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# 'Hardcore Drinking'

## Portrayals of Alcohol Consumption in Young Women's and Men's Magazines

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### Abstract

Young adults and young women in particular are drinking more alcohol than ever before, with implications for risky behaviours and long-term health. This study explored the ways in which alcohol and drinking were represented in six monthly UK magazines (three targeted at young men, three at young women) across a three-month period (18 magazines). We identified three main discourses across the texts, namely the drug alcohol; masculinity and machismo; and drinking as normality. These discourses constructed women's and men's drinks and drinking behaviours in sharp contrast. Drinking was aligned with traditional masculine images, although new kinds of drinks were aligned with traditional feminine images—and derided in men's magazines. Findings highlight how gender, constructed in relation to the other, is an important aspect of representations of drinking patterns in young adults.

### Keywords

- *alcohol*
- *alcohol consumption*
- *gender*
- *magazines*
- *media*
- *young people*

THE NEGATIVE consequences of consuming high amounts of alcohol have been well documented, and include health problems, premature death, impaired work performance, absenteeism, financial costs and crime (Harford, Grant, & Hasin, 1991). Velleman and Orford (1999) estimated that at any one time in the UK there are two to three million alcohol-dependent adults and approximately four to six million concerned others. A significant association has also been found between depression, anxiety and alcohol abuse (Rodgers et al., 2000). Recent research has highlighted the differential effects of different patterns of alcohol consumption. Patterns of high quantity, yet intermittent consumption termed 'binge drinking' have been demonstrated to cause more social consequences and accidental injuries than other forms of drinking (Kunz & Graham, 1998).

Patterns of drinking have been changing over the past decade, particularly in young adults between the ages of 18 and 25. Binge drinking is rapidly increasing in a number of countries. In the USA, estimates of binge drinking increased by 35 per cent between 1995 and 2001 (Naimi et al., 2003). Attitudes towards this kind of drinking are also said to be changing rapidly, becoming more accepting (Motluc, 2004). Alongside the increase in binge drinking observed in young adults, dramatic changes in drinking patterns have also been occurring in young women. Survey data from UK and other western countries show that women are catching up with their male peers in terms of amount of alcohol consumed and engagement in a binge style of drinking (e.g. Alcohol Concern, 2000).

These changes in patterns of drinking have both social and health consequences. First, there are changes associated with both how men and women choose to spend their leisure time. Second, as women engage in more risky drinking, the negative effects of such behaviour on morbidity and mortality extend to women (Rodin & Ickovics, 1990; Wilsnack & Wilsnack, 1997). Third, as binge drinking in young adults increases, so too do the risky behaviours that are associated with such drinking, such as unprotected sex and accidents.

At present we do not fully understand why these changes in the drinking patterns of young adults have occurred, nor do we know a lot about gender differences in drinking (Wilsnack,

Vogeltanz, Wilsnack, & Harris, 2000). Traditional social-psychological explanations draw primarily upon social learning theory, but cannot explain why young people's drinking patterns are changing (Wilsnack & Wilsnack, 1997). There is a need for socio-cultural (as opposed to individualized or purely structural) accounts of alcohol consumption (Wilsnack et al., 2000).

The mainstream media is a major cultural forum for the circulation of ideas and understandings. This forum provides a means for people to access stories they can draw on to make sense of issues in everyday life (Silverstone, 1999). Representations of particular issues in mainstream media can be seen to produce and reproduce meanings concerning particular behaviours and ways of living (Lyons, 2000; Lyons & Griffin, 2003). While understandings are circulated widely through the media, we need to be cautious in reaching conclusions about how the media exerts effects on people (Bryant & Zillman, 2002). 'Readers' of media texts rarely take up the stories offered to them directly. People engage and interact with media content, drawing on it selectively for particular purposes, accepting, rejecting, resisting and modifying representations to suit their own particular purposes (Hodgetts & Chamberlain, 2003).

Very little work has examined the ways in which alcohol is portrayed in media aimed at young adults. Much research has investigated the impact of advertising on alcohol consumption (e.g. Saffer, 2002), and some has examined public service announcements regarding alcohol (e.g. Andsager, Austin, & Pinkleton, 2001). However, there is a surprising absence of research examining the ways in which alcohol and drinking is portrayed in other forms of media.

