptualising what has been classed as a risky drinking practice, that of determined drunkenness, to a requisite element of a social practice that is embedded in young people's lives. This analysis also frames the avoidance of risk as the competences and knowledge needed

for an appropriate performance of a *proper night out*. In this way, the risks or dangers are so axiomatic to those involved that they are normalised and risk avoidance or moderating practices of interest become a constitutive part of the practice. The young people have developed an array of practical knowledge and tacit understandings to guard against perceived threats and hazards and to enable them to continue with their practice of a *proper night out*. The practice of a *proper night out* is associated with the normative expectations of drinking excessively and having a social time. The practice is considered normal and acceptable by the young participants and also by their wider social networks who give their approval through the affordances of 'liking', sharing or retweeting on SNS. For this group of young people, it is difficult to act outside of this practice and to either not participate or to participate in a different way. What is understood from a policy and cultural viewpoint as risky has its own meanings and relevance for young people.

9.4 Space and technology

This study has been able to explore the materiality of the practice which has enabled a more nuanced exploration of the practice that not only does not absent the role of material objects, but theorises them as integral and equal to the other elements of practice (Shove et al. 2012). Throughout this study two materials in particular have been highlighted as important to the practices of interest; those of space and technology. It is therefore considered appropriate to explore these materials in more depth.

This study adds to existing literature (Niland 2014, Atkinson et al. 2014) that demonstrates that technological advances of mobile phones and the associated

affordances of SNS play an important part within the practice and are integral to it, particularly within practice planning and storytelling. This technological advance is arguably one of the most important changes in young people's drinking practice. The affordances of mobile technology enable the young people to stay in touch during the practice performance reducing the risk of becoming isolated from the group and therefore vulnerable. In addition, the recording of the practice performance using mobile technologies and the sharing of these through selected postings to different social media highlights the possibility that other young people could share images and content that display a failed practice performance, as they understand it. This provides an additional monitoring affect for the practice performance, which in turn is reviewed by the young people in an attempt to remove or 'untag' any inappropriate content.

This study has demonstrated the importance of alcohol consumption 'time outs' in regulating the pharmacological effects of intoxication. These 'time outs' have been shown to be legitimate periods when the young people do not consume alcohol, and spaces and places, are integral to the identified practices of interest. For example, twenty-four hour eateries within the night time economy, give young people the option to have a break from drinking, socialise with their friends and plan the next stages of the practice. These spaces are not always external to bars and clubs but can be internal to them and include preening spaces and dance floors. In this way spaces and places, can be seen as being integral to the regulation, maintenance and control of the intoxicated experience.

9.5 Differences in how the social practice of a *proper night out* is performed

This study has endeavoured to address some of the difficulties in accounting for and considering social differentiation and inequalities within empirical analysis (Gram-Hanssen 2015, Walker 2013). In order to account for and consider social differences and inequalities, this study drew on conceptual tools from the three element model (Shove et al. 2012) from Bourdieu (1986) and from Judith Butler's (1990) theorisations of 'doing gender' to inform the data analysis. In trying to understand the meanings or the common understandings associated with young people's drinking practices, particularly around status and recognition this study has drawn on the conceptual tools of capital from the work of Bourdieu (1984).

The study has shown how the interconnected elements of materials, meanings and competences are integral to the gendered performance of practice. This is best illustrated by the way the materiality of the practice and specifically the type of alcohol consumed is gendered. Similar to other studies drinking a specific type of alcohol was shown in this study, to be a way of doing gender and either, masculinities or femininities (Nicholls 2016, Lyons and Willott 2008, de Visser and McDonnell 2013). However, what this study contributes to the literature is that this 'knowing' of which type of alcoholic drink is appropriate, and when it is, appropriate, was found to be part of the habitual nature of the practice. This knowledge was embedded into the embodied, tacit know-how and competence of the practice that related to the shared, situated and localised understandings of what is (and what isn't) a proficient performance. That is not to say that in some localised settings these understandings of performance cannot be contested and adapted (Nicholls 2016, Mackiewicz 2012).

In this study, the young men performed their masculinity in a financially constrained way so although wine drinking is not an approved masculine performance drinking, consuming free wine in large quantities (although disapproved of by some) demonstrated a masculine competence in that particular performance. This exploration of the *proper night out* interconnects practice meanings, materials and competences to produce contested and approved versions of masculinities and femininities. Identifying the links between the elements has shown that this practice is part of the everyday routine gendered practice performances of the young people.

