

# Binge drinking in England, a regional view

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# Questions

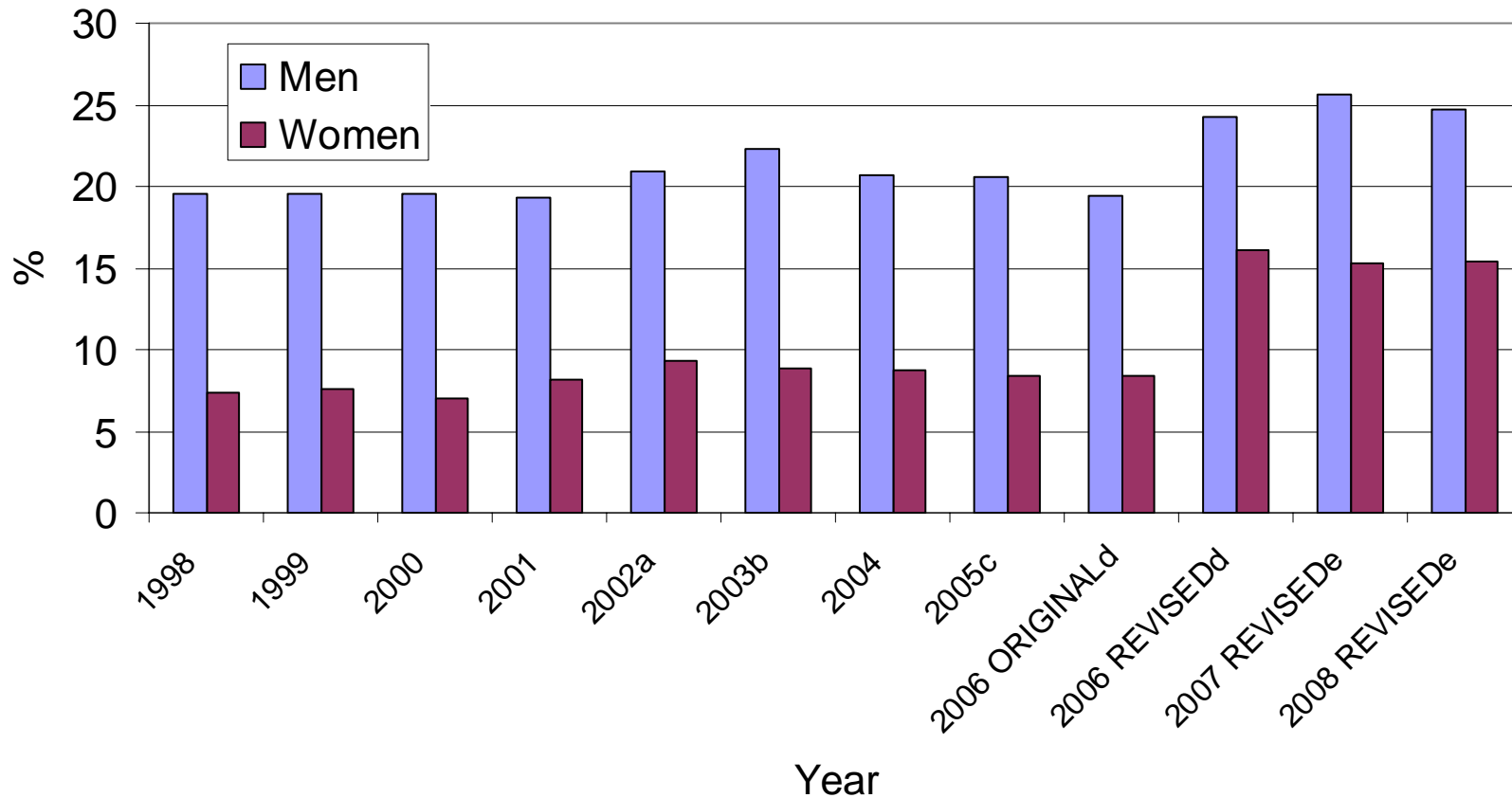
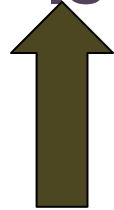
- Is binge drinking new in England?
- Are regional variations in binge drinking new?
- Did the change from weekly units/daily matter?
- Who is at particular risk?
- How might being drinking be reduced?

## Data

- Health Survey for England 1991-2008
- Cross sectional nationally representative data
  - Around 10,000 adults aged 16 and over
- Three data changes
  - Weekly to daily maximum units 1997/8
  - Increase in unit strength of alcohol (wine and strong beer) 2006
  - Wine glass size 2007
- General Household Survey 1980
  - Cross sectional nationally representative data