The aim of this study was to examine critically the ways in which drinking and particularly different types of drinking are portrayed in media targeted to young adults. We examined magazines that are frequently read by young men and women, given their dominant form in the media (particularly for young adults), and the fact that they have long been documented as a source of health information (Elliot, 1994). It was expected that results would be beneficial in assisting researchers to theorize the changes in drinking patterns that have been occurring in young adults over the past decade. We were

particularly interested in the ways in which drinking per se, binge drinking and women's drinking were represented in popular magazines.

## Method

### *The texts: men's and women's magazines*

We focused on three magazines targeted at women and three targeted at men in the UK. We selected four magazines which are specific to the sub-group of 18 to 25-year-olds, and which had the highest monthly readership numbers for these young people. For women *Cosmopolitan* with 1,915,000 readers and *Marie Claire* with 1,690,000 readers were selected. For men *FHM Magazine* with 3,733,000 readers and *Loaded* with 2,029,000 readers were selected (from National Readership Survey, 2001). Two further magazines were selected, aimed at this age group, but chosen for health content, namely *Health and Fitness* (for women) and *Men's Health* (for men).

Magazines were all monthly periodicals, and a data collection period of three months was employed, from November 2001 to January 2002. The Christmas period was chosen explicitly as there is evidence linking increased levels of alcohol consumption with a seasonality effect. Although only a tentative association, alcohol consumption levels appear to peak during December (Uitenbroek, 1996). Therefore it was assumed that media coverage of this topic may also be at its peak. In summary, eighteen magazines were selected, nine aimed at women (three each of *Cosmopolitan*, *Marie Claire*, *Health and Fitness*) and nine aimed at men (three each of *FHM*, *Loaded* and *Men's Health*).

### *Analytic approach*

We aimed to highlight some of the dominant ways in which drinking alcohol was represented across the magazines, and to explore whether—and how—men's and women's drinking were portrayed in different ways. We drew on principles derived from poststructuralist discourse analysis to analyse the text. This approach views language as primary and as a focus of study in its own right, and texts as social processes and practices. Ways of speaking about topics are seen as producing and reproducing reality, and

reflecting social, economic and political forces (Parker, 1992). The sociopolitical and historical context of the text, and the researchers, is explicitly acknowledged (Lupton, 1992). Our approaches to the text varied based on our own backgrounds. While all white women from western cultures (New Zealand and Great Britain), we span three decades from the early 20s onwards.

### *Procedure*

As part of the analytic approach, we identified particular discourses concerned with drinking within these magazines. This allowed us to explore the common-sense meanings and metaphorical associations of drinking in this media form. *Discourses* have been defined as shared patterns of meaning which 'organize the various symbolic systems human beings inhabit, and which are necessary for us to make sense to each other' (Parker, 1999, p. 3). We did not follow a step-by-step method, but used particular 'ways of reading' the texts. We all read and re-read the articles relating to drinking and alcohol consumption many times, and engaged in discussions about specific articles and the text more generally. We all highlighted interesting sections of the articles, and examined the ways in which drinking and alcohol were being discussed across different types of articles and different magazines. Particular attention was paid to inconsistencies and contradictions in terms of meanings ascribed to drinking and alcohol consumption. Such inconsistencies can be used to trace the function and effects of a particular way of speaking and can lead to the identification of features shared by articles that lead to the formation of coherent patterns (Lyons & Willott, 1999). Through this analytic process we identified three main discursive themes, which we employed to explore the meanings and associations of men's and women's drinking.

We were primarily interested in how the representations positioned individual readers (see Davies & Harré, 1990), and the ways in which such representations functioned for both men and women. Therefore, we systematically examined each discursive theme and explored, using quotations, pictures, headlines, etc., the ways in which they positioned men's and women's drinking, and constructed men's and women's drinking in different ways.

## Results

Across all magazines, there were a total of 479 pieces of text (articles, letters, etc.). Of these, 57 (11.9%) were related to alcohol consumption, with 36 (7.5%) of these in men's magazines and 21 (4.4%) in women's magazines. Despite differences in article numbers for men and women, coverage of the topic was relatively equal when the amount of text dedicated to each alcohol-related article was taken into account. Compared to the 14 pages dedicated to the topic in women's magazines, men's magazines allocated only 6 pages showing a preference for using smaller paragraphed articles. Alcohol was mentioned across a range of pieces within the magazines, from full articles, to letters, health advice, joke pages and so on.