The masculinities of men are also constructed in relation to their interactions with young women who are also participating in the practice, and vice versa. By performing their femininities in highly sexualised and vulnerable ways, the young men were positioned, and positioned themselves, as a protector thus performing an approved masculinity. This replicates the findings of other studies that also illustrate the effects of gendered constructions on young men's and women's drinking practices (de Visser and Smith 2007, Bailey et al. 2015, Stepney 2015, Willott and Lyons 2012). However, the use of a practice framework has enabled a more holistic view of the practice incorporating both constructs of masculinities and femininities which as Nayak and Kehily (2013) point out few studies have done. Furthermore, utilising the conceptual tools of Bourdieu (1984), the connection between online performances and the accumulation of both bonding and bridging social capital, embeds the practice in the everyday lives of young people giving them access to status and recognition through their gendered performance.

According to Demant and Järvinen (2011) and Groves et al. (2015), an acceptable performance of drinking or being seen to drink in the right way is central to the accumulation of symbolic capital. However, like many young people living in financially and socially deprived communities, it was difficult for the participants in this study to accrue symbolic capital (Skeggs 1997a). The young people in this study were more likely to accrue physical, social and cultural capital from their performances of a *proper night out*. Their alcohol consumption practice thus related to achieving status and recognition through the accrual of physical and cultural capital, which was legitimised through a process of exchange for social capital in the online world. This process involved SNS content relating to the *proper night out* being liked, shared or re-tweeted. This builds on alcohol studies that have viewed alcohol consumption as pleasurable, social and fun (MacLean 2015, MacNeela and Bredin 2011, Measham and Østergaard 2009, Brown and Gregg 2012) to a social practice that provides a way for young people to achieve status and recognition and demonstrate that they are leading successful lives. This is particularly important when status and recognition is hard to come by in other aspects of their lives. This study builds on findings from other empirical studies that have linked online alcohol consumption performances with the accumulation of social capital (Moewaka Barnes et al. 2016, Niland 2014, Atkinson et al. 2014). This study adds to this body of literature by demonstrating that there is not just one online performance but multiple performances on multiple platforms. This affords opportunities for young people to gain the different types of social capital, both bridging and bonding (Bohn et al. 2014) through different performances, thus enhancing social status and recognition within their different social networks. By posting content relating to the *proper night out* the young people are afforded these

opportunities to gain social capital and recognition when other avenues of cultural, symbolic and economic capital are not equally open to them.

For some of the young men an intoxicated loss of control (such as vomiting, passing out and fighting) was performative of a young masculinity which was celebrated within their immediate and intimate peer network (Thurnell-Read 2013). This sharing afforded the young men the opportunity to gain bonding social capital enabling them to gain status and recognition within their peer networks. However, this acceptable and even celebrated intoxicated performance may be seen as unacceptable and risky by their wider virtual networks. Virtual performances and content was therefore carefully managed to ensure that only images and stories appropriate to a particular SNS and their online audience, were posted and therefore had the potential to accrue social capital and recognition. Any stories that did relate to poor intoxication management were relayed by the young people in a humorous way, so as not to jeopardise accrual of capital (Brown and Gregg 2012, Lyons et al. 2014b).

This study also demonstrates how the competence and knowing how to do gender, constrains and limits the practice performance. Again, that is not to say that individuals do not have choices but that they are limited in their actions by the gendered expectations and meanings of the practice. However, we can also see how masculinities and femininities are challenged and contested by the practice, and how the gendered performance and the practice performance then changes over time. For example, young women's participation in intoxicated drinking practices in public spaces contest the traditionally masculinised experience of public drinking spaces (Szmigin et al. 2008, Griffin 2013), and caring masculinities (Elliott 2015) that are part

of the meanings of the practice of the *proper night out* for some young people illustrates how gendered performance is situated and localised.

Gender is something that is done or performed (Butler 1990) and is performative through gendered, appropriate embodiment (Coffey and James 2016). Appropriate embodiment was an integral component of the practice and was particularly noticeable within the 'getting ready' sub-practice when the young women performed a highly stylised embodiment of the practice. This interconnects with meanings of hyper femininity which contested intoxicated drinking practices as masculinised arenas. The young men were also shown to perform an appropriate stylised, embodied, masculine performance in their online performances.

The practices of interest are also shown in the study findings to be gendered and underpinned by assumptions about appropriate masculine and feminine performances and local configurations of practice. The young women attempted to limit their physical vulnerability by being vigilant for any type of sexual threat and routinised gendered practices of interest included protecting drinks from being spiked, moving away from males deemed a threat and utilising male friends as 'protectors'. Young men adopted actions that could be read as traditionally masculine (for example protection) and others that could be read as feminine (for example caregiver) in order to negate threats to the practice. These practices of interest were part of the tacit knowledge of the practice and the routinised actions embedded within the practice. This builds on the work of Zinn (2008) who argued that, what could be viewed as non-rational everyday strategies for managing risk are based on the use of prior gendered knowledge and experience.