# Is binge drinking new in England? No.

## in women due to increasing strength of wine

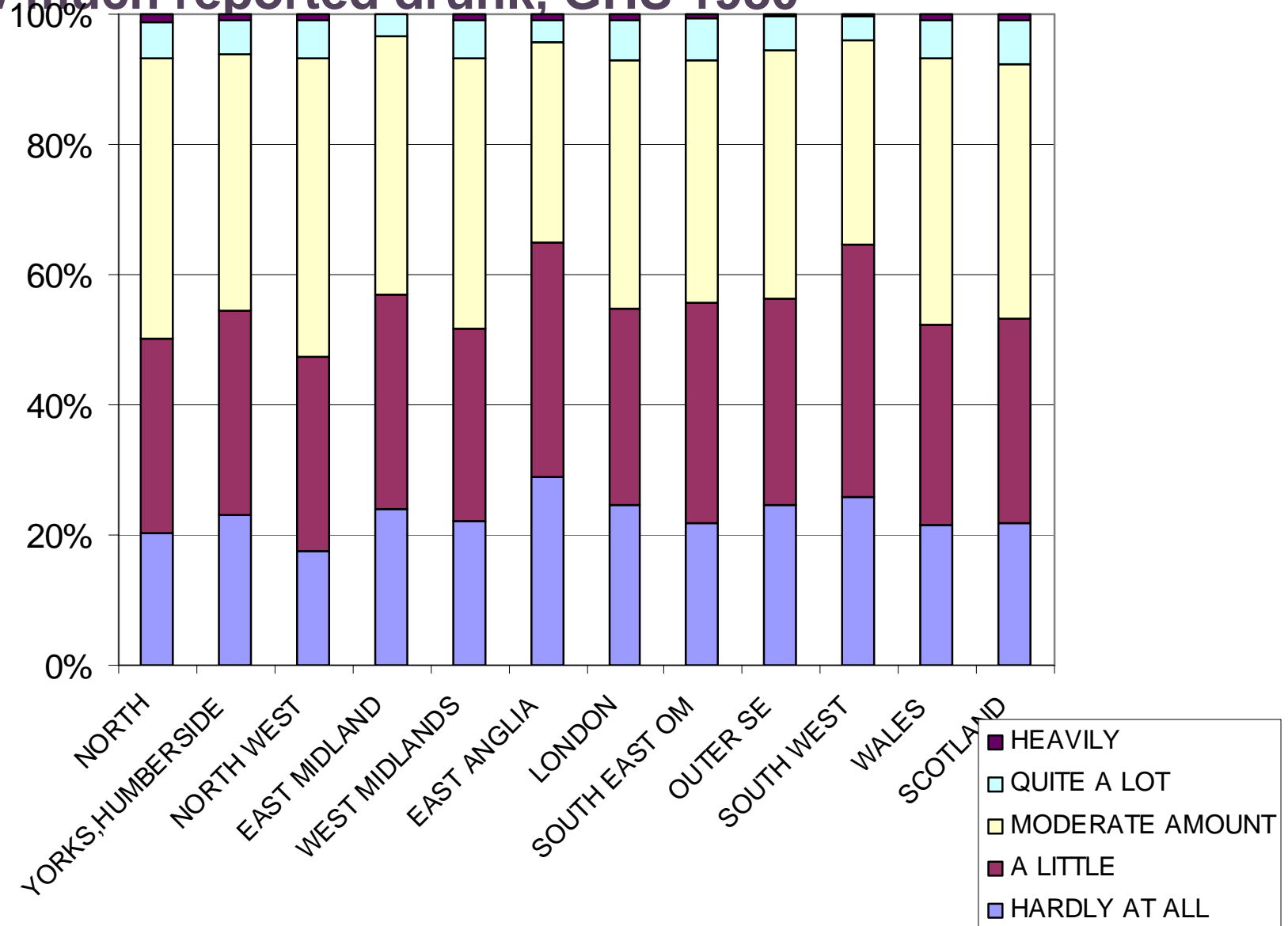


# Why do regional drinking variations matter: North East

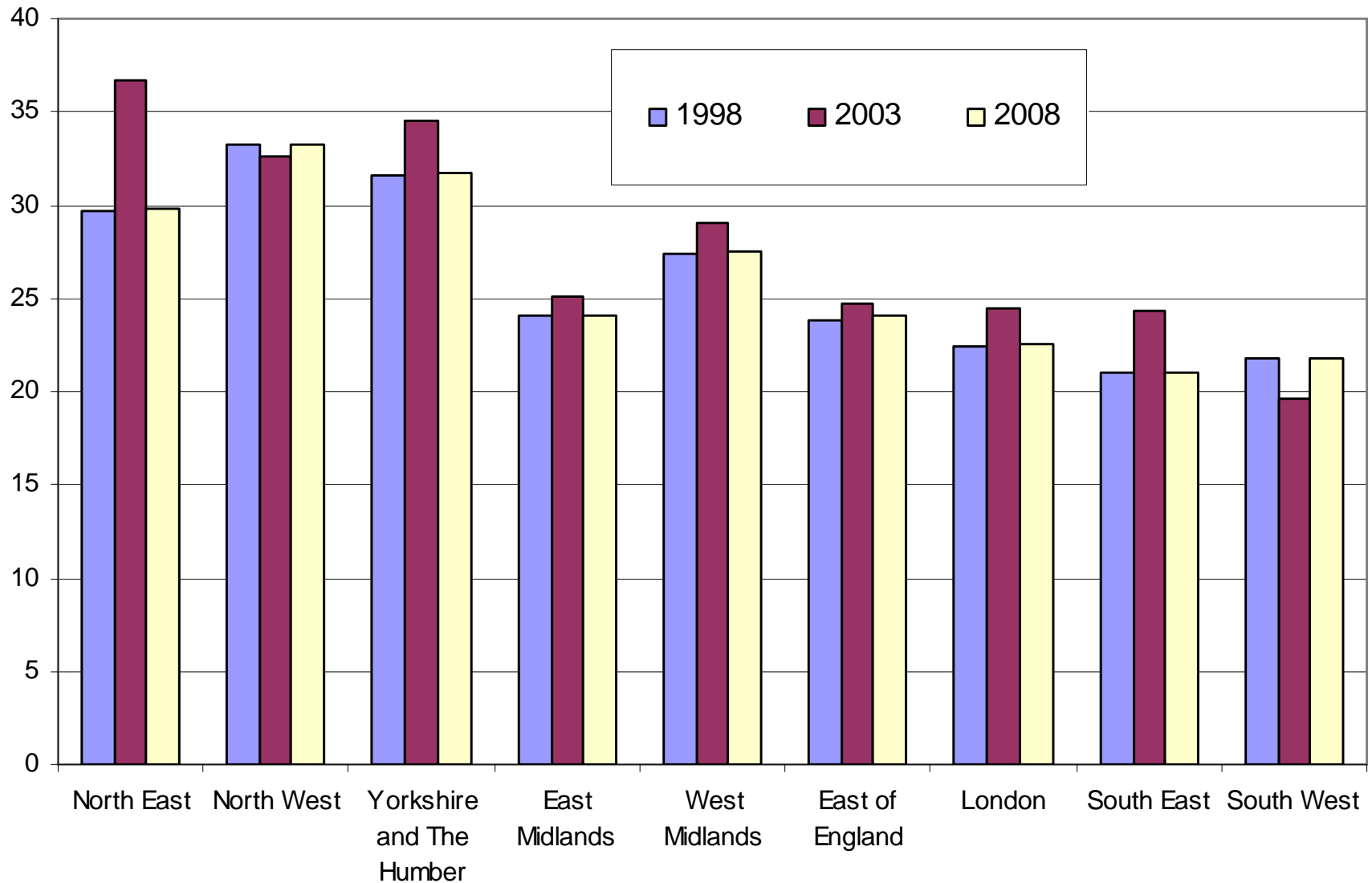
- North East health and wellbeing strategy Better Health, Fairer Health started in 2008.
- Transform the region into the healthiest in England within a generation.
- One of the ten key themes in the 25-year plan is alcohol
- What would the north-east need to do to reduce its drinking to that of the lowest regional levels in 25 years?

