PARTY MORALS

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The moral, then, is this. Since societies, like individuals, get the sorts of drunken comportment that they allow, they deserve what they get.

– MacAndrew and Edgerton

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Summary

The transgressive ways people often behave in when drunk may seem chaotic, and may appear to be an effect of their drunkenness. However, decades ago, MacAndrew and Edgerton (1969) demonstrated that alcohol intoxication by itself does not lead to transgressions of social norms, and that explanations for drunken behaviors are to be found in the social contexts of drinking practices. Their finding is the starting point of this thesis, in which I explore and explain the moral order of youth party practices. In the introductory chapters, I outline the theoretical background and methods used. In the article *Drinking and Moral Order* (Fjær and Pedersen, 2015) we examine intracultural variation in drunken behaviors by comparing two extended parties that center on drinking. We show that drunken comportment is culturally heterogeneous, and explain the difference in moral orders between the two parties as expressions of differences in value priorities. In the article *I'm Not One of Those Girls* (Fjær et al., 2015) we analyze the moral positioning of participants in a particularly liberal party practice, and show how even within that context, there is a sexual double standard. While many of the young women we interviewed positioned themselves against the moral figure of "the slut", regardless of whether and how they participated in the hookup activities of the party practice, the young men were relatively free to morally position themselves in ways that aligned with their behaviors. In the article *Departies* (Fjær and Tutenges, 2017), we conceptualize extended youth parties as a type of party practice where participants depart from their everyday life in several, intertwined ways. During these lengthy, and usually alcohol-fueled parties, participants' moral departures occur in concert with spatial, temporal, stylistic and experiential departures. This type of party practice highlights how the altered moral orders of party practices are culturally produced. In the final article, entitled *In Defense of Qualitative Interviewing* (Fjær, forthcoming), I describe two types of critiques of qualitative interviewing that have implications for studies of moralized practices in particular. After reformulating the critiques as methodological challenges, I show

how researchers – by facilitating stories when interviewing, using multiple indicators in analysis, and through comparative analysis – can draw valid conclusions from interview data on morality and moralized practices. In that way, I provide a methodological defense of the approach used in the first two articles, bolstering the argument that there is an altered moral order to even seemingly chaotic youth parties.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments 5

Summary 7

1. Introduction 11

2. Theoretical perspectives 16

2.1 Drunken behavior as an object of social science 16

2.1.1 The proof 16

2.1.2 Drunkenness is learned behavior 18

2.1.3 Critiques and consequences 19

2.2 Morality 22

2.2.1 Morality as culture 23

2.2.2 Normative orders and repertoires 24

2.2.3 The reference to selves in morality 27

2.2.4 Norms 31

2.2.5 Values 33

2.2.6 The relationship between norms and values 36

2.2.7 Conclusion 38

3. Methodology 39

3.1 Data generation 39

3.1.1 Field observations and recruitment 41

3.1.2 Interviews with *russ* 44

3.1.3 University induction weeks observations and interviews 45

3.2 Data quality 46

3.3 Analysis 48

3.4 Ethics 50

3.5 Comments on process 53

4. Conclusion 57

References 59

Appendix 1: Interview guide for the *Russeferinga* study (in Norwegian) 64

Appendix 2: Interview guide for the *Fadderuka* study (in Norwegian) 66

Appendix 3: Excerpt from failed interview (in Norwegian) 68

Appendix 4: Information sheet and consent form for the *Russeferinga* study (in Norwegian) 70

Article 1 Fjær EG and Pedersen W (2015) Drinking and moral order: Drunken comportment revisited. *Addiction Research & Theory* 23(6): 449–458.

Article 2 Fjær EG, Pedersen W and Sandberg S (2015) "I'm not one of those girls": Boundary-work and the sexual double standard in a liberal hookup context. *Gender & Society* 29(6): 960–981.

Article 3 Fjær EG and Tutenges S (2017) Departies: Conceptualizing extended youth parties. *Journal of Youth Studies* 20(2): 200–215.

Article 4 Fjær EG (forthcoming) In defense of qualitative interviewing. **Submitted to *Qualitative Research***

1. Introduction

When young people party, they depart from their usual ways of behaving – they do things differently, and they engage in activities they would not participate in at other times. Take, for example, Anja's story about how much fun she had with her friends on their party bus, when they stole and vandalized a statue during the Norwegian high school graduation celebration, known as *russefeiringa* (Fjær and Pedersen, 2015: 453):

> Some girls were stealing a stone statue, so it was carried into the bus. And we just laughed, because we got into the bus and then there's a statue just standing there. Then we begin to drive with the statue, and we hear that the police are out looking for a bus that's stolen a statue. We were laughing ourselves to death. So then we had to drive back to the gas station, someone throws out the statue, and we just drive off! The statue was tagged with the name of our bus, so someone took the marker and wrote the name of another bus all over it.

Moreover, different types of parties may depart from the participants' usual practices in very different ways, as Helene points out when she describes sexual practices during *russefeiringa* and compares it to a regular party (Fjær et al., 2015: 966–7):

> I think people are crazier during the celebration just because it's the celebration. Maybe it's a little stupid, but it's really quite nice too, because then you have something to blame it on. For example, having sex on the bus, in front of everyone else, or perhaps having sex with five different [people] in one night, or hooking up with eight different boys on the same bus in one night. If you're at a [regular] girl party, you don't hook up with all the boys there—then you'll just be labeled a whore. But if you're out on a bus

and make out with all the boys, it's just "Yeah, that's hilarious, because it's the celebration."

The ways in which parties break with everyday practices is the topic of this thesis: I examine variations in how parties depart from everyday life; I examine participants' negotiations of the differences between their behavior at parties and elsewhere; and I examine the scope and constitution of this departure in a specific type of party practice. I also aim to explain these departures. Lastly, I defend the usefulness of the tools I have used.

Party participants often drink alcohol, and those who abstain are surrounded by other people who are drinking. Although alcohol plays a role in creating this break, however, it was demonstrated decades ago that alcohol does not pharmacologically determine a change in the way people behave (MacAndrew and Edgerton, 1969). Accordingly, parties, including drunken antics, should be studied as cultural phenomena.

Indeed, despite sometimes appearing chaotic, parties are ordered in the sense that participants mostly know what to do and what not to do; they adapt their behavior to what they perceive to be right or expected of them; they think, feel and talk about the acceptability of different party behaviors; and they sanction the transgressions of others and cope with the consequences of their own. In other words, although the participants are drunk and parties differ from other practices, they are still morally ordered.

The main question I address in this thesis is therefore: *How are parties morally ordered?* My co-authors and I have broken this question down in three articles. In a fourth article, I take a meta-perspective, when I defend the method used in the first two.

In Article 1 (Fjær and Pedersen, 2015) we examine intracultural variation in drunken behaviors. Based on a qualitative comparison of two seasonal, extended parties that both centered on drinking, we demonstrate that participants adapt to the specific moral orders of

different party practices. Because they participate competently within different party practices, even within short time spans, this indicates that drunken comportment is culturally heterogeneous. We explain the difference in moral orders between parties as expressions of differences in value priorities at the level of practice.

In Article 2 (Fjær et al., 2015) we examine party participants' negotiations of the difference in sexual morality within a party practice and outside of it. Despite wide agreement that a particularly liberal party practice offered opportunities to engage in sexual practices one would not take part in under other circumstances, the women we interviewed positioned themselves morally against other (mostly hypothetical or mythical) women. Even the young women who "hooked up" during the celebrations positioned themselves against the moral figure of the "slut", thus moderating the moral significance of their unusual party behaviors. Apparently due to a sustained sexual double standard, the young men we interviewed did not position themselves against one specific moral figure, but seemed freer to morally position themselves in accordance with their behaviors.

In Article 3 (Fjær and Tutenges, 2017) we conceptualize extended youth parties, mapping out the key ways in which these parties depart from the everyday life of their participants. By describing how the moral departures of participants are intertwined with spatial, temporal, stylistic and experiential departures, we show how these moral departures are culturally produced.

In Article 4 (Fjær, forthcoming), I present two strands of critique against qualitative interviewing, and reformulate them as methodological challenges to researchers conducting interview-based studies. Many of the examples used by critics of interviewing to point out problems with interview data come from studies of moralized practices, so by implication, it is particularly important for researchers of morality and moralized practices to counter these challenges. In response to these challenges, I describe what I see as three common elements of

qualitative interviewing practice – facilitation of storytelling, analysis of multiple indicators, and comparative data analysis – and show how these have been used to draw valid conclusions from interview data in studies where it would not have been possible if the critics had been right.

Before the articles themselves I will elaborate on the thesis' theoretical perspectives and methods. First, I explain how the work of MacAndrew and Edgerton is the starting point of this thesis by outlining their main achievements and discussing some critiques of their argument. MacAndrew and Edgerton established the study of drinking and partying as a study of culture, rather than of the effects of alcohol intoxication, which is the main reason I focus on their work. I then turn to the concept of morality, which appears in all the articles, but due to limitations of that format deserves a more elaborate presentation here. I will not adopt someone else's theory of morality in its entirety, but somewhat eclectically draw on different approaches to construct a theoretical approach that is useful for understanding the topics at hand. This means that I will not utilize all the nuances in the respective theoretical vocabularies, I will not discuss their compatibility unless it is relevant to the topic of this thesis, and while I do refer to some classic studies, I do not aim to trace the origins of the ideas I present. Moreover, I will in some places note how this conception of morality is relevant for the articles in this thesis, but do not intend to completely link all relevant details of the concept with the articles – to do so would reduce readability and involve extensive self-referencing to the very articles that follow. Other earlier research and theories of more particular relevance to each article are explained in the articles themselves.

I then elaborate on the method of the thesis, which is mainly limited to Article 1 and Article 2, because only those include data analysis. This includes descriptions of entry into the two fields, recruitment, and discussions of interviewing, data quality, analysis and ethics. I will comment briefly on methodology, but the most important methodological discussion of this

thesis is in Article 4, on the usefulness of qualitative interviewing for studies of morality and moralized practices.

2. Theoretical perspectives

2.1 Drunken behavior as an object of social science

The understanding that drunken behaviors are culturally constituted, not determined by the effects of alcohol, is fundamental to this work, and was demonstrated by MacAndrew and Edgerton in their book *Drunken Comportment: A Social Explanation* (1969). Like Durkheim before them and Bourdieu after – with *Suicide* and *Distinction*, respectively – they take a phenomenon widely perceived to be determined by non-social factors, and demonstrate that it is at its core a social phenomenon. At the time of their study, MacAndrew and Edgerton found that "the conventional understanding" of why people behaved differently when they were drunk was that "alcohol, by its toxic assault upon the central nervous system, causes the drinker to lose control of himself and to do things he would not otherwise do" (1969: vi), that is, alcohol "renders the drinker temporarily immune to the action of those internalized constraints ('inhibitions') that normally serve to keep his comportment within proper bounds" (1969: 63). After they establish that this is a widespread belief among scientists and others, they recognize it as a hypothesis, and go on to prove it wrong.

2.1.1 The proof

When people drink, they usually change their behavior, and when they do it is usually to ways that they would deem unacceptable when they are sober, for example by becoming violent or promiscuous (MacAndrew and Edgerton, 1969: 16). If this change is due to a "disinhibiting" effect of alcohol on the brain, it should be universal, or at least have some limited variation. However, MacAndrew and Edgerton's review of ethnographic accounts of drunken comportment around the world demonstrates that the variations in drunken comportment are so great that it is hard to point to anything common among them, except the drunkenness.

First, there are several examples of cultures where drunk people do not behave like they are disinhibited at all, even when they are very intoxicated (MacAndrew and Edgerton, 1969: 17, 21, 24–5, 28–9, 35). People have also calmly adhered to ritual expectations when they were drinking one type of alcohol to extreme intoxication but behaved as if "disinhibited" when they were drunk on another type (1969: 37–42), while other people display similar differences even when they drink the same type of alcohol on different types of occasions (1969: 49–53, 55, 57, 59). The typical drunken comportment within one culture may also change over time, both from calm to violent and the opposite way (1969: 48).

Especially important to MacAndrew and Edgerton's argument is the finding that when people become disinhibited, they do so "within limits", by which they mean that "with rare exceptions, for even the most seemingly disinhibited drunkard there are limits beyond which he does not go" (MacAndrew and Edgerton, 1969: 67). Which norms are transgressed and which are upheld vary greatly, especially across cultures. Also, type and extent of drunken transgressions often follow social roles. As proof, MacAndrew and Edgerton describe places where many men become violent, but neither women nor priests do, despite them all being drunk (1969: 70). Elsewhere, only outsiders fell victim to alcohol-related murders (1969: 71). There are places where drunken and armed men prior to engaging in fistfights hand their weapons to onlookers (1969: 73), others where even the fists are not allowed to be used during drunken fights, so the men only wrestle (1969: 74), and others still where drunken aggression is only verbal (1969: 75). There are people who while sober are "capable of the most bestial acts", but "at the same time capable of maintaining complete control of themselves" when they are drunk (1969: 76). People may become frequently violent while drunk, but still adhere to strict sexual rules (MacAndrew and Edgerton, 1969: 77). Elsewhere, drinking is an occasion for promiscuity, but not if outsiders are present (1969: 78). Lastly, ethnographers have remained safe in places where drunken brawls are notoriously dangerous, seemingly because alcohol

intoxication did not suspend the locals' deference to powerful outsiders (1969: 64–67, 70). MacAndrew and Edgerton conclude that "*nowhere* is it the case that once one is drunk, anything and everything goes" (1969: 82). In short, drunk people are fully capable of adhering to rules, so they are not really "disinhibited".

In general terms, within some cultures people behave completely within usual normative expectations while drunk, and even within cultures where the behavior of drunk people is different from when they are sober, these transgressions may vary across practices and situations, they stay within some normative limits, and the type and extent of the transgressions vary across cultures. None of this is best explained by the hypothesis that alcohol by its psychopharmacological effects temporally causes drinkers to lose their inhibitions. MacAndrew and Edgerton state that "it seems evident that *in and of itself, the presence of alcohol in the body does not necessarily conduce to disinhibition, much less inevitably produce such an effect*" (1969: 87–88, emphasis in original).

2.1.2 Drunkenness is learned behavior

Having demonstrated that drunk people are fully capable of following norms, even when they also break some, MacAndrew and Edgerton "must conclude that drunken comportment is an essentially *learned* affair" (1969: 88), that is, drunk people behave the way they have learned that drunk people can and should behave. However, they are quick to point out that this does not entail an understanding of drunken behaviors as "the preordained running-off of a 'program' their society has implanted in them" (1969: 89).

Additional empirical support for this explanation that drunken behaviors are culturally rather than psychopharmacologically produced is that in those places where drunk people frequently transgress some norms they otherwise would adhere to, such drunken transgressions are not sanctioned, or they are sanctioned mildly (MacAndrew and Edgerton, 1969: 89–90),

and that in some places people engage in similar "time outs" without drinking alcohol (1969: 98, 168). This means that "drunkenness is a state of societally sanctioned freedom" (1969: 89), that within many or even most cultures where people drink, drunkenness generates a "'time out' from many of the otherwise imperative demands of everyday life" (1969: 90).

To the question of *why* there are such "time outs", MacAndrew and Edgerton suggest that such occasions provide participants with an opportunity to do things they want to do, but would be sanctioned for at other occasions (1969: 169). Drunkenness provides participants with an excuse, so they can construe their transgressions "as purely episodic happenings rather than as intended acts issuing from their moral character" (1969: 169). When people drink, they therefore signal to each other that they might have to be excused for some of their subsequent behavior, and those who are not prepared to excuse expected transgressions might then leave (1969: 171). Those who drink will soon feel the intoxicating effects of alcohol and know, because they have learned it, that they are entering a state where some of their behavior will be excused (1969: 170).

2.1.3 Critiques and consequences

Later research has largely supported MacAndrew and Edgerton's disproval of the disinhibition hypothesis' potential to explain drunken behaviors (a review is given in Källmén and Gustafson, 1998). Different strands of research still find that young people learn how to behave when drunk (Harnett et al., 2000; Østergaard, 2009; Plant, 2001). Researchers have found cross-cultural variations in the understandings of drinking (Kuendig et al., 2008) as well as in more or less every other conceivable aspect of alcohol consumption (Heath, 2000). Few have studied intracultural variations in drunken behaviors explicitly, but those who have find that within cultures there are various ways of behaving while drunk (Abel and Plumridge, 2004).

Accordingly, MacAndrew and Edgerton's work and conceptual apparatus is still a central reference in studies of alcohol-related behaviors (MacLean et al., 2018; Pedersen et al., 2016).

This does not mean that the science is settled on the issue of drunken comportment. MacAndrew and Edgerton's argument has been criticized for presenting the cultural regulations of drunken comportment in a dichotomy of either excusing or not excusing bad behavior (Room, 2001: 191), and for presuming that cultures are homogenous (Room, 2001: 193). This criticism is repeated in Article 1 in this thesis (Fjær and Pedersen, 2015: 449). However, as shown above, MacAndrew and Edgerton describe intra-cultural variations in drunken comportment, so it is uncharitable to read them as presenting cultures as homogenous. Strangely, Partanen criticizes MacAndrew and Edgerton both for offering a functionalistic explanation and "a rather shallow, individual-centred view of drinking" (Partanen, 1991: 232). Although MacAndrew and Edgerton deny it (1969: 169), the functionalism is perhaps not hard to spot, as they argue that drunk people behave as they have been taught and do so within socially sanctioned occasions where they can vent emotions they cannot act on at other times (1969: 166–169). In other words, drunken "time outs" have a "function" within a system of practices.

However, their argument is far from individualistic. Their great accomplishment is precisely to delegate the responsibility to study and explain the phenomenon of drunken comportment to social scientists. Precisely because it is not a given that the alcohol played a decisive role, or even that the transgressors were drunk (MacAndrew and Edgerton, 1969: 97), transgressions at parties should *not* be studied solely as *drunken* antics. Transgressions at parties should be studied as just that – transgressions that happen within certain social contexts, not only under the influence of alcohol. An important consequence of MacAndrew and Edgerton's argument for subsequent research is that the study of the transgressions that occur in contexts where people drink should *not* be a narrow form of "alcohol studies". Rather, it should be a

study of those contexts, or of how certain contexts provide participants with occasions to behave in ways they would not at other occasions. In the following I will mostly talk about these contexts as "party practices", in order to not link the transgressions to drinking by necessity, even if the participants often were drunk.

Looking at a decidedly individualistic theory might drive this latter point home, in addition to showing that the dominant psychological theory of drunken comportment is compatible with MacAndrew and Edgerton's theory. The "alcohol myopia model" is a psychological model that aims to explain "drunken excess" (Steele and Josephs, 1990). The researchers are careful to point out that because of variations in drunken comportment "[a]lcohol cannot be a direct cause of such effects" (Steele and Josephs, 1990: 922). However, they argue that alcohol "restricts the range of cues that we can perceive in a situation" and "reduces our ability to process (…) the cues (…) we do perceive" (Steele and Josephs, 1990: 923). By way of this effect on the drinker's cognition, alcohol leads drunk people to perceive and react to salient cues in, for example, violent ways, but overlook other, less salient cues that otherwise would inhibit such a reaction. Accordingly, the way drunken people comport themselves "depends significantly on the cues that influence behavior and emotion during intoxication, cues that vary from person to person, occasion to occasion, and culture to culture" (Steele and Josephs, 1990: 922). Occasions and cultures are, of course, objects of study for social scientists, and to the extent that persons learn from each other and adapt (albeit myopically) to occasions, this learning and adaption contribute to variations in drunken comportment across cultures and occasions. This means that not only is the dominant psychological theory of drunken comportment compatible with MacAndrew and Edgerton's anthropological one, but because it has little to say about how people come to be exposed to the cues they study, it too leaves much of the explanation of why drunk people behave differently

than others to those who study the phenomenon on a higher level of analysis than that of individuals.

A more serious problem with MacAndrew and Edgerton's argument than those pointed to in the above critiques is that their explanations are rudimentary. While pointing out that drunken behavior is learned and that drinking occasions offer a "time out" by excusing certain behaviors, they offer "little guidance on what features in a society are linked to particular patterns of drunken comportment" (Room, 2001: 192). What is it about an "occasion" or "culture" that leads participants to behave differently, but still orderly, in contexts where people drink? In the next section I will argue that a concept of morality is useful for such an explanation.

2.2 Morality

In the social sciences there has been a renewed interest in the topic of morality. Here, morality is understood as encompassing, seeping through social life, comprising conceptions and regulations of what is right and wrong, worthy and unworthy, good and bad, appropriate and inappropriate (Bykov, 2018; Hitlin and Vaisey, 2013). Morality is a normative dimension in a range of (overlapping) social phenomena through which it is expressed and upheld – including narrating, sanctioning, forgiving, negotiating, positioning, excusing, justifying, compensating, and emotions (Baumeister and Newman, 1994; Haidt, 2003; Much and Shweder, 1978; Scott and Lyman, 1968; Sykes and Matza, 1957). This normative dimension can be analyzed as norms (or "rules") and values, which are at the core of morality, but it is a core that cannot be understood separately from the other phenomena through which it is upheld or the culture of which it is a part. Neither can it be understood separately from the selves it relates to and coordinates, since morality pertains to whatever is perceived as relevant to accessing the worth of selves.

This understanding of morality is descriptive in the sense that it examines morality as a phenomenon, so that, for example, calling a specific statement "moral" does not mean that it corresponds in specific ways to specific values, such as security or justice, in the way a normative conception of morality would (Durkheim, 1953; Gert and Gert, 2016; Hitlin and Vaisey, 2013: 55). This does not, however, mean that researchers should refrain from pointing out moral inconsistencies, such as the persistence of the sexual double standard (as we describe in Article 2), or whether a context-dependent shift in morality leads people to behave in harmful ways (as we describe in Article 3). In other words, researchers might have morally laden motives for studying moralities descriptively (Fjær, 2014).

