

Where people drink: from city centre to home



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Drinking geographies

1. Policy context:
 - Liberalisation and control of night-time economy
2. Academic context
 - Pleasure and disorder
 - Geographical imaginaries of problem drinking
 - Omissions

The JRF study

1. Aim

- Explore changing cultures of alcohol consumption in two communities
- Focus on drinking practices of an unremarkable cross-section of population

2. Methods

- Eden and Stoke
- Survey and interviews

3. Domestic drinking practices

Popularity of home drinking

Regular drinking venues in the past 12 months, %

	Total	Eden	Stoke
Home	72.9	72.5	73.3
Friends'/family's houses	63.4	63.8	63
Pubs/bars	59.6	55.2	64.4
Restaurants	52.7	48.8	57.4
Hotels	28.2	26.2	30.4
Clubs	22.7	20.3	25.3

Source: Questionnaire survey

Hospitable drinking

- **Malcolm Patterson:** If you are at a dinner party and you've got something nice, a bottle of wine, the right bottle of wine with a meal, sort of, adds something. (Stoke, Male, 55-64, NS-SEC 1)
- **Jenny Rush:** I have friends round on a Thursday or I go to theirs, I do drink a full bottle of red wine to myself. It doesn't touch the sides really, it doesn't affect me in any way. [She continues later] A group of us, about six of us, so girl friends. We have a takeaway at either one of our houses, you know once a week, it's a regular thing. (Stoke, Female, 35-44, NS-SEC 4)
- **Max Speer:** There's usually some [alcohol] knocking about [the house]. People, you know other people, drink it and people bring it, you know if you went around for dinner, they bring wine or I'd buy wine for people when they come round for dinner and it's not a, you know, dry house. (Stoke, Male, 25-34, NS-SEC 5)

Bodily effects

- **Audrey Bennett:** Well I think I like to switch off, because I tend to get home and....sort out anything I need, because quite often I've been in different meetings and, sort all that out and then I actually start to relax when I start doing the cooking, this is when I'll want a glass of wine and quite happy drinking while I'm in the kitchen doing the cooking. And that's me winding down really. (Eden, Female, 45-55, NS-SEC 1)

Bodily effects

- **Margaret Sellers:** [W]hat I really like doing to be really decadent, just take a big glass to bed, to bed with me when I'm reading. You know if you sort of think there's nothing to watch on telly, I'll take a big glass of wine to bed and read, and it's lovely, it feels really decadent. And, and relaxing and lovely, so I like to do that as well. I suppose it is a bit of a luxury, I'm treating myself and being kind of to myself sort of thing.
- **Margaret Sellers:** I think I comfort drink if I have a bad day, or it's a Tuesday and I think, and there's not a bottle open, I think oh sod it that's what it's there for, I'll just have a glass of wine. But I wouldn't drink the whole bottle. [She continues later]...I came home on Friday feeling really, really, really down, fed up and I opened a bottle of cava, and I had the whole bottle with orange juice and I went to bed at half past eight, I woke up feeling fantastic the next morning, so it obviously did the trick... (Eden, Female, 45-55, NS-SEC 4)

Home drinking on a night out

- **Annie Peters:** [We m]eet about half one, two, open the wine, you know, why not, talk about the day, chill out, and then we'll start getting ready to go out and then the vodka comes out.....sometimes if we're feeling cheeky we'll have a couple of little bottles of alcopops.....drink as we're getting ready and people come, people come to my house and meet us there, and we'll drink vodka all together and then we'll go out and then we'll drink when we get back as well.
- **Interviewer:** So you'd be chatting about what the night's going to be like or where you're going or what kind of stuff?
- **Annie Peters:** Yeah, yeah what we did last week...we'll talk about work as well, as we unwind, we'll talk about work and what's happened there, because Lucy has got quite a stressful job as well and we sort of really offload on each other and get it all out, then we're ready to go out. (Stoke, Female, 25-34, NS-SEC 1)