# Are regional variations new? Maybe.

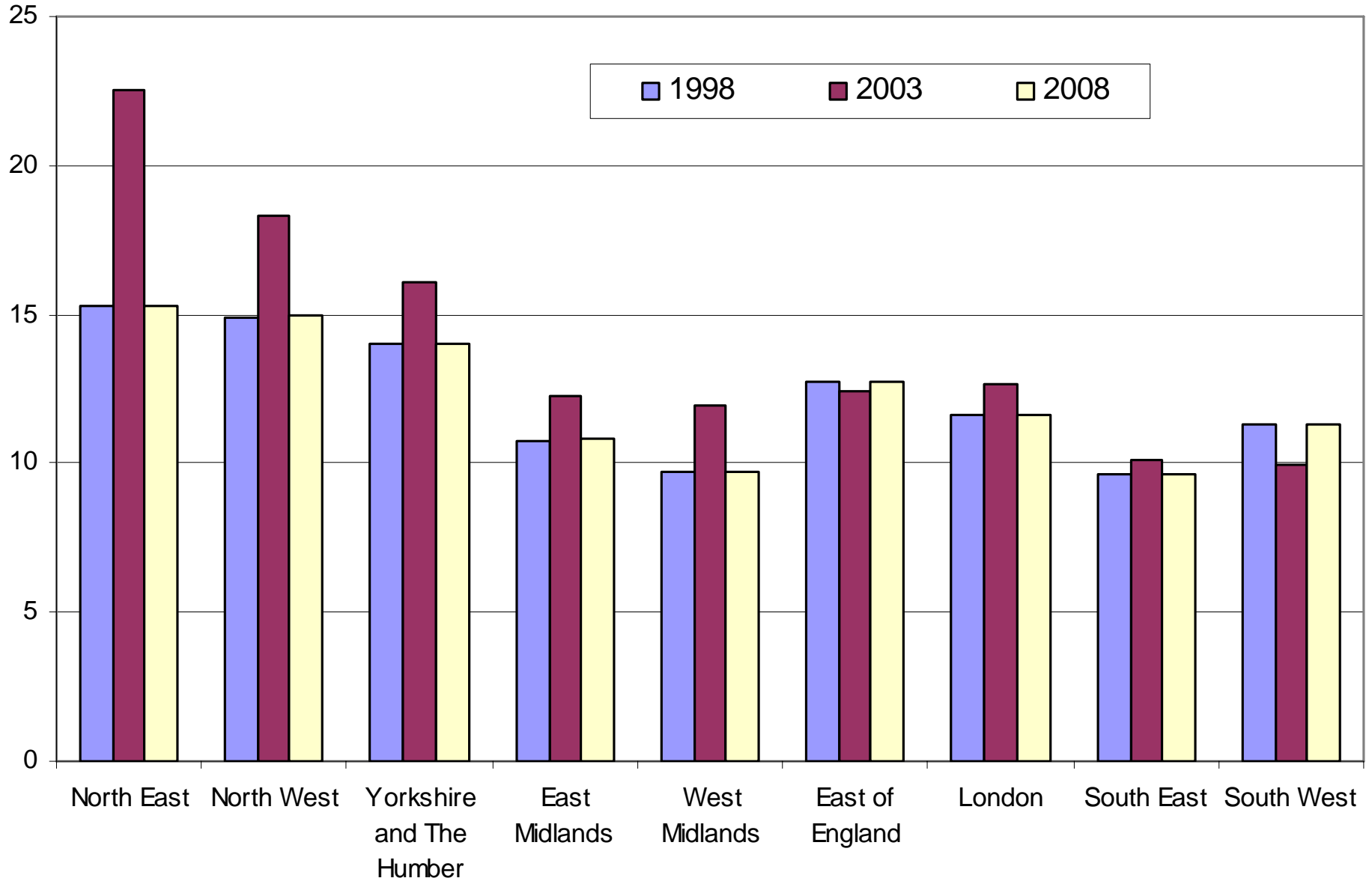
## How much reported drunk, GHS 1980



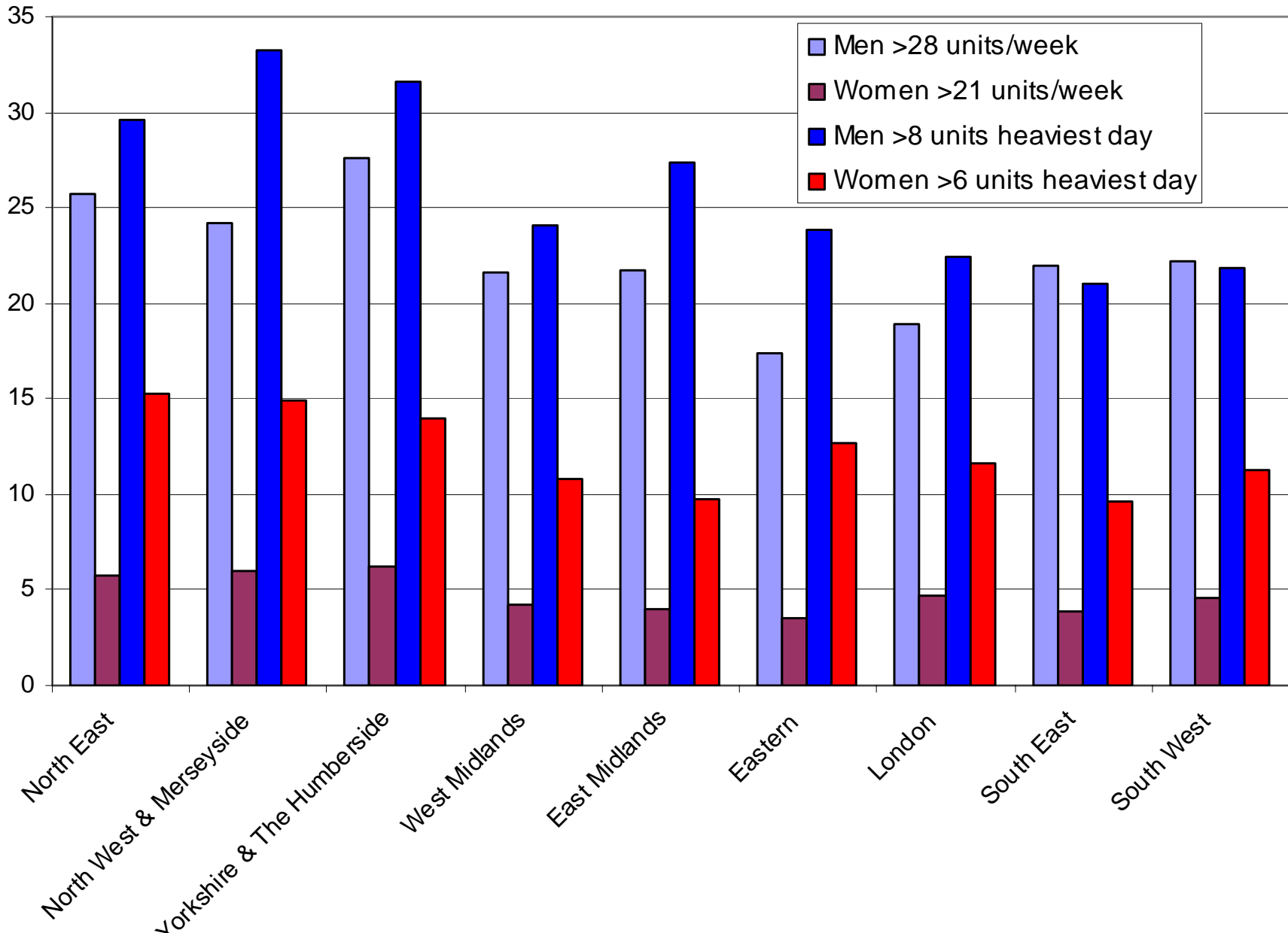
## Trends in regional binge drinking, 1998-2003, England Men