There were different ways in which types of drinks, ways of drinking and types of drinker were constructed for men and women. During the analysis three major discursive themes were identified in relation to alcohol consumption, namely, the drug 'alcohol', masculinity and machismo and drinking as normality. The focus of this article is not to describe each of these themes per se, but rather to explore the ways in which men's and women's drinking was constructed within these magazines. Consequently, references to the three major discursive themes identified during the analysis are limited to their contribution to the differential construction of men's and women's drinking.

### *Types of drinks*

There were clear differences in the types of drinks women were portrayed as drinking and enjoying, and those that men typically drink. Women's drinks were aligned much more closely with 'the drug alcohol' discourse, in which drinks are described and compared to 'harder', highly potent, Class A drugs. For example:

There's a new generation of glamorous, highly potent cocktails and spirits on the market that offer women that hit and stimulation that, just five years ago, they would have achieved from party drugs such as coke, speed and ecstasy. (*Cosmopolitan*)

You get an immediate hit from something like snorting a line of coke or taking a pill, and

people are now turning to alcohol to get the same rush. (*Cosmopolitan*)

Women's drinks are also described as glamorous and sparkling, and are most likely to be cocktails, spirits, wine and champagne:

The tiny glasses of bright red liquid lined up along the bar sparkle and glow like massive rubies. (*Cosmopolitan*)

... you kick back and relax by getting your best friends around for several bottles of chardonnay. (*Marie Claire*)

... by the time I was eighteen, it was noticeable that the way I drank was different. I'd take vodka, not wine, to a party, and drink it neat. (*Marie Claire*)

In contrast, men were constructed quite clearly as beer drinkers, with occasional reference to drinking shots as well: '... after a hard day building boats, the grubby Cuban locals drink what every working man orders at the bar—a bottle of ice-cold beer' (*FHM*). Here the use of 'every working man' reinforces that drinking beer, working and being male go together, and beer is what *all* men drink. This notion is repeated through assumptions that beer is what men do order when they get to a bar: 'Modern chemical brewing techniques have made trips to the bar a kind of beer lottery. Who knows whether your foaming pint will retain the watery consistency of vicar's piss, or the unerring tendency to make you fight close friends' (*FHM*).

Drinking wine was constructed in negative terms in *FHM* and *Loaded* magazines, although as worth considering in *Men's Health* due solely to weight concerns:

Booze news: Beware this evil white wine [swaying willow diet chardonnay] which achieves reduced-calorie status through its low alcohol content ... The worst thing to come from Down Under since *A Country Practice*. (*FHM*)

Have a drink. But make it wine. Researchers at the University of North Carolina measured the bellies of men who drank a beer a day, a glass of wine a day, and a third group that didn't drink at all. The beer drinkers had the largest guts—but the wine drinkers weren't

scoffing two bags of Scampi fries with a nice Merlot either. (*Men's Health*)

Portrayals and descriptions of what men drink were notably absent in the women's magazines, yet the reverse was true for the men's magazines. There was an overt construction of certain drinks as 'women's drinks' in *FHM* and *Loaded* magazines. These drinks were described in opposition to 'men's drinks', and were generally constructed in a derogatory (yet humorous) manner:

*The 100 worst things about being a man*

# 94. Women have a much broader alcoholic palette from which they can imbibe, taking in as it does the likes of pomagnes, spritzers, sweet sherry and Taboo or Mirage. They all taste like piss, granted, but that's not the point. (*Loaded*)

*Alcohol Gender Collision*

As with underwear, women have considerably more tantalising options when ordering drinks. We have a pint of beer, they have an entire top shelf and a fridge of multi-coloured bottles. Obviously, the only way to stomach their *over-priced gnat's piss* is by mixing it with our own loony juice, but it's a brave man indeed who'll risk wasting his *hard-earned wages* by adding unknown substances to his pint. (*FHM*, emphases added)

Thus, while women are constructed as having a number of advantages when it comes to drinking alcoholic drinks (more choice, lots of colours), men have only 'a pint of beer'. However, 'women's' drinks are positioned in the lowest position on the value rating of drinks: they taste like 'piss', are 'over-priced' and can be termed 'unknown substances'. Men are positioned in traditional masculine roles as hard-working and money earners. Referring to men's income as 'hard-earned wages', and reinforcing this by stating that what alcoholic beverage they spend these wages on is a crucial decision, implies that conversely, women do not have such a crucial decision to make, because their drinks are not purchased with such hard-earned money.