This study illustrates how social practice theory, using the conceptualisations of gender theorists such as Connell (2005), Paechter (2003) and Butler (1990) can explore gender relations in empirical analysis. In order to incorporate theories of gender this study has highlighted the relevance of gender as constitutive of social practice (Paechter 2003, Nayak and Kehily 2013). By using this approach, we can see gender as a set of relations that are configured, contradicted, enacted and are (re)produced through the performativity of the practice and in relation to each other (Butler 1990). The study also demonstrated how the concept of capital (Bourdieu 1986) provides a useful way of theorising about alcohol consumption and social differences that exist within the practice.

9.6 Implications for policy and practice

In policy, young people are constituted as problematic, irresponsible drinkers who are engaged in harmful, dangerous and risky 'binge' drinking. However, these representations of young people in alcohol policy are at odds with how young people and their actions are presented in this analysis. Importantly, social practice theory suggests that young people's alcohol consumption is constitutive of wider social practices. For example, consuming alcohol as part of dining out or sharing a beer with friends. In studying just one of these practices, that of a *proper night out*, it is apparent that young people's actions are embodied, routine and habitual, as well as thought-through and conscious. The practice know-how and tacit knowledge proscribe appropriate actions which, for the most part, include a managed intoxicated performance, practices of interest that regulate and negotiate uncertainties and

hazards within the practice and provision of care. In this way, risk-taking and risk aversion practices are part of (young) people's everyday social worlds.

Drawing upon social practice theory, this thesis offers an insight into the complexity of risk and how the practices that young people engage in moderate and negotiate risk. Hazards and uncertainties are theorised as being complex, multi layered and integral to the practice. Such a view opposes public health policy, which frequently perceives risk-taking as something that is governed by rational thought and individual intentionality. Rather risks and uncertainties are viewed as routine for the young people and integral to the practice, and responses to these risks are governed by the know-how and competences embedded within the practice. Thus, a practice that is understood from a policy viewpoint as a risky practice is not understood as such by its participants. Although risk is present, it is ordinary and normalised. Risk responses within the practice are shown to be both conscious or unconscious, and thought through or routine and the knowledge about moderating and navigating these risks is part of the embodied know-how of the practice. This is in opposition to cognitive understandings of risk, which have been seen to be integral to English alcohol policy. In summary, this research suggests that public health policy decision makers would benefit from contextualising risk within the social practice that it is constitutive of and seek to understand how social practice evolves and develops. The use of social practice theory then has practical implications for the way a particular issue is understood and in moving away from an individual level approach. This move can potentially challenge the direction of policy. However, as individual harm reduction approaches are embedded in English alcohol policy and as the Alcohol Health Alliance (Thom et al.

2016) has found, influencing the understandings that this policy is built on and thus the direction of policy is a challenging proposition.

However, in some senses the young people draw on concepts and narratives that are familiar from health education, neoliberal messages and Government discourses such as drinking water, taking individual responsibility for safe keeping, managing their intoxication and knowing their intoxicated limits. Government discourse and neoliberal ideology then do not stand outside of the practice but are, at least partly, integrated into the practice know-how. However, this incorporation does not change the competences of intoxicated practice, which remains constitutive of the practice, and is in opposition to the intention of Government education and awareness programmes. Understanding drinking to intoxication as a constitutive element of a social practice, which provides opportunities for young people from lower socio-economic groups to gain at least limited status and recognition, illustrates why individual harm reduction models of intervention and education programmes are lacking in effectiveness for this group. This analysis suggests that policy makers should be mindful that health information and advice can (and is) incorporated into the drinking practices of young people without contributing to fundamental social change.

Despite both the limited impact of individual harm reduction models and the increasing attention social practice theory has been receiving in the social sciences (Blue et al. 2016, Maller 2015), it has not had, as yet, such an impact in public health (Holman and Borgstrom 2016). The breaking down of intoxicated drinking practice into its constituent elements illustrates how social practice theory can enable a comprehensive and grounded understanding of the practice of a *proper night out*, and

offers opportunities for interventions at the level of the constituent parts to adapt or change the practice. However, any intervention on just one element is unlikely to stop or significantly curtail the practice, rather it is more likely that the practice would adapt and evolve (Shove et al. 2012). Demonstrated by the reconfiguration of practice competence to include risk responses that are evident in popular and political discourses.