# Trends in regional binge drinking, 1998-2008 England Women



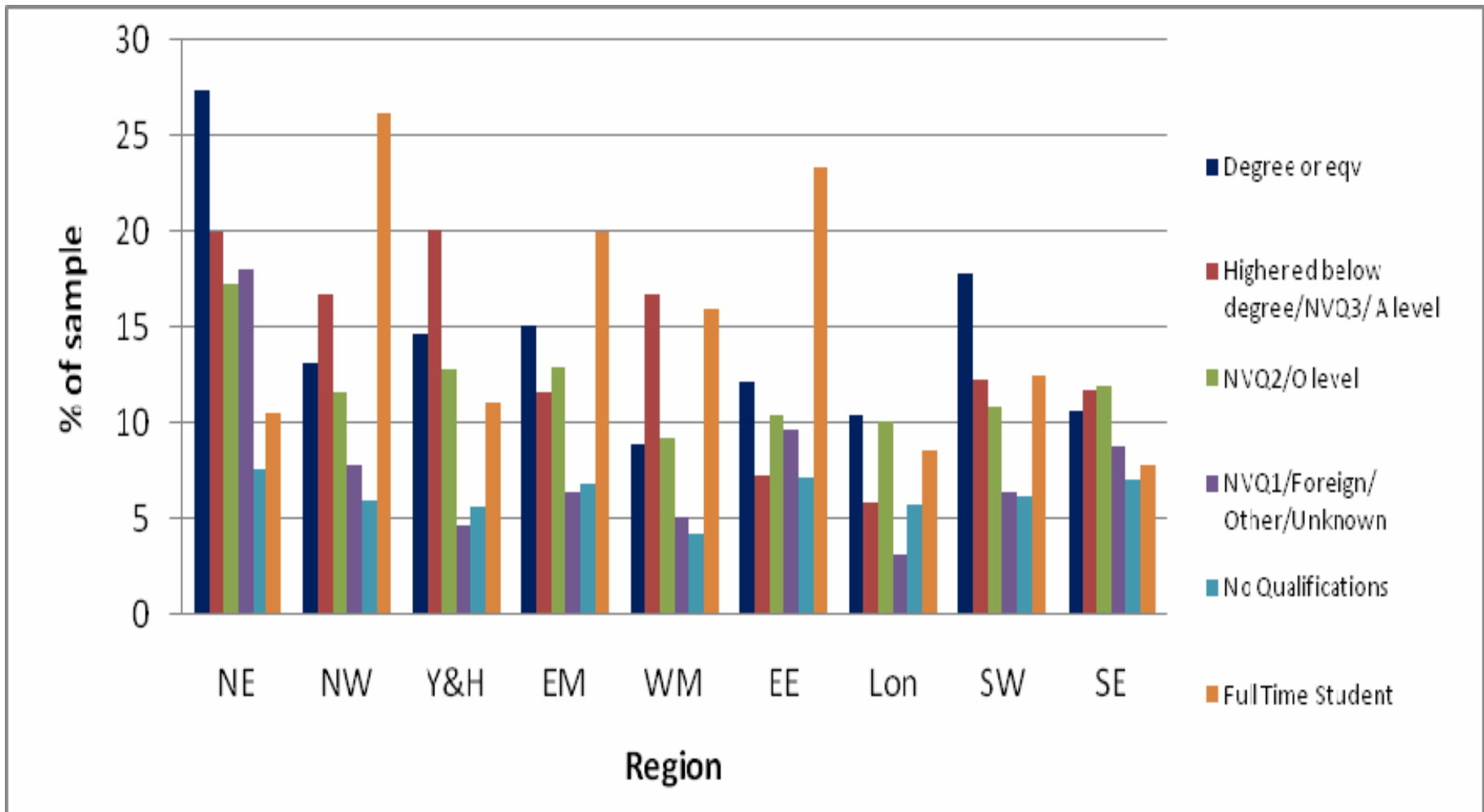
# Is it due to weekly/daily unit change? Partly. England, HSE 1998



