

# Mind the gender gap!

When boys and girls get drunk  
at a party

## Introduction

In the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a new word made it into the Oxford Dictionary: 'ladette', meaning 'a young woman who behaves in a boisterously assertive or crude manner and engages in heavy drinking sessions' (Oxford Dictionary 2006). This word suited a trend of the 1990s, where in particular the British media turned its attention to young girls suddenly acting like boys by displaying drunkenness and rowdy behaviour in public. The media attention has been supported by research (Hibell et al. 2004; Gill 2002; Sweeting & West 2003) which suggests that girls in the United Kingdom get drunk as frequently as the boys and also drink the same quantities. Findings like these have also been reported in other European countries, for instance in Finland, where research suggests that over the last two decades especially 14-year-old girls have developed a way of drinking that is not so different from that of the boys (Lintonen et al. 2000; Ahlström & Österberg 2004).

The convergence of boys' and girls' way of drinking foster new interpretations of both alcohol and gender or in other words the meaning of alcohol in relationship to gender (Sulkunen 2002). Do girls become like boys when they drink like boys, such as implied in the notion of ladettes? Is alcohol then used by

## ABSTRACT

J. Østergaard: Mind the gender gap! When boys and girls get drunk at a party

This article investigates the gender gap in alcohol use and partying among Danish adolescents by means of a survey of 15–16-year-olds. The aim is, first, to reveal the present gender differences in alcohol use when using measurements such as 'age of onset of drinking', 'frequency of intoxication', 'binge drinking' etc. Second, by drawing on other types of questions, the issue of the gender gap is readdressed from a perspective which contextualises adolescents' use of alcohol. The context is the last party the adolescent went to, and the questions centre on whether boys and girls party differently and how alcohol might effect how they party. By using graphical models for high-dimensional contingencies developed by Kreiner (1987; 1996; 2003), it is first analysed if consumption of alcohol makes boys rate the party more successful than girls. Second, by mapping out what boys and girls do when they party it is analysed whether alcohol consumption results in boys and girls doing the same or different activities at the party. Finally, it is analysed what activities are associated with rating the party as successful. At the very end it is then discussed how a gender gap in alcohol consumption could also be explained by how alcohol is embedded in a social setting, where the adolescents perform traditional gender roles.

## ■ KEYWORDS

Keywords: Alcohol consumption, gender, partying, situational drinking, adolescents, survey, graphical models

the girls to achieve some form of equality with the boys (Young et al. 2005)? Or do the girls drink like the boys because of a greater equality in other areas, for example that girls now do what boys used to do—hang out with friends in the street and other public areas? Have girls taken control of the public areas and are the boys, in sharp contrast to previously, left in the home environment taking a greater interest in playing computers (Sweeting & West 2003)?

‘Girls drinking like boys’ raises many interesting questions, some of which have been answered—namely that girls are as likely to be in traditional male arenas such as the street and other public places, or semi-public places like parties, and that this can explain some of the increased use in various substances such as alcohol (Sweeting & West 2003). However, from this research, it is still not known if girls who frequent the same places and drink like the guys also act like the guys? The aim of this article is to contribute an answer to this issue by asking the question: What are the gender differences when adolescents party and, in particular, get intoxicated at a party? The data used for the analysis are a self-administrated questionnaire sent to 2000 Danish adolescents aged 15–16 years in the beginning of 2005.

## Previous studies

Gender difference in adolescents’ way of drinking is considerably less identifiable as compared to gender differences in adults’ way of drinking. As teenagers girls drink more like the boys, but as they get older they seem to lower their alcohol consumption especially in comparison with men (Ahlström & Österberg 2004). How-

ever, there are specific differences when countries are compared. Girls in countries which can be characterised by extensive drunkenness (Room & Mäkelä 2000) certainly drink more than girls in countries that can be characterised by a higher degree of regularity of drinking (Ahlström 2005; Hibell et al. 2004). Therefore the gender gap is considerably smaller among adolescents aged 15–16 in the Nordic countries compared to Southern European countries and not even present in countries like the UK where adolescents drink quite often with the purpose of getting intoxicated (Ahlström & Österberg 2004; Brain 2000; Sweeting & West 2003; Room 2001). The gender gap in drinking alcohol among adolescents in the Nordic countries then mirrors the gender differences in the adult population, as women in the Nordic countries drink less differently from the men (Bloomfield et al. 2001; Wilsnack et al. 2000).

The reason put forward in explaining country-specific differences is a combination of biological differences and country-specific differences related to the drinking tradition and also to egalitarianism such as a higher level of equality in education and the labour market (Bloomfield et al. 2001; Bloomfield et al. 2006; Mäkelä et al. 2006). Hence the underlying argument given for a stronger convergence in the Nordic countries is that women are emancipated from the traditional female role and therefore have the possibility of becoming more equal to men. In this process women naturally acquire the lifestyle of men including their way of drinking. Hence the underlying notion behind this hypothesis is that equality in other areas of men’s and women’s lives result in that women will

develop the same drinking behaviour as men, i.e. that alcohol has the same meaning to women as it has to men.

In this way the convergence hypothesis and in fact also the concept of 'ladette' draws on a very traditional notion of the association between gender and alcohol consumption. Traditionally alcohol consumption has been reserved for men in the public sphere (Eriksen 1999). In bars, restaurants etc. men could demonstrate their 'strength', 'vitality' and 'manliness' by drinking excessively. Hence "consumption of alcohol was a symbol of masculinity whereas sobriety was a symbol of femininity" (ibid., 3). Therefore, if women were drinking in public places, it would be displayed as an 'abnormal' and 'acquired' male behaviour.

Although women today are allowed to drink in public, the convergence hypothesis and in particular the notion of a new 'ladette culture' targeting teenage girls, arises from the same critic and indignation characteristic of women's drinking in public places in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. According to the Oxford Dictionary, 'ladette' is the equivalent of young teenage girls drinking excessively i.e. 'binge drink like boys'. The boys' excessive use of alcohol, however, needs no further explanation, as it is neutralised by referring to that as a symbol of masculinity. Therefore, when girls suddenly drink like guys, a natural way of explaining this new phenomenon is by saying they are acquiring male behaviour. Neither the concept 'ladette' nor the convergence thesis is acknowledging that drinking the same amount of alcohol still can result in girls acting differently from boys. When the convergence hypothesis is tested it is usually by comparing similarity

(or differences) in the amount of consumed alcohol, the frequency of intoxication or binge drinking etc. Hence it is implied that a result that shows boys and girls drinking the same quantity or equally frequently is equal to no gender gap. However, if boys' and girls' way of drinking is not contextualised, there is a danger of overlooking how drinking the same amount or equally frequently can be associated with gender-specific differences, such as acting differently (Sulkunen 2002; Törrönen & Maunu 2007) or doing it for different reasons with different purposes.

In quantitative research there has been a long tradition for studying drinking motives (Kuntsche et al. 2006). This tradition has been based on or inspired by a Motivational Model developed by Cox and Klinger in 1988 (Kuntsche et al. 2005). It suggests that no differentiated drinking motives can be detected in early adulthood, that no gender-specific motives arise until subsequent years and that they might also change over time (Kuntsche et al. 2006). A review over the previous 15 years of research on drinking motives suggests that social motives (defined by referring to such statements as 'one drink to be sociable', 'to have a good time or to feel better about oneself' etc.) are the main reasons for drinking among adolescents (Kuntsche et al. 2005). This result and the fact that differentiated drinking motives cannot be detected in early adulthood, suggests that the social situation is important in determining adolescents' ways of using alcohol. A Canadian study of college students confirms this, as it revealed how young people would drink differently in various social situations (Demers et al. 2002). Hence their reasons for drinking were highly in-

fluenced by the social context.