From this study of one type of drinking practice it is evident that if we want to change the practice the links interconnecting the elements would need to be broken or reconfigured in some way possibly by bringing together interdisciplinary interventions, for example urban planners, marketers, technology developers and public health decision makers. It therefore follows that any intervention should be interdisciplinary and aimed at the practice (population level) rather than at an individual level. For example, by reducing the availability of alcohol.

This study has also shown the importance of space and place in the self-regulation young people's pharmacological intoxication. This regulation could be helped by interventions that add to the possibilities for external venues and internal spaces for 'time-outs' in the night time environment. A possible avenue then would be exploring how additional venues for 'time outs' could be developed in the night time economy. Also exploring the reconfiguration of the internal layout of commercial venues to create more additional safe, internal spaces for 'time outs' from alcohol consumption.

This study adds to our understanding of the impact of technological advances and the affordances of SNS on the practice. Technology is not only constitutive of the practice but it also serves to illustrate how young people extend their interaction with both

their peer group and their wider social networks through the affordances of SNS. These technological advances also serve to extend the opportunities for young people to accumulate social capital, status and recognition. There is, also possibilities that technology could be used as a regulator for the practice, although this would require further exploration.

Importantly alcohol policy should not be separated from the wider society in which alcohol consumption practices take place. This is particularly relevant if the intention is to prevent participation in the practice, policy makers could seek to support the development of competing practices, practices which contest both temporal and financial resources that have been taken up by the practice of a *proper night out*. Competing practices would need to provide opportunities for friendship, sociability and for accumulating physical, cultural and social capital, which are currently provided by the practice of a *proper night out* for some groups of young people.

This analysis illustrates that the meanings associated with the practice of the *proper night out*, for example social recognition and status, embed the practice into the everyday lives of young people from lower socio-economic groups. These embedded meanings make it difficult for young people living in economically disadvantaged circumstances to either not participate in the practice, or to participate in a different way, either by drinking more moderately, or not at all and the praxes of actions for this group of young people are constrained and limited. In our efforts to understand young people's alcohol consumption, it should be acknowledged that young people do attempt to moderate and regulate associated risks. If the intention is to keep young people safe and reduce alcohol attributable harms, there are opportunities for

policymakers to support young people engaging in risk or safety practices of interest. For example, by planners reconfiguring external spaces and local regulators requesting more internal safe spaces within the night time environment. Different ways of conceptualising risk at a policy level are a prerequisite for a different approach.

9.7 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to position the findings from this research study, within the literature on alcohol studies, risk theories and social practice theory and to consider the contributions that are made to these fields. At a basic level, this study has demonstrated that alcohol consumption is situated within a recognisable, bounded and interconnected set of spatial and material features, social meanings and competences, which together constitute a social practice. In this way, this study has contributed to the field of alcohol studies by moving analysis from the individual to the practice. This move has enabled previous contributions to the field of alcohol studies, to be brought together with findings from this study, to provide a fuller and richer account of young people's drinking practices.

In addition, bringing the three element model of social practice together with 'doing gender' and conceptualisations of capital, has enabled this study to meet the theoretical challenge of undertaking empirical enquiry, that explores the unequal and varying performance(s) of alcohol consumption practice. By distinguishing between the practice-as-entity and the practice-as-performance, it has been possible to understand gender as being performative of the practice and to understand how social status can be achieved and enhanced through an acceptable, situated, performance of the practice. This study has also highlighted the presence of multiple, practice

performances enabled through the integral nature of technology and the affordances of SNS, which in turn provides additional opportunities for enhancing social status.

This study adds to the growing body of literature, which critiques the dominant risk theories of rational choice which reduce individual action to conscious, rational, decision making and ignore the complexities of everyday life. This is demonstrated in the study by the re-conceptualisation of risk as routine, ordinary and normalised within young people's intoxicated drinking practices. Risk is thus viewed as being complex, multi-layered, fluid and axiomatic to the practice. Knowledge about moderating and navigating hazards and uncertainties through practices of interest is part of the competence and embodied know-how of the practice, and as such can be unconscious, tacit, routine and habitualised.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

10.1 Introduction

This research study has provided substantive empirical data to illustrate the existence of the practice of a *proper night out*, and its constitutive sub-practices and the elements that come together to form the practice. This data has enabled a more holistic understanding of the praxes that young people are engaged in during this intoxicated drinking practice.