2.2.1 Morality as culture

Renewed interest in morality has coincided with the rising popularity of a variety of theories of practice, culture, and cognition (Haidt, 2001; Lizardo, 2017; Patterson, 2014; Vaisey, 2009; Wilson, 2002). Guided by heuristics, intuition, emotions and readings of the situation they are in, people are often able to respond quickly and do so in a manner practically adapted to (moral) problems at hand (Lizardo, 2017; Lizardo and Strand, 2010; Martin, 2010). Importantly, culture is not primarily something people carry around with them as mental representations, for example in the form of explicit rules – people do not have the capacity to do so (Martin, 2010). Instead, their practical knowledge in the form of durable dispositions includes the ability to take cues from the situation – the environment "scaffolds" their practices by reminding them of what parts of culture are relevant (Lizardo and Strand, 2010). It is largely a Wittgensteinian point that following a rule (or a norm) is mostly something one knows *in practice*, not because one carries around a mental and explicable recipe of what is correct, but because one masters the practice of which the rule is a part (Wittgenstein, 2009). Such a skilled adaption to the surroundings will then seem natural, and the explication of a norm – say, after someone has

transgressed – should not lead theorists to believe that there was such an *explicit* rule there all along. Variations in moralities can then be explained by people learning culturally specific moralities from childhood on, so that they are largely adapted to their surroundings by being able to judge, behave, think, and feel about the moral status of events they face, without much of the deliberation other theories of morality have presumed (Haidt, 2001; Shweder, 1982).

For the articles in this thesis, these points are useful for accounting for how people can adapt spontaneously to situations where they are permitted to behave in ways they would otherwise be sanctioned for. It is because young people learn the elementary cultural skills necessary to participate in social events – including those where normative expectations are altered – that they are able to party, and when they fail it is not only because they are too drunk – at least sometimes it is because they have not yet learned enough.[1] Normative orders (or "structures") of parties are upheld *in practice*, because people know how to interact and take cues from their surroundings, picking up on recurring and established ways of doing things. That is, the normative consistency of a party practice is due to conditioned participants who can plan, adapt to, and find meaning in party situations – both those elements that are structured as general forms of interaction, and those that are particular to partying – along with culturally contingent temporal and spatial structures that limit and enable when and where people party, and access to materials such as alcohol (Fjær, Pedersen and Sandberg, 2016).

2.2.2 Normative orders and repertoires

Understanding morality as an element of culture and, on a lower level of analysis, practices, has consequences for how norms and values are theoretically constructed, so before going into details about those concepts, I will specify their theoretical context.

[1] Although what may to outsiders seem like failures are often valued by participants as contributions to the party (Fjær, 2012; Mallett et al., 2008).

Ontologically, I do not understand norms and values as single things that can easily be pointed out in concrete situations. A lot of adaptions and goals of participating in practices are not explicated by the participants (Martin, 2010; Vaisey, 2009). Rather, the normative principles that guide them are a part of the background expectancies of competent participants who *know how* to engage in the practice, even if they do not necessarily know how to give a coherent and correct *account of* it (as demonstrated by Garfinkel, 1964). Moreover, these normatively structured practices are the context in which some participants learn how to participate in the practice. As such contexts, practices may scaffold in particular the participation of less experienced participants, but in general, the practice in itself shapes the participation of participants and conditions them for future practices. Normative principles are perceived as external to the individual; they take on an objective character, so that people do actually think that something is right or wrong, even if that evaluation is culturally contingent (Shweder, 1982).

However, this does not mean that the normative orders of practices are hidden or never explicated. Norms and values might have to be explicated in some form when participants break with the expected way of participating (an early formulation of this point is given by Durkheim, 1982: 51), so other participants might explain to those who breach the normative expectations what they have done wrong, and they might have to do so to legitimize a sanctioning they are carrying out (Much and Shweder, 1978; Scott and Lyman, 1968). Those who are deemed transgressors might offer reasons for transgressing that are intended to excuse the breach, and by doing so explicate or imply normative expectations. These explications of norms and values by participants are not *necessarily* good descriptions of the normative structuring of the practice up until the breach, and do not even imply that people in practice adapt their behavior to them – people *might* not know their real reasons and make some up, or they *might* want to provide reasons other than the real ones because that is better in the situation where they provide reasons

(Mills, 1940; Swidler, 1986).[2] But the norms and values participants *describe* are a part of how the practice is normatively regulated in practice – importantly, they and others can subsequently adapt to them – and thus a part of the normative order that needs to be included in a study of how a social phenomenon is normatively ordered (Fjær, 2018; Patterson, 2014: 12).

Similarly to how sociology is not concerned with individual persons, but phenomena on higher levels of analysis, rather than studying single norms and values in specific situations, what researchers can describe, then, are *normative orders on the level of cultures and practices*. These normative orders are upheld and reproduced by a relationship between different types of actions and reactions, such as imitating, evaluating, correcting, excusing, explaining, sanctioning, positioning, forgiving, and emotions, in addition to actions and reactions more specifically related to contextual characteristics of that which is normatively regulated, such as adapting to the presence of others, and temporal, spatial, symbolic and material structures. These types of actions and reactions are something participants *know how to do*. Some of them involve explications (e.g., excuses) while others do not necessarily (e.g., imitation). Most of them are general competencies that are not tied exclusively to the specific practices where they are put to use. "Normative repertoires" might be fitting terms for such sets of actions and reactions that uphold and reproduce normative orders, and "moral repertoires" when they pertain to moral matters.

The norms and values *researchers* may identify in analyzing practices are *reconstructed normative principles* of these normative orders, including both the moralized practices and the moral repertoires participants deploy in reproducing and regulating them. The reconstructed norms and values may overlap with those participants describe – after all, participants are themselves trying to explicate the normative principles of their practices – but they are also

[2] I will address the problem of the relationship between people's accounts and their actions in the methodology section.

positioned parts of the phenomenon with interests in certain representations of the practice, and they lack the tools of objectification that data generation and analysis provide (Bourdieu et al., 1991). Identifying a norm or a value, then, is a statement about a normative order (or "structure"); it points to relationships between types of actions (excusing, sanctioning, forgiving etc.), and does not imply that all individual participants are conscious of *this* norm or *that* value when they act in conformity with them.

2.2.3 The reference to selves in morality

I use terms such as "moral" and "morality" throughout the thesis. So, why talk about "morality", and not just "normativity"? The problem with talking about just "normativity" would be that in many contexts people may value something and there may be norms for how things should be done, but it would be meaningless to call relevant evaluations *moral* evaluations. To use a simple example, if a chess player makes a wrong move, even if it leads to a loss, we would usually not say it was *morally* wrong. However, we would not only morally evaluate a player who cheats, but also under certain circumstances morally evaluate someone who make wrong moves, for example someone who intentionally plays badly.[3] Similar cases can be constructed regarding other domains, but more generally something may be right or wrong with reference to some value and role, but morally irrelevant, at least in principle, while something related to the morally irrelevant might be deemed morally relevant (playing badly intentionally). A normative account or participant-account of such breaches could be that "It is wrong to undermine the game" (by cheating or intentionally losing), or more generally "It is wrong to undermine the interaction". Many descriptive accounts of morality would still take *the moral*

[3] This presumes, of course, that winning is valued. Say, if an adult teaches a child to play chess, motivating the child with some intentional losses might be necessary to realize the prioritized value of learning.

norm as their basis (Gert and Gert, 2016), which would produce an interpretation like "Within this group, people perceive it as wrong to undermine the game (or the interaction)". However, such a descriptive account does not demarcate moral from non-moral norms. To be moral, some element of the normativity at hand must be tied to persons in such a way that it cannot be seen as exclusively a part of a game, task, role, interaction and so on.

Another descriptive account of the above example could, rather than focus on the norm, focus on the activity of moral evaluation. From this perspective, the above breach would be a moral one because "Within this group, people perceive those who undermine the game as people of lesser worth". That is, what distinguishes moral normativity from other forms of normativity is that, in practice, *selves* are invested in it (Shweder, 1982: 46; Goffman, 1986: 32).[4] Within this understanding, "morality" as a research object comprises everything that pertains to evaluations of selves (or "character").[5]

Mistakes and flaws can then reflect negatively on the moral standing of the person, unless they are excused (Scott and Lyman, 1968). This includes actions that are offensive to the self of others, such as harm or injustice, but may also be harmless to others but involve self-

[4] For the few theorists I have found who seem to claim this, it is mostly implied, not emphasized. For example, while he and his colleagues have tended to focus on normative principles ("moral foundations", i.e. values), an understanding of morality as the evaluations of the *worth of selves* is clear in Haidt's intentionally broad definition: "Moral judgments are therefore defined as evaluations (good vs. bad) of the actions or character *of a person* that are made with respect to a set of virtues held to be obligatory by a culture or subculture." (Haidt, 2001: 817, emphasis added).

[5] Because I approach morality descriptively, that morality pertains to evaluations of selves does *not* mean that these evaluations necessarily reference anything real, like stable character traits, even when people may seem to think they do. It is also an empirical question to what degree people believe that the references (actions, traits, motives etc.) for moral evaluations are expressions of something stable.

debasement (such as some of the challenges by Haidt to conceptions of morality as only being about harm and fairness, 2007: 999), or they might be moral and self-invested for one part of an interaction but not another. Likewise, good or correct behavior can reflect positively (or neutrally) on the moral standing of the person: they are perceived as virtuous (Graham et al., 2013), unless this behavior is explained away, say, by luck. Regarding oneself, something is moralized when one sees it as reflecting on the worth of oneself or one knows or suspects that one will be evaluated thus by others. Such evaluations manifest as self-conscious emotions, such as shame, guilt and pride, also called moral emotions (Haidt, 2003; Tangney et al., 2007; in the context of drinking, see Fjær, 2015).

Obviously, it does not follow from this theory that community, interaction and relations are irrelevant to morality. Not only do the normative principles behind moral judgments mostly relate to interpersonal and collective phenomena (for example all the dimensions of moral foundations theory, Graham et al., 2013; they acknowledge Durkheim's contribution to this insight in Haidt and Graham, 2009). Selves are also social products, dependent on recognition from others, and perceived through shared cultural schemas that, among other things, relate to worth (Leung and Cohen, 2011; Markus and Kitayama, 1991). Moral principles are arguably at the core of these social selves (Hitlin, 2011), but this is not a "private morality", as people are concerned with their standing relative to others (Fiske, 2011), they care about their reputations, and through gossip they work to affect those of others (Graham et al., 2013: 69; Sperber and Baumard, 2012).

Moral repertoires are employed to evaluate, sanction, protect, and so on, the moral status of a person or – by way of social categories about groups, practices, institutions and so on – multiple persons. Exactly what is referenced when moral repertoires are deployed can vary greatly, and include actions, reactions, nonactions, traits, relations, emotions, thoughts, motives, products and consequences. Whenever any such "things" are moralized, however, it is because

they are treated as relevant for evaluating someone – self or others, actually or in principle. In short, normative repertoires are moral repertoires when they reference the worth of a self.

People will of course disagree on whether something is morally relevant. Whether something is deemed morally relevant or not by a person, a group, or generally within a practice or a culture, is a characteristic of those individual, shared and collective moralities (Shweder, 1982). It is also possible to moralize something for oneself – or some group one belongs to or practice one participates in – but not for others (Lovett and Jordan, 2010). For example, as a consequence of some self-relevant event, one may experience the negative self-conscious emotion of shame, while also thinking that a similar reaction in others would be groundless. As we show in Article 2, moralizing for oneself but claiming to not do so for others is also a rhetorical technique for positioning oneself as tolerant while also positioning oneself as morally good or acceptable relative to others.

That morality as a research object entails evaluations of people's selves does not mean that people will have to constantly evaluate themselves or others for researchers to perceive some particular phenomenon as moralized,[6] because researchers might know that what they observe is a sort of phenomenon that people will tend to include in moral evaluations. Again, this is clear when norms are breached: people may tend to act in accordance with a norm habitually, but morally evaluate breaches. It would be wrong to say that the behavior is not moralized until a breach and subsequent reactions occur, but because behaving in accordance with the normative expectations is precisely expected, the *negative* evaluation of a self does not necessarily occur until the breach. However, that *someone else* has breached certain norms is a potential source of positive self-evaluation (as we show in Article 2), and may serve to remind of practice-specific dangers (Tutenges and Rod, 2009). Thus, breaches are not sanctioned or

[6] Which is not to say that people do not monitor themselves (Giddens, 1986).

justified and then forgotten; rather, they are often remembered and talked about, and sometimes learned from (Tutenges and Sandberg, 2013; Workman, 2001).

2.2.4 Norms

Norms (or "rules") denote what people "*ought* to" in different contexts.[7] Such normative conceptions can be placed on a continuum between those that relate to what people *should* and those that relate to what people *should not*, with the less categorical norms regarding what is to different degrees *expected* or *accepted* in between. People may also adapt normatively to what they perceive to be usual and normal (Patterson, 2014: 13). Norms are conditional, so that the relevance of a norm is dependent on and may be activated by the practice context. Still, in line with the understanding of morality as culture, people will often habitually act in accordance with norms, not because they have deliberated over whether something is right or wrong in the specific situation (Aarts and Dijksterhuis, 2003). These habits are usually a part of the practical, adaptive dispositions that enable competent and meaningful participation in practices. As explications of principles of normative orders, norms are not isolated but connected with other norms, and they are shared or collective in the sense that they regard interaction and/or are upheld through it (an overview is given by Horne, 2001; recent sociolgical accounts and defences for the concept are given by Patterson, 2014; and Therborn, 2002).

Because (1) people may behave in a certain way for reasons other than to adhere to a norm, because (2) there are not norms for every imaginable type of behavior, and because (3) it would mean using the same data for independent and dependent variables, researchers cannot infer the existence of a norm simply from a pattern in people's behavior, but rather have to

[7] I intentionally do not say ought to or should "*do*", as norms are not limited to regulation of *behaviors* but extend also to that of people's "internal states" such as beliefs, emotions and intentions. I only talk about "social norms", as the alternatives are not relevant here.

depend on a range of indicators (Becker, 1958; Fjær, 2018). Reactions to transgressions provide one such indicator. When norms are breached and those deemed responsible for the transgression may have to explain and excuse their transgressions to others who may have sanctioned them, the participants then express *their version* of the normative expectations (Durkheim, 1982: 51; Much and Shweder, 1978). In itself, the presence of different reactions to such breaches demonstrates the existence of the normative order that has been disrupted, even if the participants' *accounts* of what has been breached are not *necessarily* correct (Mills, 1940; Swidler, 1986). On the other hand, if events that would usually constitute a disruption are not represented and reacted to as transgressions, this indicates that the normative order has shifted. This often happens at parties, and the opening quote in the introduction, where Anja talks about how much fun she had vandalizing a statue, is one clear example of this. The shift, then, is not just that vandalizing has gone from being prohibited to accepted – the owners of that statue probably would not agree that the norms have shifted – but that in addition to the specific actions of vandalizing the statue, the party participants shifted many related actions, including turning the event into a story about how much fun the party had been, rather than a breach that needed to be justified or excused.

That it is possible to explicate a norm and a shift in norms from one context to another should not be confused with normative consensus, as norms are often discussed, contested and misperceived (Much and Shweder, 1978). That people do not support, say, the legitimacy or content of some norms does not, of course, mean that they are free to transgress them, but they might try to, and in some cases transgressions and the related actions of evaluating, excusing, and so on may establish a precedent and shift the normative order of a specific practice or the general interactions within a social group (Merton, 1938). That it is still possible to explicate normative principles – that people usually seem to adhere to them, and either hide it or provide

excuses if they don't – shows that despite empirical variation and the theoretical possibility of chaos, it is still useful to talk about norms.

Such a concept of norms is useful, but not in itself sufficient to make sense of the shift in normative order that occurs at parties or in other social contexts where people are expected to drink. For example, it is clear from the quotes by Anja and Helene in the introduction *that* other forms of behavior were deemed acceptable, not only by themselves, but by their group and by party participants in general. A concept of values is useful to make sense of the more general principles that structure normative orders, not least in answering questions of *why* people do what they do.

2.2.5 Values

Values are conceptions of what is good. They are generalized goals that guide people in situations, but persist across them (Hitlin, 2011; Schwartz, 2012). Taking into consideration that people are, in their practices, guided by some principles of what is good is important in order to understand how culture is generative. Practices such as the parties described in this thesis cannot be reproduced and recruit new participants by having participants that only *re*act – however competently – to their surroundings. Rather, participants plan their participation and they develop and utilize their practice-relevant competencies with some sense of why participation is or will be meaningful. Such reasons are a practically oriented part of people's dispositions, and as such do not have to be explicated beyond fairly simple, evaluative statements, although many can draw on elaborate repertoires if necessary (Miles, 2015; Vaisey, 2009). For example, people can plan and participate competently in party rituals, in addition to evaluating them, without having a theory of why, say, rituals affect and generate valued emotional states (Collins, 2004; Tutenges, 2013).

People hold a number of different values that will often be in some sort of conflict, both situationally and in a more lasting way, and are therefore ordered by relative importance (Schwartz, 2012). This does not mean that the values that are not prioritized are irrelevant. For example, getting drunk can in many contexts involve ordering hedonism over security, but that does not mean that the drunk person will not also take steps to avoid being harmed. Moreover, if values are activated in situations, it is often because of some conflict (Hitlin, 2011: 522), so security may suddenly become the most important value to persons who experience threats to their safety.

Within moral repertoires, values are not only generalized goals individuals can refer to as motivations, but also ordered normative principles for evaluating self and others (Graham et al., 2013; Hitlin, 2011). Thus, a person or group of persons who realize some prioritized value may be judged by others for failing to realize other values – hedonistic behavior may be judged as, say, unclean or harmful. We show this in Article 2, where the party participants' positioning did not include claims to disagreement about the ideal that parties should be pleasurable and stimulating, and most seemed to agree that sexual activities could be a part of realizing those values. Rather, value priorities – how others failed to realize additional values – were referenced in their moral positioning.

Regarding the level of analysis, values are situationally activated (Verplanken and Holland, 2002), but people also plan their participation in practices where certain values are likely to be realized, and select into and out of practices based on their values and value priorities (Vaisey, 2008). People associate practices with the possibility of realizing certain values (Patterson, 2014: 20), and participation in itself coordinates the value priorities of participants. Participant evaluations of concrete instances of practices are largely judgments of the extent to which the instances succeed in realizing these values, and practices often include established evaluation activities (for example, meeting the day after drinking to evaluate last

night's party, see Fjær, 2012). Representations of a practice, such as drinking stories (Tutenges and Rod, 2009; Workman, 2001), often communicate the value priorities that participants expect to hold at a practice, and without which the practice would be turned into something else. Such representations can draw judgments from outsiders and prospective participants, in addition to coordinating existing participants, thus coordinating their associations between the practice and the possibility of realizing certain values (as we show in Article 3). Value priorities of participants in a specific practice and those that are expressed in representations of that practice do not randomly coincide, then. Accordingly, although values are a part of individual dispositions, and as such are durable across practices, it is within practices that are contingent on social relations and include different forms of interaction that the values are activated and realized, and they are in this sense both socially contingent and shared.[8] However, participants need not share value priorities in order to realize them within the same practice (and without turning the practice into something else). For example, some participants may value, say, integration, others hedonism, and others tradition, and they may all get what they want at the same party.

Some basic values seem to be universal, and while some cross-cultural differences are the result of culturally shared value priorities, much observed cultural variation arises from culturally specific ways of realizing values, that is, variation in the characteristics of practices people can participate in, including who can participate in them (Graham et al., 2013: 61–5; Leung and Cohen, 2011: 511; Schwartz, 2012). More specifically, independent of culture, people tend to value safety and pleasure, but the ways they realize these values in practice, if

[8] It is for these reasons that it is meaningful to talk, elliptically, about the value priority of a practice, as I sometimes do, even though a practice cannot do anything and valuing and evaluating are lower-level phenomena that are shared and communicated (others hold that values also operate also at other levels, see Hitlin, 2003: 120).

they are able to at all, how important they are, and which of the two is the most important, may vary greatly, not least as potential realizations are limited and enabled by distributions of power and resources.[9] In other words, value priorities and how people realize them are culturally contingent parts of people's dispositions that shape their planning of and participation in practices, including how they participate in the normative ordering of those practices through deploying their moral repertoires.

Of course, non-participants may not agree with the shift in value priorities or the participants' judgments that certain behaviors are excusable as realizations of those values. This is especially true when outsiders are bothered or victimized by actions that party participants situationally perceive as acceptable contributions to realizing their shared value priorities. Similar disagreements may be found among participants in the same practice (e.g., some might find intoxicants other than alcohol inexcusable) and between members of different cultures engaged in similar practices (Fjær, Pedersen, von Soest, et al., 2016). Often there are also other people associated with or participating in a practice who have very different value priorities from those who are partying, for example those who work with organizing the parties or otherwise cater to the participants, whose realization of those value priorities is, however, mostly compatible with those of the party participants.

2.2.6 The relationship between norms and values

Variance in sets of norms between practices is to some degree determined by the value priorities that are associated with the practices (Merton, 1938: 673). Norms not only limit how values are realized within a practice, but can also be understood as "recipes" for practice-specific ways of realizing values (an implication of the more general point that structures are enabling, not only

[9] If pleasure is deemed a sin within a culture, then, it is a moral denial of this good, and as such a recognition of it as a potential good.

constraining, Giddens, 1986: 25). That is, if a norm is thought of in isolation it may seem limiting, but when it is seen as a part of the set of norms that are relevant in a practice, it may offer opportunities to realize values (Horne, 2001: 6). Moreover, conformity is a value people can hold to different degrees, and people can adhere to a norm that one should act in accordance with what one values (Patterson, 2014; Schwartz, 2012).