Drinking or getting drunk is then not only an individualised choice but a learned component, as Mary Douglas famously formulated it: 'Drinking is essentially a social act, performed in a recognized social context' (Douglas 2003, 4). Therefore in determining gender differences in drinking alcohol it is important also to pay attention to how drinking among boys and girls might be governed and constrained by different norms and collectiveness which could also change according to the specific drinking setting. In quantitative research mapping, the drinking setting has mainly been done by asking questions as: when, where and with whom (Demers et al. 2002, Engels et al. 1999, Greenfield & Room 1997). For instance by asking college students about a number of circumstances where they consumed alcohol (i.e. at a party, a get-together), and the location (at home, at a restaurant, disco/bar etc.), it is revealed that the highest quantity of consumed alcohol takes place at parties, with friends, on Saturday evening, followed by a lower consumption on Friday and Thursday. Also boys are more influenced by the group size than women, but drinking in gender-mixed or non-gender-mixed groups does not have an impact on the situational alcohol consumption (Demers et al. 2002). However, from this research it is still not known how alcohol might affect what boys and girls do at a party. Does getting drunk at a house party mean that the party is equally fun for boys and girls and are there any gender differences in what boys and girls do at the party when they are intoxicated?

Qualitative studies suggest that drinking parties are constructed around an already

defined set of expectations on both how to drink and what should happen during the evening (Garvey 2005; Demant & Østergaard 2006; Young et al. 2005). An observational study conducted in Norway on pre-parties—the *Vorspiel*—among young adults reveals how drinking at the *Vorspiel* is organised around the expectation that everybody drinks together and preferably the same amount. If this social rule is broken—for instance a participant is drinking less and perhaps also lying about it—it is interpreted as a deceit by the other group members. At that moment, the social trust based on the commitment to get intoxicated together has been violated (Garvey 2005). The Norwegian study, however, does not go any further into discussing if expectations on how to drink and behave at the party might be different for boys and girls.

Studies in England on how young adults party suggests intoxication is bounded differently for girls than for boys (Brain 2000; Measham 2002). The notion of 'bounded and unbounded substance use' is one way to approach how differences in young people's use of alcohol and drugs can be approached. The dichotomy captures how alcohol consumption for a vast majority of young adults is about maintaining 'control over a deliberate loss of control' (Measham & Brain 2005, 274) and how this 'controlled loss of control' is imbedded in a hedonistic consumer-oriented 'leisure' lifestyle, where the state of intoxication is part of leisure 'time out' from the more structured and restrained everyday life associated with schools, work etc. However, for a small minority, that is not constrained by school, work etc. this recreational drug use is unbounded as it is not just the 'leisure'

lifestyle, but the whole lifestyle. The studies also point to how this ‘controlled loss of control’ changes depending on class and gender (Measham & Brain 2005). The young women interviewed in the Measham study (2002), for instance, describe how it is important that they enforce self-policing and self-restraint when intoxicated, as they otherwise would cross the boundary of what is a socially acceptable display of their drunkenness. Hence they are struggling with the fine line between making themselves sexually attractive and active, but not sexually too active and thereby sexually promiscuous. The young women can enjoy life, seek the pleasure and the fun of partying, but not completely lose it like the boys, who do not hold back in telling admirable and glorifying stories of sickness, hospitalisation, i.e. how they take the risk of ‘losing it’.

For adolescents, getting intoxicated is about having fun, relaxing, unwinding, letting go from a more structured working/school life (Gusfield 2003; Sande 2002; Pedersen 1994). However, for the girls the notion of ‘controlled loss of control’ has different boundaries compared to the boys or in other words, different social rules apply to how girls are expected to use alcohol to have fun and relax at a party. Even though they might drink as much as the guys it does not necessarily mean they act the same as intoxicated guys. Focus group studies in the USA even suggest that the notion of females ‘drinking like a guy’ is not interpreted as equality at least among heavy drinking females (Young et al. 2005). Rather, it is interpreted as the way to make themselves (hetero)sexually available, i.e. to be ‘liked by the guys’ by being ‘one of the lads’.

## The present study

The analysis on how girls and boys party is based on quantitative data from a survey of adolescents aged 15–16 years conducted in the beginning of 2005, as part of a larger Danish research project on Youth and Alcohol (The PUNA project)<sup>1</sup> sponsored by Rockwool Fonden. First, gender differences will be analysed by using measurements such as age of onset of drinking, frequency of intoxication and binge drinking (5+ units at one occasion). Based on previous research (Ahlström 2005; Hibell et al. 2004) the hypothesis is that the gender gap is considerably noticeable among Danish adolescents aged 15–16 years.

The second aim is to contextualise gender differences by looking at the importance of alcohol in establishing a fun party. According to previous research, drinking alcohol at a party is about having fun and letting go. But because the boundaries for the ‘controlled loss of control’ are different for boys and girls, the association between the individual’s alcohol consumption and the notion of a fun party could be gender specific. Hence the first hypothesis is that a high consumption of alcohol at the individual level is associated with rating the party as more fun in particular among boys.

The second hypothesis is formulated with reference to how drinking is a social act. As the Norwegian study suggests, certain social rules apply to how alcohol is consumed at a party. Preferably one should drink the same amount and definitely not less than others. Hence the second hypothesis is that adolescents who evaluate their drinking to be similar to the other people at the party find the party more fun.

The individual’s alcohol intake at a

house party has been hypothesised to be influenced by the interaction of the group (Douglas 2003; Demers et al. 2002; Senchak et al. 1998). Hence the bigger the party group, the more the adolescents drink, and the older the other participants, the more the adolescents drink. The gender composition of the group was not asked; however, as mentioned earlier, it did not have a big effect on college students' drinking (Demers et al. 2002). Since research suggests that particularly among young adults men are more influenced by the social composition of the drinking group (Hammer 1992; Demers et al. 2002), the hypothesis is that boys consume more alcohol when they party in bigger groups and with older adolescents.

The third and final aim of this article is to analyse what boys and girls actually do when they party and how what they do at the party impacts the rating of the party. A number of pre-defined social activities such as dancing, flirting, meeting new people, getting into a fight, throwing up etc. have been listed. The Norwegian study suggests that drinking alcohol in public enhances the possibilities of approaching strangers—among other things because the more disciplined behaviour is left at home (in the private space) (Garvey 2005). Therefore the hypothesis is that approaching strangers is strongly related to alcohol consumption, both for boys and for girls—as this is the essence of the party. Likewise the hypothesis is that for both boys and girls a high alcohol intake is strongly associated with sexualising each other (Measham 2002; Young et al. 2005). However, gender differences are hypothesised to exist in terms of what activities make a fun party. As Measham suggests,

the boundaries for losing control at a party are much more constrained and defined for the girls. Hence the hypothesis is that activities that stress the notion of losing control—such as for instance throwing up or getting into a fight can make the boys rate the party as fun, whereas this is not the case for the girls.