This thesis has outlined the findings from a qualitative study, which has explored the ways in which young people living in deprived communities engage in, navigate and manage intoxicated alcohol consumption drinking practice framed as the *proper night out*. Specifically, this research study explored the drinking practices of three friendship groups of young people, and explored how these drinking practices related to risk. The theoretical approach to the studies located the social world in practice and approached young people's alcohol consumption from a social practice theory perspective. Viewing the *proper night out* in terms of the three elements of practice (materials, competences and meanings), it has been possible to consider how these interconnected elements have come together to form an everyday recognisable normative performance of an intoxicated alcohol consumption practice. By doing so, the study has reframed alcohol consumption from an individualised approach to one that is practice orientated and as such has reconceptualised risk as it relates to alcohol consumption as a practice of interest. It is noted that the concept of risk is problematic as it is understood and applied in different ways. The notion of risk has been shown in this thesis and how and when it is used to be subjective, political and situated within

the specific social practice that it is located. Thus risk within the social practices that alcohol consumption is constitutive of is viewed differently throughout the study. For example, as the possibility of a harmful outcome as a result of excessive drinking or the risk of being excluded from a social group. This approach also illustrates how individualised harm minimisation interventions are unlikely to be effective as they are at odds with the established social practices of young people.

This thesis is timely, as although practice theory has been influential in building up a body of work on sustainability that has challenged the dominant discourses around environmental and climate change policy (Hargreaves 2011, Shove 2010, Gram-Hanssen 2011), and has become increasingly prominent in consumption studies (Arsel and Bean 2013, Epp et al. 2014), it has yet to have had a meaningful effect within public health (Holman and Borgstrom 2016). However, social practice scholars have turned their attention to using a practice framework to provide a more nuanced understanding of health related practices such as smoking, snacking and cycling (Blue et al. 2016, Spotswood et al. 2015, Twine 2015) and more recently in the field of alcohol studies (see Ally et al. 2016, Supski et al. 2016). Thus, this thesis builds on this body of scholarly work and seeks to construct new knowledge by using a practice framework to develop understandings of the drinking practices of young people. This appears to be the first time social practice theory has been used to aid understanding of the intoxicated drinking practices of young people living in deprived communities and builds on previous research by Supski et al (2016) who have investigated university students drinking practices using a social practice framework.

10.2 Limitations

As with any other theoretical frameworks, there are limitations to using concepts from social practice theory to affect policy. Whilst this study has shown how a turn to practice moves understandings away from an individual harm reduction approach it does not provide a list of possible interventions, making its adoption by policy makers challenging. However, the findings from this study join the growing body of research that has been championed by the Alcohol Health Alliance that challenges the type of individualism that is embedded in alcohol policy.

The generalisability of the findings are limited by the small number of friendship groups (three) who participated in the study. However, the intention was to draw upon a highly localised and small sample (twenty-three young people) over at least a one-year period, which generated a considerable amount of data from social media content and group interviews.

Whilst it is recognised that young people participate in different types of alcohol consumption practices, time resources also prevented an exploration of more than one type of drinking practice, as part of this study. Analysis of other types of drinking practice combined with a tracking of their practice trajectories would broaden understandings of young people's alcohol consumption further. A starting point for this maybe the types of drinking practices identified by Ally et al. (2016) such as '*a get together at someone's house*' or '*light drinking at home with a partner*'. Developing a practice based understanding of different types of alcohol consumption practice, their trajectories, similarities and differences may help in identifying and promoting less harmful practices.

It should also be noted that the friendship group discussions were contrived, and that the young people were engaged in a performance during these interviews, thus perhaps precluding some topics of conversation (Willott and Lyons 2012). This was particularly apparent, when the young people appeared to struggle to explain themselves in a way that was not openly racist, homophobic or misogynist. As such, some of the conversations were self-policed and an alternative performance was presented to what may have been presented if an alternative interviewer, for example a peer researcher had been facilitating. It was also recognised that dominant viewpoints including those that are strongly expressed or those shared by the majority of the participants may close down discussion (Emslie et al. 2012). In addition, the recruitment of friendship groups of young people worked well in the study but it needs to be acknowledged that this approach effectively excludes young people who are excluded from such groups.

It is also acknowledged that the use of SNS content as data enhanced this study and particularly understandings of how young people accrue capital and perform the practice in the online environment. Despite this, the study was limited by the exclusion of Snapchat content from the data. This is of particular relevance as it has grown in popularity and is now thought to be the favoured social media tool of young people (Rushton 2015). Also the temporary nature of its content and its potential for sharing among small and intimate peer group (Madrigal 2013). Thus, alcohol studies researchers may want to consider how Snapchat content can be accessed for future research studies.