### *Ways of drinking*

The ways in which men and women drink alcohol is also constructed differently in the

discourses we identified. Interestingly, women's drinking was linked with working hard, having professional lives, going out with friends, relaxing or going out dancing:

... what could be better after a hard day's work than sending your man off with the lads, while you kick back and relax by getting your best friends around for several bottles of chardonnay and a girly night in? (*Marie Claire*)

You meet the girls for a meal and polish off some wine. You move on to a pub, then a club and dance the night away in high heels until two in the morning. (*Health and Fitness*)

This quickfire, hardcore drinking isn't what we expect of young professional women but it's an increasingly common sight in bars and clubs across Britain. (*Cosmopolitan*)

As the final quotation above demonstrates, women's drinking is constructed in traditionally masculine ways (e.g. 'quickfire, hardcore'). This is portrayed as a change that is occurring for young women, and a change that is rapidly occurring all across Britain. Furthermore, the amount of alcohol that women are consuming with their girlfriends is normalized through routine everyday social activities (e.g. 'polishing off wine', 'several bottles of Chardonnay').

On the other hand, the ways in which drinking alcohol was described in men's magazines was linked less to traditional masculine roles (working hard, professionalism, public sphere) and more with battle and war metaphors. For example, in an article entitled 'What does a bloke have to do to get a drink around here?', the following subheadings are used to describe trying to get a pint of beer at a bar:

Making your stand till-side

In the line of fire

Choose your weapon

Be a gent

Angle of attack

And one for yourself

Play it cool

No-man's land. (*Men's Health*)

Similarly, other accounts of drinking drew on war metaphors and also used words associated with physical work:

I hammer back a pint. (*FHM*)

I knock back a cool beer. (*FHM*)

... I take up with the barman who's keen to destroy my liver. An ambush-like assortment of shots and beers later and my head seems far too heavy for my weary shoulders. (*FHM*)

Therefore, while women's magazines are describing women's drinking in traditional masculine ways, linking drinking to work and relaxing and having fun after work, men's magazines seem to be drawing on increasingly stronger images of 'masculinity' to create a distinction between men's and women's drinking.

### *Types of drinker*

In both women's and men's magazines, drinking is constructed as a very normal, everyday social activity:

... purists may have you sitting in the lotus position under your tree all December but the reality is *most of us will at some point get drunk* and party. (*Cosmopolitan*, emphasis added)

We know you can't avoid a hangover at Christmas

New year, new hangover? Don't despair *we've all been there!* (*Cosmopolitan*, emphasis added)

Like the British, Finns like to get so drunk they can barely pronounce their own names. (*Loaded*)

As part of this normalization of drinking, drinkers are constructed in various ways. In women's magazines, women who drink are constructed in particular ways, but as with 'ways of drinking' there was an absence of constructing men who drink. The focus throughout was primarily on women and what they do. Notably, women who drink alcohol are positioned in women's magazines as professional, glamorous, good-looking, competent and sophisticated. The 'goodtime girl' phrase is used across a range of articles:

Three smart professional women in their late twenties, with immaculate hair and make-up, drain their champagne flutes then reach for their shot glasses—downing the liqueur in one swift movement. (*Cosmopolitan*)

Champagne fuelled parties, the Christmas day eating competition and the New Year's who has the strongest liver challenge ... Christmas wouldn't be the same without a goodtime girl lifestyle. (*Cosmopolitan*)

However, in sharp contrast, men's magazines constructed not just men as particular types of drinkers, but strongly positioned women as particular (different) types of drinkers as well. There is a negative portrayal of (especially older) women who are out drinking in public spaces in *FHM*:

I'm ... guzzling a cool lager, but one glance around and all's far from well: Jive Bunny's on the TV and gaggles of drunken 'mature ladies' totter around giggling maniacally. (*FHM*)

A classy joint with a 'designer' feel to it, even a group of clucking women in bright pink wigs can't dent the marvellous atmosphere ... (*FHM*)

Groups of women are described as 'gaggles', reinforcing the description of women in bird terminology (geese, chicks, birds, ducks). Their behaviour is described in this way as well (e.g. clucking), and contrasted with the classy feel of the bar, implying that such women are out of place in this type of environment. More concerning, perhaps, are the ways in which women who drink are described in readers' letters. The following is an extract from a letter to the advice-givers (Jenna and Chopper) in *FHM*:

Dear Jenna & Chopper

My girl likes a drink, but the trouble is, when she's had a few she goes a little crazy. She always tries to punch blokes, which gets me into fights, and the last time she was pissed, she dropped her knickers in the street and walked home showing everyone her arse. Do you think she's just a good-time girl, or the kind who'll go and sleep with all my mates behind my back?