An important part of learning to participate competently in a practice is learning practically *how to* realize values, which includes learning *how* certain behaviors and experiences *are* realizations of values. For example, young people learn not only how to drink without getting sick (right away), but also how being drunk might be pleasurable and stimulating (Østergaard, 2009). Shifts in the acceptability of a type of behavior, such as those seen when young people party, can then be explained by a shift between practices with which participants associate different value priorities. Behaviors that would not be acceptable within other contexts become acceptable because they are perceived by participants to be coherent with or contributing to realizing the prioritized values associated with the practice, while behaviors that were acceptable in other contexts can be deemed unacceptable obstructions to the realization of prioritized values. This relationship between values and norms, understood as theoretically constructed normative principles, explains the normative shifts of parties with the same theoretical principles by which one could explain the moral order of any other practice. Although it is consistent with MacAndrew and Edgerton's point that societies provide temporal excuses to behave differently (1969: 168), thinking of parties in terms of shifting value priorities and norms for realizing them does not explain what people do at parties simply as an *exception* to other forms of morality.[10]

[10] Of course, this is not a *complete* explanation. On the one hand, it is obviously *not enough* only for a group to shift value priorities for a party to occur – not least, they have to know how, and have the

2.2.7 Conclusion

The moral orders of party practices, then, are relationships between types of actions and reactions (sanctioning, positioning, excusing, emotions etc.) that through their implications for the worth of selves contribute to the generation, regeneration and apparent predictability of practices where people break with everyday practices. These moral orders can be efficiently described by reconstructing their normative principles in the form of norms and values, as long as these descriptions are combined with accounts of how these normative principles are expressed, negotiated, challenged etc. While a certain level of practical coordination, agreement and sharing relating to norms and values is necessary, the theory does not presume consensus among party participants. For example, participants may adhere to the same norms for different reasons, as they have different motives for participating; some may consider their participation "alternative" to that of others, and participants can disagree about what behaviors can be excused with reference to the party context.

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resources, the place and the time. On the other hand, because the same values can be realized in different ways, it is not a given that the same people will always choose the same ways to do so.

3. Methodology

In line with the somewhat eclectic theorizations outlined above, I have, with my colleagues, used a variety of methods to examine the moral order of youth parties. In the following I will first give an overview of the methods used in the two empirical studies, before discussing data quality, analysis and ethics. I will also discuss two methodological characteristics of the thesis. Rather than discussing how our approaches compare to different methodological schools, I will focus on the choices that my colleagues and I made, and discuss the reasoning behind them.[11]

3.1 Data generation

When the larger research project of which the empirical articles of this thesis are a part began in 2013, it was with an interest in *russefeiringa* – the Norwegian high school graduation celebration. This celebration has a long history in Norway, stemming from rites of initiation to university. Participants – known as *russ* – dress in unicolored trousers or overalls, mostly red or blue, often with a cap of the same color, in addition to a range of other clothes and paraphernalia with prints, patches and paintings that jokingly convey belonging to some group or something more personal. Participants are conspicuously present in public spaces and media in the run-up to the celebration and in the weeks in the spring during which it takes place. In

[11] An in-depth discussion of methodological issues relevant to Articles 1 and 2 is found in Article 4, and I will not repeat points from that article here. Also, because Article 3 was a conceptually-driven review, there is little to say about the methodology behind it. I will only note that I conducted extensive online searches for literature, both on particular party practices (e.g., "spring break") and more general terms (e.g., "youth" and "parties", which tend to return political science studies), in addition to going through the reference lists of relevant literature. However, we delimited the social phenomenon and conceptualized it in that article itself, so obviously, there was no established vocabulary we could rely on to efficiently identify all relevant literature.

addition to extensive partying, the celebration consists of many rituals and challenges. Some of these are generally perceived as mandatory, others as optional, and many involve alcohol and sexual activities (in addition to Articles 1, 2 and 3 in this thesis, see Fjær, Pedersen and Sandberg, 2016; Sande, 2002; Bretteville-Jensen et al., 2020).

My interest in this celebration stemmed from a more general interest in youth party practices, which my master's thesis touched upon but did not get to explore in depth (Fjær, 2011, 2012, 2015), but also an apparent need for updated knowledge about the celebration, as the last study of it was based on data from the early 1990s (Sande, 2002). At our first meeting about the study, to which I was invited by Pedersen and Sandberg, we talked about the characteristics of the upcoming celebration, and it struck us as strange and outlandish, in the way even familiar cultural practices can seem hard to comprehend once their ritualized actions are described in the most concrete way.[12] The flexibility of a qualitative approach suited our curiosity well, as observations and interviews could easily be adapted to whatever came up early during data generation. We could recruit interview participants in the field, and develop research questions based on our observations, and then structure the interviews accordingly. I had also recently conducted an ethnographic study of nursing homes (Fjær and Vabø, 2013; Næss et al., 2016), so it was an approach I was trained for. Beyond our shared interest in exploring this curious celebration and my personal competencies and preference for a qualitative approach, we had few detailed plans before we started observing and interviewing. More focused ideas emerged along the way. For example, the first article from this project was an in-depth study on the mobile party spaces created by the groups of participants who refurbished old buses to work as their private rolling night clubs (Fjær, Pedersen and Sandberg, 2016). It is a strange and, even internationally, very unusual tradition, but the idea that it could

[12] Concrete description, presuming little prior knowledge, can make almost any practice, but especially ritualized ones – for example soccer matches and parades – seem like absurd spectacles.

be interesting to write an article about the *mobility* of these party spaces – that the buses are party capsules moving around on the highways and outskirts of a sleeping city – first struck me in the field, when we followed one of these buses on the highway. We subsequently focused on this part of the celebration when we started interviewing. Similarly, the moral positioning in talk about hookup practices during the celebration, which is the basis of Article 2, struck me during an interview where this positioning was extreme and therefore hard to ignore. By then we had already conducted many of our interviews, and the guide could not be altered, but when I later looked at the relevant data excerpts from all the interviews, many of the other participants had positioned themselves in similar, albeit somewhat more subtle ways. This led to a change in the focus of the article I was planning to write, long after data generation had ended. As these two examples show, from the outset, the study was not planned out with clearly formulated research questions and article abstracts before we went into the field. We did not know what we were going to find before going into the field, and even after the interviews were done, transcribed and coded, they continued to surprise us. In this sense, though, the study went as planned, because we had planned for it to be flexible.

3.1.1 Field observations and recruitment

Shortly before the high school graduation celebration of 2013, with participants mostly of the 1994 birth cohort, was about to begin, Kine Paulsen and I started working as research assistants on the project. We conducted short field observations, mostly together, in addition to interviews. Our first field visit was when Kine had established contact with some participants who allowed us to join them at their "baptism" – a ceremony that marks the start of the celebration. They arrived at the school yard in the afternoon with their uniform trousers inside out, and at the command of a ceremonial leader everyone took them off, reversed them, and put them back on. Then each participant came up to a "priest" with a beer, and in front of everyone

they then drank in one gulp as much as they could or wanted, before they leaned forward and the priest poured what remained of the drink over their head while they were given a nickname, which was written on their cap. Once they had all been "baptized" in this way the party continued with loud music, dancing and drinking.

Almost every stage of this ritual had already been decided, since these traditions – like much else in the celebration – had been passed down over the years as rules for participation. Probably the most visible and striking of these traditions is the party buses. Many participants club together and buy buses which they refurbish to function as rolling nightclubs, or smaller vans that also have sound systems but lack the dance floor and capacity of the buses (for a more detailed account of the practice, see Fjær, Pedersen and Sandberg, 2016). They then drive around in these, the buses with hired chauffeurs and the vans with designated drivers, most days from the beginning of the celebration in late April or early May until May 17th, which is the Norwegian national day. We visited one major weekend gathering at Tryvann, a set of parking lots where urban Oslo borders on large forest areas. Here, those who have a bus or a van bring them, often with additional sound and lighting systems, thus themselves making the party space for which the organizers charge them and the other participants. Here we had brief conversations with participants, and were invited into several of the parked buses.

We also coordinated with our initial contact to arrive in our own car on a weekday at a parking lot by Maridalsvannet, on the outskirts of urban Oslo, when they would be there. We drove up and could not see anyone, passing an empty parking lot, and after reaching what seemed like forest roads, wondering if we had missed the place or been misinformed. However, when we drove back, we could see some buses had arrived at the parking lot we had passed earlier, so we parked the car a hundred meters or so away and walked over to talk to the participants. Some were initially skeptical. We were visible as outsiders, as we did not wear the dress that signals to fellow participants and outsiders that one is a *russ*, and we were also about

ten years older than them. Some we talked to also told us that there were adult men who would sit in the forests by the parking lots where the buses stopped, to look at girls who went to the edge of the parking lots to pee. That Kine is a woman and that we provided business cards from the university seemed to help. New buses arrived constantly, filling the parking lot and the edges of the road passing it, with loud electronic dance music emanating from them. We counted about 30 buses, which could mean as many as 800 participants gathering within a few minutes. When the police suddenly arrived, participants flowed back into their buses and drove off. We then followed one of the last buses out to the highway and all the way to another parking lot at Ingierstrand, a bathing area by the fjord on the opposite side of the city, where a smaller number of buses and vans had gathered. Here the police did not arrive, and we could stand around and watch while the participants walked around in groups, between the buses and in and out of them, maybe dance a little before walking off again, and some others carried to their bus a sign they had stolen from a kiosk.

I took brief notes while in the field, and wrote those out to lengthy accounts immediately after coming home, or the day after our nighttime field visits.[13] These notes provided us with

[13] I went on four such field visits, and Kine did one more on her own. I felt at the time that I should have done a few more. Four undoubtedly seems low, but there are several reasons for not having done more. Probably the most important is that Kine and I had too little time between the outset of the study and the start of the celebration to establish anything beyond superficial contact with participants. Moreover, these nightly observations were my second job at the time, a supplement to work at another research institute (I usually spend twice as much time writing notes as I spend in the field). Also, the celebration only lasts about three weeks for the most dedicated participants, and a lot less for many others. For those on a bus, there are days at set intervals when they cannot roll due to resting restrictions for the chauffeur (I believe that, at the time, several people told us that such breaks occurred every nine days). Some participants also travel to party at gatherings elsewhere. With full

data on their rituals, their party activities, their interactions with the police and the way they created their party spaces swiftly in parking lots at the edges of the city. Still, the places where we observed were mostly dark, which limited what we could see, the music was often deafening, limiting what else we could hear (the participants usually wore ear plugs to avoid permanent tinnitus; I also brought mine), and while many participants we met would willingly talk for a few minutes, they were there to party, not to talk to researchers, and most of them were drunk, with a limited attention span and interest in talking to us. Arguably, some of them also had a reduced ability to provide informed consent. We understood early on that the most useful data would be generated in interviews with the participants. For this reason, during fieldwork we got phone numbers from participants who said they would be willing to give an interview, and then we called them up at times when they were more likely to be sober and asked them again if they would like to participate. We also used the field observations to ensure that the topics of the interview guide were relevant and interesting, and we became familiar with some of the most common slang terms.

3.1.2 Interviews with russ

In total we conducted 41 audio-recorded interviews with participants in *russefeiringa*, of which 25 were women and 16 were men, at cafés in Oslo and a neighboring city. The men were harder to recruit, but more women graduate from high school. Two of the women insisted on being interviewed together; all the others were interviewed individually. The interviews were semi-structured, organized both by the dynamics of the stories the participants told and topics in a prepared guide (see Appendix 1). The interviews centered on the participants' experiences,

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access, then, it would have been about 12 more days within a span of three weeks to *potentially* observe. My guess is that I could have done about five to seven more field visits, *if* we had made plans with participants several months earlier to follow them, *and* it had been my only job at the time.

including preparations, the first parties, major parties, experiences with transgressions, drinking, participation in hookups, hangovers, and online representations of the party. In order to elicit their stories, participants were encouraged to talk freely and provide detailed accounts of specific experiences.

Regarding the interviews I conducted, after having informed the participants of what their participation entailed, and ensured that they gave informed consent, I started the interviews by asking them about their preparations and expectations, in order to warm up before the more important questions. I then used these descriptions to transition to the first parties, and then to the other topics. I memorized the topics in the guide, and could therefore know what in the participant's talk was relevant enough to follow up on. The length and detail of their responses varied, of course. Some participants almost immediately provided lengthy stories, while others started out more cautiously. Also, upon analysis, some short responses turned out to be loaded with much more meaning than they seemed to carry at the time of the interview and than their brevity might imply. The interviews progressed in this way, with my questions mostly responding to what had been mentioned by the participant, until I felt the topics in the guide had been covered. Usually, I would then look at the guide for topics I might have forgotten or which we had covered only briefly, and if there were any, I would round off with questions on those. Accordingly, the questions that were actually asked did not reflect the guide as it was printed.

3.1.3 University induction weeks observations and interviews

In the fall of 2013 I was a research assistant on a similar study of the two induction weeks for new students at the University of Oslo, commonly called *fadderuka*. Kristine Vaadal – then a student who wrote her master's thesis using data from the project – and I each followed a group of students, organized by the university both to introduce the students to the institution and to

enable them to make friends early on. We followed them on the first day when they met at campus and we were introduced as researchers, and on the evenings when they met to socialize informally. Again, I conducted four such field visits. The evening activities mostly involved drinking alcohol. For example, I joined them for their first visit to a major student house with several bars and stages, and long tables with benches, and I participated in a pub crawl and a private party in an apartment. These parties were a lot easier to observe than those at *russefeiringa*, as the participants would often sit around and talk and get to know each other, and with few exceptions the group did not disperse. I could listen to their conversations and was included by both the new students and the older ones leading the groups, seemingly benefiting from my association with the university we all were a part of. I recruited participants for interviews in this group, but due to other work commitments I only interviewed one of the total of 31 students – 22 women and nine men – that participated in the interview part of the study. The rest were interviewed by Vaadal and other research assistants. These interviews followed the same principles and topics as the interviews with *russ* (see Appendix 2). Participants were encouraged to talk freely in the form of stories about concrete experiences, starting out with their expectations regarding the university and the induction weeks, before moving on to topics of partying during the induction weeks, drinking, transgressions, hooking up, and then previous experiences with alcohol, in addition to their experiences from *russefeiringa*.

3.2 Data quality

The interviews in the two data sets include stories that seem to point at the essence of what the studies were about. These passages combine several central topics and concepts, and it has been tempting to build entire analysis sections around just a few of them, rather than cite excerpts from them together with shorter and less eloquent quotes from other interviews. Although they have been important in the empirical arguments, when they have been quoted in the articles,

these “rich” responses have always been edited down, mainly to fit the article format and limit their impact on the word count, but also to ensure the participant’s anonymity (which is also the reason I will not provide lengthy examples here). As a result, the “richness” of the data is not apparent in the published excerpts.

However, not all interviews have such passages. As might be expected in studies with several interviewers – with different personalities and interview styles – and with guides that only provide a topical structure to interviews, the data quality was uneven. While responses for the most part were topically relevant, in the parts where the data turned out not to be particularly useful, this was due to the responses being *brief* and *unspecific*. I have not analyzed the data sets to quantify the extent of such responses. Here, I will only describe the problem and note how we handled it.

Although *brief* responses are not necessarily a problem, it will be if there are, across all interviews, mostly brief responses on a topic of interest, because this reduces the amount of data that can be analyzed and therefore also the chance of finding contradictions, exceptions and nuances, and identifying possible processes and relations to other phenomena. Usually some participants have nothing to say on certain topics, and some others have little to say in general, therefore it is important that the ones who *do* have relevant experiences to talk about are encouraged and given time to talk. The corresponding characteristic of good quality interview data is that it is comprehensive. *Unspecific,* vague or general data can limit the usefulness of interview data because usually it is the researcher that should generalize, not each participant. For example, it is more useful if data includes stories about specific events rather than (only) accounts about what the participants think usually happens. If participants are vague on important topics, they should usually be probed for more detail. However, unspecific data is not completely useless in a study of morality, since people often talk about what they value in

very general terms. Appendix 3 provides a particularly clear example from an interview with brief and unspecific responses.

There are two reasons why I think these limitations regarding data quality did not have a significant impact on the overall quality of the studies. First, I have not found, in the data sets, a topic where participants – across interviews – were consistently brief and unspecific. Second, brief and unspecific responses were still included in the analysis. Although they generally could not add to our understanding, we checked whether they contradicted what we found in other parts of the data set. If they seemed in line with the tendencies found elsewhere, they at least gave us little reason to believe that if that participant *had* given a more comprehensive and specific account, that hypothetical account would have undermined our argument.

A consequence of high-quality data being watered down in editing, and the least useful parts not being cited, is that the "span" in data quality is not obvious in the articles. However, I see this more as a limitation of the article format itself, where an argument is unpublishable if it cannot be reduced to a few thousand words.

3.3 Analysis

All the audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed and coded by other research assistants. The interviews with *russ* were coded with a codebook comprising 66 codes, grouped in 18 code groups. That code book formed the basis for the code book used to code the induction week data set, comprising 67 codes in 19 groups, with codes relating to the particularities of each party practice changed. Both code books consisted of very descriptive codes, in the sense that they mostly organized the material by what was being talked *about*. For example, both code books included groups of codes on sex, alcohol, violence, and narratives, and both included a code group with codes relating to particularities of the respective party practice. To give a more specific example, the code group comprising codes relating to sex had four codes in both code

books, all codes to be applied whether the participants were talking about themselves or others (translated from Norwegian):

- "Flirting/making out/hooking [up]." Applied to parts about more careful interactions.
- "Boundaries/norms during the celebration and at other times." Applied to parts implying that sexual norms are different during this celebration than at other times.
- "Intercourse/oral sex." Applied to parts about sexual acts.
- "Sex one regrets." Applied to parts about regretting sex.

The code names were the same in both code books, but the descriptions for what data they should be applied to were altered somewhat from the first to the second. Such a descriptive strategy for coding meant that it demanded very little interpretation on the part of the different assistants who did the coding, and pushed most of the analytical work over to us, who later read the coded excerpts.

This coding strategy suited me, because I started analyses with a primarily topical interest (e.g., "party transgressions") and expected subsequent analysis to reveal more about the relevant processes (e.g., how parties are morally ordered). Early in the analysis for the two empirical articles, I pasted relevant excerpts into tables, mostly to enable a quick overview. With these I could, for example, imagine a negative case – a possible piece of data that would contradict the argument I was making – and then easily look for it in the table. However, tendencies in the material were always obvious before I finished these tables, so I did not complete them, and instead read the remaining relevant parts by locating them through the coding program, ensuring that I did not overlook important negative cases data. I preferred to develop the argument directly, in preliminary notes for the articles, and drafts, rather than spend time on finishing cutting and pasting solely for the sake of completion. This also seemed to ensure a tight integration of theory and analysis, as they were written out together, rather than in sequence or back and forth. Frequently I also searched for particular words in the data sets

to ensure that relevant parts had not evaded the coder. Moreover, I would often filter the material in the coding program so I could skip through the interviews not only to read the coded parts, but also what came before and after them. Such a text-focused analysis, mostly ignoring responses that cannot easily be transcribed from an audio recording, was necessary because most interviews were conducted by others, and interviewers had no systematic way of recording nonverbal responses.

3.4 Ethics

The two empirical studies raised several ethical issues, although they did not present us with any unusual ethical dilemmas.[14] The participants were adults, albeit young adults, there was no significant power dynamic between us and the participants, and they were constantly in a position where they could control what information they provided and pull out of the study if they wanted. During our field visits at the high school graduation celebration we did observe many drunk people who arguably had limited opportunity to provide informed consent, but they were drunk in public spaces by their own choice, seemingly doing whatever they would have done anyway. Of course, we never sought out the less public places where we could have observed them in more compromising situations, such as the forests where they, according to their own accounts, peed and had sex. That they did seek out such places for such activities indicates that they were at least somewhat concerned about how they appeared to others, but also that, despite being intoxicated, they were often able to act in accordance with such a concern. During field visits, my role as a researcher was also clear. I introduced myself as a researcher to those I talked with, but I was already visible as an outsider to them because I was both about ten years older and not dressed in the typical uniform. Importantly, in the field, our

[14] Willy Pedersen was the manager of the two empirical studies, and responsible for reporting them to the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD).

conversations with each participant and observations of them were fleeting – we did not know who they were, and given how many participants were gathered and that they were dressed in almost identical clothes, we had few opportunities to find out, much less write field notes from which outsiders could identify individual participants. So when, for example, we saw someone steal a sign, nothing in those observations could later be used to identify those who did it. The only ones that could be properly identified were the ones who gave us their phone number, but in most cases, we had no observational data relating directly to them. During the induction week study, the participants were informed of our role while they were sober, on their first day at the university. I also introduced myself as a researcher to any new participant I met during the field visits. Because so much of the interaction during those parties occurred in small groups that sat down and talked, I was also easy to avoid, if any participant, without my knowledge, had no interest in talking with a researcher.

For the high school graduation study, participants were presented with an information sheet about the interview study no later than at the interview we scheduled with them, and given time to read the sheet (see Appendix 4). After they had read it, the participants were asked to sign at the bottom of the sheet to confirm that they had provided informed consent before the interview started. Among other things, the sheet informed the participants about the general topics of the studies, that their participation was confidential, that data would be anonymized, that we would record and transcribe the interview, and that they could decline to participate at any time, as well as providing phone numbers and email addresses for us and project manager Willy Pedersen. An important point that this sheet did not specify is that I have also anonymized identifiable third parties and groups. That is, interview data about other participants who, because we were never in contact with them, never gave their consent to participate. The participants would often mention other participants in their own or other bus groups. In theory, a detailed history combined with data on what group those involved were associated with could

easily be used to identify individuals. The problem might be hypothetical, but not including the names of groups further helped ensure the anonymity we promised the participants.

There are problematic sides to ensuring informed consent by obtaining signatures, since the participant is then connecting their name to the study, despite having just been informed that participation is anonymous. If they also take with them another information sheet, others can later find that and connect them to the study. In the study of the university induction weeks it was decided to obtain informed consent orally, by informing participants about what participation entailed before each interview. The participants, to my knowledge, were then also told to contact Willy Pedersen if they had further questions. I only conducted one of these interviews, and the information and oral consents were not transcribed, so I have little knowledge of precisely what the participants were told. While it is hard to control such a solution afterwards then, it is still better at ensuring anonymity. Moreover, the interviewer had to inform and ask for consent each time, thus repeating that act over and over, rather than merely rationalizing it into asking for a signature on a form. Especially in a study where participants are not interviewed because they are, say, in a vulnerable position or belong to a stigmatized group, it might be preferable, then, to ensure that participants are informed and consenting *without* obtaining signatures.