## Methods

As part of the PUNA project two surveys were conducted in the beginning of 2005. Adolescents aged 15–16 were asked about their alcohol use and attitudes, their social networks and leisure activities, upbringing and social background. Their parents were also asked to participate in a separate survey on attitudes to adolescents' drinking, upbringing, rules about alcohol, and their own alcohol use and social background. The two questionnaires were sent in separate envelopes to the adolescents and the parent, and included a letter emphasising their anonymity (in particular that the parents would not see the adolescents' answers).

The Danish Civil Registration System was used to select a representative sample of 2000 adolescents born in 1989. The personal identification number of the adolescents made it possible to identify the biological parents, one of which was asked to participate in the separate parent survey. When the adolescent lived with both biological parents, the participating parent was selected by criteria of birth. The response rate for both surveys was 72%.

Among the 1445 adolescents who answered the questionnaire there was an almost equal amount of boys and girls (respectively 49% vs. 51%). Because the sample is based on year of birth, the adoles-

cents are in different school classes ranging from the 7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> grade/high school. However, far more than the majority of the adolescents (85%) are in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, but significantly more girls (89%) than boys (82%) are in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, whereas more boys (15%) than girls (7%) are in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

The issue of the gender gap will only be analysed for adolescents in 9<sup>th</sup> grade (n=1219), as this makes it possible to compare the results with other surveys. Also there are very few respondents in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade, and furthermore it is in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade that a more regular drinking practice develops (Settertobulte et al. 2001; Demant & Østergaard 2006).

#### ■ Measures

The drinking setting is restricted to the previous party the adolescents went to, because previous research suggests parties are where young adults drink the most alcohol (Demers et al. 2002; Engels et al. 1999). Because the survey is restricted to 15–16-year old adolescents, who are legally prohibited from drinking alcohol in clubs and bars etc., the previous party has been narrowly defined to the previous house party, which is usually held privately or in rented premises. Asking detailed questions on the previous house party presupposes the adolescents have been to one. Therefore the first question asked the adolescents to recall if they had ever been to a house party and if not, skip all the following 8 questions. If they had been to a house party, they were then asked to report how long ago this party took place: 1) less than a week ago, 2) a week ago, 3) 2 weeks ago, 4) 3 weeks ago, 5) a month ago, 6) 2–3 months ago, 7) 4–6 months ago, 8)

7 months ago or more. The two last categories have been grouped together for the purpose of analysis.

The social composition of the other participants is measured by asking two questions: First, a very broad question on the age of the other participants, which is formulated as ‘how old were the majority of the other people, who also were at the party’ (1=younger than me, 2=same age as me, 3=older than me). The two first categories have been grouped together for the purpose of analysis. Second, the size of the party is measured by asking how many people attended the party: 1) 5 people or less, 2) 6–10 people, 3) 11–15 people, 4) 16–20 people, 5) 21 people or more.

Respondents were asked to place a tick next to any one of 14 listed activities that may take place at a party.

Alcohol intake per person (i.e. consumption at the individual level) was measured by asking, ‘did you drink alcohol at the party and if so, write how many units’. This variable was then grouped into 6 categories: 1) zero units (if the adolescents did not drink or wrote they drank less than a unit) 2) 1–2 units, 3) 3–4 units, 4) 5–6 units, 5) 7–9 units, 6) 10 + units. To measure the collectiveness of the drinking at the party, the adolescents were asked to evaluate ‘how much did you drink in comparison with others?’ 1) did not drink alcohol, 2) drank much less than the others, 3) drank less than the others, 4) the same as the others, 5) drank more than the others, 6) drank much more than the others. The first two and the last two categories have been grouped together for the purpose of analysis.

The outcome variable was formulated as follows: ‘How would you describe

the atmosphere at the party?’ Based on a seven point Likert scale, the adolescents were then asked to put a cross at the scale, where one meant not very good and seven very good. The party atmosphere was deliberately chosen as a way to measure whether the party had been successful, because ethnographic research (Lincoln 2005) suggests that the atmosphere of a room creatively can be transformed by the use of music and alcohol and because the PUNA focus group studies indicated that alcohol was crucial in the establishment of the ‘right’ party atmosphere. Since the scale is screwed to the upper end, the first three categories have been grouped together for the purpose of analysis.

#### ■ The statistical method

The gender gap as measured by age of first intoxication, frequency of subjective intoxication etc. is tested using Pearson chi squared statistic and—in the case of two ordinal or binary variables—the  $\gamma$ -coefficients for measuring the degree of association. The gender gap in how adolescents party will be analysed by using chain-graph for high-dimensional contingencies, using strategies and techniques described by Kreiner (1987; 2003). “A chain-graph model is a block of recursive models where each component is a graphical regression model” (Kreiner 1996, 167). The variables in each of the components in the graphical model at the different recursive levels are connected by “arrows pointing from lower to higher levels, while variables at the same recursive level are connected by undirected edges” (Kreiner 2003, 7). These arrows are also called an edge. Any edge between two pair variables in the model is then analysed as a conditional relationship: “that a

relationship between two variables exists if and only if the association does not disappear completely, when one controls for the effect of antecedent and or/intervening variables” (Kreiner 1996, 157). This is similar to how controls for confounding and effect modifications are used in epidemiology. Using log linear analysis, the associations between all variables are tested for conditional independence. The test statistic used for removing or adding an association/edge between two variables are either the standard chi squared statistics and in the case of two ordinal or binary variables, the  $\gamma$ -coefficients. Instead of asymptotic p-values, Monte Carlo estimates of p-values are used. Both backwards and forwards model search are used until only correlations that are conditionally dependent are left as edges in the model. The final model then only includes highly significant and/or highly relevant associations. For ordinal and binary data, the partial  $\gamma$ -coefficient is used to measure the strength of the conditional association and it is usually lower than marginal  $\gamma$ -coefficients because they are calculated as a weighted sum<sup>2</sup>. In the case of higher order interactions, however, the partial  $\gamma$ -coefficient cannot be used as a measurement of the strength. The statistical program DIGRAM version 1.43.2 has been used for the analysis.

The first statistical model set up to be tested is then defined in the following way: The first block is the conditional distribution of the atmosphere at the party. The second block is the symmetrical relationship between the variable ‘alcohol intake at the individual level’ and the variable ‘the collectiveness of drinking’. The third block is the symmetrical relationship between the two variables measuring the

social compositions of the participants—group size and age. The fourth block is the time span. The fifth block is gender.

The second statistical set up to be tested is defined as: The first block is the conditional distribution of the atmosphere at the party. The second block is the symmetrical relationship between all the social activities. The third block is the variable ‘alcohol intake at the individual level’. The fourth block is gender.

### **Where is the gender gap in alcohol use among Danish adolescents?**

Two contradicting tendencies become apparent when looking at gender differences in the PUNA survey according to measures such as ‘age of onset of drinking’, ‘the total consumption of alcohol at first intoxication/previous intoxication’, ‘frequency of getting intoxicated the last 30 days/12 months’, and ‘binge drinking’. On the one hand the gender gap is absent in terms of frequency of subjective intoxication. Hence girls subjectively experience drunkenness just as frequently as the boys. On the other hand there are significant gender differences when looking at the age of onset of drinking alcohol (although weak), total consumption of alcohol when first drunk/last drunk and in terms of binge drinking, if the traditional measure (drinking 5+ units during the previous month) and not the alternative definition is used.<sup>3</sup> So when boys and girls are the same age and in the same school class, boys report that they start to experiment with alcohol at a slightly younger age. The girls, however, catch up to the boys—in particular when they are about 14 years old, which is the average age for girls to first experi-

ence intoxication. Therefore, at the age of 15–16, the most prevalent gender difference among the Danish adolescents is that the boys still drink larger quantities (i.e. binge drink), when they drink.