Affordability and accessibility

- **Marjory Miller:** You didn't have the money and the last thing...you'd go and do is buy a bottle of sherry or anything, if the next day you'd got nothing to put on the table, is it. So you didn't, you just didn't do it really (Eden, Female, 65+, NS-SEC 4)
- **Anthony Oram:** [W]hen I was young, well there weren't supermarkets but I mean the, the wine shops were, I mean you were almost reluctant to go in there. I mean you know they weren't friendly places if you like and you didn't go in to, to be made a fool of if you didn't know much about the wine. I mean it wasn't just like off the shelves at Tesco's or anything like that. (Eden, Male, 65+, NS-SEC 1)

Affordability and accessibility

- **Paul Bolton:** I'd go for, you'd go £3.99 [to wife], I'd go £4.99. I wouldn't, I wouldn't look at the top shelf in terms of £9.99 and, because I don't think I can tell the difference or appreciate what the difference is, so I think equally well though, on the bottom shelf as I call it.....I don't particularly like that, so I suppose I'd put myself in the middle, I don't like that but I'm not aspired to that.....When you're drinking it at home whether it's middle or a top [shelf], you drink it as quickly don't you? You don't sort of, dare I say, piss about and swill it round and smell it and – I don't want to be a wine expert. I've no aspirations. (Eden, Male, 45-54, NS-SEC 2).
- **Allan Cummins:** Sainsbury's is my local (Stoke, Male, 25-34, NS-SEC 5)

Lifecycle

- **Anne Moyles:** I don't go out to nightclubs anymore, we stay very local now, I do a lot more drinking at home, you know, me and Stephen will crack open a bottle of wine most evenings, we don't go out to the pub that much, and we drink more than what we did, overall, [laughs] than when I was going out nightclubbing....Because we do it over the week and yeah I'll still get blotto most weekends and things like that, just, we just do it sort of quietly...(Eden, Female, 35-44, NS-SEC 3).

Religion

- **Haidar Ahmed:** I was going home right, and I was thinking right okay, am I sober? Am I [walking] straight? Is anyone going to be up at home and so on? And you know I used to walk home and look to see if there was a light on, and if I'd see a light on downstairs, I used to just walk around the streets for a bit and just wait for the light to go off then just creep in the house and go straight to bed. So it was just that walking home was I think, it was more a feeling of, probably guilt, I've had a good night, I've had a brilliant night, I've really enjoyed myself and now it was time to back down, come back down to reality now. I think it was just a guilt trip like, really, walking home (Stoke, Male, aged 16-24)

Health

- **Reece Holt:** That's stupid really, binge drinking is when you're passed it and can't move...if you've got sort of a wish to be ill...but I can't believe binge drinking's four [pints]...'cos that's not even drunk, it's just drinking. (Eden, Male, 18-24, NS-SEC 2)
- **Annie Peters:** I don't [have any health concerns], you should do shouldn't you, because you see it everywhere and you know like alcohol is like one of the biggest killers out of any drug that there is but you just, you just don't. (Stoke, Female, 25-34, NS-SEC 1)

Health

- **Amanda Pinder:** I do have concerns about drinking but I, I still think that my drinking is within manageable limits, and I never feel ill after I've drunk [she continues later]today with anything, clean your teeth, whatever you eat, how much you drink, you know the goalposts keep moving all the time, and it's difficult to be sure that, but I don't think it's harmful, not the amount I drink. (Stoke, Female, 55-64, NS-SEC 2)
- **Maurice Haige:** [I like] red more than white. I've heard that's good for you. That's brilliant, it absorbs your cholesterol and clears out the blood vessels and I prefer red than white. (Stoke, Male, 55-64, NS-SEC 1)
- **Audrey Bennett:** I mean I'm reasonably fit, I do eat healthy food, and I don't think that I'm seriously damaging myself by drinking wine with a meal each evening. (Eden, Female, 45-55, NS-SEC 1)

Conclusions



1. From city-centre to home
2. Domestic drinking cultures
3. Ideological power of home
4. Policy challenge

Policy recommendations

1. Minimum alcohol pricing?
2. Health education:
 - Units and health
 - The meaning of binge drinking