# Who is at risk?

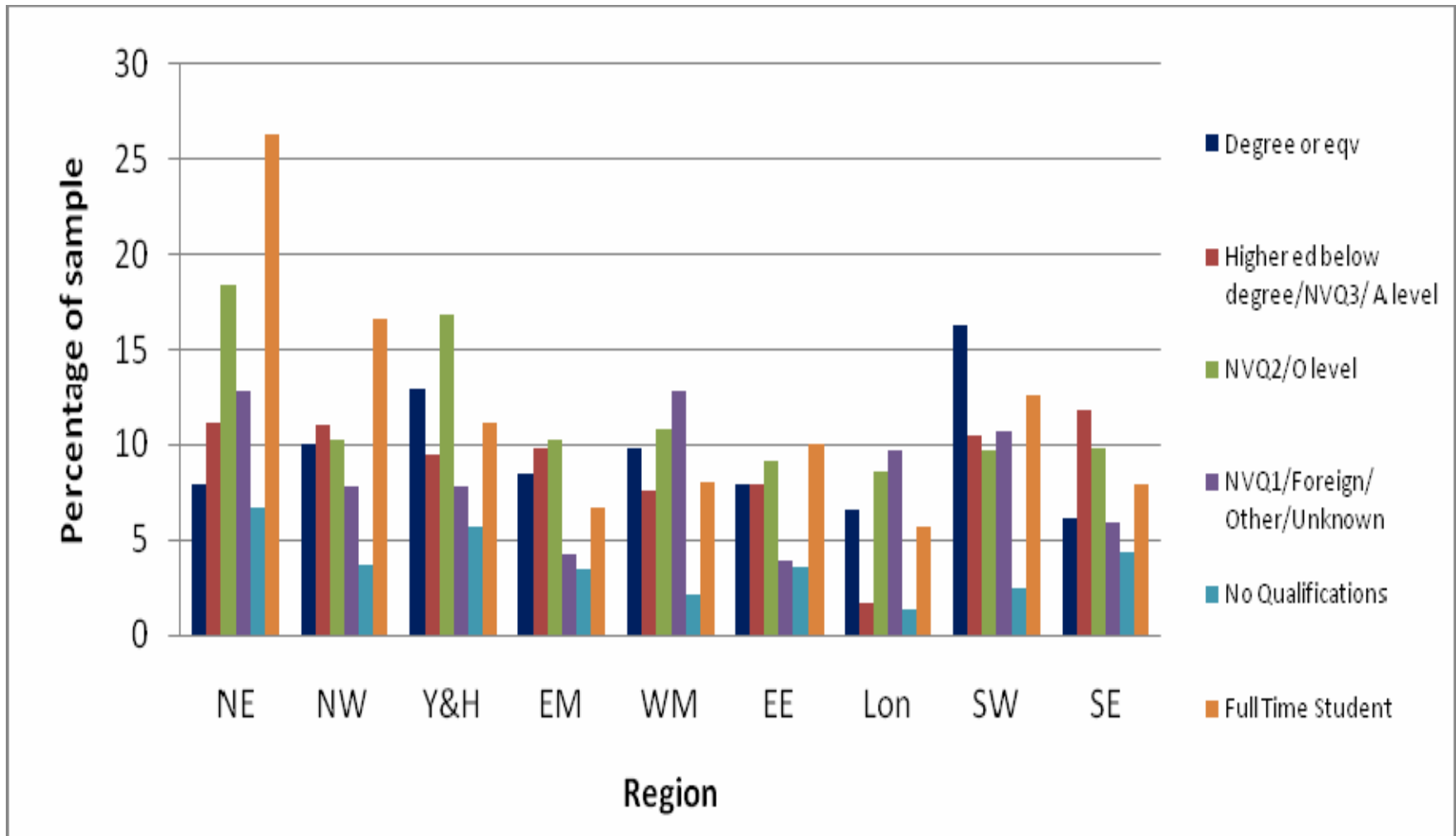


# Who is at risk: regional binge drinking by highest educational qualification, men England 2007



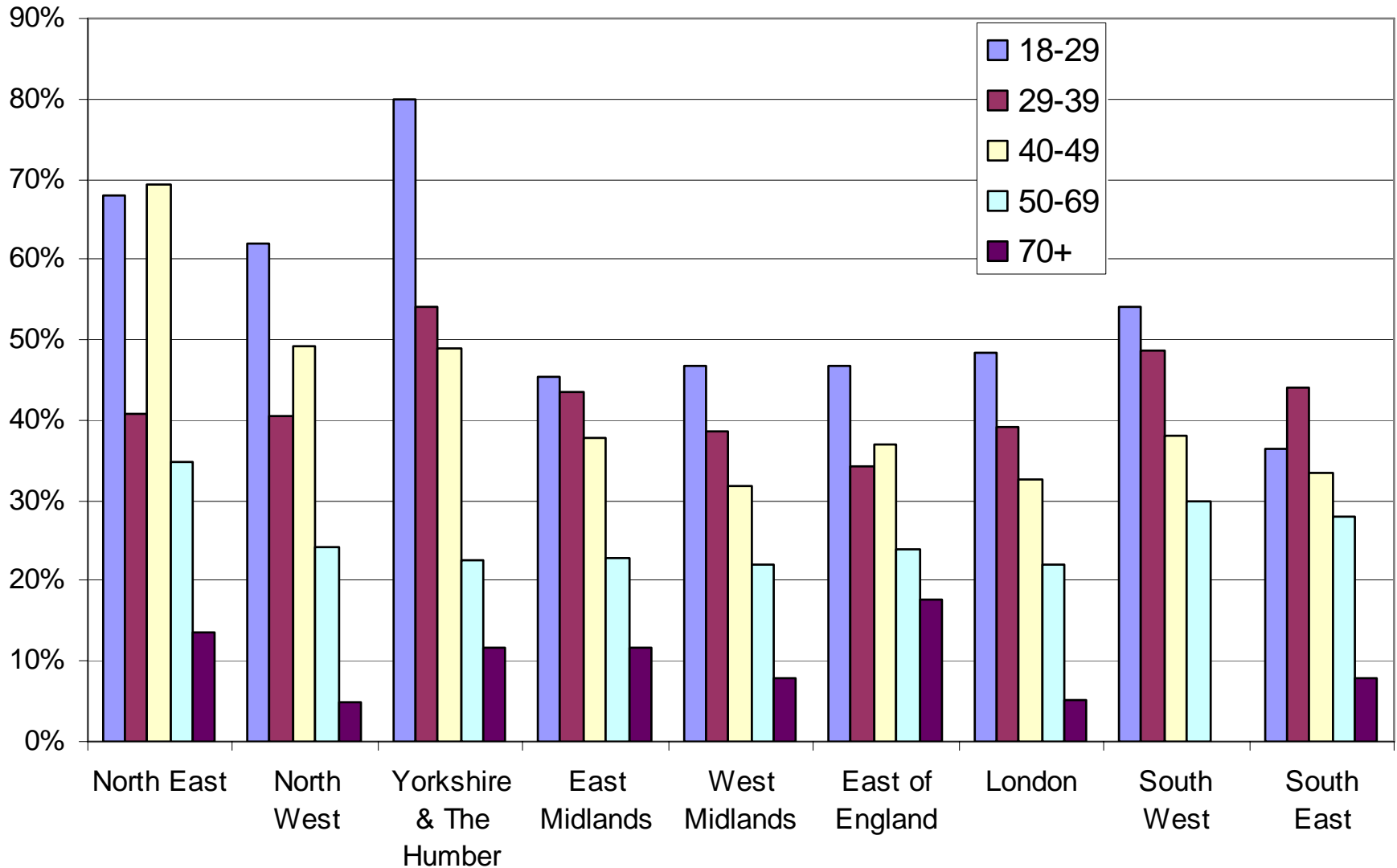
(Source, Savell, 2009)

# Who is at risk: regional binge drinking by highest educational qualification, women England 2007

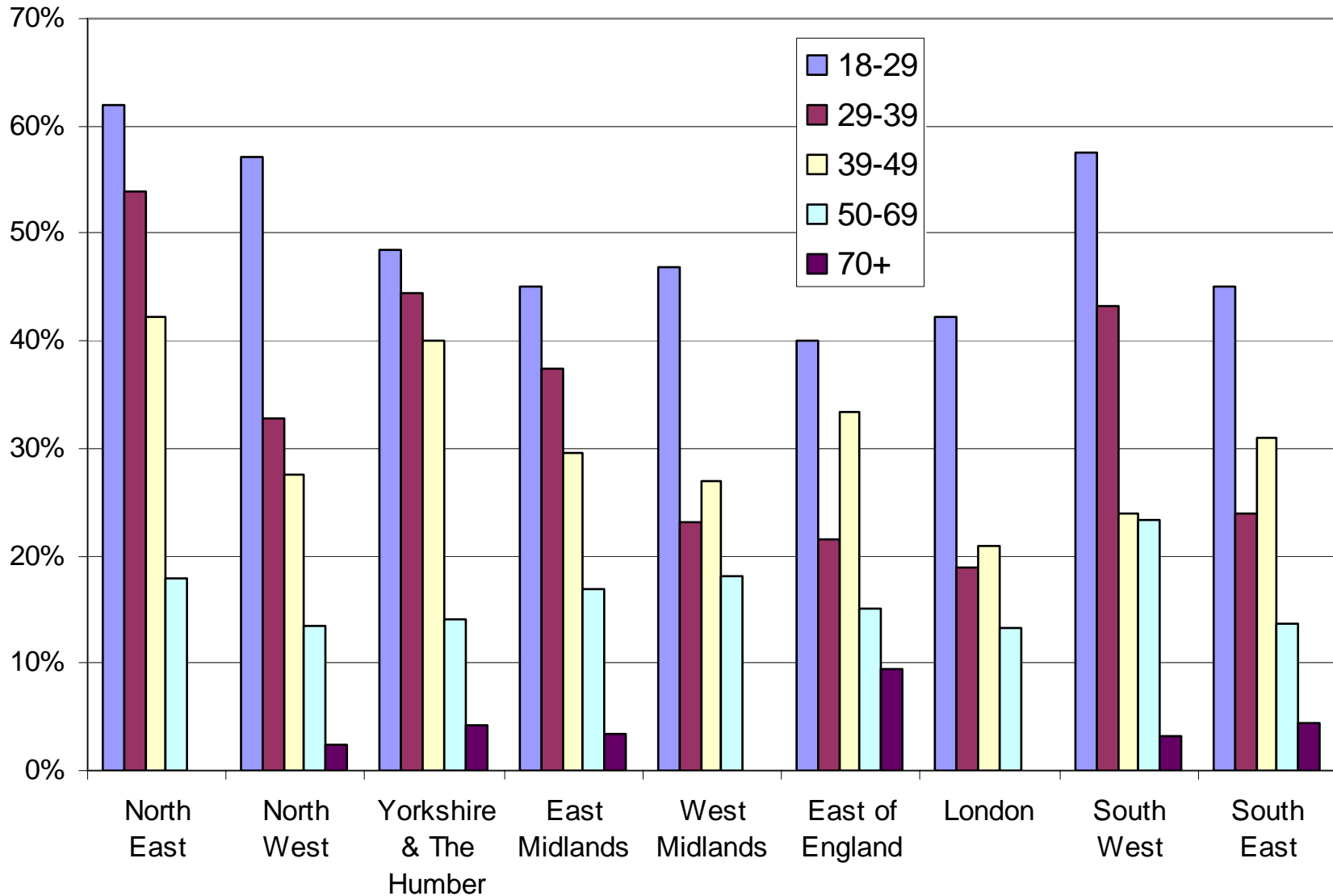


(Source, Savell, 2009)