To my knowledge, no participant who gave their consent retracted it later, and I have not heard of anyone regretting participating. I have not made any effort to contact participants in order to send them articles or in any other way inform them about the results of the studies, and no participant I have interacted with has later contacted me regarding the study. I have, however, been interviewed in national media about these issues, and written an opinion piece with Willy Pedersen, and it is not unlikely that this has led a few participants to search for and read some of the articles. Article 2 has also been on the reading lists for a course, for several semesters, and while it might be statistically unlikely, it is still possible that some participants

later took that course. It is *conceivable*, then, that a participant could read some of the published material from these studies and recognize parts of it. In itself this would not be unethical, although the participant might disagree strongly with how the observations or interview quotes are analyzed, and perhaps feel exposed by being quoted. However, many experiences and descriptions provided by the participants are strikingly similar, so although they might *think* that they recognize themselves in brief quotes or descriptions of data, it is quite possible that they are mistaken. For example, two of the 25 women we interviewed for the high school celebration study told us that they had a blackout at the gathering at Tryvann, got help from friends, got picked up by their mother, and suspected that their drink had been spiked. While one seemingly remembered a lot less, and recalled it as more traumatic than the other, so many elements of their stories were identical that if one of their experiences had been used as an example in an article, the other participant could easily have recognized herself in it. Because of anonymization and use of pseudonyms, and because there is rarely any reason to quote almost identical passages, so only one of similar data parts will be included in an article, any participants who *think* that quoted data material relates to them may recognize themselves in descriptions and quotes that relate to experiences that are simply more common than they imagine.

3.5 Comments on process

From a methodological perspective, this thesis as a whole has two characteristics worth mentioning. One is the movement from the empirical perspective in Articles 1 and 2 to a more generalizing perspective in Article 3 and a methodological perspective in Article 4. The first two articles were primarily based on qualitative interviews, of which one was supplemented with some observation data. Among other things, these established the usefulness of studying parties through concepts relating to morality, because at the time the study started there were few standard works and concepts linking the two topics. The third, theoretically focused article

conceptualized some patterns we had discovered when reading other researchers' studies as well as conducting our own research – letting the relevance of our argument rest on existing empirical studies. The fourth was a polemic, but practically focused methodology article, where I mostly left the topic of partying but argued for the use of interviews for studying particularly moralized practices. The movement in the overall study, then, has been from empirically exploring, via conceptualizing, to discussing the research tools themselves. A possible weakness with, and an argument against, such an approach is that the two latter studies would build on, rather than test, the empirical arguments of the first two. However, we tested parts of our argument in another article not included here (Fjær, Pedersen, von Soest, et al., 2016), and both Article 3 and Article 4 draw heavily on other studies.

The second characteristic is how comparisons run as a red thread through the articles, as the most fundamental argumentative tool. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, this was also partially inspired by MacAndrew and Edgerton's work, but it was not planned in advance, and it was not until I conducted observations at the student parties held during the university induction weeks that the comparative strategy of this thesis started to take shape. Comparing the high school graduation celebration with the university induction weeks systematically on some theoretically relevant aspects, rather than treating them as separate cases to be explored in depth, allowed us to demonstrate how participants' behavior at these parties was not merely learned behavior, but morally ordered in accordance with the specific party context. This comparison resulted in Article 1. Although the parties were similar in several ways – they both gathered many young people over several days, with drinking being an expected activity – their moral orders were strikingly different. Importantly, because we found moral variations between parties with many of the same participants, both within a limited geographical area and a limited time span, we could show that the variation in morality likely occurred at a level of practice, which the participants adapted to – and that the variation in morality was not, say, caused by nation- or

generation-specific cultural differences. In writing that article, I discovered the potential in such a comparative analysis, where data is not only interpreted as tendencies and processes to be explained by abstract concepts, but can be internally compared in different ways to identify and further analyze variance that otherwise would have to be hypothesized.

Obviously, despite parties being moral contexts that the participants adapt to, participation is not homogenous – behaviors, reasons and reflections are all likely to vary among participants. The initial idea for what ended up as Article 2 was to examine moral variation within a party practice – the available moral positions, so to speak – by comparing the accounts of different participants on the same topics as in Article 1. I remembered from doing the interviews how some participants had positioned themselves when talking about the liberal hookup practices of the celebration, but when I read through data parts coded with codes in the "sex" code group, what struck me was how so many of the young women did so. Soon, this positioning, as a part of sexual morality, seemed worthy of its own article, but especially through a comparison with the men. Just as with the article before it, this comparison was analytically crucial for the main argument. By including both men and women (which not all such studies do. See, for example, Armstrong et al., 2014), we were able to *show* how the young women who positioned themselves against the sexual activities of their women peers did so in a fairly systematic way, against the moral figure of "the slut", while the men, seemingly released from corresponding masculine ideals and moral figures, positioned themselves far more freely, and more in accordance with their own behavior. If the data material had only included women, it is *possible* that we could have relied on earlier research and theories, say on masculinities, and still argue that there was a new sexual double standard. However, such a comparison between our sample of women with earlier studies of men would have kept open the possibility that the double standard we could still have found was an effect of, say, generational differences between our sample and the participants in other studies.

In Article 3, the comparisons underlying the analytical argument are somewhat encapsulated in the emphasis on exception. Here, we detail how *departies*, as we call this type of party practice, *differ* from other types of party practices in five important ways. These differences are not only analytically important, as a way to delineate this type of practice from other types, but also crucial for the participants themselves, as these differences are what, to a high degree, motivates their participation, generates the party and structures their evaluations of the party's success. In other words, the participants emphasize how these parties are different from other parties, and we analyzed some of the central differences and built our concept of *departies* on them. Of course, this overlap in understandings does not mean that our conception of these differences between party practices is identical to that of the participants.

Article 4 takes more of a meta perspective, looking at the usefulness of the primary tools used in the first two articles in the thesis. While the article is organized as a defense against repeated critiques of qualitative interviewing, and is of special relevance for studies of morality and particularly moralized practices, I also argue for the usefulness of comparative analysis. Moreover, I show how comparison in qualitative interview studies is not a strategy that can be isolated from other elements of the method, but is contingent on rich data that enables an analysis of multiple indicators. As a part of this thesis, Article 4 can be read as a methodological bolstering of the arguments in Articles 1 and 2, although it uses examples from studies by other researchers.

This comparative strategy did not come from a methodological decision prior to the study, then, but from repeated experience with the fruitfulness of comparative analysis. We compared data because it worked, not because theoretical arguments had convinced us it would work.

4. Conclusion

The starting point of this introduction to the thesis articles was MacAndrew and Edgerton's (1969) proof that drunken behaviors are not solely, or even primarily, a consequence of alcohol intoxication. While their argument delegated the responsibility for explaining drunken behaviors to social scientists, they did not offer more than a rudimentary explanation themselves. Later scientific conceptions of morality can explain why drunk people tend to behave differently from how they otherwise behave, and why that behavior, despite apparent chaos, still has some order and regularity to it. Morality is understood here as a normative dimension people learn in order to participate competently and meaningfully in different practices. It is not suspended during parties and other contexts where participants drink alcohol, but rather temporarily altered. In the latter part of the introduction, I described the methods used in the studies that formed the basis of two of the articles, and some of the reasoning behind the choices we made.

The following articles contribute in different ways to the understanding of parties as morally ordered. In Article 1 we show, by comparing two different youth party practices, that participants adapt to party-specific moral orders. In Article 2, we focus on the moral positioning relating to sexual activities within a particularly liberal party context, and find a new sexual double standard, where young women tend to position themselves against the moral position of "the slut", while the men are relatively free to position themselves in line with their behavior. In Article 3 we conceptualize a specific type of party practice, and show how the altered moral orders of such youth parties intertwine with spatial, temporal, stylistic and experiential departures from everyday practices. It follows that morality is not the only factor contributing to generating such departures. In Article 4, I defend the use of qualitative interviews in studies of morality and moralized practices against critiques that tend to use such studies as examples

to argue against the use of interviews to study culture. This methodological argument thus strengthens the empirical ones in Articles 1 and 2.

The last sentence of *Drunken Comportment* (MacAndrew and Edgerton, 1969: 173) is the motto of this introduction. MacAndrew and Edgerton's point was that people and societies do have the potential to affect drunken behaviors. If that behavior causes harm, drunkenness is not a valid excuse to abstain from changing it. This thesis supports such a conclusion, but it is important that this is not a morally individualistic argument. Drunken behaviors and the moralities that guide them are cultural phenomena, and participants may have limited opportunities to alter established social practices, even if they wanted to. A part of this is that the moral order of party practices includes expectations of transgressions that in many cases can leave participants ashamed, traumatized and injured. While drunken antics provide endless material for entertaining stories, for individuals and societies they are actually a very serious matter.

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Appendix 1: Interview guide for the *Russeferinga* study (in Norwegian)

Intervjuguide pr 9. mai

Hovedtematikk: Alkohol, overskridelser, dagen derpå, seksualitet, fortelling/dokumentering, ritualer/symboler

Fest og festfortellinger

Hvordan startet du russefeiringen?

- Den første festen? Hva skjedde? Hvor var dere? Hva drakk du? Hvor mye? Hva gjorde dere?
- Hvilke andre fester eller treff har du vært på? Stavanger/Lillehammer/Tryvann/rulling. Hva skjer på disse festene? Vorspiel, hvor? Nachspiel? Hvor lenge holder dere på? Reparering? Går over i hverandre?
- Spesielt gøye eller minneverdige fester/situasjoner i russetida? Hva skjedde? Hva kjennetegner en bra russefest? Hvordan er folka, stemninga, musikken? Hva drikker du? Hvor mye?

Ritualer/Symboler

Farge? Er det forskjell på fargene i forhold til festing? Status?

Russenavn, historien bak dette? Russekort? Kjøpte du mye utstyr?

Går du noe i russeklærne aleine, eller mest sammen med andre? Har du fått noen negative reaksjoner fra andre, som ikke er russ?

Revy eller andre russerelaterte ting før mai? Roller (prest/revysjef)? Russeavis?

Var du med på en buss?

- *Hvis ja*: Hvem er de andre på bussen? Hvordan planla dere det? Hva var tanken bak konsept/ dekknavn? En egen låt/slagord? Hva er «rulling», hva går det ut på?
- *Hvis nei*: evt. andre fremkomstmiddel? Samme spm som ovenfor. Vanlig i vennegjengen? Planlagt? Fester dere annerledes enn de som har buss? Er det forskjell på russen?

Overskridelser

- Tok du noen knuter? Hvilke? Hadde du planlagt noen på forhånd?
- Fikk du noen spesielle utmerkelser (gullruss)? Ambisjoner? Får man status?
- Andre litt gærne ting du eller dere gjorde? Venner som gjorde gærne ting? Reaksjoner?

Bakrus

- Black-outs? Hvordan takler du det? Oppsummering av venner?
- Blir du bakfull? Fylleangst? Hva gjør du med det? «kur»?
- Noen fester som gikk skikkelig galt? Hva gjorde dere med det i vennegjengen?
- Har du tatt andre rusmidler i russetida? Hvem fikk du av? I hvilken sammenheng? Var det første gang du tok? Tatt det igjen?

Dokumentasjon

- Egen nettside? Hvem har innsyn? Hva brukes sidene til?
- Poster dere bilder av festen på face eller insta? Youtube-videoer? Noen spesielt morsomme bilder/videoer? Hva skjer?

Seksualitet

- Hadde du kjæreste i russetiden? Hvis ja: Er det vanskelig «å holde seg i skinnet» dersom man har kjæreste?
- Mange av knutene er jo knyttet til sex, tok du noen av dem? Hvilke? Var det mange som gjorde det? Gøy? Ville du gjort det utenom russetiden/knutene? Er det noen du har hatt sex med og møtt igjen? «russekjæreste»
- Hva med klining/sex med en av samme kjønn, vanligere i russetiden? Mer innafor?
- Angret du noen ganger dagen etter? Ubehagelige situasjoner? Håndtering?

Refleksjon

- Hva tror du at du kommer til å huske best fra russetida? Hvordan har den skilt seg fra andre fester? Ble den som forventet? Uventede ting?
- Fikk du noen tilbakemeldinger fra foreldrene dine ang drikking og festing i russetida? Hva er deres drikkevaner?

Appendix 2: Interview guide for the *Fadderuka* study (in Norwegian)

Intervjuguide fadderuka – sept 2013

Bakgrunn: Alder, vokst opp hvor? Foreldres utdanning og yrke. Tidligere utdanning?

Forventninger til å begynne på universitetet: Gledet deg? Spent? Skummelt? Tror du det vil bli vanskelig? Ambisjoner om bestemte karakterer? Planer for yrke seinere?

Forventninger til fadderuka

- Hva slags forventninger hadde du på forhånd til fadderuka?
  - Hva hadde du hørt fra andre?
  - Stemte forventningene?
- Hvorfor ville du være med på fadderuka?
- Hva slags opplegg/arrangementer var du med på?
  - Hvorfor akkurat disse?

Fester i fadderuka

- Hvordan var det å møte de andre for første gang?
  - Hvordan foregikk det/hva gjorde dere?
- Hvordan var det første festen?
  - Hva gjorde dere?
  - Hvordan kom du i kontakt med andre?
  - Var det annerledes enn på dagtid?
- Hadde dere noe opplegg/leker på festene?
  - Drikkeleker?
    - Hvis ja: Hva synes du om det? Var de kjente? Pleier du å drive med drikkeleker til vanlig?
- Hvordan var de andre festene i fadderuka?
  - Noen som var spesielt bra/dårlige?
  - Dansing? Med gutter/jenter?
- Hvordan var gruppa sammensatt – kjønn, alder, studert før?
  - Påvirket dette festene? Hvordan?
- Etter festene:
  - Hvordan var dagen etter festene? Hva snakket dere om?
  - Har du fått noen gode venner her på universitetet? Har fadderuka spilt noen rolle, tror du?

Alkohol

- Drikker du på festene?
  - Hvor mye? Like mye hver gang?
  - Ble du beruset/full?
    - Hvordan merket du det/hva skjedde?
    - Reaksjoner fra andre?
  - Dårlig dagen etter?Angret/fylleangst?
  - Drikker du like mye som på andre fester /ikke i fadderuka?
- (Tenkte du igjennom hvor mye du skulle drikke i fadderuka på forhånd?)
- Drikker de fleste andre på festene? Hvor mye?
  - Like mye som på andre fester?
- Er det noen som ikke drikker/drikker lite?
  - Hva slags reaksjoner får de?

    - Hvis noen drikker mindre noen dager – hva er grunnene? Hva synes de andre?
- Har det vært bruk av andre rusmidler?

Overskridelser
- Er det noen hendelser eller situasjoner du husker godt fra festene/fadderuka?
    - Hva skjedde? Hvorfor husker du det godt?
    - Var det alkohol involvert?
    - Hva slags reaksjoner hadde de andre? Var dere enige?
- Ble noen veldig fulle/dårlige?
    - Gjorde noe uventet/artig/rart?
    - Pinlig/morsomt?
- Var det noe flørting i fadderuka?
    - Noen som hadde noe på gang? Når begynte det?
    - Skjult eller åpent for andre?
    - Hva synes du om det?
    - Har du selv kjæreste? Ble forholdet satt på noen prøver under fadderuka?

Russetida: Deltok du i russefeiring? Hvor i landet? Var du med på buss? Husker du noen historier fra russsetida – noe som gjorde inntrykk på deg? Var det noen fellestrekk mellom russetida og fadderuka? Eller er dette helt ulike saker? Hva er i så fall forskjellene?

Universitetet: Når du nå ser tilbake på det, har det vært en stor overgang for deg å begynne på universitetet? Sosiologer er jo opptatt av normer og regler – har du en følelse av at det er bestemte normer (kjøreregler for hvordan en oppfører seg) som gjelder på universitetet? Forsto du disse normene allerede under fadderuka? Når du ser tilbake på det – gjorde du «dumme ting»? Som du helst skulle vært foruten?

Tidligere erfaring med alkohol
- Første fest/når begynte du drikke?
    - Med hvem? Hvor?
- Drikker du vanligvis?
    - Hvor/ med hvem? I hvilke situasjoner?
- Tidligere fadderuker/folkehøgskole?

Sosiale medier
- Har du tatt bilder/video i løpet av fadderuka?
    - Av hvem/hva? Offentlig? Snapchat?
    - Pleier du å gjøre dette til vanlig?
- Facebook:
    - Blitt venner med mange? Når? Sender du forespørsel selv? Når er det ok å bli venner?

Appendix 3: Excerpt from failed interview (in Norwegian)

Below is a passage from an interview where the participant, throughout the interview, provided very brief and unspecific responses, lacking in details and associations. The topic right before this passage was the large gatherings at Tryvann, which is the place they are referring to ("der"/"there"), when they transition to the topic of hookups, which was central to the study. Still, the interviewer is not able to elicit any lengthy, detailed response. I will not speculate in what the cause of this failure might be, only note that the resulting data was mostly useless.

Hva er det som skjer der, folk danser og sånn, liksom eller?

Ja, nesten bare det. Random hookups og sånn hele tiden. Det er liksom …

Er det lett der eller?

Alle er så fulle at det er liksom … Det er ikke så veldig vanskelig!

Men hvordan fungerer det, er det liksom bare å kjøre på liksom?

Jeg vet ikke, jeg husker ikke! Det bare går sin gang.

Det bare går sin gang liksom.

Ja, egentlig.

Fikk du hooke opp med noen der, da?

Det ble et par ganger, ja.

Ja, er det liksom flere på hver kveld og sånn, eller er det liksom sånn spesielt én dame?

Nei, det varierte det også. Så … Det var egentlig bare helt tilfeldig.

Men er det liksom lettere å hooke opp med jenter under russetida enn det er ellers?

Ja, jeg vil vel si det på en eller annen måte. Ja.

Hvorfor tror du det er sånn, da?

Enda mer alkohol og bare «russetiden, sånn skjer» liksom. Gir mer faen på en måte.

Ja, for legger liksom den russetida litt opp til at det skal skje også, liksom?

Ja, jeg vil tro det, egentlig.

Hvor mange jenter var du med ila russetida, da?

Hva tenker du på?

Nei, altså … egentlig alt.

Hvor mange jeg var med liksom?

Ja, lå du med mange jenter for eksempel?

Det ble bare en.

Ja.

Men … Nei, jeg vet ikke hvor mange hookups, jeg har ikke telt liksom. Men …

Det blir mer sånn klining og roting liksom?

Ja, blir det fort.

Appendix 4: Information sheet and consent form for the *Russeferinga* study (in Norwegian)

UiO : Universitetet i Oslo
Institutt for sosiologi og samfunnsgeografi

Kunne du tenke deg å bli intervjuet om russefeiringen?

Vi vil gjerne invitere deg til å bli med i en intervjustudie om russefeiringen. Russen får mye oppmerksomhet i media, og de fleste som har gått på videregående har deltatt i den. Feiringen er også særegen internasjonalt, men likevel er den nesten ikke forsket på. Vi kunne derfor tenkt oss å intervjue deg om dine erfaringer med russefeiringen og hørt om forberedelsene du har gjort, aktiviteter du har deltatt i, opplevelser du har hatt og tanker du har gjort deg. Det har også vært mange debatter om overstadig drikking i russetida, derfor er vi også interessert i å prate med deg om hva du tenker om dette.

Hva går dette ut på?

Vi som ønsker å intervjue deg heter Kine Paulsen og Eivind Grip Fjær, og vi jobber som forskningsassistenter på Institutt for sosiologi og samfunnsgeografi ved Universitetet i Oslo. Intervjuet kan vi gjøre på en kafé i Oslo eller på universitetet på Blindern en dag i løpet av de nærmeste ukene. Intervjuet vil ta ca. en time, og vi vil ta det opp elektronisk for å huske det du sier. Alt du sier vil bli anonymisert sånn at ingen skal kunne se at det er du som har sagt det. Vi vil heller ikke fortelle andre at vi har pratet med akkurat deg. Opptaket av intervjuet sletter vi når undersøkelsen er over, og beholder en anonymisert, skriftlig versjon. Totalt vil vi intervjue opp mot 50 russ. Det er helt opp til deg om du vil delta og du kan trekke deg underveis om du skulle ombestemme deg.

Har du spørsmål om studien?

Du kan nå Kine på 971 94 707 og kine.paulsen@sosgeo.uio.no og Eivind på 926 02 312 og e.g.fjar@sosgeo.uio.no
Du kan også kontakte sjefen vår Willy Pedersen på willy.pedersen@sosgeo.uio.no

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt informasjon om undersøkelsen og ønsker å stille til intervju

_____ _____

Navn Dato

Postadresse: Postboks 1096 Blindern, 0317 Oslo
E-post: ekspedisjonen@sosgeo.uio.no
www.sv.uio.no/iss/

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Drinking and moral order: Drunken comportment revisited

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Abstract

MacAndrew and Edgerton's seminal *Drunken Comportment* revealed that normative expectations to drunken behaviour differ greatly across cultures. Such variation also exists within cultures, where different drinking contexts may be associated with great normative variation. However, why social regulation of drunken comportment varies has largely been left unexplored. To examine the basis of such differences, two Norwegian drinking contexts are compared: (i) the high school graduation celebration and (ii) the two introduction weeks at university. Data comprise 71 qualitative interviews and field notes from participant observation. The two practices take place within a time span of only four months and involve many of the same participants. Alcohol plays a key role in both contexts. However, while the first context allows for heavy intoxication, sexual explorations and violating norms that ordinarily regulate behaviour in public, the second context is associated with much more control. We argue that the basis of this difference may be found in the differing value priorities of these practices, with participants' behaviour being guided primarily by hedonism and social integration, respectively. When applied to drinking practices in general this conceptual apparatus might elucidate the basis of context-specific norms and intra-cultural variation in drunken comportment.