Here the text highlights that a woman who drinks can be positioned in one of two ways: as a goodtime girl (which is okay) or as someone who sleeps around. Worryingly, the reply that Jenna and Chopper give to this reader narrows this positioning to only one choice:

Reply: . . . she seems to be a bit of a troublemaker and a tease. So the next time she gets drunk and pulls down her panties, take her firmly by the arm and pull her into a dark alley. Then yank her skirt up, throw her over your knee and spank the shit out of her. (*FHM*)

Clearly these 'advice-givers' do not see women drinkers as goodtime girls; rather they are constructed as deserving to be treated in any way their boyfriend wants, if they get drunk. This response could also be taken to imply that the public space for drinking still belongs primarily to men, and therefore men have the right to police female behaviour in it.

In going out and drinking, men are portrayed as taking part in a battle or an adventure. Letters to advice-givers also highlight how much alcohol is considered moderate drinking:

Letter: Please can you help me. I'm not what you'd call a heavy drinker as I only go out on a Friday, and even then, I only drink around five to eight pints. The problem is that I have developed what can only be described as embarrassing 'beer breasts' . . . (*FHM*)

Letter: Dear Terry, my wife complains that I drink too much. Some days I'll have eight or nine pints with my colleagues after work, but the fact is, I just have a good tolerance for beer. Is this 'binge drinking'?

Reply: No, Bob, you're not a binge drinker. You're a drunk. (*Men's Health*)

In these letters, 5–9 pints over an evening is assumed by readers to be moderate drinking (not 'heavy', due to 'good tolerance'). Drinking is an embedded part of life for men, as an article in *Loaded* entitled 'The 100 worst things about being a man' reinforces:

# 86. It is actually considered more acceptable among our own gender group to force broken beer glasses into each other's faces than it is to pull each other's hair during a ruck. (*Loaded*)

# 95. Our higher tolerance of alcohol means that it is more expensive for us to get pissed, and yet the other 99 reasons in this list give us much greater impetus to do so on a regular basis. (*Loaded*)

Here drinking, and drinking regularly, is constructed overtly as not just as part of being a man, but drinking is also what men do as a consequence of being male.

## Discussion

This analysis provides important insights into the cultural re/production of social norms around alcohol consumption and gender. In particular, this study highlights how magazines targeted at young adults portray the strong idea that drinking alcohol, and binge drinking, is normative and cool, adult and professional. New kinds of alcoholic drinks reinforce this positive association and align drinking with class A drugs, especially for women. It may be that drinking is already so socially and culturally embedded for men this association does not need stating. Associating alcohol consumption with an adult, sophisticated lifestyle supports Pape and Hammer's (1996) suggestion that drinking in young adults functions as a process of socialization into the adult world. However, there are clear differentiations in the ways in which men and women are portrayed in the magazines in terms of what they drink, ways they drink it and the types of drinkers they are. Interestingly, this differentiation is made much more clearly in men's magazines than in women's magazines, and somewhat less so in those magazines aimed at health and fitness.

In women's magazines drinks are aligned with feminine images and descriptions, yet the drinking itself is aligned with masculinity, adventure, professionalism and the public sphere. This reinforces the shift in gender relations and social positions that has been occurring over recent decades, particularly in relation to work and working life. As Beynon notes, for men 'the breadwinner ideology is no longer credible; work dependent upon muscle power has declined; and there has been a sharp growth in western economies of part-time and female labour' (2002, p. 84). Alongside the changing patterns of employment and traditional roles



has been a notable shift from home-based to public-situated leisure activities for young women (Sweeting & West, 2003). Young women are now much more visible in public spaces (including pubs), which were traditionally perceived as male leisure arenas. This greater visibility has been linked to measured increases in women's participation in risky behaviours such as drinking (Sweeting & West, 2003).

Despite such changes, within the magazines drinking is described in traditional masculine-role ways (e.g. after a hard week's working). Historical precedent legitimizing this linkage as equally applicable to women can be found in Second World War England. In her article on the topic, Langhamer (2003) proposes women's own notion of legitimate leisure reward for work well done is the most convincing explanation for increased female pub participation during the war years. Linking work and drinking in these ways adds to the normalization of drinking as a valid response to participating in the world of work.

