



## Research paper

## Down the local: A qualitative case study of daytime drinking spaces in the London Borough of Islington



Claire Thompson\*, Sarah Milton, Matt Egan, Karen Lock

Faculty of Public Health &amp; Policy, London School of Hygiene &amp; Tropical Medicine, 15-17 Tavistock Place, London WC9H 1SH, United Kingdom

## ARTICLE INFO

## Article history:

Received 14 May 2017

Received in revised form 4 November 2017

Accepted 16 November 2017

Available online xxx

## Keywords:

Qualitative

Daytime drinking

London

Alcohol licensing

Hybrid establishments

Hipsters

## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Recognising the lack of research on daytime drinking practices in areas with managed night-time economies (NTEs), this qualitative study explores the phenomena in the London Borough of Islington; a rapidly gentrifying area with a highly regulated night-time economy (NTE). The objectives were to (i) Characterise the daytime drinking spaces of the local alcohol environment and (ii) Theorise the ways in which these spaces, and the practices and performativities within them, are situated within broader social and economic trends.

**Methods:** Adopting a legitimate peripheral participation approach to data collection, 39 licensed premises were visited in Islington and on-site observations carried out between the hours of 12 pm and 6 pm using a semi-structured observation guide. Observations were written-up into detailed fieldnotes, uploaded to NVivo and subject to a thematic analysis.

**Findings:** The daytime on-premises alcohol environment was characterised by two main trends: the decline of traditional pubs and a proliferation of hybrid establishments in which alcohol was framed as part of a suite of attractions. The consumption trends that the latter exemplify are implicated in processes of micro-cultural production and 'hipster capitalism'; and it is via this framing that we explore the way the diverse local drinking spaces were gendered and classed. Hybrid establishments have been regarded as positive in terms of public health, crime and safety. However, they could also help introduce drinking within times and contexts where it was not previously present.

**Conclusion:** The intersection of an expanding hipster habitus with Local Authority efforts to tackle 'determined drunkenness' create very particular challenges. The operating practices of hybrid venues may feed into current alcohol industry strategies of promoting 'new moments' in which consumers can drink. They blur the divisions between work and play and produce temporal and classed divisions of drinking.

© 2017 Elsevier B.V. All rights reserved.

## Introduction

Faced with the decline of traditional industries and employment, many UK cities have sought to reinvent themselves as places of leisure (Roberts & Eldridge, 2009). In developing 'night-time economies' (NTEs) to revitalize inner city economies, the promotion and consumption of alcohol has been central (Lukas, 2008). At the same time, alcohol related harm is a major national health concern (WHO, 2014) and a contributor to problems of crime, safety, social order, injury and disease (Andrews, Sudwell, & Sparkes, 2005; Haan, Kaplan, & Camacho, 1987). Historically, a tension exists in the UK between concerns over the social and health impacts of alcohol consumption and the economic role of

alcohol (Jayne, Valentine, & Holloway, 2010). Interventions that seek to balance economic and social impacts of alcohol are mainly enacted at the local level (Fitzgerald & Angus, 2015).

Currently, the most significant lever for modifying the availability of alcohol in the UK is through the licensing of alcohol outlets; a process administered by local licensing authorities – who in England have considerable leeway to tailor policies to their own environments (Egan et al., 2016; Martineau, Tyner, Lorenc, Petticrew, & Lock, 2013). Interventions at this scale include restricting what kind of places and during which hours alcohol can be sold and consumed (Egan et al., 2016). Overwhelmingly, such policies are formulated around spaces of the NTE, which are viewed as problematic and risky. Local authorities (LAs) have struggled to control night-time alcohol and entertainment spaces (Haan et al., 1987). NTE venues are contested spaces that are alcohol-fuelled, consumption driven and often characterised by social disorders and the clustering of young people engaged in

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: [claire.thompson@lshtm.ac.uk](mailto:claire.thompson@lshtm.ac.uk) (C. Thompson).

heavy-drinking and public drunkenness (Hadfield, 2006; Hadfield, Lister, & Traynor, 2010). This is further complicated by the fact that attempts to manage NTE spaces are often at-odds with the culture of excess that remains a highly visible dimension of youth drinking cultures. Added to which, such efforts are typically subject to resistance from local businesses (Hadfield et al., 2010; Measham & Brain, 2005).

This focus on the NTE, both in policy and research, has not been matched by a sustained investigation of the daytime alcohol environment. In part, this may be because it is not perceived to have the same sense of danger, risk or excess (Hayward & Hobbs, 2007). And yet, the daytime alcohol environment is of interest because it is undergoing a period of intense change. The number of pubs in the UK is at its lowest level for a decade. The rate of closure of community pubs, the established venue for daytime drinking, is around 21 closures per week (Smithers, 2016). A recent national study of drinking practices in Britain found that nearly a fifth of all recorded 'drinking occasions' took place before 5 pm. The noon till 6 pm period marks the first half of a 12 h escalation of alcohol related crimes that occurs in the UK on a daily basis, with approximately a tenth (on a weekend) or a fifth (weekday) of all alcohol related offences occurring within that initial six hour period (Ally, Lovatt, Meier, Brennan, & Holmes, 2016). Daytime drinking has also been associated with occupational injury (the so-called 'lunchtime effect'), impaired driving ability and disturbed nocturnal sleep (Camino López, Fontanedab, González Alcántarab, & Ritzelc, 2011; Ebrahim, Shapiro, Williams, & Fenwick, 2013; Horne, Reyner, & Barrett, 2003; Institute of Alcohol Studies, 2014).