Keywords

Alcohol, drunken behaviour, moral order, morality, norms, values

History

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Introduction

People often behave differently when drinking than at other times. Drunken people can be more talkative and forthright; they may dance, show sexual interest in others – even strangers; but they may also appear rude or offensive, become violent, take unnecessary risks and destroy property. In their seminal work *Drunken Comportment*, MacAndrew and Edgerton (1969) demonstrated that such alcohol-related behaviours may not be understood as pharmacologically determined, but rather as culturally constructed. If alcohol was the primary reason for the behaviours they termed ''drunken changes-for-the-worse'', drunken people should act more or less the same way across history and cultures, while in fact ''the way people comport themselves when drunk is anything but uniform'' (1969, p. 86). Moreover, while drunken people might *appear* spontaneous and out of control, as if their incorporated civility is temporarily suspended, their behaviour is in fact quite ordered and predictable; within a given context, they breach only some norms while not suspending others. Therefore, the essential challenge becomes accounting for why drunken comportment is both transgressive and ordered – apparently chaotic and uncivilised, but at the same time repeatable and predictable. MacAndrew and Edgerton's tentative answer was that drinking allows for a ''time out'' from some norms, while the drunk person ''maintain[s] a keen sense of the appropriate'' (1969, p. 85), a phenomenon they termed the ''within-limits clause'' (1969, p. 67).

In a review, Room (2001) argued that even if the basic argument of *Drunken Comportment* has been accepted by the majority of researchers, it has rarely been critically scrutinised. MacAndrew and Edgerton drew their examples from cultures they perceived as homogeneous (1969, p. 172), and their argument appears functionalistic (Partanen, 1991, p. 232). This implies that studies demonstrating a plurality of drinking practices within a society (Demant & Törrönen, 2011), participants' active shaping of party practices (Fjær, Pedersen, & Sandberg, 2015) and normative heterogeneity regarding drinking and partying (Caetano & Clark, 1999) are anomalies within this theoretical framework. Later studies have tended to limit their focus to norms regulating the amount and frequency of drinking in different situations (e.g. Baer, Stacy, & Larimer, 1991; Greenfield & Room, 1997). While related, drinking norms differ from norms for drunken behaviour. After all, the second chapter of *Drunken Comportment* demonstrated that a permission to drink to intoxication does not necessarily entail acceptance of transgressive behaviour (MacAndrew & Edgerton, 1969). The foundations of cultural variations in the social regulation of drunken comportment have largely been left unexplored (Abel & Plumridge, 2004). While MacAndrew and Edgerton's original study was primarily oriented towards differences *between* cultures, we will highlight how different drinking contexts *within* a society may be associated with highly differing norms and values for the same groups of people.

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This includes broadening the scope of interest from the relationship between intoxication and behaviour specifically to more generally the basis of behaviour in contexts where intoxication is common and expected.

Because drinking practices are fundamentally *social* (Douglas, 1987; Heath, 2000), our conceptualisation of individual behaviour needs to include links to the structure of these practices. Such a conceptual apparatus can be found in studies of morality, a topic that has attracted renewed interest over the past decade (Hitlin & Vaisey, 2010). We will argue that the duality of transgression and order witnessed on different drinking occasions may best be understood as context-specific *modifications of the moral order*. For the present purpose, a useful conception of ''morality'' is the rather broad one that it comprises social regulations of what is good and bad, right and wrong and appropriate and inappropriate (Hitlin & Vaisey, 2013; Turner, 2010, p. 126). Perceptions and evaluations of one's own and others' social actions as right or wrong are such a major force structuring social interaction that several researchers argue that a ''social order'' is to a large degree grounded in a ''moral order'' (e.g. Goffman, 1966, p. 8; Smith, 2003; Wuthnow, 1987). The morally ordered situations of everyday life are ''the points of departure and return for every modification of the world of daily life'' (Garfinkel, 1964, p. 225). Many social contexts, where alcohol is consumed, are clearly examples of such ''departures'', where situational alterations bring about the ''modification of the background of everyday expectancies'' (Garfinkel, 1964, p. 249). Precisely such modified moral orders are of interest here.

Moral orders are structured by shared *value priorities*. Drunken behaviour can therefore be studied as an expression of a temporary change in value prioritisation. Values are ideals at a high degree of abstraction, general ''conceptions of what is good and desirable'' (Schwartz, 2006, p. 139) that ''exist at both the cultural and individual level'' (Hitlin, 2008, p. 43). Because values ''refer to desirable goals that motivate action'' and ''serve as standards or criteria that guide the selection or evaluation of actions, policies, people and events'' (Schwartz, 2006, p. 143), this is a promising place to look when examining why people in one context can be motivated to behave in ways that in other contexts are deemed immoral. Importantly, it is the ''*relative* importance of values [that] guides action'' (Schwartz, 2006, p. 143, emphasis in original). The relative priority of values ''in any given situation is *very much dependent on the context*'' (Seligman & Katz, 1996, p. 56, emphasis added). Verplanken and Holland argue that ''values need to be activated (...) to exert an influence'' (2002, p. 436) and that ''[i]n everyday life (...) value activation is often inherent in the situation'' (2002, p. 444). Different drinking practices may then be based on differing and even fundamentally opposing value priorities – such as hedonism, authenticity, self-expression, group solidarity or sanctity – that are activated within different contexts, often corresponding to participants' *plans* to partake in certain practices. It should then be possible to identify the prioritised values that structure the moral order of different drinking practices and motivate individuals to participate.

While values are the reasons *why* things are done, norms direct *how* they are done. Participants intuitively read and interpret contextually relevant norms, adjusting their moral judgements of their own and others' behaviour accordingly (Haidt, 2001, 2012). Morality is practically oriented – ''akin to perception'' (Haidt, 2001, p. 814). The practical orientation of morality is evident in the variances in normative expectations that usually apply across different practices and situations and to people of different social statuses (Haidt, 2001; Turiel, 2002). Activated values are ''cognitions that may define a situation'' (Verplanken & Holland, 2002, p. 435) so the prevailing norms of a certain drinking practice correspond to its value priority (Elster, 1999, p. 91). In spite of this order, situations where people drink may be very different from those of everyday life, clearly illustrating how ''what we do at one time may differ from – or even contradict – what we do at another'' (Hitlin, 2008, p. 93; see also Ross & Nisbett, 2011, p. 27).

Even though morality is practical and largely intuitive, moral discourse pervades and shapes almost any practice through gossip, arguments, neutralisations, excuses, contestations and subversions (Sykes & Matza, 1957; Turowetz & Maynard, 2010). Such reactions constitute a natural entry point for explorations of a moral order. People are inherently concerned with how breaches of norms might appear to others. Constitutive of this concern are emotions that arise from an ''awareness of a discrepancy between a current self-state and some evaluative standard'' (Tracy & Robins, 2004, p. 113). The presence of moral emotions (Haidt, 2003; Tangney, Stuewig, & Mashek, 2007) and a concern for one's reputation (Haidt, 2012; Sperber & Baumard, 2012), consistent with these norms and value priorities, can further establish that the normative order in question is morally structured.

This conceptualisation of the moral order of drinking practices enables us to make sense not only of (1) the dual presence of transgression and order witnessed with regard to drunken comportment, but also of (2) inter-practice differences within a certain ''drinking culture''. We argue these points through a comparative analysis of two different party practices in which many young Norwegians participate: the high school graduation celebration in May and the two introduction weeks at university in August. We analyse these by comparing the social regulation of three aspects of behaviour: (i) alcohol consumption and intoxication, (ii) sexual experiences and (iii) behaviour in public spaces. Alcohol is central in both contexts, and many participate in both within a time span of four months. Nevertheless, the two contexts differ radically with regard to transgressions: the first appears chaotic, while the other is quite calm and ordered. Thus, a comparative analysis of these two party practices may shed light on how drunken comportment within the same broader socio-cultural context rests on differing departures from the moral order of everyday life.

Methods

The present study is a comparative case analysis (Eisenhardt, 1989) of the moral order of two drinking practices. Initially, we studied the high-school graduation celebration. An interest in the social transgressions that pervaded it and the aim to explore intra-cultural variation led us to search for a comparable case including many of the same participants.

There was a very limited number of alternatives (most of them were associated with a subculture or a social class), but the introduction weeks to university proved to be similar in many respects. Many of the graduating high school students would go on to take higher education, thereby avoiding merely comparing different groups. As we will show, drinking is a central activity in both practices. As they take place only months apart, generation or age effects are unlikely. Accordingly, a comparison of these two practices should enable us to identify some variation in the moral order of different drinking practices within more or less the same population. A striking and unexpected difference was the apparent lack of social transgressions during the introduction weeks. Being far more different in this respect than we had anticipated, the cases proved to fit as theoretically sampled (during the research process) polar cases (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 537) with regard to how they depart from the moral order of everyday life.

Moving from a comparison of drinking cultures to drinking practices complicates the sampling of cases. MacAndrew and Edgerton (1969) only included descriptions of drinking where participants were clearly intoxicated; they did not simply compare cultures were alcohol consumption was moderate with more extreme ones. This way of ''holding constant'' the level of intoxication across cases only worked because they could assume that none of the same people participated in several of the compared drinking practices. This cannot be assumed in a study of intra-cultural variation. Participants may apply in one practice what they have learned about drinking and drunken behaviour from their experiences with another practice. This means that consumption levels and intoxication may co-vary with behavioural norms between drinking practices within a culture. Because we had already conducted one study, and to ensure anonymity not saved contact information of any informants, one solution to this was to ask for retrospective accounts of the high-school celebration in interviews with participants in the introduction weeks. Most importantly, we are certain that we are comparing practices where participants commonly and expectedly drink intoxicating amounts of alcohol.

Fieldwork for the high school graduation celebration was conducted by two research assistants (one male, one female) from late April to mid-May 2013 in the Oslo area in Norway. The researchers observed different forms of parties, such as the ritual marking of the beginning of the celebration, partying on a bus and a major commercial event. During these observations, we also recruited informants for future interviews. In total, 41 informants were interviewed (16 men); all were 18 years old or had recently turned 19. One interview was conducted with two informants. We chose a similar approach for the data generation on the introduction weeks to the University of Oslo. Students were grouped by the university, and two research assistants (one male, one female) each followed primarily one such group for almost two weeks, with additional observation over a few nights with other groups. Here too, informants were recruited for interviews in the field. We interviewed 31 informants individually (nine men). Ages ranged from 18 to 24 years old. Male participants proved more demanding to recruit in both cases, but the predominance of women also reflects the trend in Norwegian higher education.

In both studies, interviews were semi-structured. The interview guides were lists of topics we wished to cover, based on our observations in the field, including drinking during the practice in question, previous drinking experiences, social transgressions, sexual experiences and the behaviour of others. However, the interviews were conducted in an open manner, thereby encouraging informants to tell stories about concrete experiences. This approach produces data in the form of stories where a normative orientation is largely up to the informant. This enables us to draw out explicit or underlying normative claims that more or less spontaneously arise in accounts that were not framed as moral by the interviewer. Interviews were first analysed by coding interview transcripts from each case on a range of different topics. Then, passages marked with codes of relevance to the present article were analysed to identify dominant norms and value priorities (Vaisey & Miles, 2014). Different normative patterns on the level of these cases surfaced, and subsequent analysis consisted of comparing these. The data contain apparent outliers, such as abstainers and moral judgements not consistent with the respective moral order. However, we believe that these are best understood by comparing different moral orientations of individuals within drinking contexts, and this will be reported elsewhere. In our comparison of the two cases, we focus on three aspects that are particularly telling because they are clearly moralised aspects of social life: drinking and intoxication (Room, 2005), sexual experiences (Chambers, Tincknell, & Loon, 2004; Haidt & Hersh, 2001) and behaviour in public (Dixon, Levine, & McAuley, 2006; Goffman, 1966). Quotes from interviews and some song lyrics are translated from Norwegian; redundancy and most fillers have been edited out.

The modified moral order of a high school graduation celebration

A month before their final exams Norwegian high school graduates assume a shared identity as so-called *russ* and dress up in unicoloured overalls for a three-week-long celebration that centres on music, dancing, heavy drinking and various social transgressions. The celebration has been interpreted as a modern *rite of passage*, with historic roots going back to when Norway established its first university in 1811 and the small minority who would attend it celebrated their initiation with public use of alcohol (Sande, 2002). Nowadays, the celebration includes codes of transgressions issued by locally elected committees. Those who succeed in, for example, wearing loaves of bread as shoes all day at school, having sex in a forest or buying beer in a grocery store while remaining on all fours, are allowed to attach an item corresponding to the transgression in the cord of their uniform cap. Some group together and buy old buses that they refurbish as rolling nightclubs. These vehicles, driven by hired chauffeurs, make the partying mobile and difficult for parents, schools and the police to control. These groups also commission anthems that are intended to present the group in a positive light (Fjær et al., 2015). The celebration is widely accepted as a tradition, but the drinking, transgressions and spending it involves are

frequently problematized in news articles and op-eds. The police follow the celebration closely, and several of our informants saw police officers daily checking up on their parties in parks and parking lots, often asking them to leave.

Within this context, drinking to intoxication was not merely allowed or excused, it was expected, and those who did not live up to this expectation were met with negative sanctions (Herman-Kinney & Kinney, 2013). Camilla emphasised that her abstinence from alcohol had ''nothing to do with religion'', so during the celebration she could not provide a valid excuse for not drinking:

> It's like that in general, they nag a lot about it. It's like they think it's annoying, and it's not even something that concerns them, it's me. So that annoys me. I have never been moralising or anything regarding that, and maybe I had expected others to be more tolerant.

These demands are best understood as alterations of the norms regulating drinking and intoxication. Importantly, this was not merely a practical adjustment of their typical drinking patterns to fit this particular occasion. Rather, it reflected context-specific norms allowing for forms of visible intoxication that otherwise would be stigmatised.

> Aud: I could come drunk to school. Drunk [or] hung-over from the day before. I remember a gym class that was very funny, when I actually came right from [the] party. The most fun was that we had dance in that class. [The teacher] thought it was fun, we had a cool gym teacher.

The same type of behaviour could easily have been framed as an expression of serious alcohol problems. However, within the moral order of the graduation celebration, it was framed as a story about having ''fun''. The same value priority was also expressed in the reputation they attempted to establish through their anthems. Lyrics typically referred to drinking, with lines such as ''drinking like it was the day before doomsday'' and ''get intoxicated, party 24/7, drink all week''. Similarly, the written code of transgressions awarded, for example, substituting milk with beer in one's breakfast cereal and drinking and urinating at the same time.

Nonetheless, participants were well aware of the symbolic boundaries distinguishing acceptable forms of intoxication from morally dubious ones, even within this context. We registered few enforced limits on drinking, but apart from some cannabis use, we only heard rumours about other intoxicants. Several informants also actively opposed cannabis, and reported excluding from their parties visitors who used it. More subtle boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable ways of handling intoxication also surfaced during interviews when informants reflected on this drinking practice. Gina and Frederikke were interviewed together:

> Gina: What's a little scary after the celebration, was that when you got home from school [during the celebration] you craved a glass of beer or wine or something. That was a bit dangerous.

Frederikke described similar experiences and added: ''You'd started your time as an alcoholic! So it's good that [the celebration] doesn't last longer, because we've got friends who haven't managed [to break the habit], who still drink every day''. She then goes on to talk about a specific friend with whom she used Snapchat to communicate:

> Frederikke: I get a snap daily of him sitting with dinner and a beer or where he's drinking a glass of wine or he's got a six-pack. It can be dangerous too, if you can't limit yourself.
> *Interviewer: Did you think about this during the celebration?*
> Gina: No, not at all. Then, it was just ''drink as much as you can, have fun''.

Frederikke's cautionary tale exemplified a crossing of the moral boundary into unacceptable drinking. However, during the celebration, such a ''scary'' and ''dangerous'' drinking practice was an expression of their hedonistic priorities (''fun''). These differing judgements of drinking and intoxication stem from, and contribute to reproducing, the modified moral order of the celebration. One is based on the everyday priority of values such as safety and self-control, where ''alcoholics'' are stigmatised. Within the other, hedonism is prioritised to the degree that intoxication, even in day-time and at school, is judged positively.

Norms regarding sexual experiences were also modified within this context. Many participants would ''hook up'' (participants used the English term to designate everything from kissing and fondling to sexual intercourse), often with several other participants. Sometimes this included kissing others of the same sex, but this was apparently of a more playful than erotic character. Jenny described hooking up with several other distantly acquainted participants during one evening:

> You know a little about who they are and maybe have talked a little with them on Facebook, then often you walk over and kiss a little and make out a little with that person, take it home with you maybe, join him in his bus, things like that. It happened a lot during the celebration. A lot of the girls [on my bus] were suddenly gone because they had gone home with some guys. Of course, that's a part of the celebration, to get to know new people and do things you maybe wouldn't have done at an ordinary party. Almost half the bus has seen a girl hooking up with the guy you'd just hooked up with, so that's like ''Yeah, OK, that's fine''.

Jenny's (non-sarcastic) judgement that it was ''OK'' to see her friends hook up with someone she had just hooked up with herself indicates that these sexual experiences implied very little, if any, commitment to the partner beyond the experience itself. Within this party practice, this was normal and accepted, but she would not behave like this at other parties. This normative difference from other party practices was not limited to female participants:

> Erik: At other times, there's a lot less social acceptance for acting like you do during the celebration. For example

> [boys] making out with boys, you almost never see at a party now. It's not about getting a couple, three, four girls during an evening – it's not about getting any. You'll be labelled a player or whore quickly then. So it's something completely different. People calm down a lot more. You have to get to know the person before having sex, and things like that.

Participants were well aware that under other circumstances behaving like they did during this celebration would be judged as immoral, leading others to label them (''player'', ''whore''). Nevertheless, they participated fully, and claimed to enjoy it. This did not imply the exposure of a ''secret self'' to an ''anonymous crowd'' (Redmon, 2003); participants intentionally partied with their friends, and often made new friends at these parties. Within this modified moral order, it took much more to gain a bad reputation for one's sexual behaviour than at other times. This was also expressed in the reputation participants tried to establish through their anthems. In one extreme case, members of a group of female participants proudly reported to us that strangers had approached them to praise their anthem, which was produced by a group of male musicians and contained lines such as ''jumping from dick to dick with our pussies, come here to lick our clitties''. However, in general, a gender difference was clearly inherent in these anthems, with men being active and women attractive. Explicit and often sexist lyrics were the norm among male groups, while the female groups had anthems with more suggestive lyrics, as in the line: ''The ladies walking by, looking so fly, ditching that guy, taking the mood up from none to high''. Although there is an element of humorous exaggeration in these lyrics, the ideals were real: within this party practice, being perceived as sexually active and attractive is a *goal* of reputation management.

Participants were also allowed to *not* take part in hooking-up activities. Usually, this was because they were in a relationship, that is, they had a *status* that made different norms applicable (Smith, 2003, p. 10). As Anja replied when asked whether she had made out with anyone during the celebration: ''Yes, I did. If you didn't, then... almost everyone does it, except those who have a [girl- or] boyfriend''. Carl had acquired a reputation at his school as a ''player'', but had recently started a relationship. When asked whether he had any boundaries for what he would do during the celebration, he said:

> I've got a girlfriend, so I drew the line at cheating. I felt I could not do anything like that. That's my moral line. To eat that smoothie with cat food was no problem for me. Reckless drinking, fine. Nudity, no problem.

Carl's reflections on where his moral limits lay during the celebration demonstrate that he still saw himself as a morally responsible person, contrary to MacAndrew and Edgerton's claim that during parties ''demands for accountability are (...) set aside'' (1969, pp. 167–168, see p. 67 for a qualification). While the sexual domain of the moral order of everyday life is different from this, it is not because it is suspended – it is *modified*. Importantly, this modification did not extend to infidelity (cf. MacAndrew & Edgerton, 1969, pp. 77–82). Therefore, some participants ended their relationships in order to hook up during the celebration. Despite some reported rapes at major events, the norm that sex should be voluntary was not suspended. Many of our female informants had ''No means no'' printed on their uniform, and guards at major events routinely asked women engaging in heterosexual intercourse whether it was voluntary and waited for a response.

Different forms of transgressions in public are common during the celebration. Apart from the codified transgressions, which are often carried out in public spaces, behaviour in public that is clearly deemed immoral within most other practices is perceived as a positive contribution to the party:

> Anja: Some girls were stealing a stone statue, so it was carried into the bus. And we just laughed, because we got into the bus and then there's a statue just standing there. Then we begin to drive with the statue, and we hear that the police are out looking for a bus that's stolen a statue. We were laughing ourselves to death. So then we had to drive back to the gas station, someone throws out the statue, and we just drive off! The statue was tagged with the name of our bus, so someone took the marker and wrote the name of another bus all over it.

Anja presents the collective (temporary) stealing and vandalisation of private property as a spontaneous and positive contribution to the party. Clearly, it breaches the norms of everyday life, where one is expected to respect other people's property. Nevertheless, this sort of transgression was quite common. Several informants gave accounts of stealing traffic signs, and we also observed this during our fieldwork. Even if this form of behaviour seems transgressive and spontaneous to participants and outsiders, it is ordered in the sense of being predictable and frequent. Within this party practice, such transgressions are valued rather than morally condemned. According to Anja's story, they returned the statue not because they deemed it wrong to steal it, but because they risked getting into trouble with the police, which would end the party. Other informants told entertaining stories about making rude comments about customers at a deli through a megaphone and finding other participants having sex ''doggy style'' in the woods and pushing them over in a self-invented game they called ''topple the doggie''. In addition to these seemingly creative pranks, participants could act in ways more typical of transgressive drunken behaviour in Norway involving urinating, vomiting, yelling and loud singing in public. Heidi got to experience this clear difference in background expectancies (Garfinkel, 1964) relating to behaviour in public:

> Once I went to shop for groceries after being out rolling [on the bus] one night, and I had writing all over my face. I put on ordinary clothes as I was just going to the store, and I got lots of strange looks! I looked quite stupid with... if I had been wearing my overalls, people would have known why, right?

Heidi noticed the stares, and presumed she was being judged by others because she was not wearing the uniform

that would have signalled to others that she was allowed to appear this way in public. Generally, a reference to the party practice explained and legitimised transgressions. Christina noted that the celebration:

> ... symbolises a period of youth, where you act out and party a lot and are not very responsible, in many ways. I would never put on my uniform and participate again. I think it's just generally the way I behaved, like, in public. That you think you own the world in a way, walk around with your girlfriends and think you are the world's coolest, and that the ordinary rules don't really apply to you. I peed in public, for example.