The Danish European School Survey<sup>4</sup> conducted in 9<sup>th</sup> grade school classes in 2003 points to a somewhat different result than the PUNA survey. According to the ESPAD survey, Danish boys aged 15–16 years experience a greater frequency of subjective intoxication than the Danish girls. The PUNA survey and the ESPAD agree upon gender differences when it comes to binge drinking (5+ units). However, the PUNA survey does suggest a considerably lower number of instances of binge drinking. These conflicting results can be caused by many indefinable reasons such as the different survey designs, the two-year time span etc. In fact another recent Danish survey also conducted in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade school classes suggests a decrease in the number of times the adolescents have been binge drinking between 2002 and 2005 (Sundhedsstyrelsen 2007). According to this survey the percentage of adolescents who have tried to binge drink once or more within the last month is very similar to the PUNA survey result. With reference to these three different surveys it can then be concluded that there is a significant gender gap in alcohol use among Danish adolescents aged 15–16 when measured by reported quantities of consumed alcohol beverages. Girls may be less inclined to drink in larger quantities, because they physically cannot tolerate the same amount of alcohol. However, they also might be less inclined to drink heavily because it is not very feminine (Measham 2002). In contrast, for the boys,

binge drinking is a way of displaying masculinity. It symbolises, among other things, that they dare to take risks (i.e. get sick, hospitalised etc.) associated with heavy drinking (Eriksen 1999; Measham 2002). In the following this gender gap in alcohol use will be contextualised by analysing if alcohol is equally important for boys and girls in establishing the right atmosphere at the party.

### **A description of a house party**

Some 10% of the teenagers in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade report they have never been to a house party and therefore they will not be included in the analysis. It is characteristic of these 122 individuals that they have very little experience with drinking alcohol (i.e. 85% of them report that they have never been intoxicated and among those 18 individuals left, 15 individuals were intoxicated once or twice within the last 12 months. Furthermore onset of drinking predominately happened in the presence of relatives—parents, sibling etc.). Analysing how alcohol is associated with partying is rather pointless, if the adolescents hardly have any experience with either drinking alcohol or partying. Hence the 10% who are left out of the analysis cannot substantially change the result, as they have not yet entered a world of partying or drinking. Although this might have other implications such as social exclusion (Demant & Järvinen 2007; Järvinen & Gundelach 2007), this issue is not the focal point of this article.

A party is about meeting people, celebrating birthdays, calendar events etc. (Sande 2002; Pedersen 1994). According to the PUNA focus group studies, the adolescents also associate a house party with having fun and doing things with friends

that are a little bit out of the ordinary. It is described as a place where they can ‘relax’ and be themselves (Demant & Østergaard 2006). Therefore it is less surprising that the majority of the adolescents (64%) report the atmosphere at the party was 6 or 7 at the rating scale, and almost nobody (0.3%) said it was not very good, as that is of course in line with the aim of the party—to have fun and to do things that are different from the everyday life. But this also means that only small differences are to be revealed in the statistical analysis. Furthermore adolescents in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade seem mainly to party with others of the same age, as only a minority of 16% partied with older people and practically none (0.4%) of the teenagers reported that the majority of the other people at the party were younger than themselves. The sizes of the parties are more varied, as about half of the adolescents report that the party was quite big, with 16 or more people. Only about 5% of the adolescents reported they went to a house party with 5 people or less.

One fifth of the adolescents reported that they drank less than a unit of alcohol or that they did not drink at all. However, at the opposite end, approximately one fifth of the adolescents reported that they drank 10 units or more. (The average consumption is 6 units of alcohol). Finally in evaluating their drinking practice about half of the adolescents (48%) saw themselves drinking like the others at the party. Only few (7%) thought they were drinking more, and about one fifth reported that they do not drink at all. Hence drinking the same way or at least feeling that one is consuming the same amount of alcohol seems to be very characteristic of how the adolescents see themselves drinking at the house party.

## A successful party is when boys and girls drink in tune

The first result of the statistical analysis is reported in Table 1 and shows the conditional distribution of the dependent variable given the only two independent variables where the association is significant. Hence the party is rated a little bit more fun if one is a girl compared to if one is a boy. However, as the table indicates the difference is very small and therefore this result should be interpreted with some caution.

The hypothesis—that there would be a positive association between the variable ‘quantities of consumed alcohol at the individual level’ and the rating of the party—is surprisingly not the case at least when the collectiveness of the drinking is included in the analysis. Only the collective experience of drinking is positively associated with the atmosphere at the party. Hence 41% of the teenagers who feel they drink in tune with the other participants rate the party very successful. In contrast if the teenagers report that they drank less/did not drink alcohol only 29% rate it that

successful.

The positive association between the collectiveness of drinking and the rating of the party does not differ between boys and girls. Although boys in particular rate the party very successfully if they feel they have drunk more than the other people at the party, this tendency is not statistically significantly different from what characterises the girls. This result is interesting because boys actually consume more alcoholic beverages at the party (see below). Therefore it could be expected that the boys to a higher degree report they drink more than the others (for instance the other girls) and vice versa. Since this is not case, it could mean that in evaluating how one drinks at a party, boys look to other boys and girls compare themselves to other girls perhaps because they are mainly drinking in non-mixed gender groups. This interpretation is furthermore confirmed, given that there is no gender difference when looking at the very strong correlation between units of alcohol consumed and the perception of how one drinks in comparison ( $\gamma = .81$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). This association suggests

**Table 1.** The association between the dependent variable— the atmosphere at the party (1=not very good, 7=very good)—and the independent variables, percentage. Only variables where the association is significant is reported.

	The atmosphere at the party					Total	n	Partial $\gamma$
	1-3	4	5	6	7			
	%	%	%	%	%	%		
Boys	5	6	20	34	35	100	499	.09*
Girls	3	6	20	34	37	100	574	
Did not drink/drank less	9	11	20	31	29	100	242	.19***
Drank a little less than the others	4	8	24	32	32	100	245	
Drank the same	2	4	17	36	41	100	505	
Drank more or much more than the others	0	6	24	33	37	100	70	

\* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$  \*\*\*  $p < .001$

that when adolescents consume rather large quantities of alcohol they also to a higher degree answer that they are drinking like the others or even more at the party. However, since this association is not affected by gender, it does suggest that drinking at the same pace as the others means to drink at the same pace with either the other girls (if one is a girl) or the other boys (if one is a boy). It does not mean that girls when they evaluate how they drink compare themselves to the boys and vice versa.

### The pressure to consume alcohol

There is a significant association between 'quantities of consumed alcohol at the individual level' and the following four independent variables: gender ( $\gamma = -.27$   $p < .001$ ); time since the adolescent went to the party ( $\gamma = .24$ ,  $p < .001$ ), number of participants at the party ( $\gamma = .12$   $p < .001$ ) and the age of the other participants ( $\gamma = .39$   $p < .001$ ). The intake of alcohol increased significantly if the adolescent is a boy, the previous house party took place recently, the party was big, and the other participants were mainly older.