Furthermore, alcohol marketing and the media at times promote daytime drinking in the context of all-day drinking [for examples of this see (Bell, 2016; Delany, 2016; Ferguson & Richards, 2015)], with the implication that some of the problems experienced by the NTE begin in the afternoon and early evening. In which case, there is a need to examine how the spaces of the NTE operate during the daytime. This paper reports on the findings of a qualitative study exploring the local daytime alcohol environment in an urban locality with a large and challenging NTE.

#### *Setting and policy context: The London Borough of Islington*

Data for this study were collected in the London Borough of Islington. The Borough has over 1300 premises licensed to sell alcohol and one of the highest densities of pubs, bars, cafes and shops selling alcohol in London. The area is also characterised by high levels of social inequalities and alcohol related health harms (both chronic and acute) (London Borough of Islington, 2012). The Local Authority deploys a range of policies and interventions to try and manage its alcohol trade and, in particular, its NTE. These include encouragement of initiatives delivered in partnership with industry actors to promote what is sometimes referred to as responsible drinking and preferred managerial practices: e.g. 'Best Bar None' (see <https://www.bnuk.com>), 'Challenge 25' (see <https://www.challenge25.org>) and 'Pubwatch' (see [https://www.islington.gov.uk/business/best/support\\_networks/pubwatch](https://www.islington.gov.uk/business/best/support_networks/pubwatch)).

They also include regulatory interventions, often involving the local alcohol licensing system. Notably, Islington operates a Cumulative Impact Policy (CIP). CIPs chiefly affect applications for new alcohol licenses within specific areas identified by the Local Authority as having particular alcohol problems linked to high alcohol outlet density. These areas are called 'cumulative impact zones' (CIZs) (Grace, McGill, Lock, & Egan, 2014; Martineau et al., 2013). The policy is designed to give Licensing Authorities a stronger legal position should they want to reject applications for new licenses within CIZs. Previous research has suggested that CIPs have been used to discourage certain types of establishments, such

as traditional pubs and bars, whilst encouraging other types of venue that appear to place less emphasis on the alcohol side of their business, such as coffee shops and restaurants (Egan et al., 2016; Grace, Egan, & Lock, 2016). The CIP in Islington was developed in 2013 in response to concerns that the "saturation" of on- and off-licence premises had reached a point where "the economic benefits of the night time economy [were] starting to be outweighed by the health impacts, loss of amenity and the costs of excessive alcohol consumption, crime and disorder" (London Borough of Islington, 2012).

Islington is also a place of interest because it represents a very particular locality. Islington was the first area in London to be identified as being 'gentrified' and remains one of the focal points of these debates (Wilson et al., 2004). So much so, that it has been described as 'super-gentrified'; and thereby in the grip of such change and inequality that mixing across the wealth and social class barriers is become increasingly difficult (Smith, 2006).

Islington has come to exemplify the socio-economic and cultural trends of gentrification. On the one-hand, it is known for its plush bars, restaurants and boutiques (Shaheen, 2013). On the other, poverty and inequality are intensifying in the area, with child poverty being particularly high. Increasingly, middle-income families can no longer afford to live in the area with soaring house prices and stagnating wages for middle and lower income earners (Penny, Shaheen, & Lyall, 2013). Its demographic make-up can be characterised as one of startling contrasts: with a transient young professional group sandwiched between poor families living in social housing and a very rich group of families occupying prime properties (Shaheen, 2013). It is generally these transient young professionals who frequent the plush bars and cafes, and who are described as 'hipsters' in accounts of new consumer practices in concentrated areas of rapidly gentrifying Western cities like London (Cumming, 2015; Schiermer, 2014).

Media and cultural accounts often associate 'hipsters' with urbanism and localism, and as aficionados of things such as neo-artisanal goods, architecture, urbanism, localism, folk music, and coffee. They are imagined and presented as iconic millennial figures who hold counter-mainstream tastes (Scott, 2017). Typically, the term is used to refer to young, white, educated and middle class individuals with left-leaning politics who tend to work in 'creative industries', cafés, bars, music or fashion stores (Schiermer, 2014). The term 'hipster capitalism' has been used to describe the approaches to micro-entrepreneurial cultural production that these actors engage in (Scott, 2017) and which have helped define the boutique and independent consumption spaces of Islington, including establishments that serve alcohol (Shaheen, 2013). It is via this framing of 'hipster capitalism' (Scott, 2017) that we examine the daytime alcohol environment of Islington.

#### **Methods**

This paper reports on the findings of a qualitative study aiming to explore the daytime alcohol environment of a local area that has both a problematic NTE and a rapidly changing retail and consumption environment. The main objectives of the study were to (i) Characterise the daytime drinking spaces of Islington's alcohol environment, and (ii) Theorise the ways in which these spaces, and the practices and performativities within them, are situated within broader social and political trends.

The daytime alcohol environment of Islington is the site of both a heavily regulated NTE and of burgeoning aspirational consumption. In order to examine this setting and the factors that shape it, we used a qualitative case study approach, concentrating our efforts on specific areas that have been identified as problematic in terms of NTE drinking spaces – designated cumulative impact

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/7512228>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/7512228>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)