Christina uses the negative stereotype of young people as irresponsible (Scales, 2001) to explain her own transgressive behaviour, in addition to attributing permission for it to the practice. Consistent with this context-dependent change in attitude towards behaviour in public, informants also noted that they and their friends rarely felt any negative moral emotions after participating in transgressive behaviour. Again, this was *because* it was carried out within this particular party practice. Frida commented: ''It's like everything becomes allowed with those overalls on''. She claimed she had never felt negative emotions about her behaviour during the celebration, and argued her point by contrasting it to an ordinary house party where participants were held to a higher standard of self-control:

> Maybe it had been embarrassing [if we were sitting] around a table at a party and you didn't remember anything, like, that would have been awkward. I'm going to a birthday party tonight, and I hope I won't behave like [I did] during the celebration, because it's a completely different setting.

In short, during this celebration, many forms of behaviour are expected that would otherwise be sanctioned negatively, both by others and internally, through moral emotions, such as shame and embarrassment. Participants *modify the moral order* of everyday life, generating a dual presence of transgressions of everyday norms and a predictable, moral structure. Participants we encountered were often eager to argue against any moralising regarding their drinking and spending, which outsiders traditionally have voiced in the media. This modification of morals and subsequent defence of their behaviour should not be misread as merely opportunistic attempts at justifying their drinking and transgressions. The celebration has a long tradition (Sande, 2002). Participants have gone through long periods of preparation where they have observed the celebrations of previous cohorts and sometimes participated as visitors. They have learned the ''dos and don'ts'', and are thereby able to reproduce the celebration as a tradition. Central to this tradition is its value priority, which was clearly expressed in participants' anthems. Here, they position themselves as particularly virtuous participants heavily invested in hedonism. In the lyrics ''feelings explode'', and ''the time has come to lose it all'', participants are often going ''up'' or ''higher'', while they ''never say stop'' and ''party together without having to care''. These self-presentations illustrate how participants perceived the virtues and ideals of the party practice as hedonistic – in stark contrast to the second drinking context we studied.

Drinking and making friends during the introduction weeks at university

The two introduction weeks marking the start of university usually take place three months after the high school graduation ends. Here, new students – ''freshers'' – are put together in groups of 10–30 and are led by older students – ''buddies'' – who volunteer to introduce them to the institution. In the evenings, group activities involve drinking alcohol, often in quite large quantities. However, the moral order is manifestly different from the graduation celebration. The freshers often did not know anybody they were drinking with, but changing this was also the explicit goal of the introduction weeks. This was also a goal for the university, because it expects socially integrated students to be less likely to drop out.

Here too, abstainers had to explain to other participants their choice not to drink; drinking was an expected part of socialising. Participants usually held the ''politically correct'' opinion that in order to include everyone, there should not be any pressure to drink. Nonetheless, when the option of drinking non-alcoholic beverages was offered, it was frequently done in a humorous way:

> Martine: There was no one who did not drink. Everybody drank alcohol all the time, in a way. But there was no pressure from the buddies, or, there *was*. They said ''We'll meet there, and then we can have a beer or a soda'', but they laughed the ''soda'' away, because they were told to say it so that everyone should be included. We joked about it, also on the first day.

The majority drank here, as when graduating from high school. Many of our informants drank almost daily, experienced frequent hangovers and estimated their usual intake to the equivalent of a bottle of wine for each session, sometimes more. Here too, drinking was a central and a normal activity, as the places participants socialised in on campus were primarily student-run pubs, a large party tent, a large leisure complex with bars on all floors and campus lawns where they often brought their own beer to barbeques or bought it from an outdoor bar set up for the occasion.

However, the way participants drank in the two contexts differed. The high school students calculated their intake in order to get ''enough'' to stay intoxicated throughout the night. For the freshers, some calculation was also necessary, but for a different reason; they were concerned about how others might perceive their drinking and behaviour. Three months earlier, showing up drunk at school had been an expression of commitment to the underlying hedonistic value of the graduation celebrations; now, at university, participants could be afraid of appearing visibly drunk, even at the party itself. Tale had graduated from high school the same year, and she described participating at one major event during the graduation celebrations: ''You're drunk all the time, often

before six in the evening. You drink constantly from Friday to Sunday''. She told us she had been ''hungover all the time'' during the introduction weeks and that she drank at least a bottle of wine on each occasion. Despite this, her attitude towards intoxication was very different:

> You didn't want to be that girl who got known because she crashed out at 10 in the evening. You think about how you want to present yourself the first time you're at a party with these people, because you're [going to be] studying with them for three years, most likely.

Tale did not want to get a reputation as ''that girl'' who drank in a way seen as uncontrolled (within this context), as it would complicate her relationship with other students she would be spending a lot of time with in the future. Later in the interview, she argued her point by telling a cautionary tale about a fellow student: ''Who doesn't regret being pissed and vomiting in the taxi? Of course you regret it, particularly when people bring it up all the time''. Other informants gave similar reasons. They did not want their fellow students to ''get the impression that you're such a drunkard'', as a male participant phrased it. The normative expectation that participants should drink did not entail a normative acceptance of visible drunkenness. Mette also drank up to a bottle of wine at each drinking session, but when a fellow participant ''had drunk a little more beer, and everybody noticed'', as she told us, ''everybody realised that you should control yourself, or else you'll be like her, who just drinks a lot and babbles, and everybody's just, 'Oh, my God, what's happening?'''

This fear of being seen as failing to live up to contextual norms regarding self-control was evidently a fear of failing to become integrated with other students; that is, failing to live up to the value priority of the party practice. On the other hand, drinking was also the primary *means* of integration. Participants thus faced the challenge of making friends through drinking without getting too drunk.

> Elin: When we began drinking, the atmosphere got better right away. It was very nice, there were drinking games and icebreaker games that were quite fun. You get to know each other quickly then, with alcohol in the picture. It relaxes the atmosphere.

Presented as a matter of fact, alcohol is seen as easing the interaction between strangers, enabling them to chat and play in a more relaxed way. This motivates drinking under these circumstances, even if it is controlled. However, this caution changed the more the participants got to know each other. Towards the end of the two introduction weeks, when participants had established firmer social relations, a form of partying guided more by hedonistic values was gradually allowed to emerge.

When it came to sexual relations, partying during the introduction weeks of university differed radically from that of the graduation celebration. Informants provided a few stories about hooking up, but usually they were about a fellow student, not themselves. The term they used was ''flirting'', rather than ''making out'' or ''hooking up'', and they included reference to longer-term prospects, such as whether this was the beginning of a relationship. Informants had little more to say about sexual relations other than that they had heard gossip about participants who had flirted or had ''something going on''. Syver noted that there was ''not much of a sexual atmosphere'' within his group, and that nobody hooked up or ''at least it wasn't noticeable, like turning into a big thing. It hasn't led to any relationships yet, whether romantic or sexual''. The female participants shared this view. Kari found the men in her group rather effeminate, and therefore not very interesting, but also argued that ''I wouldn't have thought it was very nice to know that I was going to be in the same class with this person for three years if it went wrong. Or *when* it goes wrong, you could say''. Other participants provided the same reason for the relative absence of hook ups. An additional concern was that they could get a reputation. Kalle drew on the same reason that motivated the control of their alcohol consumption, speculating that for both women and men, ''I don't think people want to be seen as loose''. As a clear expression of this concern, a relatively high proportion of hook-up stories at university included some reference to regret, embarrassment or attempts to hide their experiences. Ingeborg claimed she had ''many embarrassing experiences'' from the introduction weeks:

> What's most embarrassing to think about is an evening where I managed to make out with three boys, like, just because it was interesting. ''Yes, you got that kind of lips. How do you make out?'' That was awfully embarrassing.

Ingeborg had acted in a way that was normal and virtuous within the context of the graduation celebration; however, during the introduction weeks it was a source of intense embarrassment, indicating that she perceived her behaviour as a deficiency in her self-presentation rather than as a virtuous participation (Haidt, 2003, pp. 859–860; Tangney et al., 2007, pp. 359–360). Whether motivated by the prospect of ''awkward'' situations in class over the following years or fear of gossip and a ''bad reputation'', what guided this restrained sexual behaviour was the value priority of integration. The new students would rather establish positive social relations than risk alienation for fleeting sexual satisfaction. In contrast, such concerns about long-term prospects and reputations regarding sexual experiences were more or less absent in the high school graduation data.

Compared with the graduation celebration, the freshers spent much less time in public spaces, such as parks, urban squares and streets. High school students party in public because they do not have access to the ''night-time economy'' (Fjær et al., 2015). On campus, the university students had many self-organised bars and a large party tent housed a bar and seating around long tables for hundreds of students. The student association also runs a leisure complex with bars, concert halls and a club. Most evenings, participants met to drink and chat in these self-governed spaces. We observed that for much of this time they sat down, most of them drinking while getting to know each other and talking about the education they were about to start. It all looked like a rather orderly night out, with some going down to the club to dance and hardly anyone visibly hooking up.

At times, the students moved through or stayed in public spaces while we were with them during our fieldwork. When they were drinking in outdoor areas on campus, they were sitting in circles on the lawns, chatting. During an organised pub crawl, participants walked in groups from pub to pub and queued to get in, chatting with each other. Even if the campus was full of students, the most transgressive element about it was that there were so many people on campus so late in the evening. In the interviews, most stories about transgressions involved recollections of their experience with the graduation celebration. The few exceptions to this appeared conform compared with the graduation celebration. Vigdis described how one in her group had brought a boom box and they had danced a few hundred meters from a pre-party in a park to the student leisure complex. Ola was probed for stories about ''funny'' or ''embarrassing'' episodes:

> Once, this guy in my group was taking the metro, and he was very drunk and was talking to everyone. It was very funny, because they didn't want to talk to him. So we teased him a little for that.

These episodes could be construed as breaches of everyday expectations regarding behaviour in public, but they appear rather insignificant compared with transgressions that are common during the graduation celebration, such as public sex, vandalisation and public urination.

The graduation celebration and the introduction weeks to university constitute strikingly different drinking contexts. In the latter, most norms of the moral order of everyday life remain in effect. As Henrik noted, referring to a student pub, ''If anyone exercised that [graduation celebration] culture in *The Basement*, they would have been sanctioned!'' As Henrik implied, this transposition of behaviour from the graduation context to the introduction weeks was merely hypothetical. The new students expected themselves and others to behave in a controlled manner, they judged and gossiped about those who approached the boundaries of expected behaviour and they planned their behaviour out of fear of gaining a bad reputation and experiencing negative moral emotions. This generated a social order that resembled that of everyday life much more than that of the graduation celebration. In contrast to the high school students' emphasis on irresponsible youthfulness, Morten associated the order of the introduction weeks with being ''grown-up'':

> *Interviewer: Did you experience it as another high school graduation?*
> Morten: No, I didn't. It wasn't like that. It was a different kind of party. Less messing around, less sex, less... yeah, a little more serious atmosphere than the high school graduation. Even if you drink a lot, it is a little more grown-up.

The differences between these two party practices stem from their different value priorities. One emphasises hedonism, the other integration. During the graduation celebration, highly integrated groups collectively aim at realising hedonistic ideals, resulting in frequent and extreme intoxication, hook-up sessions and disruption in public spaces. During their introduction to the university, groups of students who are initially strangers drink, chat and play games in order to establish social relations. While the latter behaved in ways resembling more hedonistically oriented party practices, they were not acting in this way primarily for its intrinsic value – they had fun to make friends.

Discussion

Recent developments in morality research (Haidt, 2012; Hitlin & Vaisey, 2013; Schwartz, 2006) enable a study of drunken comportment as morally ordered, decades after MacAndrew and Edgerton associated ''moral'' with the ''conventional understanding'' they criticised (1969, p. 14). The dual presence of transgression and order within different drinking practices is an expression of differences between the moral orders of these practices and the moral order of everyday life. Much apparently transgressive behaviour at parties is expected and valued, which again makes it predictable and ordered. Our analysis of the Norwegian high school graduation celebration revealed one such modified moral order with regard to drinking and intoxication, sexual behaviour and behaviour in public. However, people may participate in a multitude of party practices, and accordingly master a multitude of departures from the moral order of everyday life. In MacAndrew and Edgerton's words, the ''societally sanctioned freedom'' (1969, p. 89) found in drunken *time outs* (1969, p. 90) are not intra-culturally homogenous phenomena, because social regulations of drunken comportment are not based on single *within-limits clauses* (1969, p. 67).

Inter-practice differences in drunken comportment within a society are primarily an expression of differences in the value priorities structuring the moral order of different drinking practices. We argued this point through a comparison of the value priority and corresponding norms of the graduation celebration with those of another drinking context – the university introduction weeks. While both include heavy drinking, there are marked differences in the value priorities of the two practices – hedonism and integration, respectively – with corresponding normative regulations. This point about value *priorities* at the level of social practices does not mean that other values are unimportant and ignored completely in either context. Values such as security and self-control are important in everyday life, but certain contexts enable and activate a structured reordering of value priorities where they are not the primary structuring values (Seligman & Katz, 1996; Verplanken & Holland, 2002).

We strategically sampled the practices analysed here in order to study differences in drinking practices within the same culture and cohort. Our basic point – that the normative structures of drinking practices are embedded in practice-specific value priorities that motivates individuals to plan and attend these events – should also apply to less clear-cut drinking contexts, such as pubs, clubs, concerts, holiday resorts, stag and hen parties, work parties and so on. Many people drink in the context of sports events where the prioritised value may be loyalty (to a team). Likewise, drinking practices centring on real ale may be based on a priority of authenticity (of taste), and peer groups going to

clubs and bars may prioritise sexual relations (establishing them). Transposing the virtuous form of drunken behaviour within one such practice to another will then entail transgressions of the local norms against, say, snobbishness, sexual attention or boisterousness. These practices are embedded into the more encompassing value priorities of societies at large (Schwartz, 2006).

Studying individual differences is the next step in examining the relation between values and drunken behaviour. Individuals can organise and participate in different practices at different times, and may base their decisions to do so on the value priorities of the practices. Compatible with the conceptual apparatus utilised in this article, an individual's drunken behaviour can be understood as an expression of the values that ''make up [a] part of the self-concept'' (Verplanken & Holland, 2002, p. 444). Most participants will attempt to live up to the value priority of the practice, but precisely because ''the opinion of the majority carries normative or moral force'' (Ross & Nisbett, 2011, p. 45), this also enables subversive positioning based on alternative value priorities. We have not aimed at explaining *how* individuals come to hold certain values, but previous research has identified mass media (Daykin et al., 2009), social media (Egan & Moreno, 2011) and story-telling (Fjær, 2012) as channels for the dissemination of the norms and values of party practices. Individuals can also exploit the moral order of a drinking practice. There is an important conceptual line between accepted behaviour and behaviour that might be prevalent but is not derived from the central values of the practice. For example, some participants may use parties with a hedonistic orientation as occasions to sexually harass or exploit others, but even if this is prevalent, it does not mean that participants accept it. It does not contribute to sustaining the moral order of the practice, contrary to expected negative sanctions.

Declaration of interest

The authors report no conflicts of interest.

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II

"I'M NOT ONE OF THOSE GIRLS":

Boundary-Work and the Sexual Double Standard in a Liberal Hookup Context

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Sexual morality is not keeping up with the new sexual practices of young people, even in cultures oriented toward gender equality. The Norwegian high school graduation celebration constitutes an exceptionally liberal context for sexual practices. Many of the 18-year-old participants in this three-week-long celebration engage in "hookup" activities, involving kissing, fondling, and sexual intercourse. Through an analysis of qualitative interviews with 25 women and 16 men, we argue that while they avoided overt slut-shaming, the morally abject position of the "slut" was still sustained by implication. The young women drew symbolic boundaries against anonymous other women who failed to value safety, hygiene, and self-control. This boundary-work was combined with declarations of tolerance of hookup practices, reflecting a sexually liberal culture geared toward gender equality. That young women who hooked up also drew boundaries against "other" women indicates a lack of alternative gender beliefs that allow young women to positively associate with hooking up. The young men also drew symbolic boundaries in their talk about sex, but enjoyed more freedom in their moral positioning. Although the liberal context was evident, the gendered difference in sexual boundary-work may contribute to the persistence of a sexual double standard among young people.

Keywords: *hookup; slut-shaming; sexual double standard; symbolic boundaries; boundary-work*

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The second half of the twentieth century witnessed a sexual revolution, where sexual activity was no longer morally restricted to heterosexual, married couples (Smith 1994; Widmer, Treas, and Newcomb 1998). However, while some expectations of greater gender equality have been fulfilled, researchers still find traces of a sexual double standard. Even within modern "hookup cultures," heterosexual men are expected to be sexually active while women who are equally active risk stigmatization through "bad reputations" and "slut-shaming" (Bogle 2008; Crawford and Popp 2003). This gender difference in moral ideals might not be primarily a consequence of a "battle of the sexes" (Hamilton and Armstrong 2009), where sexual practices, discourses, and ideals are dominated by a hegemonic masculinity (Currier 2013); it is likely that a new sexual double standard, one that does not center on the moral difference between marital and extramarital sex (Armstrong, England, and Fogarty 2012), is also a consequence of status struggles among women (Armstrong et al. 2014; Kitzinger 1995).

Although the sexual double standard is strongly established, it may be challenged under particular circumstances, either in sexually liberal cultures or in exceptional liminal contexts where people regard ordinary sexual norms as suspended. One event that combines these two traits is the Norwegian high school graduation celebration, which takes place within an already liberal Nordic sexual culture (Haavio-Mannila, Kontula, and Rotkirch 2002) where values of gender equality and sexual tolerance are high. In the course of these celebrations, sexual transgressions are prevalent. For example, it is relatively common to hook up with different partners during the same evening, and participants describe such behavior as immune to the usual symbolic sanctions.

In this cultural study of sexual morality we ask what happens to the sexual double standard under such exceptionally liberal circumstances. We employ insights from social psychology and sociology to explore the moral ideals among women and men in one of the most gender-equal countries in the world and in a specific context where promiscuity is perceived as common. We show how young women in this context balance between boundary-work toward "loose women" on the one hand and "moralizers" on the other. The former is similar to traditional slut-shaming, although subtler, while the latter reflects the importance of the liberal context. Men's side of this new double standard involves a greater freedom to associate with different moral ideals.

SEXUAL MORALITY AND SYMBOLIC BOUNDARIES

In all Western countries, adolescent sexuality has increasingly been regarded as "a positive dimension" of human development even as sexual risk management strategies have been emphasized (Schalet 2011; Tolman and McClelland 2011, 251). Most gender differences in sexual behaviors and attitudes have been reduced especially in countries with a high level of gender equality, such as the Nordic ones (Petersen and Hyde 2010). Among young people, hooking up is a new feature that supplements traditional romantic attachments (Bogle 2008, 20-23; Garcia et al. 2012). The term "hooking up" is used to denote anything from kissing to intercourse, but a defining dimension seems to be lack of relationship commitment (Currier 2013; Lewis et al. 2012). The practice has been described as "an innovative new social form at the edge of change in intimate heterosexual unions" (Ridgeway 2011, 184) and is not as clearly scripted as previous relationship practices (Bogle 2008, 182).

Sexual morality may not be keeping up with this new practice. Although marriage is no longer seen as the only proper context for sexual activity, gendered sexual expectations (Gill 2008; Ridgeway 2011; Ronen 2010) might support a new double standard (Armstrong, England, and Fogarty 2012; Crawford and Popp 2003). This is the case when "men are expected to desire and pursue sexual opportunities regardless of context" (Hamilton and Armstrong 2009, 593), while women are expected to take the more passive role as "sexual gatekeepers" (O'Sullivan and Byers 1992). These gendered standards are sanctioned when women are denigrated on the basis of presumed sexual activity in the practice of slut-shaming (Armstrong et al. 2014; Ringrose and Renold 2012), while similar terms for men—like "stud" or "player"—may instead have positive connotations (Bogle 2008, 104-5).

Through symbolic boundary-work, people may underline some aspect of their social identity to claim a position in a "moral space" (Hitlin 2007; Taylor 1989). Lamont and Molnár (2002) define symbolic boundaries as "conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize objects, people, practices and even time and space" (168) and boundary-work as the "kinds of typification systems" and "inferences concerning similarities and differences" that "groups mobilize to define who they are" (171). Through boundary-work, people explicate and emphasize similarities and distinctions between themselves and others (i.e., specific persons, groups, or hypothetical people).

The development and maintenance of symbolic boundaries reflect perceived disagreements regarding the importance of certain values and how to live up to them. Values are general conceptions of what is good that constitute the "key orientation points for our moral assessments of self and others" (Hitlin 2007, 249). Therefore, people can position themselves morally by drawing boundaries against others whom they construe as prioritizing the wrong values (Struch and Schwartz 1989). When women are expected to passively attract men, for example, they can position themselves by slut-shaming other women (Kitzinger 1995, 189; see also Espiritu 2001). Similarly, when men are expected to take the active part in sexual interaction, they may draw boundaries against men who are not sexually active (Bogle 2008, 104). An analysis of symbolic boundaries may therefore reveal gendered expectations that support the sexual double standard, even in liberal contexts.

The Nordic Context and Norwegian High School Graduation Celebration

The Nordic sexual culture is usually perceived as "liberal" (Haavio-Mannila, Kontula, and Rotkirch 2002). Adolescent and women's sexuality is met with greater social acceptance than in many other countries. Increasingly, "sexual well-being," defined as perceived satisfaction with one's sex life, is seen as important for an individual's general life quality (Træen and Schaller 2010). People in these countries also have accepting attitudes toward nudity and pornography (Kontula and Haavio-Mannila 1995; Lewin 2000). Sexuality is included in school curricula, where themes such as contraception, abortion, and homosexuality are covered in a matter-of-fact manner. Traditional moral aspects of sexuality are usually downplayed, and the ideal seems to be that young people should make autonomous, well-informed choices about their own sex lives (Nordberg 2013).