For instance 30% of the boys reported consuming 10 units or more whereas this was only the case for 15% of the girls. However, the gender gap in quantity of consumed alcohol is only true if the adolescents attended the previous party within the previous month. If it is more than two months since they attended a house party, the gender gap disappears. One important factor in explaining the gender gap in quantity of consumed alcohol beverages is then the time span. This means that adolescents who do not party frequently do not consume large amounts of alcohol irre-

spective of their gender. Or in other words it is only 'natural' for boys to drink more than girls if they are regular partygoers.

The positive association between a big party and quantity consumed is also only true for the girls, not the boys. An analysis of collapsibility<sup>5</sup> shows that if there were more than 5 people at the party, the girls report to a higher degree that they have consumed 6+ units than if they were partying with less than 5 participants. In contrast, boys' alcohol consumption is not affected by the size of the party. This result can be interpreted in two ways: The drinking pressure is stronger for girls when they go to bigger parties compared to when they go to smaller parties. Or boys can drink heavily even in smaller groups—most likely in a male-only-group—whereas some girls find this strange and pointless. The focus group study points in particular towards the issue of pointlessness, with many girls saying that they find it pointless just to sit and drink together in a group of girls, unless they are going to a big party later on in the evening (Demant 2006). In contrast intoxication seems to be more meaningful to the boys irrespective of the size of the party.

Both boys and girls feel pressured to drink more alcohol if they party with predominately older adolescents. As already mentioned only a few of the adolescents report that they partied with older teenagers—and the analysis even reveals that they are primarily girls ( $\gamma = .4$   $p < .001$ ). However, the pressure to drink larger quantities is still rather strong for both boys and girls. The reason could be that older teenagers most likely have more alcohol experience, so in order to drink in tune and thereby create the right atmosphere, both the boys

and girls 'naturally' end up drinking more alcohol (see also below).

### **The collectiveness of drinking**

The adolescents' evaluation of their own way of drinking is influenced by two variables, namely the size of the group ( $\gamma = -.18$   $p < .001$ ) and the age of the other participants ( $\gamma = -.36$   $p < .001$ ). Hence adolescents tend to underevaluate how much they drink, when the number and the age of the other participants increases. Hence the concept of drinking in tune is dependent on the social composition of the group. If the adolescents go to bigger parties with older participants, they are less likely to feel they are drinking in tune. In this way the social composition— i.e. the social interaction at the party — has an indirect effect on the atmosphere at the party. If the adolescents mainly interact with people who are like themselves in terms of age or if the number of people to interact with is not too big, the adolescents also to a higher degree find they are drinking in tune and this creates the best party atmosphere both for boys and girls.

### **The social activities at the house party**

The adolescents were asked to select all the social activities they did at the previous party. As there was no limit to how many social activities they could tick off, a ranking of the answers will suggest what prevalent social activities happen at a house party. Table 2 shows the ranking of the social activities and the small statistical differences in what boys and girls report. The most common answer is 'to talk to someone one does not usually talk to' which is mentioned by in total 58% of the

teenagers. It is closely followed by dancing (53%), getting drunk (46%) and flirting (42%). Like the Norwegian study suggests (Garvey 2005), a house party is then all about meeting new people, extending one's social network, but it is also about dancing and flirting and drinking alcohol.

Girls report to a higher degree than boys the social activities ranked in the top 5, except from feeling they are getting drunk. The only activity boys do more than girls is fighting, although very few actually experience this.

In the following statistical analysis it will be analysed how alcohol intake at the individual level affects what boys and girls do at the party. Furthermore it will be analysed what activities are associated with a good atmosphere at the party and whether boys and girls agree upon this matter.

#### **■ Girls still do more social activities than boys**

Consuming a lot of alcohol cannot explain that girls more so than boys dance, flirt, talk to strangers and talk intimately to someone. Girls still supersede the boys in these matters and therefore it can be noted that more girls generally do more of the listed activities, when they are partying. However, as mentioned in the previous analysis, at the party, boys consume larger quantities of alcohol than the girls. So even though girls according to table 2 report that they feel they 'get drunk' just like the boys, the girls still consume less units of alcohol during the party<sup>6</sup>. Hence one could say that the only thing boys end up doing more of compared to the girls is consuming alcoholic beverage.

However, alcohol intake at the individual level is positively associated with

**Table 2.** Social activities at the previous party, percentage

Did you experience any of the following at the party?	Boys	Girls
Talked to someone I don't usually talk to	53	63**
Danced	38	65***
Got drunk	49	43
Flirted	35	48***
Talked intimately to someone	20	30**
Did something I don't usually do	24	21
Made out/kissed with someone (scored)	14	15
Vomited	12	9
Saw someone getting into a fight	9	10
Had a quarrel with someone	9	7
Made a fool of oneself	9	8
Got injured	6	5
Was together with someone and regretted it afterwards	4	4
Got into a fight	4	1*

\* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$  \*\*\*  $p < .001$  (n=998)

two important activities listed in table 2, namely flirting ( $\gamma = .22$   $p < .001$ ) and talking to strangers/acquaintances ( $\gamma = .14$   $p < .05$ ). Alcohol then clearly makes it easier to flirt, and it does have some influence on whether the adolescents engage in what they do most at the previous party—interact with strangers. The associations are true both for boys and girls. Hence girls who drink alcohol flirt and talk more to strangers than girls who do not drink alcohol and the same is the case for the boys. In this sense alcohol seems to play a central role for two connected activities—to make contact with new people, most likely the opposite sex and then sexualise them. Alcohol can then be said to play an important role for sexualising the opposite sex at the party, perhaps because alcohol makes it easier for the adolescents to interact more freely. For instance it is less embarrassing to say 'stupid' things if there is alcohol involved (Demant & Østergaard 2006).

However, less surprisingly, a high alcohol intake is also associated with reporting of vomiting ( $\gamma = .15$   $p < .01$ ) and feeling drunk ( $\gamma = .75$   $p < .001$ ). But it is not associated with either 'talked intimately with someone' or dancing. Especially the latter result is interesting, as it could be expected that alcohol would make it easier for both boys and girls to enter the dance floor, perhaps especially for the boys, who lack behind the girls in doing this social activity at the party.

#### ■ Flirting and dancing makes a party more fun

In closing, it will be reported what kind of social activities make the adolescent rate the atmosphere at the party as very good—and whether boys and girls are of the same opinion in this matter.

A successful party or fun party is where the adolescents feel more free to sexualising each other by doing such social activities as flirting and dancing. Hence if the

adolescents report they flirted ( $\gamma = .14$   $p < .05$ ) or danced ( $\gamma = .12$   $p < .05$ ) at the party, more of them answered the party was very good. The result is the same for boys and girls.

Even though flirting and dancing are very 'female' oriented social activities, as it is what girls do more so than boys at the party, they are vital for both boys and girls in creating the right atmosphere at the party. Hence when the boys occasionally stray into the dance floor, it makes such a bigger impact on them that they actually rate the party better than if they did not dance.

Consuming a lot of alcohol also has a positive effect on the rating of the atmosphere ( $\gamma = .14$   $p < .001$ ), but only for the boys ( $\gamma = .27$   $p < .001$ ). So when boys drink heavily at the party, they rate it as more successful than if they drink little or no alcohol. This is not the case with girls ( $\gamma = .05$   $p = .21$ ); heavy drinking does not make the girls rate the party any better, most likely because this increases the likelihood of vomiting. And one of the most remarkable results is that vomiting makes the party successful ( $\gamma = .26$   $p < .01$ ), but again this is true only for the boys. This result is remarkable because as table 2 reveals

few of the adolescents actually report they vomited at the previous party. However, an analysis of collapsibility shown in table 3 below discloses why vomiting can make such an impact for boys' way of rating the party. The atmosphere at the party can be collapsed into two categories, one category which refers to seven on the scale—the rating of the party as 'very good'—and one category which refers to all the remaining categories—one to six—on the scale.