This research was also limited by its restrictions to one geographical area and as such although the study findings broadens our understandings of young people's alcohol consumption practices we cannot assume that it can be generalised to all young people. In addition, the study is limited by its investigation being situated in an urban area. It is suggested therefore that a similar study be undertaken with young people living in rural areas.

The impact of this study is also likely to be limited by virtue of its lack of potential in appealing to public health policy decision makers. This point relates to the overview of alcohol policy outlined in chapter 2 that identified a reluctance by English policy decision makers to commit to a public health vision of reducing the alcohol consumption of the population as whole rather than targeted interventions aimed at population groups. The way an issue is defined and understood is key to adopting policies that will enable widespread change (Thom et al. 2016) and this thesis can make a contribution to that debate.

10.3 Further research

This research study has provided an empirical example of how a social practice framework can and does provide a useful approach for broadening our understandings of young people's alcohol consumption practices, and how practice orientated exploration can be used within public health. The use of social practice theory as an analytical framework moves us away from an individualised approach and interventions that focus on individual harm reduction, supporting a move to more broad based interventions at a practice and population level. Although this study has provided new insights into the alcohol consumption practices of young people future

research might consider how young people are recruited into and become carriers of both the practice of the *proper night out*, and also 'practices' that compete for temporal and economic resources. This type of future research may provide more insight into potential future interventions. Future research may also consider exploring the regulatory effect of the affordances of mobile technology and exploring in more detail other typologies of young people's drinking practices, to further broaden our understanding of the different practices they are engaged in. Other directions for future research include comparison studies of young people from other social and economic groupings or young people from rural areas.

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Appendix 1:

Participant Information Sheet

A research study exploring young people's drinking practices

Please ask if there is anything, you do not understand or if you would like more information. Take your time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

About the research

This research is being carried out by Kath Hennell to explore the drinking practices of young people and how these are represented on social media. You are invited to take part in-group discussions with your friends and to share your experiences of 'going out' with the researcher on social media. In practice, this will mean 'friending' Kath on facebook or Snapchat, if you use these and/or allowing Kath to follow you on twitter and/or instagram if you use these. You are invited to share your experiences of 'going out' and of alcohol with Kath through your postings. Any other postings for example relating to family, sports or work/school/training will not be used.

Participation is entirely voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to participate, you will be given this information sheet and asked to sign a consent form. You can decide not to be involved in the research at any time and without giving a reason. If you decide not to be involved in the study, Kath will make every attempt possible to remove your data from the study. Although the later, you do this in the study the more difficult it may be.

What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be asked to let Kath have access to and to collect your postings on social media as well as taking part in three group discussions with your friends and Kath. No other adults will be present during the discussions. The group discussion will involve you, your friends and Kath having an open discussion about your postings, which relate to alcohol and 'going out'. A time and venue will be arranged that suit you.

Each discussion will take about one hour of your time. You will get £3 expenses and £10 for each group discussion as a thank you for taking part.

What would my involvement mean to me?

There are no foreseen risks to taking part in the group discussion. The information you give during the research will help increase understanding of the needs of young people.

What should I be aware of?

Kath will audio-record the discussion groups. This is to help Kath think about what people have said after the discussion is over.

When Kath writes about the research study she will not reveal who has taken part in the study and if necessary we will use different names including in any publications such as a report, so that people reading the report will not know who took part.

Once the audio recordings have been written up, they will be destroyed but all the paperwork will be kept. This will include a copy of your discussion, which has been written down, but it will have no names in it. Only Kath and her research supervisors (the research team) will listen to recordings from the discussions and have access to the paperwork.

The paperwork, postings and any computer records are kept for 5 years after the end of the project. But they are locked away and a special password is needed to get to them. Only the research team will know the password.

All your postings and discussion contributions are private and all your friends who attend the group discussion will be asked to keep the conversations private. **However, should you suggest, imply or state that you will act in a manner that will cause harm to yourself or others or that someone else is harming you or others then Kath will have to let someone else know.** If possible, she will tell you she has had to do this.

Contact Details of Researcher

If you have any questions about this research then please contact, Kath Hennell by email k.hennell@lancaster.ac.uk.

Complaints

If you wish to make a complaint or raise concerns about any aspect of this study and do not want to speak to Kath, you can contact:

Mark Limmer

m.limmer@lancaster.ac.uk

01524 593015

or Prof Paul Bates

p.bates@lancaster.ac.uk

01524 593718

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Resources in the event of distress

Should you feel distressed either as a result of taking part, or in the future, the following resources may be of assistance.