The Norwegian high school graduation celebration offers an even more liberal context for sexual exploration and experiences than found in the general population (Fjær and Pedersen 2015). Every year the majority of graduating cohorts take part in the celebration, which draws on academic ritual traditions going back several centuries. Participants go by the untranslatable name *russ* and wear a uniform of unicolored overalls and special caps with a tassel attached by a long cord. From late April until the National Day on May 17, participants attend alcohol-fueled parties dominated by loud, electronic music, heavy intoxication, dancing, and hookups.

On the weekends, these parties take place at commercially organized events that may draw more than 10,000 participants. Before the celebration, many participants buy vans or buses that they refurbish and equip with powerful sound systems and disco lights. These vehicles offer autonomy by enabling participants to party while a hired chauffeur drives them around (Fjær, Pedersen, and Sandberg, forthcoming). Formal members of these groups are exclusively either men or women, but friends and romantic interests of either sex are often invited to party with them.

Hookups have become a central ingredient of these parties, meaning that many will kiss, fondle, and sometimes have intercourse. Each year, an elected group of participants issues a code that rewards different transgressions—typically revolving around drinking and sex—with the permission to attach an item corresponding to the transgression to the cord of the cap. One traditional challenge is called "the pinecone," which refers to the item the transgressors may wear. "Taking the pinecone" means having intercourse with another participant in the open, sometimes with a witness. Because the celebration centers on transgressions involving activities that are associated with adults, it is sometimes interpreted as a modern rite of passage to adulthood (Sande 2002).

The celebration is an exceptionally liberal context embedded in a society where the values of gender equality are strong. As such, it is a useful case for exploring the possible persistence of a sexual double standard when it might be expected to be at its weakest. We examine the moral implications of the symbolic boundaries that young women draw in their talk about sex during the celebration and then compare this boundary-work with that of men. This analysis reveals the existence of a subtly communicated sexual double standard, even in a context geared toward sexual liberty and gender equality.

METHODS

Respondents may frequently offer accounts that serve to underline social distinctions rather than accurate descriptions of prior events. Accordingly, qualitative interviewing is suitable for the study of symbolic boundaries, and the evaluative standards that underlie them may be readily identifiable in interview data (Vaisey and Miles 2014). The present study is based on interviews with 41 youths: 25 women and 16 men. Most of the respondents reported heterosexual experiences, and none openly identified as lesbian, gay, or bisexual. All were from the 1994 birth cohort,

and were 18 years old or had recently turned 19 at the time of the interview. The study was conducted in accordance with the guidelines put forward by the Norwegian National Research Ethics Committees and approved by the Norwegian Social Science Data Services. Respondents were primarily recruited during ethnographic fieldwork at high school graduation celebration parties in Oslo. Two researchers (Kine Paulsen and Eivind Grip Fjær, both in their late twenties) attended several parties during the celebration held in the spring of 2013. These included a ritual initiation where participants were baptized in beer, a major commercial event, and "rolling" with buses at night (Fjær, Pedersen, and Sandberg, forthcoming).

The researchers were easily identified as outsiders because they wore regular attire and were visibly older than the uniformed participants. In addition, there were stories circulating about men seeking to sexually exploit drunk women. To avoid suspicion of such intentions, Kine usually initiated contact with participants. Fieldwork consisted mostly of short informal interviews and observing participants drink, dance, hook up, and mingle to meet fellow participants. At times, loud music prevented anyone from talking, which made eavesdropping difficult. While some participants, often drunk, were eager to talk, others seemed more preoccupied and lost interest quickly. The richest data for this study were therefore generated from interviews, which were conducted in cafes in the greater Oslo area by the same researchers and lasted from 45 minutes to two hours.

The respondents were encouraged to talk freely and were asked to provide stories of concrete experiences with alcohol use and sexual encounters during the celebration. Because the majority of the high school graduation cohorts take part in this celebration, participants are not a homogeneous group, and their experiences vary greatly. Because all interviews included accounts of actual parties, those who did not hook up had still observed other participants' hookups. Respondents' reports of their observations of others, regardless of their own participation, often included some spontaneous evaluation. In this study, we draw on these parts of the interviews in particular to assess the symbolic boundaries that they draw and their underlying moral ideals.

Interviews were transcribed and coded using a broad range of codes that were grouped by topics. The code group relating to sexual experiences included detailed codes on flirting and making out, oral sex and intercourse, and sexualized violence and sexual norms. In this article, we analyze talk about sexual experiences in a broad sense that includes kissing and fondling. We identified accounts of sexual experiences where

informants implicitly or explicitly evaluated themselves or others. A gender difference surfaced early on: The young women seemed more concerned than men about what anonymous strangers—"others"—did. Subsequent analysis examined what the informants were *doing* when they evaluated others and, more specifically, what kind of boundaries they drew between themselves and others, and what norms and values were exposed in this way.

SEXUAL BOUNDARY-WORK IN A LIBERAL HOOKUP CONTEXT

Many respondents described the celebration as a liberal context for hookup activities. However, many of the young women also drew symbolic boundaries in their talk about sex, one against "other" young women and another toward intolerant moralists. The tension between these boundaries points to difficulties with combining hooking up with being a moral young woman. Men did not seem to face similar strains.

The Liberal Hookup Context

Hookups were a central ingredient of parties during the celebration. When Frederikke[1] described those parties she attended, she told us, "All the girl-buses bring boys and all the boy-buses bring girls. So it ends up with, like, everyone making out with everyone, and it's like a total 'sharing is caring.'" Under these circumstances, intimate interactions did not involve any mutual commitment, whether their temporary partners were friends, acquaintances, or strangers. Knut noted, "Suddenly the person you hooked up with two seconds ago is gone. An hour later you see that person [hooking up] with another person. Or [find] yourself [hooking up] with another person." These encounters could also lead to intercourse in adjacent forests, positively framed by the context as "taking the pinecone."

Respondents were familiar with slut discourse, and claimed that if anyone were to transpose their behavior from the celebration to a regular party, others would label them as a "slut" or a "player." However, as Helene told us, the context of the celebration offered a moral permission to participate in exceptionally liberal hookup sessions:

> I think people are crazier during the celebration just because it's the celebration. Maybe it's a little stupid, but it's really quite nice too, because then you have something to blame it on. For example, having sex in the bus, in front of everyone else, or perhaps having sex with five different [people] in one

> night, or hooking up with eight different boys on the same bus in one night. If you're at a [regular] girl party, you don't hook up with all the boys there—then you'll just be labeled a whore. But if you're out on a bus and make out with all the boys, it's just "Yeah, that's hilarious, because it's the celebration."

Although Helene seems to exaggerate the numbers here, her point is clear: The celebration allowed for sexual explorations with hardly any risk of moral sanctioning. Playing on the similarity between "let loose" and "be loose," which is the same in Norwegian, Zahra noted, "People don't judge you that way when you're *russ*, because it's a lot easier to let loose. But that's because everyone's loose, then—if I may say so!"

The direct and overt slut-shaming reported from U.S. campuses (Armstrong et al. 2014) was not present in our interviews. Words like "loose" (Norwegian *løs*), "whore," and "slut" (Norwegian *hore* and, at times, the English "slut") were, with very few exceptions, used only to describe *other* people's labeling, implicitly distancing themselves from the use of these terms. Talking about women, Erik noted, "If you hook up with, say, five or six guys at a regular party, you almost get labeled a whore. But during the celebration it was almost completely normal and everyone did it. Therefore, they dodged those labels afterward too".

At first glance, then, the celebration might appear to offer individual autonomy, sexual pleasure, and temporary freedom from conventional sexual morality, for both young women and men. However, the double standard that they referred to outside of the celebration was not completely erased within it. It was communicated in more subtle ways, limiting the temporary suspension of sexual morals.

Boundaries against the Irresponsible, Indecent, and Uncontrolled

Many young women emphasized the difference between themselves or their group of friends and other women when talking about sexual experiences during the celebration. When asked about the transgressions of her friends, Anja diverted the focus to anonymous other women:

> My bus was quite moderate, but you hear about people. . . At Tryvann [a commercial event] there are girls who just walk around in the woods. It's unbelievable. They just ask boys, "Want to fuck?" and then it just happens, when they [the boys] are peeing, for example. We were having a blast, and of course there were some [in my group] who had, like, sex in the forest, and then they came back to the bus, and everyone laughed at it, but there weren't any very loose girls on my bus, so there wasn't so much of it.

Although Anja expressed her support of the underlying hedonistic values of the celebration, she presented herself and her group as moderate in contrast to other "loose girls." She emphasized the degrading status of the act by associating it with something dirty ("when they are peeing"). Deciding whether a behavior is clean or not may reduce ambiguity when conflicting moral assessments are possible (Douglas 2002, 165). Sex in the open was a part of the celebration, but the possible immorality of having sex in this forest was underlined by its uncleanliness, making it a useful reference in moral boundary-work. Astrid told us, "The forest at Tryvann is infamous because everyone lies around there, fucking. So I'm sure there are many who regret it, because it was so open. It's very disgusting when you lie in the forest with two others on top of you, or behind." The disgust Astrid reports is a common emotional reaction to breaches of sexual norms (Haidt et al. 1997), and merely reporting it underlines her moral distance to the actions that took place in this space. Similarly, Julie noted, "We are more like: 'We just don't do that [have sex in the open].' At least not in the forest at Tryvann, because everyone can see you there." Despite their mythical status, the anonymous others who ostensibly had sex in this space served as a useful reference for the young women to position themselves against.

These moral boundaries were often related to a concern for self-control and security, which resonated with stories about rapes circulated among participants and in the media. Helene had once had sex in the open during the celebration. When she noted the priority she placed on safety, and that her partner was a friend, she simultaneously contrasted it with that of other participants: "I'm not completely for having sex with strangers during the celebration. I don't think it's completely safe. I like to feel safe." Although Ellinor hooked up with "friends from school, just innocent stuff," she told us, "Many see it like it's once in a lifetime where you can let loose and don't think about the consequences. But there are consequences to what you do. You could get an STD, for example."

Moreover, to emphasize their agency, those who chose to *not* hook up could draw symbolic boundaries against those who did.[2] Birgitte said, "I'm not the person who would do anything while drunk anyway. There are many who are, like, 'Oh, you didn't hook [up] with anyone?' But I'm just, like, I don't want to. I stay away from it." Similarly, Isabelle underlined her disinterest: "I haven't [hooked up] as much as all the others. I'm the person who doesn't chase boys. I don't have time for it; I'd rather dance with my friends and have fun than spend my time hooking up with a boy." In this way, the symbolic boundaries the young women drew signaled autonomy or concern for personal safety and hygiene.

Although they could refer to legitimate concerns, the young women's boundary-work implicated a morally abject position. These hypothetical, anonymous, or mythical "others" (Wetherell and Edley 1999, 342) were supposedly motivated by an exclusive focus on sexual pleasure. In this way, the young women drew symbolic boundaries by underlining value priorities. Unlike "others," they did not participate *just* to have fun through having sex; they had fun in other ways and held additional values, such as security, hygiene, privacy, decency, and self-control. This connection between the presentation of a modest self and a distancing from morally stereotyped "others" was evident in Lena's account:

> [I hooked up with] people that I maybe was a good friend of, or not a good friend of, but that I've maybe had an eye for before. It's not, like, just because you're *russ* you're going to hook up with most people. I'm not like that, in any case. I think it's a bit stupid. A kiss now and then, that's fine, for my part. That's my limit. There are people who hook up and take the pinecone, and are going to, like, take the whole forest of pinecones! And then you're not thinking about the consequences, I think. So I've really been quite against that. So, yeah, there were a few hookups, if you can call it that, but nothing more than that.

In contrast to those only interested in having sex, Lena implied that she was able both to place a priority on having fun *and* to think about her safety when it was necessary. "Other" women were perceived to act spontaneously on hedonistic values, and while this was not in itself wrong—after all, the whole celebration was about having fun—acting *only* on their desires was deemed wrong (Risman and Schwartz 2002, 20).

This boundary-work was based on an *asymmetry* in the young women's knowledge about, and perception of, their own and other people's values. Because people draw their knowledge about others from the limited behavior they can observe, they tend to see others as less complex. This generates asymmetries in how people perceive themselves and how they perceive others (Pronin 2008). Mostly, these others who served as a convenient contrast were strangers whom they had observed, people whom they had heard gossip about, or characters in stories circulating among the participants. Therefore, these others could easily be associated with the moral figure of the "immoral and unruly woman" (Skeggs 2005, 967). Resembling the attribution of "lack of self-restraint" in dehumanizing processes (Haslam 2006), this perceived "value dissimilarity" (Struch and Schwartz 1989) to a morally abject position provided a contrast that distinguished the storyteller as modest. Although more subtly communicated

than in overt slut-shaming, these symbolic boundaries still delimited a similar position to the morally abject position of the "slut."

The implicit prescription seems to be that women should always exert *self-control* by controlling their own sexual desires (which is not the same as denying them). This expectation is gendered because men did not face similar moral proscriptions, and therefore it also supports a sexual double standard. However, there were other and more progressive elements underlying these expectations as well. Notably, young women did not advocate an ideal of female passivity. Neither was the relationship to sexual partners (necessarily) included in their judgments; the failure of the immoral others did not lie in seeking pleasure outside of stable relationships (Crawford and Popp 2003; Risman and Schwartz 2002), in failing to act as sexual "gatekeepers"—restricting men's initiation (O'Sullivan and Byers 1992)—or even in having too much sex. Still, the boundaries against immoral others revealed that traditional gender expectations were established moral orientation points.

In the interviews, the young women did not develop similar judgments of the young men's behavior. One likely reason for this was that drawing boundaries against fellow women was more pressing, as they were "proximate stranger[s]" (Skeggs 2005, 970; see also Fiske 2011, 80-83), with whom the young women would not risk being associated. The "other" women were therefore "transformed into a recognizable figure: the figure of the constitutive moral limit in proximity" (Skeggs 2005, 970). Because the young men were not expected to follow the same rules, they were not judged in a similar way.

Boundaries toward Moralizers

The symbolic boundaries against "other" women's lack of self-restraint might give the impression of a strict and heavily moralized practice. However, boundaries were drawn not only against sexual behavior but also against intolerant and moralistic attitudes. That is, the young women simultaneously distanced themselves from the stereotyped "unruly women" *and* the moralization of them. These moral positions could be combined quite subtly. When Zhara was asked whether any of her friends had "taken the pinecone," she replied, "As long as they enjoy it, it's fine with me. But it's, like . . . I don't know, I feel . . . One [friend] did it with her guy, and that's fine, but another just did it on random." One reason behind this dual boundary-work might be that it was harder to associate close friends than anonymous "others" with the "slut" figure (Korobov

2006, 511; Pronin 2008, 1180). Camilla's close friend Karoline had casual sex with a stranger and subsequently worried about getting a reputation as a "whore." The two friends discussed this several times. The incident had all the characteristics of a story about the irresponsible, indecent, and uncontrolled female "other": Karoline had sex with a stranger in the forest at a major commercially organized event, approached him with the sole intention of having sex, and never met him again.

> Like, she who took the pinecone, I could not in my wildest dreams have done that, not at all. So, she did it, [and] then I think, like, "OK, then she chose it herself, she probably wanted to." It's not like I think, "Oh, Karoline, you idiot, you shouldn't have." I don't really think that much about what others are doing. As long as they in a way think it's fine, then [as far as I'm concerned] they get to do it like that.

Camilla drew a symbolic boundary, but underlined that prioritizing having sex was a choice that her friend was free to make. Although most of the young women never condemned their friends' sexual morals, some, like Camilla, struggled to see what kind of pleasure their friends got out of fleeting sexual experiences with strangers. Nevertheless, with close friends, their sexual experiences were not primarily material for boundary-work but for playful banter (Fjær 2012; Workman 2001).

In contrast to the negative positioning against "other" women, a claim to tolerance is a positive association with a social value (Hitlin 2007). Not appearing intolerant may be particularly important in the liberal Nordic context, especially during the high school graduation celebration, as it reduces the apparent discrepancy between participating actively in a transgressive party practice and judging negatively the transgressions of other participants (Tsang 2002). Nille, who had invested much time and money in the celebration, was perhaps the most elaborate in drawing boundaries against other participants' sexual practices. Nevertheless, she supplemented her distancing from others with repeated declarations of tolerance:

> I'm not one of those girls who walk around taking anyone. I'm not someone who just hooks up, as they say. I don't see the celebration as an opportunity to get laid, I don't. To be completely honest, I think it's completely ridiculous, pathetic! I'm more like, [I] want to make memories with my friends and just have lots of fun. I'm not criticizing those who choose to do it that way. But I would not have done it myself. I just don't see any dignity in it. I have a friend who was just completely wild during the celebration. Right? I don't

> judge her in any way. But I would not have done it myself. Lying in the forest getting it on with someone you don't know, I think it's way over the top.

Nille's simultaneous judgment and claim to tolerance—reminiscent of the notorious phrase "I'm not a racist, but . . . "—might be a response to the possible stigma associated with being old-fashioned, boring, or moralistic when faced with an "innovative new social form" (Ridgeway 2011, 184). Hookup cultures are more ambiguous, not as clearly scripted as previous relational practices (Bogle 2008). Although this liberal context left individual participants to explore a range of possible sexual experiences, they were also held responsible as they navigated unclear moral demands.

Hooking Up While Staying Decent

Despite the freedom the context offered, it did not seem to provide the young women with a way to integrate hooking up with their sense of a (female) moral self (Hitlin 2007). Although they were allowed to hook up, they seemed unable to find a way to associate with this practice without adding conditionals and drawing moral boundaries. This combination of participation in a celebration they described as particularly liberal with the drawing of symbolic boundaries against a gendered and stigmatized moral position points to a lack of "alternative cultural beliefs about gender" (Ridgeway 2009, 150) where hooking up is *fully* compatible with being a woman.

In our interviews with the young women who were particularly active in hooking up, this discrepancy was striking. Jenny told us that when she found someone attractive "often you walk over and kiss a little and make out a little with that person, take him home with you maybe" and that this "happened a lot during the celebration." She described her group as being popular among men and that they enjoyed turning down men who were not attractive enough. She also had a friend who, she repeatedly noted, was not her boyfriend but with whom she had sex during the celebration, including once in a forest "just to have some fun." Although she could describe her behavior and claim to enjoy it, earlier in the interview she said:

> Jenny: Of course, I didn't take it all the way; I still took it all the way, but I had limits for myself, then. Some . . . not everyone had that.
> Eivind: What limits are you thinking about, then?
> Jenny: Like, not having sex in public. Many did it in the bushes and the bus and, like, you turned around and there were some [people] standing there and . . . That's, like, not exactly my style. But of course, [I] had a great time.

Although Jenny actively participated in the hookup part of the celebration, rather than claim any positively defined moral position based on this participation, she negatively defined her moral position against something she was not. This boundary-work resembles "defensive othering" in that it accepts a standard that devalues her actions but deflects the potential stigma onto others (Schwalbe et al. 2000, 425). The "double bind" (Hamilton and Armstrong 2009) facing women who prefer to hook up might be not only a consequence of potential stigma, then, but a lack of alternative moral positions. When no generally accepted positive alternative for identification seems available, marking a distance to the readily available stereotype of the "loose" and "unruly" woman is a way to morally "make do" with familiar moral figures.

This pragmatic use of culturally available, gendered stereotypes (Ridgeway 2011; Swidler 1986; Wetherell and Edley 1999) was apparent in Julie's account. Every participant in the celebration earns a nickname, and hers had been "player": "I've been dealing with different boys, and what's funny is that when I was done with my ex I was with the boss on his bus shortly after. I enjoy messing with boys, to just mind-fuck them—nothing more. So then I was a 'player,' in a way." By calling her "player" her friends modeled their understanding of her adoption of the non-committing standards of hookup culture on the categorization of *men* who also do so. When Kine subsequently pulled in the possibility of a moral evaluation, Julie both alluded to having hooked up with others and indicated a moral boundary between her group and other girls ("cats"). Coming from the affluent Westside, she drew this boundary along a class line:

> Kine: You didn't have a [boyfriend] before the celebration?
> Julie: No, I had more of a fuck friend [laughing].
> Kine: Did he think it was OK that you were messing around with others?
> Julie: Yeah. He's in the army, so what he doesn't know, he's better off not knowing. Really, nothing much happened, none of the girls [on my bus] . . . Very few Westside buses did anything like "Wow! What have you been up to?" Right? No one were, like, wildcats anyway.

Moral discourse was not keeping up with the sexual practices of these young women. The celebration had opened up for participation in hookup activities, but moral evaluations of these activities reverted to traditional standards—bundled in gendered stereotypes—rather than challenge them. Although the participants could enjoy the exceptional liberty the celebration offered, it was never meant to be anything but an exception. The three weeks it lasted was seemingly not enough for a development of alternatives to the gendered expectations that support the sexual double standard.

Men's Sexual Boundary-Work

A great variation in the young men's descriptions of sex during the celebration revealed that they saw several different moral positions as available. Consistent with men's ideals of the new sexual double standard, some young men saw the celebration as an opportunity for pursuit of sexual pleasure and bragged about their sexual experiences (Armstrong, England, and Fogarty 2012; Hamilton and Armstrong 2009). For these young men, it was a sign of virtuousness to have a number of hookups and sexual experiences, especially with attractive women. Christoffer told us that in his group of friends "we had two players who hooked up with a new person every day. We just thought it was fun. It's, like, awesome in a way." There was also a competitive dimension to it: "There was a competition within the group about being with the most girls. Then it was about finding the fine ones and avoiding the beasts, and if you got so desperate and went for a beast, that was rewarded anyway." Among these men, (hetero)sexual experiences indicated a virtuous position, in line with previous research (Flood 2008). Jon was the most defining example:

> It's not like if you haven't taken the pinecone, then you're lame or anything. It's not like that. But the general understanding is that you should have sex with someone during the celebration. It's very common. Practically everyone did it. Almost everyone had their mind set on it, so you've just got to have some guts to dare to try. Those who don't have any guts won't make it, but they normally wouldn't have done it anyway.