## Binge drinking by region by age group, men England 2007



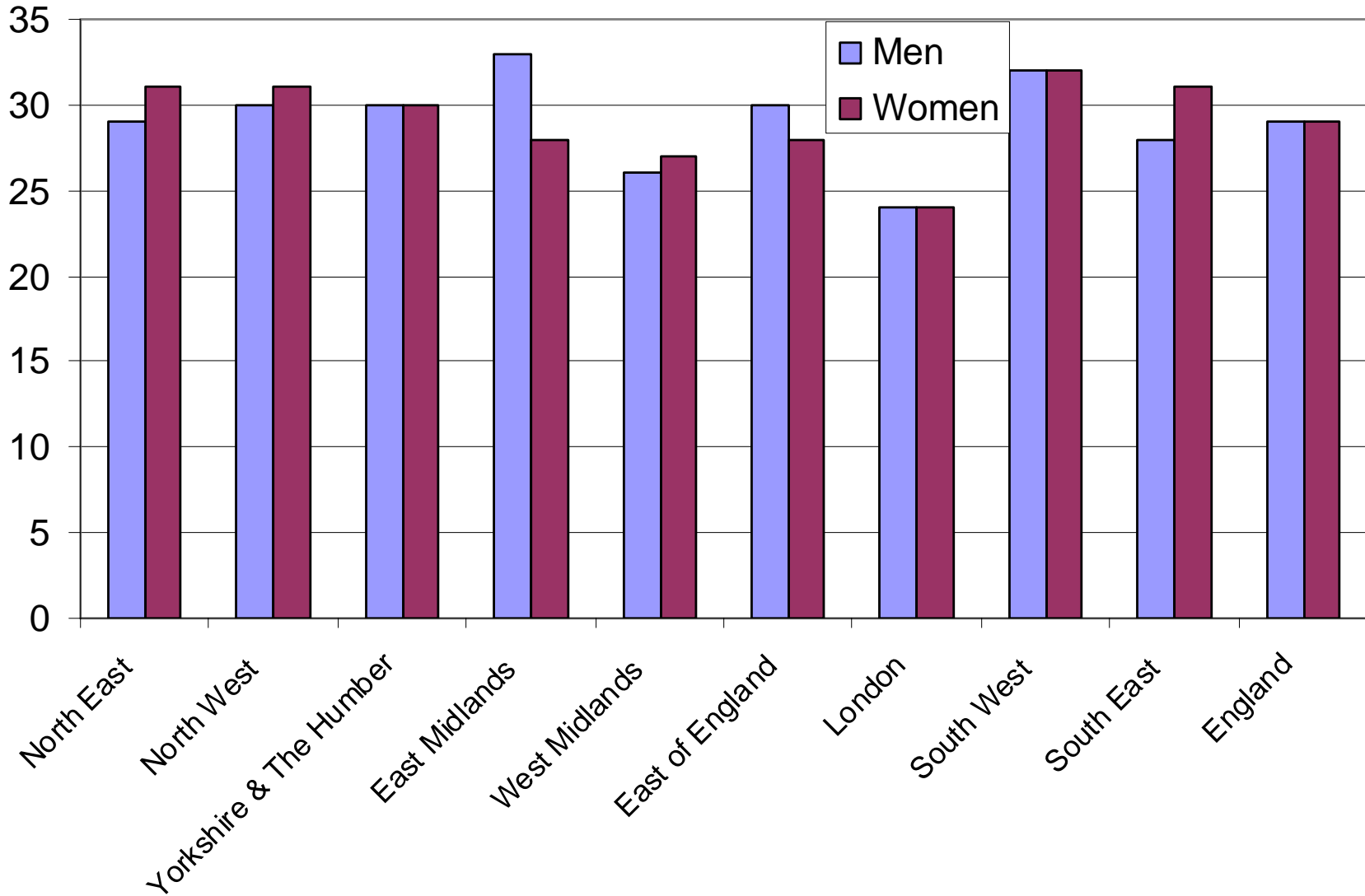
## Binge drinking by age group, women England 2007



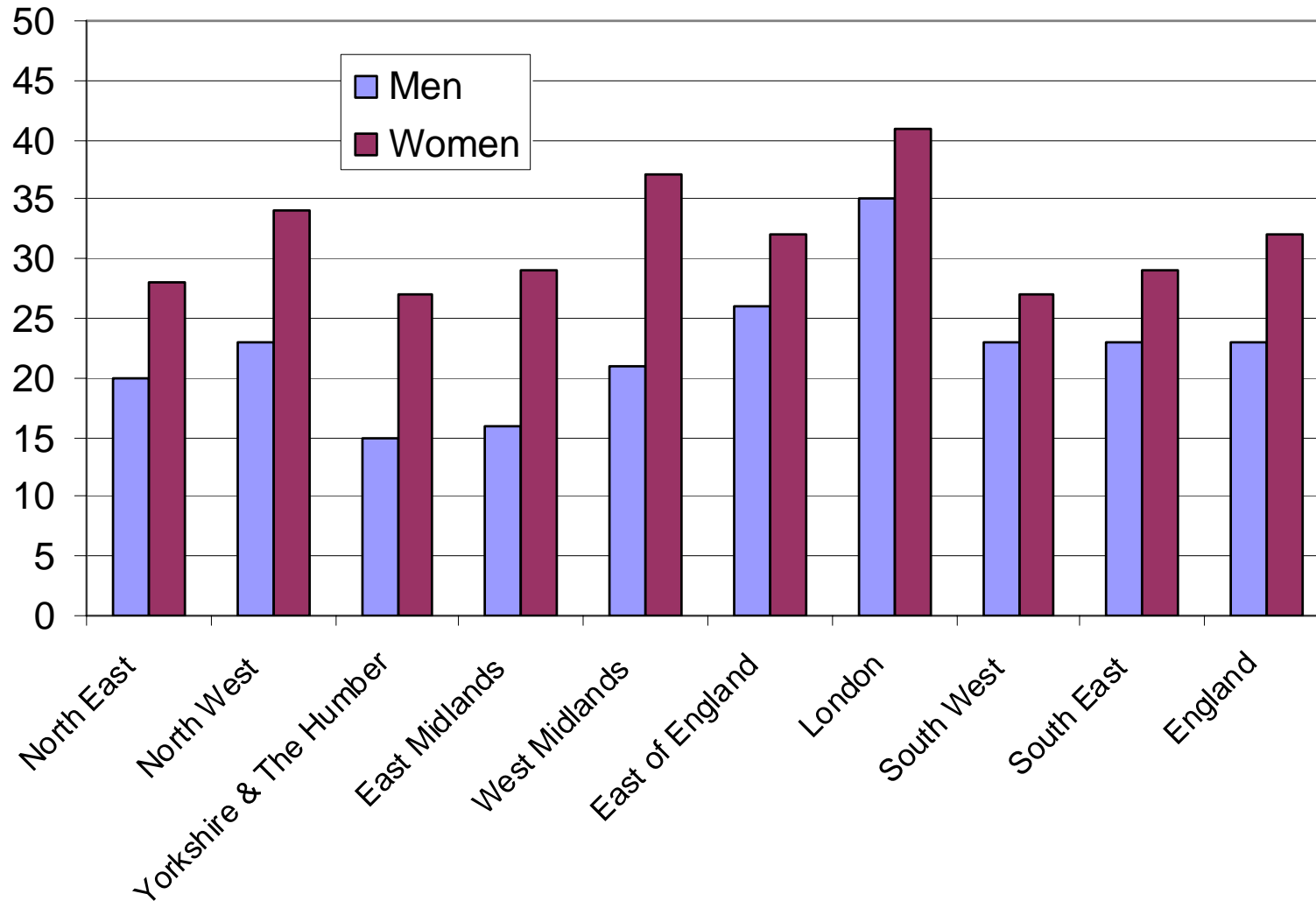
# What might influence regional differences in drinking behaviour?