- xxx
- xxx
- xxx
- xxx
- xxx
- xxx

Thank you for reading this

Appendix 2:

Consent Form

Study Title: Young people, alcohol and risk

We are asking if you would like to take part in a research project exploring the drinking practices of young people.

Before you consent to participating in the study we ask that you read the participant information sheet and mark each box below with your initials if you agree. If you have any questions or queries before signing the consent form please speak to the principal investigator, Kath Hennell.

Please initial box after each statement

- 1 I confirm that I have read/discussed the information sheet and fully understand what is expected of me within this study
- 2 I confirm that I have had the opportunity to ask any questions and to have them answered.
- 3 I understand that any interviews will be audio recorded and then made into an anonymised written transcript.
- 4 I give permission for my postings using social media to be used as data for the study
- 5 I understand that audio recordings and postings will be kept until the research project has been examined.
- 6 I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without my legal rights being affected.
- 7 I understand that if I withdraw from the study it might not be possible for my data to be extracted from the rest of the group, although every attempt will be made to extract my data, up to the point of publication.
- 8 I understand that the information from my interview and from social media postings will be pooled with other participants' responses, anonymised and may be published in academic journals and reports
- 9 I consent to information and anonymised quotations from my interview being used in reports, conferences and training events.
- 10 I understand that any information I give will remain strictly anonymous unless it is thought that there is a risk of harm to myself or others, in which case the principal investigator will need to share this information with her research supervisor.

11 I consent to Lancaster University keeping written transcriptions of the discussions for 5 years after the study has finished.

12 I consent to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Name of Researcher _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Appendix 3: Examples and explanations of social media content

Examples of social media postings in this section are from data collected for this study.

Twitter is an online, microblogging, social media service. It enables users to send and receive short 140-character text messages and or visual messages, commonly called "tweets". Users can group posts together by topic or type through the use of hashtags. Hashtags are words or phrases which are prefixed with a "#" sign. For example, a search of #worldcup on twitter will enable the searcher to read all tweets relating to the world cup. The use of # gives the tweet an elevated status by creating visibility. The "@" sign, followed by a username, is used for mentioning or replying to other users. Tweeters can tweet their own messages or can retweet messages from other users. Retweeting is the email equivalent of 'forwarding'. Other users can designate tweets as 'favourite' to show they connect with a tweet. In addition, users can connect to other users by 'following' them. Two examples of tweets are explained below next:

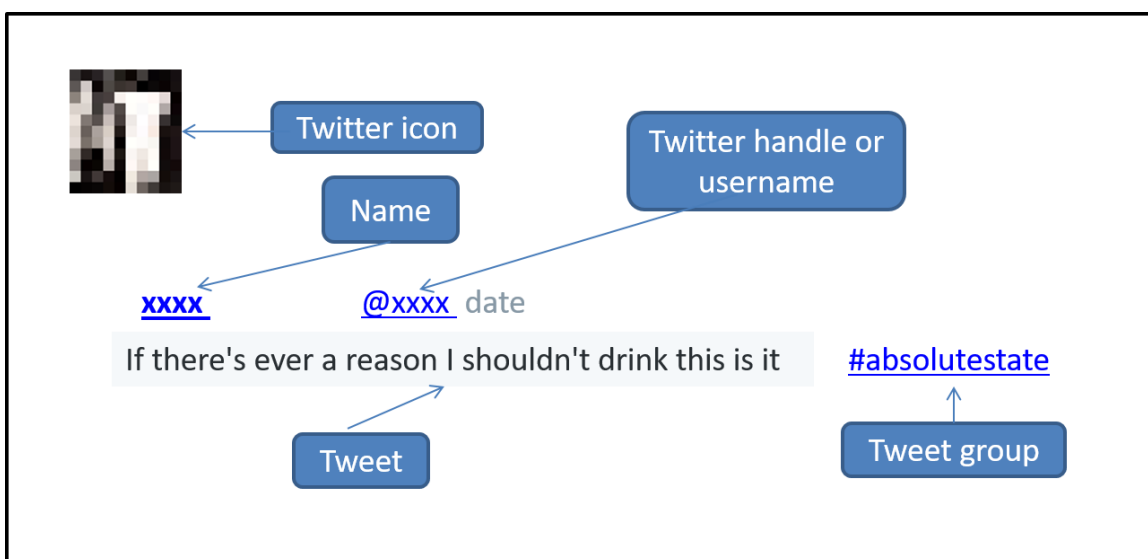


Diagram 9: Example of a 'tweet'

The tweet in the previous diagram makes reference to the aftermath of a drinking session. #absolute state is a grouping that can refer to excess drinking (although is not exclusive to it). Marking tweets by topic was useful for the study as they were used to identify 'practices' by participant's performance on twitter.