The table then clearly shows that if boys vomited, they rate the party as more successful compared to if they did not vomit. This is not the case for the girls, where there is no significant difference. Hence only boys can—probably retrospectively—see a house party as fun if they drank over their limits and vomited. As the focus group studies suggest among boys vomiting demonstrates (to other boys) that one is willing to take a risk and this way the party is made unpredictable and therefore fun and exciting. Also retrospectively, it can be a fun story to tell one's male friends and therefore it gives the party a life after it actually happened (Demant & Østergaard 2006).

**Table 3.** Collapsibility of 'the party atmosphere' and 'vomit' among boys and girls, percentage.

	The atmosphere at the party			N	Partial $\gamma$
	Category 1 (1–6)	Category 2 (7)	Total		
	%	%	%		
Boys who did not vomit	65	35	100	393	.46***
Boys who did vomit	40	60	100	52	
Girls who did not vomit	65	35	100	496	.02
Girls who did vomit	65	35	100	52	

\* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$  \*\*\*  $p < .001$

## When a party goes wrong, it is not because of alcohol

Very few negative experiences at the previous party are mentioned by the teenagers, and therefore we also find that only two social activities—which are not very widespread—can turn the party into being less successful: getting into an argument or quarrel with someone ( $\gamma = -.36$   $p < .001$ ), or seeing other participants fight ( $\gamma = -.29$   $p < .001$ ). These social activities cannot, however, be explained by the amount of consumed alcohol. This does not mean adolescents who drink and party a lot do not get hurt or have other risky experiences over a longer time span (Østergaard 2006). The questions used in this analysis refer explicitly to very specific experiences at the previous house party, and here alcohol is mainly associated with positive activities such as flirting and meeting new people.

## The house party: a social setting for traditional gender roles

Measham writes that “certain social settings, social occasions and social activities (including legal and illicit drug use) proved the resources for ‘doing gender’”, meaning that gender can be constructed through the use of various substances (Measham 2002, 351). In her study it is mainly the club scene, as her research is focusing on young adults and recreational illicit drug users. The PUNA project is targeting adolescents at a much younger age than the young adults studied by Measham, and for this age group the social setting for drinking alcohol is the house party. The focus group studies, conducted as part of the PUNA project, likewise suggest that

the house party is an important arena for sexualising each other (Demant 2006)—for ‘doing gender’, if the wording of Measham is used. In the above-mentioned statistical analysis, the issue of the gender gap has been approached, not from the question of ‘doing gender’, but from whether gender can explain adolescents’ way of partying, as gender in quantitative analysis is restricted to a fixed attribute. However, in discussing the predictor power of gender, especially when the focus is on a specific drinking situation, the issue of gender can be elaborated.

The variable used to measure whether boys and girls party differently was defined to a good or bad atmosphere at the previous house party. Because traditional drinking measurements suggest the gender gap among 15–16-years olds are mainly detected in the quantity of consumed alcohol both statistical analyses controlled for alcohol intake per person (i.e. consumption at the individual level).

The first statistical analysis then revealed that girls—independently of alcohol—rate the party atmosphere better. Although the differences among boys and girls in rating the party are minor (respectively 35% vs. 37%), it does suggest that girls’ notion of having fun and relaxation at a party is less strongly related to consumption of alcohol—at least heavy consumption of alcohol. As the second statistical analysis that looked upon what boys and girls do at the party revealed, when the variable which measures the ‘collectiveness of the drinking situation’ is not included in the statistical model, alcohol intake at the individual level does have a positive impact on how the party atmosphere is rated—but only for the boys.

Hence the first hypothesis, that alcohol intake increases the likelihood of rating the party as fun in particular for the boys, is only partly confirmed. The reason is that when a variable measuring the collectiveness of the drinking experience is included in the model, this one can explain a good party atmosphere. The second hypothesis is surely confirmed—drinking in tune is the way to create the right atmosphere at the party both for boys and girls—or said differently, the collectiveness of drinking is equally important to boys and girls. In this sense the symbolic meaning of drinking alcohol (together) is no different for boys and girls. It marks that the party has begun and it symbolises a commitment to create a fun evening (Garvey 2005; Demant & Østergaard 2006).

The hypothesis that boys drink more heavily than girls at a drinking setting was confirmed, but controlling for the time span added new information to this aspect, because boys only drink more than the girls if they are frequent partygoers<sup>7</sup>. Hence the notion that boys drink more than girls at a drinking setting like a party is only true if they are part of the party scene. This certainly suggests that drinking heavily is a learned component among the boys. Of course boys might binge drink more because they physically can. However, they might also consume more alcohol because it is what is expected of them when they party frequently.

What is notable is that drinking more does not make the boys evaluate their own way of drinking differently from the girls. So it seems as if boys look to boys and girls look to other girls when evaluating how they drink in comparison with others. Hence the importance of the collec-

tiveness of drinking in creating the good atmosphere does not make the girls feel more pressured to drink. Only the social composition of the party group increases alcohol intake among the girls. So if the girls attend rather big parties, they drink more and likewise if they party with older adolescents. The latter, however, also has an impact on boys' consumption of alcohol. The pressure to drink alcohol is then clearly influenced by the social composition of the drinking group. But not necessarily the way previous research suggests—that mainly the boys are influenced by the group setting. In this analysis both boys' and girls' alcohol intake is impacted by the social composition of the party group, and girls' even more so than boys'. Perhaps one explanation is that the girls go to different types of parties than the boys. Because when girls are asked to recall and answer questions about the previous house party, they to a higher degree than the boys describe the social composition as older participants and many participants. Focus group studies conducted as part of the PUNA project also imply that girls party with older (boys) and boys are left behind to party in male-only-groups or with younger girls (Demant 2006). Hence another way to interpret the result of the first statistical analysis is that drinking alcohol gives the girls access to bigger parties with older teenagers, whereas this is to a lesser degree the case for the boys, who drink more heavily even at small house parties.

The third aim of this article was to analyse how boys and girls act when they party, how their acting at the party might be influenced by alcohol intake, and finally how what they did at the party affects

their rating of the atmosphere at the party. This statistical analysis clearly revealed that sexualising each other—flirting and talking to strangers—is something that is easier when alcohol is consumed. As this is the case both for boys and girls it could imply, in agreement with other research (Garvey 2005; Measham 2002; Young et al. 2005), that drinking at a party is essentially about exploring the boundaries of one's sexuality. Adolescents who do not drink heavily at the party tend not to go down that path of flirting and interacting with new people to the same degree as adolescents who consume a lot of alcohol.

However, the statistical analysis also implied that a house party is a social setting where the activities generally are favoured toward performing very traditional gender roles. Girls—at least measured by the activities listed in the questionnaire—take a more active role at the party irrespective of how much alcohol they consume. Whereas the boys' main activity surely is focused on consuming rather large quantities of alcohol or when they do the other activities at the party it is to a higher degree related to the consumption of alcohol compared to the girls. Of course one can raise the criticism that social activities are lacking from the list, such as inventing games, for instance drinking games. However, another explanation of why girls do more activities is that the house party is a social setting dominated by feminine activities.