- Knowledge?
- Attitudes?

## Knowledge of Units, England 2007



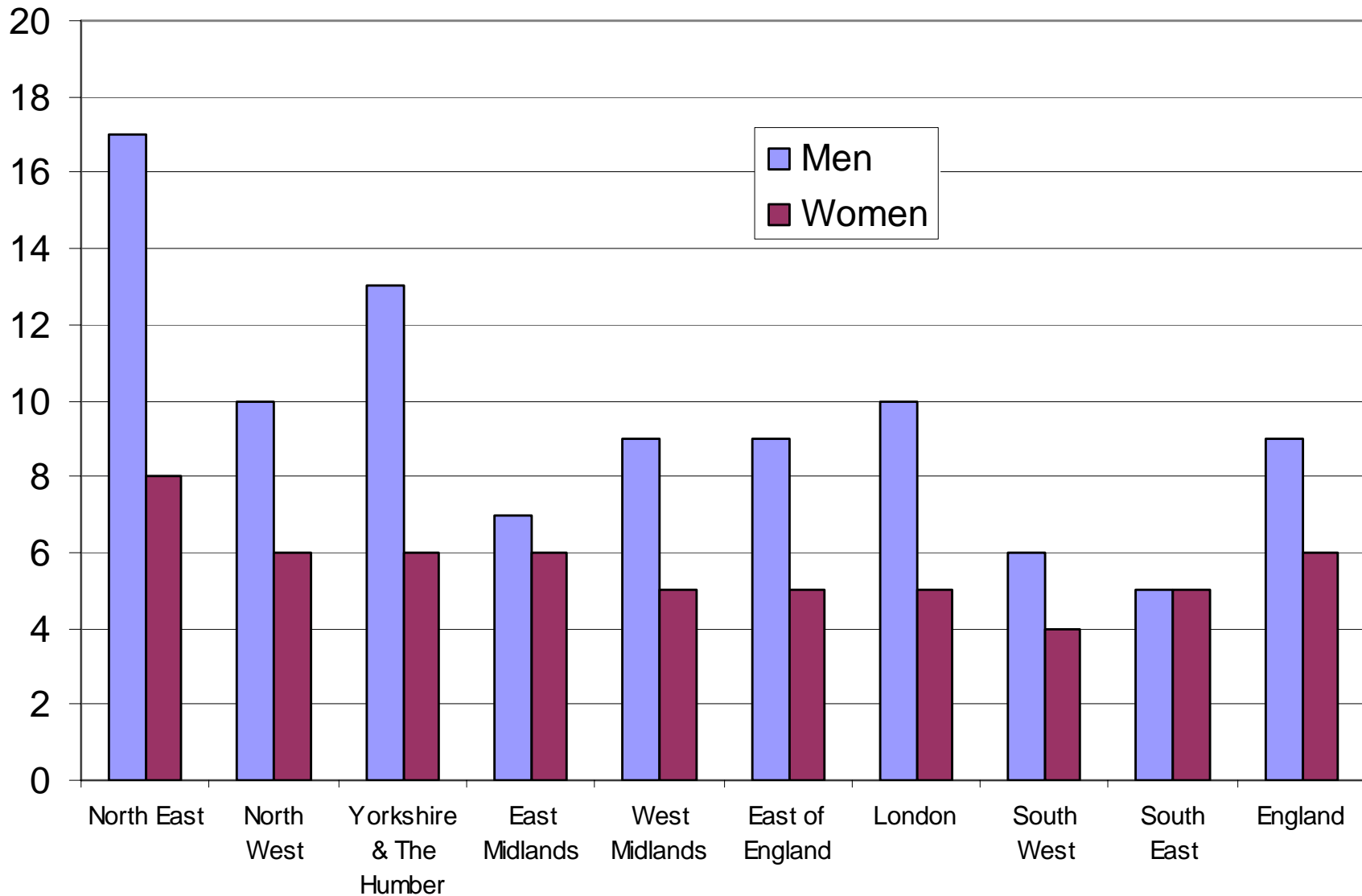
## Supports taxing alcohol more, England 2007



