

**”I can then dance
like John Travolta”**

Binge drinking, parties and the
importance of arenas

CAREER

- Social worker
- Lecturer
- PhD candidate
- ?

ARTICLES

- Changing arenas of underage adolescent binge drinking in Swedish small towns. Nordic Studies on Alcohol and Drugs Vol.32 2015.
- Adolescent strategies of controlled heavy drinking as part of gendered maturation. Submitted
- Early onset in the use of tobacco, alcohol and drugs among Swedish 13 and 14-years old adolescents. Submitted

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- Studies show that the most common place for underage drinking in a Scandinavian perspective, were home environments, in the absence of parents.
- On the other side, groups have made the street arenas and other public or half-hidden outdoor places their own leisure space, away from adult control, and these groups had a higher rate of binge drinking compared to most other youth.

- This research “journey” started with a focus on outdoor arenas for teenage binge drinking and “hanging out”, but had to take a different direction as these places were abandoned.
- Groups who traditionally would have frequented them had moved indoors to home environments.
- Ethnographic approach

REASONS FOR CHANGES IN BINGE DRINKING PLACES

- Frequently used words by the informants were control and planning. They wanted control over who had access to drinking places, and planning was the way to gain control and still have space for bingeing.
- *“The adults think that, of course, adolescents stay out on the streets, but what the f... Teenagers today are not that stupid. Me and my pals, we use to plan our parties in advance. We can plan several days ahead and write lists of who is invited, what is allowed to do or not; for instance if you pick a fight, we will report you to the police. We plan days ahead”* (Boy 17).

WELLBEING THROUGH BINGE DRINKING

- Playing board games, Karaoke singing, listening to loud music and dancing were part of a good party according to the girls while boys expressed extra satisfaction when achieving a drunkenness that made them feel cocky and sure of oneself.
- A sense of freedom was expressed in that it was accepted to try to “dance like John Travolta” or join the singing even when one did not have the best of voices.

MATURITY THROUGH BINGE DRINKING

- Being able to show you could drink in a controlled way was very important for both girls and boys, no one wanted to be labeled acting like a “14-is”.
- A “14-is” is a person with the image of a 14 year old girl who drinks too much, is loud and seeks attention. When girls displayed lack in maturity by becoming too drunk they were quickly labeled “14-isar” whereas boys could be excused and did not get the same bad reputation as easily.
- *“I only drink shots, five in a row and then no more alcohol for a while”. (Girl 16)*

PROBLEMS LINKED TO BINGE DRINKING

- Among the male participant's problems were fights, fear of throwing up and doing stupid things like running naked through the streets.
- The girl's problems were described as a lack of money, fear of throwing up or being accused of behaving like a "14-is".

- The aspects of place and space helps in explaining and understanding the importance of the arenas for partying and binge drinking.
- To party and binge drink is important, allows adolescents to laugh, be happy and talkative, but control is vital.

EARLY ONSET

LORDIA

- This study is part of a multidisciplinary research program, Longitudinal Research on Development In Adolescence (LoRDIA), which has collected information on adolescents' health, school functioning, social networks and substance use since 2014. The program is a cooperation between Jönköping University, School of Health and Welfare and University of Gothenburg
- Participants come from four small to medium sized municipalities in the southern part of Sweden.

There is no common definition of early onset and different studies uses various cut-points in age, most vary from 12 or younger and up to 15.

This study defines the age of early onset as girls or boys 14 or under.



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