The tweet in the following diagram, below, is an example of a retweet from the study data referencing a work night out. Whilst retweeting at its most simplistic is purely copying and forwarding, the practice of retweeting also contributes to the building of a shared conversation. "Retweeting can be understood both as a form of information diffusion and as a means of participating in a diffuse conversation. Spreading tweets is not simply to get messages out to new audiences, but also to validate and engage with others." (Boyd et al. 2010: p1).

In the example of the retweeted tweet below, ten people connected to it. Eight connected via favourites and two users had connected through retweeting the original tweet. Research has shown however, that the favourite feature is relatively unused (Suh et al. 2010). In contrast, retweeting is associated with the original information items being valued, entertainment, commenting on someone's tweet, to publicly agree with someone, or saving tweets for future personal access (Boyd et al. 2010). All of these actions suggest then that the original tweet

contained something considered to be a value to the retweeter and therefore was analysed and interpreted as part of the study.

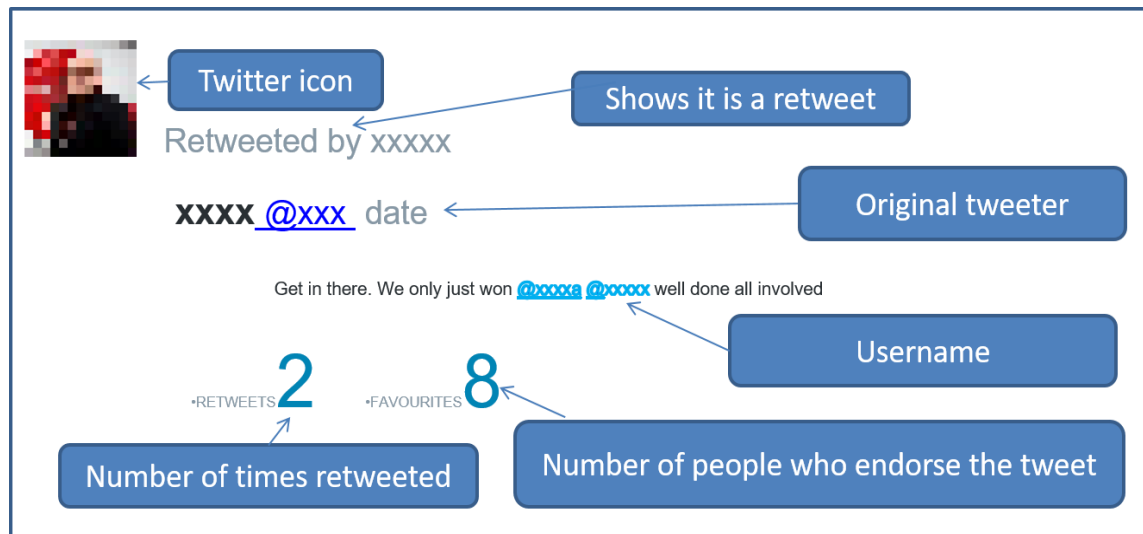


Diagram 10: Example of a retweeted 'tweet'

Facebook

Individuals who use Facebook develop a prolife and personal timeline on the Facebook website or using an app, which is a type of computer program, usually downloaded to a mobile phone or tablet. Each user can link to family, friends, colleagues and strangers through sending a 'friend' request or responding positively to a friend request.



Diagram 11: Example of a Facebook post and conversation

Each personal profile has a 'News Feed', which appears on every user's homepage and highlights information including profile changes, upcoming events, and posts from the user's friends. Posts are not space limited and can include photos and other visual images. Friends can 'like', 'share' or 'comment' on a post to show they have connected with it. The News Feed allows users to see entire conversation between two or more individuals. Content can be shared with friends by 'tagging' them in a link related to the content. In this way, the content appears on the tagged person's news feed for them to view and comment on. Users can 'untag' themselves from tagged content if they choose. Friends can also post comments on each other's timeline. The previous diagram illustrates a Facebook conversation about celebrating a birthday and posing the question of how it should be celebrated? Holiday or party? Connections with friends and family are made and remade in this example through further postings and through 'liking' postings.

The way social media content was used was also important for this study and this is relevant for all social media sites. For example, 'likes', hashtags, retweets and comments on content were important to symbolise the accrual of capital.