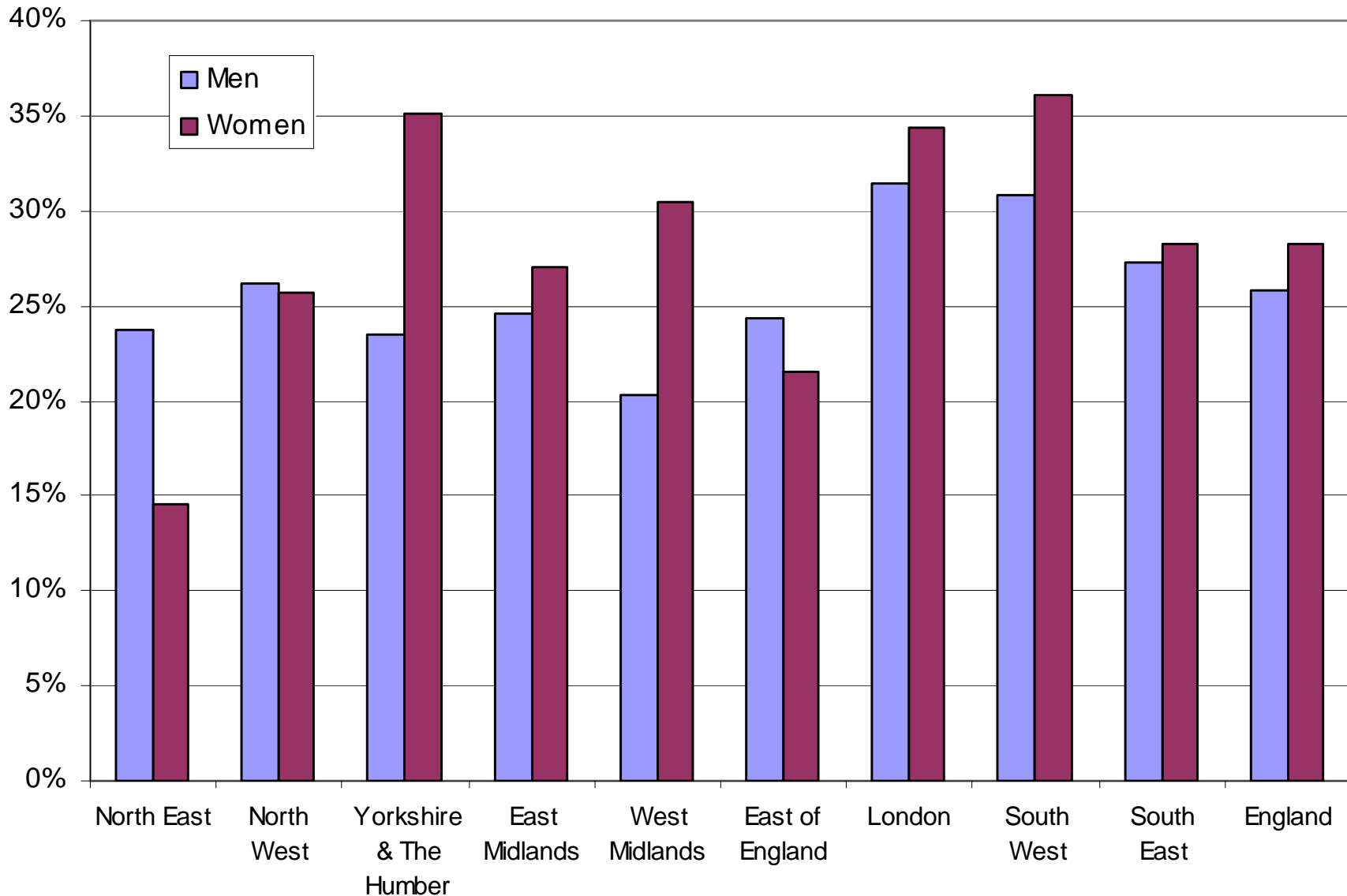
**Shouldn't we leave people alone?**

**Are people happy about how much they drink?**

## Agrees nothing wrong in getting drunk regularly, England 2007



## % Binge drinkers who wish to drink less, England 2007



## Regional odds of binge drinking, Men England 2007

| Region                 | Odds | Significance |
|------------------------|------|--------------|
| London                 | 1    |              |
| North East             | 2.8  | ***          |
| North West             | 2.1  | **           |
| Yorkshire & The Humber | 2.5  | ***          |
| East Midlands          | 1.7  | *            |
| West Midlands          | 1.5  | NS           |
| East of England        | 1.5  | NS           |
| South West             | 1.8  | **           |
| South East             | 1.5  | *            |
| Age                    | 0.96 | ***          |

## Regional odds of binge drinking, Women England 2007

| Region                 | Odds | Significance |
|------------------------|------|--------------|
| London                 | 1    |              |
| North East             | 3.6  | ***          |
| North West             | 2.2  | **           |
| Yorkshire & The Humber | 2.7  | ***          |
| East Midlands          | 1.8  | *            |
| West Midlands          | 1.5  | NS           |
| East of England        | 1.8  | *            |
| South West             | 2.9  | ***          |
| South East             | 1.9  | **           |
| Age                    | 0.95 | ***          |

# Risk factors for binge drinking

## **Men Risk factors**

- Friday/Saturday drinking
- Drank just strong beer/2+ drink types
- Would like to drink same/more
- Thought odd if didn't drink
- Easier to enjoy social event if had drink
- Not support alcohol taxation
- Acceptable to get drunk
- No educational qualifications
- Student
- Highest deprivation quintile

## **Protective factors**

- Drank just spirits
- Overestimated units in beer
- Black British

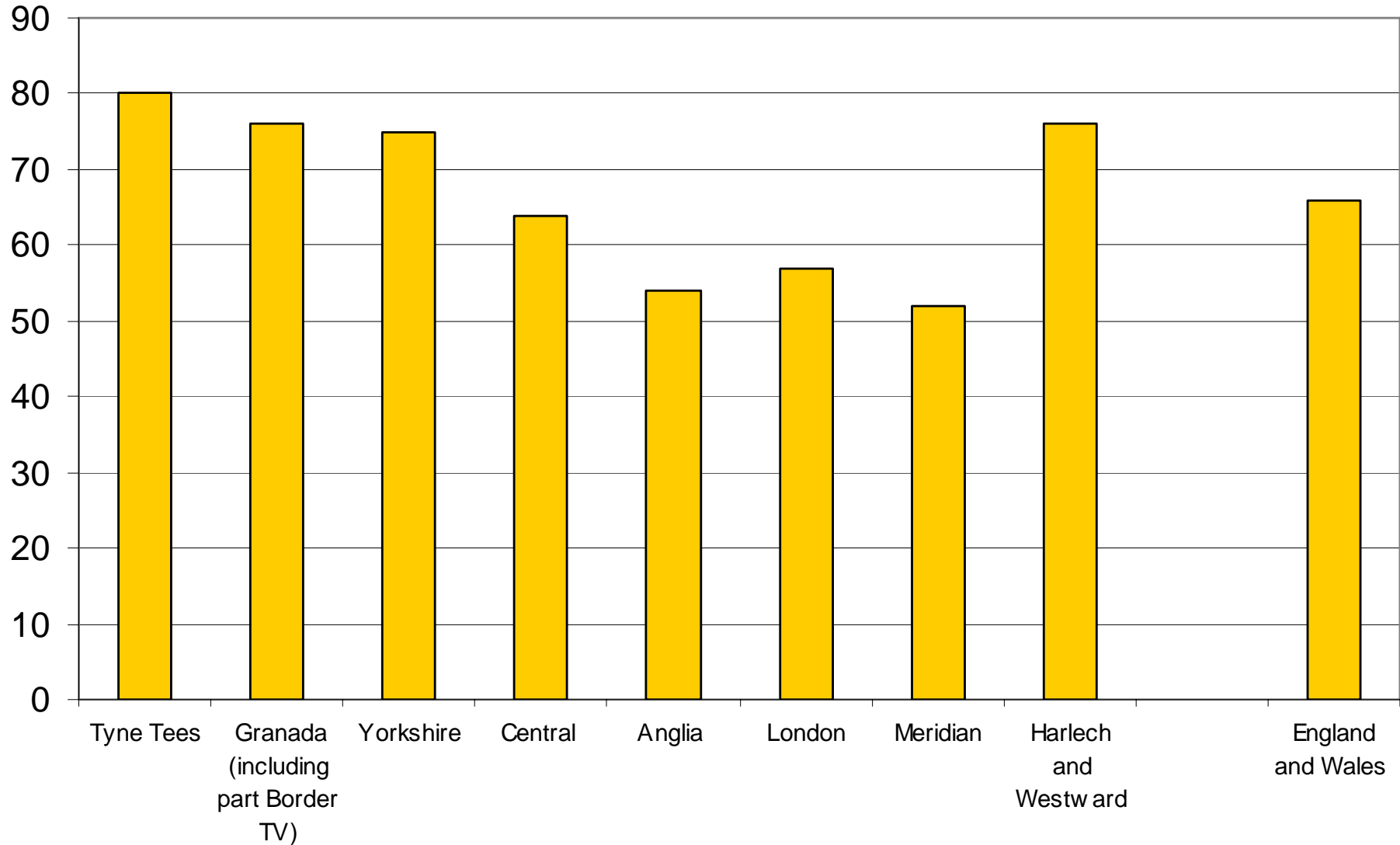
## **Women Additional Risk factors**

- Drank more than 5 years ago
- Drank just alcopops (not strong beer)
- Mid range educational qualifications (not lowest or student)

## **Protective factors**

- Drank less than 5 years ago
- Lowest two household income quintiles

## Alcohol sold on license 2004 (l per capita)



# For the north east to become the ‘healthiest’ region

- Reduce binge drinking by one third
  - in men from 30% to 21%
  - in women from 15% to 10%
- Not simply a matter of improving knowledge of units
- Improving knowledge of changing strength/volume of wine
- Information will be need to be targeted at certain groups: students and graduates; young people and middle aged
- Attitudes to drinking need to change
- Drinkers must not be demonized

## A problem: Underestimation of units

- Much more alcohol sold than reported drunk
- About double prior to unit changes, now about 1.5 times

Example of underreporting:

- BUPA Alcohol measurement tool Counts a glass of wine as 1 unit; no account of glass size

[www.bupa.co.uk/health\\_information/asp/healthy\\_living/lifestyle/alcohol/alctest.asp](http://www.bupa.co.uk/health_information/asp/healthy_living/lifestyle/alcohol/alctest.asp)

Application in progress for MRC studentship to address these issues