According to the convergence hypothesis, women's changing positions in society go alongside engaging in behaviour more traditionally associated with men, including risky and unhealthy behaviours such as binge drinking. Thus, there is the convergence of risks associated with such negative behaviours (Neve, Drop, Lemmes, & Swinkels, 1996). However, gender is relative and constructed in relation to the 'other'. As women shift their behaviours men are also shifting theirs. In the magazines analysed in this study, great effort appeared to be going into men's magazines to construct men's drinking in different ways to women's drinking. While young women are going out and drinking regularly now, their drinks, behaviour and ways in which they drink are derided, described in derogatory terms and generally devalued in men's magazines. This is contrasted with almost an absence of such constructions of men in women's magazines.

In the final chapter of her book 'Patriarchy and the Pub', Hey (1986) considers the question 'why does having "a good time" consist for men in their banding together in a misogynistic alliance?' (p. 63). In answering this question Hey observes that the main topic of conversation at the pub between men was female sexuality and men's control of it; that patriarchal

masculinity is celebrated and constructed among other men; and that masculine reputations are largely based upon demonstrating an ability to control their women or at least to be a 'man's man' i.e. not under 'her' thumb. Hey concluded that 'men's reputations derive from controlling women: women's reputations derive from controlling themselves' (1986, p. 69). In the absence of being able directly to control single women's drinking, perhaps these magazines are still reflecting a need to build masculine drinking reputations based largely upon female behaviour? And further, if this behaviour cannot be directly controlled, perhaps it can at least be disparaged?

It has been said that the changing roles of women, alongside changing values and patterns of employment, 'have had a dramatic impact on the lives, life experiences and life opportunities of men' (Stainton Rogers & Stainton Rogers, 2000, p. 242). Indeed, in some groups of men there has been strong antagonism to women's changing behaviours. Yet at the same time, Stainton Rogers and Stainton Rogers (2000) argue that there seems to be a realignment of values, such that young men's values are becoming more 'feminized', and young women's values more 'masculinized'. While this was apparent in the women's magazines we examined, it was not apparent in the men's magazines. There are exceptions to these changes in values however, and young men who feel that their identity is threatened by the changes and that their traditional roles are being challenged may take up masculine values yet more strongly than previously (Stainton Rogers & Stainton Rogers, 2000).

The men's magazines drew on stronger versions of masculinity to distinguish men's drinking from women's. However, while the military descriptions of drinking serve to provide a stronger version of masculinity, it is also possible that they are contributing to a climate of increased alcohol-related aggression and violence. Full understanding of the relationship has not yet been achieved, but it is generally accepted that the association between alcohol and aggression is complex and multifactorial (e.g. Chermack & Giancola, 1997; Graham et al., 1998). The social cultural context is one such contributory factor. While the local context in terms of irritation and provocations

associated with the drinking locale, clientele, etc. has been considered (e.g. Graham, Larocque, Yetman, Ross, & Guistra, 1980; Quigley, Leonard, & Collins, 2003), little has been done specifically to investigate the role of the media in alcohol-related aggression. In their seminal work, anthropologists MacAndrew and Edgerton (1969) argued that the general cultural attitudes and expectations found in the wider social context determine if intoxication will end in aggression. How might the media be contributing to this wider social context for young adults, and particularly young men? The use of military and aggressive language in the men's magazines studied here, and the condoning (and even recommending) of violence towards girlfriends, is a worrying finding highlighting that further work in this area is urgently required. In addition, research examining the process of producing such articles and portrayals in popular magazines is also important. For example, why do editors accept these portrayals of men's and women's drinking for their magazines? Is the decision to write about drinking in these ways informed by readership surveys or other marketing tools? Who has the power in the production process?

The ways in which alcohol consumption and drinking were represented in these magazines highlight the ways in which men's drinking is being clearly demarcated and defined in contrast to women's drinking. This may in part be a reaction to women's shifting roles, employment patterns and use of public spaces such as pubs. Many claims have been made about a crisis in masculinity that has occurred for men in recent years, although it is not clear whether this is men-in-crisis, masculinity-in-crisis or both—or a creation borne of the media around a moral panic (Beynon, 2002). The ways in which drinking was portrayed in the men's magazines seemed to function to provide men with a strong and secure version of masculinity. In doing so, however, it reinforced predominantly male phenomena such as aggression and violence (Beynon, 2002). On the other hand, representations of alcohol and drinking in women's magazines reinforce particular forms of drinking (binge drinking, 'hardcore' drinking) and relate them to the traditionally male world of professionalism, public sphere, adventure and risk. Examining how these representations are

taken up by readers and enabled, resisted or ignored, is an important question for future research.

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