If the increased activities among girls are interpreted by using Measham's (2002) research, it could suggest that when girls dance and flirt more than the boys, they actually do what is socially expected of them if they want to display themselves as feminine. This way they also make them-

selves sexually available to the boys. In contrast boys do what is socially expected of them: they binge drink.

The social boundaries for how to act and especially how to act when alcohol is consumed are different for the girls compared to the boys. This is most clearly stated in the final statistical analysis, where there are some significant gender differences in what activities are associated with a good atmosphere at the party. Hence the boundary for the 'controlled loss of control' is different for the boys, because heavy drinking and vomiting make them rate the party even more successful. Inspired by Measham's (2002) research, one could then say that by taking the risk associated with consuming alcohol in large quantities, the boys show they are willing to 'lose complete control' and this way they display their masculinity.

In contrast girls who drink heavily and vomit at the party do not find the party successful. In this sense the experience of a 'complete loss of control' is not positive or meaningful to the girls. Or in other words the boundary for how a girl should act at a party is crossed if she consumes alcohol too heavily, as she then crosses the fine line of what is socially acceptable, perhaps by becoming too sexually active and promiscuous. Furthermore one could say that when the girls are heavily intoxicated it is more difficult for them to perform all the social activities expected of them.

The house party then seems to be a social setting where adolescents can practice very traditional gendered forms of social interaction, as alcohol makes it easier to approach the opposite sex in a flirtatious way, and in this way consumption of alcohol at the house party makes it easier

to bridge two otherwise partly segregated gendered social arenas.

## Conclusion

Two different approaches to the study of the gender gap in drinking alcohol among 15–16-year olds have been presented here. By looking at traditional quantitative measurements the PUNA survey suggests that the most significant gender gap consists in the quantity of consumed alcohol beverages. Hence boys still drink larger quantities when they drink. Not surprisingly this is also the case, when focusing on the previous house party. However, the statistical analysis also revealed that it is not just the alcohol in itself—the consumptions of large quantities—which makes a party fun. The good party atmosphere is only reached when the adolescents feel they are drinking in tune with the other participants. And this is the case no matter if one is a boy or girl. The essence of creating the right atmosphere at the party is the collectiveness of drinking and here there is no gender gap. Alcohol is an equally important symbol for both boys and girls in establishing the right atmosphere at the party. In this sense alcohol can be said to have the same symbolic meaning to boys and girls at the age of 15–16.

However, there are some differences in what boys and girls do at the party and in particular the kind of activities they associate with a successful party. Girls generally do more activities that are not associated with their alcohol consumption. By

taking a more active part in doing things at the party, the girls perform a traditional female role of being the good ‘hostess’, who is visible and active in making people comfortable. The activities boys do similarly to the girls are to a higher degree associated with their alcohol consumption. In this sense, and also because they consume more quantities, boys can be described as more focused on drinking alcohol, as this is certainly a secure way to display masculinity.

Alcohol, however, does increase the likelihood of crossing the boundaries of these very traditional gender roles. But only for the boys can this crossing add to the fun of the party—as when flirting makes the party more fun. In contrast, doing masculine activities, such as vomiting, does not make the girls rate the party any more successful, most likely because they have crossed the boundary of what is the ‘controlled way of losing control’ for a girl, who wants to display femininity. Therefore girls cannot binge drink to the same degree as the boys at the party, or if they do, the party is no longer fun. In contrast, when boys completely lose it the party becomes even more fun, and this is perhaps the most obvious reason to why the gender gap is still very prevalent when measuring the quantity of consumed alcohol.

**Jeanette Østergaard**, PhD scholar  
 Department of Sociology  
 University of Copenhagen  
 Øster Farimagsgade 5, DK-1014 Copenhagen K  
 E-mail: jo@sociology.ku.dk

## NOTES

- 1) Focus group interviews with teenagers aged 14–16 has also been part of the PUNA project, and some of the insights from this area of research have been used in formulating questions in the survey, in particularly the questions which contextualise adolescents' consumption of alcohol (see also Demant & Østergaard 2006).
- 2) "The relationship between two binary variables can also be measured by the odds ratio statistic and the Mantel-Haenszel statistic. There is, however, a one-to-one relationship between Goodman's and Kruskal's marginal  $\gamma$ -coefficient, so one is as good as the other. Things are not quite that simple for the partial  $\gamma$ -coefficients and the Mantel-Haenszel statistic but both statistics can be viewed as weighted sums of respectively stratified  $\gamma$ -coefficient and stratified odds-ratio statistics with no clear indication of one being better than the other." (Kreiner 2003, 45)
- 3) The alternative definition of binge drinking was defined as whether the teenagers had tried to be drunk two days in a row (MacLachlen & Smyth 2004).
- 4) ESPAD is a collaborative cross-sectional survey conducted in 9th school grade in 33 European countries on adolescents' substance abuse and it has been repeated several times, recently in 2003 (Hibell et al. 2004).
- 5) The analysis of collapsibility is meant to simplify the description of fairly complex relationships. Imagine a two-way table illustrating the distribution of the dependent variable with the dependent variable in the columns and with rows defined by a stacked variable combining two independent variables. The analysis is performed by repeated restricted comparisons of nearest neighbours. A subset of row categories is collapsible if the conditional distribution of the column variable is the same for all categories within the subset. Collapsibility of column categories can be defined in the same way. (Kreiner 2002)
- 6) Two different measurements of alcohol consumption are included in this analyse.

One is the 'objective' (i.e. quantities of consumed alcohol at the individual level) and the other is the 'subjective' (i.e. the feeling of drunkenness). There is no gender difference in terms of the subjective measurement (just like there is no gender difference in terms of frequency of subjective intoxication reported on page 11).

- 7) There is a rather strong positive association between the question 'time since went to a previous house party' and a number of other questions which capture how frequently adolescents go to various parties, such as clubs, bars, public parties and house parties. For instance the association between 'time since previously went to a house party' and the question 'how often do you go to house parties' (answer categories: rarely, never, within the last month, within the last two weeks etc.) is  $\gamma = .80$   $p < .001$ .

## LITERATURE

- Ahlström, S. (2005): Gender Difference in wet and non-wet youth cultures. Paper presented at conference "Wet Youth Cultures" in Copenhagen, and to be published
- Ahlström, S. & Österberg, E. (2004): International perspectives on adolescent and young adult drinking. *Alcohol Research & Health* 28(4): 258–268
- Bloomfield, K. & Gmel, G. & Wilsnack, S. (2006): Introduction to special issue 'Gender, Culture and Alcohol Problems: A Multi-National Study'. *Alcohol and Alcoholism* 41: 13–17
- Bloomfield, K. & Gmel, G. & Neve, R. & Mustonen, H. (2001): Investigating gender convergence in alcohol consumption in Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland: A Repeated Survey Analysis
- Brain, K. (2000): Youth, alcohol and the emergence of the post-modern alcohol order. Paper presented as keynote speaker delivered at the 11th Conference of alcohol, Liverpool 1998
- Demant, J. (2006): Forskelle i drenge og pigers alkoholkultur (Differences in boys and girls alcohol culture). In: Gundelach, P. & Järvinen, M. (eds.): *Unge, Fester og Alkohol*

- (Youth, parties and alcohol). København: Akademisk forlag
- Demant, J. & Järvinen, M. (2007): Constructing maturity through alcohol experience. *Addiction Research and Theory* 14 (6): 589–602
- Demant, J. & Østergaard, J. (2006): Festen—et frirum [The party—a private space]. In P. Gundelach & M. Järvinen (eds): *Unge, Fester og Alkohol (Youth, parties and alcohol)*. København: Akademisk forlag
- Demers, A. & Kairouz, S. & Adlaf, E.M. & Gliksman, L. & Newton-Taylor, B. & Marchand, A (2002): Multilevel analysis of situational drinking among Canadian undergraduates. *Social Science & Medicine* 55 (3): 415–424
- Douglas, M. (2003): *Constructive drinking. Perspectives on Drink from Anthropology*. London: Routledge
- Engels, R.C.M.E. & Knibbe, R.A. & Drop, M.J. (1999): Visiting public drinking places: An explorative study into the functions of pub-going for late adolescents. *Substance Use & Misuse* 34 (9): 1261–1280
- Eriksen, S. (1999): Alcohol as a gender symbol: Women and the alcohol question in the turn-of-the-century Denmark. *Scandinavian Journal of History* 24: 45–73
- Garvey, P. (2005): Drunk and (Dis)Orderly: Norwegian Drinking Parties in the Home. In: Wilson, T. (ed.): *Drinking Cultures. Alcohol and Identity*. New York: Berg
- Gill, J.S. (2002): Reported levels of alcohol consumption and binge drinking within the UK undergraduate student population over the last 25 years. *Alcohol and Alcoholism* 37(2):109–120
- Greenfield, T.K. & Room, R. (1997): Situational norms for drinking and drunkenness: Trends in the US adult population, 1979–1990. *Addiction* 92(1): 33–47
- Gusfield, J. (2003): Passage to Play. In: Douglas, M. (ed.): *Constructive Drinking. Perspectives on Drink from Anthropology*. London: Routledge
- Hammer, T. (1992): Den kollektive drikkekulturen i et kjønnsperspektiv. Sosial integrasjon, sosialt nettverk og bruk av alkohol blant unge kvinner og menn (Collective drinking culture from a gender perspective: Social integration, social networks and alcohol use among women and men). *Nordisk Alkoholtidsskrift* 9 (3): 123–130
- Hibell, B. & Andersson, B. & Bjarnasson, T. & Ahlström, A. & Balakireva, O. & Kokkevi, A. & Morgan, M. (2004): *The ESPAD Report 2003. Alcohol and Other Drug Use among Students in 35 European Countries*. Stockholm: CAN
- Järvinen, M. & Gundelach, P. (2007): Teenage Drinking, Symbolic Capital and Distinction. *Journal of Youth studies* 10 (1): 55–71
- Kreiner, S. (1996): An informal introduction to graphical modelling. In: Knudsen, H.C. & Thornicroft, G. (eds.): *Mental Health Service Education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Kreiner, S. (1987): Analysis of Multidimensional Contingency Tables by Exact Conditional Tests: Techniques and Strategies. *Scandinavian Journal of Statistics* 14: 97–112
- Kreiner, S. (2003): *Introduction to Digram*. Copenhagen. Department of Biostatistics. [Online: <http://staff.pubhealth.ku.dk/~skm/skm/index.html>]
- Kuntsche, E. & Knibbe, R. & Gmel, G. & Engels, R. (2006): Who drinks and why? A review of socio-demographic, personality, and contextual issues behind the drinking motives in young people. *Addictive Behaviors* 31 (10): 1844–1857
- Kuntsche, E. & Knibbe, R. & Gmel, G. & Engels, R. (2005): Why do young people drink? A review of drinking motives. *Clinical Psychology Review* 25 (7): 841–861
- Lincoln, S. (2005): Feeling the Noise: Teenagers, Bedrooms and Music. *Leisure studies* 24 (4): 399–414
- Lintonen, T. & Rimpelä, M. & Ahlström, S. & Rimpelä, A. & Vikat, A. (2000): Trends in drinking habits among Finnish adolescents from 1977 to 1999. *Addiction* 95 (8): 1255–1263
- MacLachlen, M. & Smyth, C. (2004): *Binge drinking and youth culture: Alternative perspectives*. The Liffey Press. Colour Brooks Ltd
- Measham, F. (2002): Doing gender—doing drugs: conceptualizing the gendering of drugs culture. *Contemporary Drug Problems* 29: (Summer): 335–373

- Measham, F. & Brain, K. (2005): Binge drinking, British alcohol policy and the new culture of intoxication. *Crime Media Culture* 1 (3): 262–283
- Mäkelä, P. & Gmel, G. & Grittner, U. & Kuentig, H. & Kuntsche, S. & Bloomfield, K. & Room, R. (2006): Drinking patterns and their gender differences in Europe. *Alcohol and Alcoholism* 41: 8–18
- Oxford Dictionary of English (revised edition). Eds. Soanes, C. & Stevenson, A. Oxford University Press, 2005. Oxford Reference Online. Copenhagen University Library. 6 November 2006. [Online: <http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t140.e42315>]
- Pedersen, W. (1994): Rites of passage in high modernity. *Young* 2: 21–32
- Room, R. (2001): Intoxication and bad behaviour: Understanding cultural differences in the link. *Social and Science Medicine* 53 (2): 189–198
- Room, R. & Mäkelä, K. (2000): Typologies of the cultural position on alcohol. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol* 61 (3): 475–483
- Sande, A. (2002): Intoxication and rite of passage to adulthood in Norway. *Contemporary Drug Problems* 29 (2): 277–303
- Senchak, M. & Leonard, K.E. & Greene, B.W. (1998): Alcohol use among college students as a function of their typical social drinking context. *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors* 12 (1): 62–70
- Settortobulte, W. & Jensen, B.B. & Hurrelmann, K. (2001): Drinking among young Europeans. Copenhagen WHO Regional Office for Europe
- Sulkunen, P. (2002): Between culture and nature: intoxication in cultural studies of alcohol and drug use. *Contemporary Drug Problems* 29 (2): 253–276
- Sundhedsstyrelsen 2007: Undersøgelse af 11–15 åriges livsstil og sundhedsvaner 2005—samt udviklingen fra 1997–2005 (Survey of 11–15-year olds' lifestyle and health habits 2005—including the development from 1997–2005). København: Sundhedsstyrelsen. [Online: [www.sst.dk](http://www.sst.dk)]
- Sweeting, H. & West, P. (2003): Young People's Leisure and Risk-Taking Behaviours: Changes in Gender Patterning in the West of Scotland during the 1990s. *Journal of Youth Studies* 6 (4): 391–412
- Törrönen, J. & Maunu, A. (2007): Whilst it's red wine with beef, it's booze with a cruise! Genres and gendered regulation of drinking situations in diaries. *Nordic Studies on Alcohol and Drugs* 24 (2)
- Young, A.M. & Morales, M. & McCabe, S.E. & Boyd, C.J. & D'Arcy, H. (2005): Drinking Like a Guy: Frequent Binge Drinking among Undergraduate Women. *Substance Use & Misuse* 40 (2): 241–267
- Wilsnack, R.W. & Vogeltanz, N.D. & Wilsnack, S.C. & Harris, T.R. (2000): Gender differences in alcohol consumption and adverse drinking consequences: cross-cultural patterns. *Addiction* 95 (2): 251–265
- Østergaard, J. (2006): Risiko og Selvkontrol (Risk and self control). In: Gundelach, P. & Järvinen, M. (eds.): *Unge, Fester og Alkohol (Youth, parties and alcohol)*. København: Akademisk forlag.