As in the dual boundary-work described earlier, Jon initially claimed to tolerate those who did not have sex during the celebration but went on to describe a general expectation that one should have sex. Jon took sexual desire for granted, and unambiguously positioned himself in opposition to those who did not have sex during the celebration.

Apart from Jon's account, there was little evidence that those with no or few sexual experiences were stigmatized by those wanting to claim a position as sexually active (Bogle 2008, 104), and few clear symbolic boundaries were drawn against those who had no or few sexual experiences. Some men adopted a middle position (Wetherell and Edley 1999, 343), neither fully embracing the stereotypical masculine position of unrestricted pursuit of sexual satisfaction nor distancing themselves from it. These men participated in and claimed to enjoy at least parts of the celebration, but also attempted to claim some distance from other parts,

including the altered sexual practices. Benjamin told us how participants perceived those who "took the pinecone":

> If you took the pinecone it was a little like "Hey!" [cheering]. In another way, it was a little gross. It was a little brave, and then in another way it was, like, "Why on earth did you do it?" So there were two sides to it in a way. I had a friend who took the pinecone [had sex in the open], but he never attached it [an actual pinecone] to his cap because he thought it was a bit embarrassing.

Other men more openly opposed the masculine ideals of the new sexual double standard. Didrik was in a relationship with a girlfriend during the celebration, and found that "relaxing" because participating in the hookup activities was not an option. Just after telling about a friend who had his sexual debut by "taking the pinecone," he noted, "I think it's very vulgar to set yourself the goal of having sex in that place, in that way or with so-and-so-many persons—to almost give awards for having sex." For these men, pursuing sexual pleasure was not regarded as positive regardless of context and motivation. George perceived himself to be more restrained regarding alcohol and sex than others. He described an occasion where he suddenly found himself surrounded by people having casual sex, and commented, "That's one of the social boundaries that I struggled to cross—to see it as completely normal. I thought it was incredibly strange that people were lying around me, because ordinarily it would be unthinkable [to them]." By including such moral boundaries in their accounts of sexual activities during the celebration, these men argued similarly to the women who also expressed dislike of other people's apparent lack of supplemental values or "limits." These accounts challenge a gendered expectancy that men will and should pursue sex in any context (Schalet 2011, 165-67; see also Korobov 2006).

The young men's moral evaluations of sexual practices were usually phrased in general terms, without implying gendered standards. They told stories—about themselves and others—involving kissing, casual sex, regretted sex, multiple partners, infidelity, and cynical strategies for increasing their chance of hooking up. Whether they condoned the behavior they described varied, but only two young men implied negative moral evaluations specifically about women. A marginal case, Kristian held that "having sex at Tryvann doesn't earn you any credit. For a boy it may be cool, but for a girl, it's degrading." However, like the women, the majority of the young men compared themselves to relevant "others" (Fiske 2011, 80-83).

Unlike with the young women, it was difficult to identify a moral consensus in the young men's talk about sex during the celebration. No clear ideal or morally abject position was implicated in their accounts, even if they were by no means free from boundary-work.[3] It appeared that they could draw on a more varied and flexible repertoire of moral values, and accordingly enjoyed more freedom in their moral positioning. None seemed to be in a position to force moral definitions onto others beyond closed friendship groups. Despite this variance, the young men's boundary-work appeared less complicated. If they chose to participate fully in the hookup part of the celebration, they could talk about this participation without drawing boundaries against "others." But if they did not want to participate, there were other values they could emphasize. Accordingly, they did not seem to face the contradictions of active women. The men's side of the sexual double standard in this group of young adults was therefore *not* a prescriptive expectation of sexual initiative and activity, but a greater freedom to associate with different moral ideals.

CONCLUSION

The young men in this study seemed to have great flexibility in their moral positioning, even if the celebration context was decidedly heteronormative. However, the young women were more restricted. The underlying imperative seems to be that women should exert *self-control* by supplementing hedonistic values with more restrictive ones, such as security, hygiene, and autonomy. This position echoes the traditional sexual discourse in the Nordic context and the ideal promoted in the Norwegian school system of autonomous individuals who make well-informed choices about their own sex life (Nordberg 2013). However, the morally abject position of the "slut" is still implicated in this boundary-work, even if it is not explicitly evoked.

Unlike in previous studies, the "others" were in most cases strangers or mythical figures, and the boundary-work was complicated by familiarity with women who seemed to act in the stigmatized way. Despite declarations of tolerance, the young women positioned themselves through a negative definition in lack of alternative gender beliefs that positively combine femininity and hooking up. Their boundary-work referenced safety, hygiene, and autonomy, and was also used to argue for a choice to not participate. Still, this moral distancing from hypothetical "others" is not "victimless." It may lead women to be concerned for their sexual reputation and consequently restrict their behavior, and it may cause them

to experience shame and fear of gossip for the experiences that they have (Crawford and Popp 2003). Social media offer an arena for the spread of such gossip (Debatin et al. 2009) and will undoubtedly be used for such purposes as long as the basis for these symbolic boundaries persists. In short, these symbolic boundaries against unknown and hypothetical others may place limits on women and perpetuate the sexual double standard, albeit in a diminished form.

The boundary-work outlined here was a much more subtle form of moral positioning than the overt slut-shaming described in other studies (Armstrong et al. 2014; Crawford and Popp 2003; Risman and Schwartz 2002, 20). The young women were generally not placing themselves at the *top* of a moral hierarchy but were concerned about not being positioned in a stigmatized, bottom position as "loose" or "lacking control." This is consistent with the downward orientation in dominance hierarchies among younger girls (Levi Martin 2009). This concern for avoiding hierarchical bottom positions among women might contribute to sustaining the double standard. If only women participate rather consistently in such boundary-work—while men can distinguish themselves more flexibly—then the standard that serves as the basis of the symbolic boundary is likely to persist among women.

Despite traces of a traditional sexual double standard, the liberal sexual context was still very much present in the interviews. The women's subtle distancing from other women's sexual activities was often presented as coming with no moral condemnation, because they were supplemented with an emphasis on their tolerance of other people's choices. In this way, the symbolic boundaries surfaced in an ongoing negotiation between not being "loose" and still being open-minded, tolerant, and not a bore. Although tolerance was probably particularly important because of the transgressive expectations of the celebration, it may also reflect a Nordic culture with social acceptance for active women's sexuality.

In sum, even within this morally liberal context, there are clear traces of a sexual double standard where men can freely engage in sexual activities that women use as a moral contrast to themselves. The Nordic cultural orientation toward gender equality and acceptance of women's sexuality is still evident in liberal self-presentation and acceptance of women's promiscuity. Nevertheless, the context of a transgressive celebration and liberal Nordic sexual culture does not eradicate traditional gendered expectations, but rather seems to inspire more subtle ways of doing both femininity and masculinity.

NOTES

1. All names are pseudonyms. Quotes are translated from Norwegian and edited for brevity.

2. We are thankful to one of *Gender & Society*'s anonymous reviewers for pointing this out.

3. One expected symbolic boundary was conspicuous by its absence: While the sexual dimension of the celebration was decidedly heteronormative, the young men did *not* construe homosexuals as holding a morally abject position (Hyde et al. 2009; but see Pascoe 2005). This is consistent with a softening of masculinity (McCormack and Anderson 2010). However, this subject is too extensive to be dealt with here.

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III

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Departies: conceptualizing extended youth parties

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ABSTRACT

Every year, millions of young people travel away from home to party for days or weeks on end in permissive environments, such as music festivals, dance parties, and nightlife resorts. The studies that have been conducted on these extended youth parties have focused primarily on specific risk-taking behaviors, such as drug use and violence. Here, we scrutinize the research on extended youth parties to identify general changes that young people undergo at these events. We call these celebrations *departies*, because they center on the organization and facilitation of momentary departures from the participants' everyday life. Participants depart (1) *spatially*, by traveling to locations that are constructed as sites of opportunity and excess; (2) *temporally*, by partying for several days in a row and focusing on immediate gratifications; (3) *morally*, by engaging in activities that are widely deemed immoral; (4) *stylistically*, by altering their stylistic expressions through dress, demeanor, and consumption; and (5) *experientially*, because the parties generate mood and mind alterations. These are overlapping and intertwined elements, the combination of which amounts to a distinct type of youth party. Departies constitute exceptional events in the lives of many young people, and ought to be studied from a comparative perspective.

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Introduction

Every year, millions of young people across the Western world leave their homes to party with peers in permissive environments, such as 'Spring Break' destinations in North and South America (Monterrubio, Josiam, and Duncan 2015); 'Schoolies week' destinations in Australia (Maticka-Tyndale, Herold, and Oppermann 2003); nightlife resorts in Southern Europe (Hughes et al. 2009); ski resorts (Thorpe 2011); music festivals (Dilkes-Frayne, forthcoming); dance parties (St John 2009); and party busses, vans, trains, and ships (Dickerson 1996; Fjær, Pedersen, and Sandberg 2016).

These leisure activities have several features in common. Most importantly, they all involve a combination of traveling and celebration, and they all last for several days or weeks on end. They draw large crowds and involve high levels of alcohol and/or illegal drug use. Many young people spend a considerable amount of their leisure time and money on such events (Briggs 2013). They are vital for the construction of self-identity among segments of the youth population (Bhardwa 2014), and they occupy a central

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place in contemporary youth culture, including in literature, music, and television (e.g. Tiësto 2007; Korine 2012; Max 2012). These leisure activities are regularly reported in the media, where they are mainly portrayed from a critical and moralizing angle (Hier 2002, 51; St John 2009; Andriotis 2010). Finally, numerous studies have associated these activities with short- and long-term health problems (Hughes et al. 2009; Calafat et al. 2011).

In spite of these shared characteristics, research into these activities rarely takes a comparative perspective (however, see Hughes et al. 2008), and little effort has been made to develop concepts and theories capable of explaining them (however, see Redmon 2003). The vast majority of research in this area is instead focused narrowly on small clusters of risk behavior, such as violent behaviors (Hughes et al. 2008), patterns of illicit drug use (Bellis et al. 2003), binge drinking (Tutenges and Hesse 2008), HIV-risk behaviors (Apostolopoulos, Sönmez, and Yu 2002), and the purchase of sexual services (Hesse and Tutenges 2011). These studies proceed by breaking up the leisure activities into separate parts, which are then subjected to close scrutiny.

Drawing on the existing research literature, including studies conducted by ourselves, we shift focus from the particularities to the commonalities of extended youth parties. We argue that these parties center on the organization, facilitation, and realization of momentary departures from the ordinary, and thus call them 'departies,' a contraction of 'departure' and 'party.' Departies are a type of collective celebration that takes place for several days in a row in a permissive environment away from home. The departures of departies take multiple forms, of which this paper highlights the following: spatial, temporal, moral, stylistic, and experiential. These five types of departure are closely connected and overlapping, but we describe them one by one for the sake of clarity, and in order to construct a general concept that we hope will stimulate future research into extended celebrations among young people. The concept of departies is an ideal type, in the sense that it is an analytic invention of ours that does not correspond exactly to any single empirical case, but rather sums up and clarifies otherwise diffuse tendencies that can be observed in the empirical world (Weber 2011, 90; Frank 2013, 29). The concept is intended as a heuristic tool for youth, alcohol, and tourist researchers who wish to understand the subjective and intersubjective dynamics of what we consider to be a widespread, cross-cultural type of celebration.

Spatial departures

A key feature of departies is that they involve a geographical movement away from home. The spatial departures usually involve traveling to another country or state, something that was facilitated greatly during the 1960s, with the advent of cheap air travel (Mann 2013, 6). Participants leave behind the constraints of school, work, and family life, and momentarily settle in environments designed for consumer excess and excitement. The travel itself is often an integral part of the event. Certain departies are, indeed, moveable feasts during which participants celebrate on the road in vehicles or by sea in 'booze cruise ships' (Fjær, Pedersen, and Sandberg 2016).

As a rule, departy spaces differ from the participants' normal habitats and local nightlife scenes because they attract, and are densely packed with, young people aiming at what has been emically referred to as 'having a blast' (Redmon 2003, 45), 'get smashed,' or 'run

amok' (Tutenges 2012). Departy spaces have the characteristics of 'backspaces' (Redmon 2003), meaning that these locations offer a sense of sanctuary from coercive authorities, such as parents, teachers, and senior colleagues. These environments 'provide an atmosphere of special piquancy' (Goffman 1986, 81), and temporarily enable visitors to participate in transgressions that they find difficult to perform outside of this context (Redmon 2003, 27). Although participants usually travel with friends, the mere fact being away from home can lead to 'situational disinhibition' (Apostolopoulos, Sönmez, and Yu 2002), because travelers tend to feel more anonymous (Shields 1990, 49; Brown and Stephan 2013) and because they are 'free of the built-in cues and spatialization' of their normal lives (Shields 1990, 49; Brown and Stephan 2013). It has been suggested that women are particularly appreciative of the anonymity of being away from home because they find themselves released and relieved from the traditional understanding of women as the decent gender and from their usual concern for their sexual reputation (Thomas 2005; Tutenges 2012; Brown and Stephan 2013, 37). Departy locations are construed as airtight gossip containers with slogans such as 'what happens in Ibiza stays in Ibiza,' based on the premise that all departy antics will be kept secret to those who were not present (Thomas 2005; Briggs and Turner 2012; Thurnell-Read 2012; Tutenges 2012). This premise has become increasingly illusory, with departy antics now widely reported and fueled on social network sites and in the media (Eberhardt 2007; Ellen 2014; Niland et al. 2014).

The materiality, imagery, and design of departy spaces significantly shape the activities that take place within them (Andrews 2009; Jayne et al. 2012; Bøhling 2015). Participants are, for example, provided with behavioral and experiential cues through advertisements that promote alcohol as the main road to heterosexual sex and fun while stigmatizing men as primitive hunters and women as their willing prey (Tan 2013). Many departies involve a dynamic movement between indoor spaces where participants are crammed together and outdoor spaces where they may move more freely (Sönmez et al. 2013). For example, pub crawl crowds walk from bar to bar (Thurnell-Read 2011; Tutenges 2015), festival-goers move between campsites and concert stages (Dilkes-Frayne in press), and road trip parties are marked by an alternation between time spent inside vehicles and time spent with larger crowds in parking lots (Fjær, Pedersen, and Sandberg 2016). This mobility ensures that departy participants are continuously exposed to new stimuli, different people and a variety of commercial products (e.g. alcohol beverages), all of which can prevent the extended celebrations from becoming monotonous while helping to create a sense of being on an adventure full of unforeseen and memorable happenings.

Departy spaces are typically, but not necessarily, commercialized. Many of them feature 'drinkatainment' activities (Bell 2008, 292), which revolve around the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages. At nightlife resorts, for instance, tourists are offered 'party packages' that give access to an array of drinking events, such as pub crawls, foam parties, and karaoke nights (Sönmez et al. 2013). However, participants are never merely passive consumers of these parties, but always and necessarily contribute to them through their own performances (Duff 2008). At some departies, participants play an active role in transforming mundane, low-intensity spaces into party zones, as when high-school students buy busses and turn them into mobile party scenes (Fjær, Pedersen, and Sandberg 2016), or when ravers appropriate and redefine an abandoned warehouse into an electronic dance party (Bey 1991; St John 2009).

This place-making also has a symbolic dimension. Departy spaces are constituted as 'play spaces' (Measham 2004) through the creation of 'place myths' (Shields 1990). Each departy bears a name, relating either to the type of celebration (e.g. Mardi Gras and Spring Break) or to the locality (e.g. Sunny Beach and Ayia Napa). Associated with these names are place myths that make people familiar with a departy even before having participated in it (Briggs et al. 2011, 34). Survey studies suggest that a key motivation for attending departies is to engage in nightlife activities such as dancing and drinking (Bellis et al. 2000, 237; Calafat et al. 2011, 11). Participants tend to prepare for this long before they leave home, for instance by talking about how 'fun' and 'wild' it is all going to be (Josiam et al. 1998). Part of these preparations involves constructing departy spaces as realms of opportunity, excess, and spectacular experiences (Apostolopoulos, Sönmez, and Yu 2002; Briggs and Turner 2012). This anticipation helps the participants tune into the turbulent energies that await them, making it easier to 'let loose' once the party itself kicks off (Apostolopoulos, Sönmez, and Yu 2002; Sönmez et al. 2006; Duff 2010; Patrick et al. 2011; Tutenges 2015). The often long and costly journey to these events serves to heighten the anticipation, while demonstrating dedication and willingness on the part of the participants to make a sacrifice for the festivities (Jaimangal-Jones, Pritchard, and Morgan 2010, 257). The media and various commercial actors also contribute to the place-making, as they have an interest in constructing departy zones as infinitely fun and scandalous: sin sells (Andriotis 2010). These place myths can affect participants' perception of departy spaces to such an extent that the myths may remain unaltered even after having been contradicted by individuals' personal experiences.

Temporal departures

Departies are a form of 'prolonged hedonism' (Goulding, Shankar, and Elliott 2002, 278) that lasts for several days or weeks in a row, with no or few breaks to rest and sober up. Whereas the day-to-day lives of contemporary youth tend to be highly structured, for example, around set times for when to get up and when to be at school, departies often have few or highly flexible time schedules. There may be certain events that require presence within specific time periods (e.g. happy hour and hotel breakfasts), but participants often resist or fail to meet the demands of such schedules.

Unlike many other forms of celebration, such as concerts and New Year's Eve celebrations, departies last much longer than a single night, and this is part of their attraction (McRobbie 1994, 171). Every day and hour of the week is transformed into a potential time of 'fun' (Khan et al. 2000, 223). Many participants start drinking during the day, in part to relieve a hangover from the night before. Once the departy gets started they also get little sleep, and what little sleep that they do get tends to be at odd hours and places. These parties last so long and are prioritized so highly that many participants become sleep deprived, suffer increasingly from hangover symptoms, and require days or even weeks to recover once the party is over (Sönmez et al. 2013, 53; Fjær and Pedersen 2015). Novices often encounter problems with 'peaking too early' or 'burning out' before the festivities have ended, whereas more seasoned participants have in many cases developed strategies to better protect themselves and get rest, for instance by using earplugs, taking naps, or going regularly to 'chill out' areas (Dilkes-Frayne, forthcoming).

Departies can have attributes of rites of passage, marking key milestones in life or celebrating youth itself as a period in life where one is expected to have fun, experiment, and accumulate experiences (van Gennep 1960; Sande 2002). Departies are widely perceived as life experiences on which one should not miss out, and which provide those who engage in them with lasting memories. As liminal phenomena, they are played out within a clearly defined time span; their duration may be defined, for example, by their organizers (e.g. a travel agency), or it may coincide with some public holiday. Typically, participants allocate their available time off from work or school to make time for their participation (Briggs and Turner 2012), but also '[t]he spatial movement concretiz[es] and ma[kes] convincing the temporal shift from the routinized schedules of workdays to non-routinized holidays' (Shields 1990, 48).

Because departies are limited to defined points in time and life where specific groups of people may participate – an occasion and window of opportunity – these party practices often mobilize participants who are determined not to miss out on potentially important experiences while they still have the opportunity to have them (Briggs and Turner 2012). Accordingly, participants may be dually motivated to participate, both by an anticipation of valuable experiences and a fear of future regret for not having seized the opportunity to acquire them (Apostolopoulos, Sönmez, and Yu 2002; Patrick et al. 2011). Commercial actors can capitalize on this by presenting a departy, and, by association, their product, as something that cannot be missed, or by presenting their product as a necessary element without which the departy will not be complete.

Departies are widely perceived as costly, unique, and bounded events that constitute an integral part of being young. This spurs the participants on to make the most of the limited time they have and to avoid wasting time on rest, practicalities, and deliberation (Thomas 2005). Participants tend to favor spontaneity over routine, flexibility over rigidity, and immediate gratification over long-term benefits. Focus is very much on the present, and on making the most of pleasures that are readily available and easily consumed. This 'ethics of the instant' (Maffesoli 2003), 'presentism' (Maffesoli 1989), or 'NOW!-ism' (Reynolds 1998) is expressed through emic slogans such as 'YOLO' (acronym for 'You Only Live Once'), 'live like there's no tomorrow,' and 'live hard, die young.' This now-emphasis goes hand in hand with a sort of 'YOLO' rationale or 'why-not' attitude, which makes participants more prone to take part in potentially dangerous, traumatizing, and morally degrading activities.

However, participants' preoccupation with representations of departy antics reveals that this lack of concern for past events or future consequences is not complete. In preparation for their own participation, they might relay to each other tales of departy activities they have heard about, or anticipate and plan for certain transgressions. Aware of the potential for generating entertaining stories, pictures, and videos, participants' antics often have clear self-reflective and performative elements, as when festival-goers drink from beer bongs in front of cameras or opponents say something funny in the middle of a fight (Briggs and Turner 2012; Tutenges and Sandberg 2013). Social networking sites play an important role in keeping memories alive, as participants often spend lots of time online to revive and evaluate the event after it has ended (Robards and Bennett 2011; Truong 2015). These online activities may lead to the recruitment of new participants for future events, and provide indications as to how one is supposed to (mis)behave once

the next departy kicks off. Reinforcing place myths, these representations disseminate definitions of departies as events where alternative behaviors are expected and permitted.

Moral departures

Participants in departies engage in alterations of the moral orders of everyday life (Bellis et al. 2000; Briggs 2012; Tutenges 2012; Fjær and Pedersen 2015). People continually feel compelled to explore, challenge, and go beyond conventional moral commands (Bataille 2001, 63), and sometimes this is actively expected of them, most notably during times of intense celebration when deviant behavior is 'temporarily legitimated' (Redmon 2002, 381). Departy participants often reference the departy context as legitimizing or explaining participation in transgressive antics, which may diffuse responsibility and partially dissociate them from their actions (Briggs 2012; Fjær and Pedersen 2015; Fjær, Pedersen, and Sandberg 2015).

Departy spaces may be conceived as social laboratories, in which participants are enabled to experiment with prevailing norms and rules and where 'performative acts of imagination can be executed and new identities formed that then infuse and shape daily life' (O'Grady 2012, 101). What takes place at departies may be exported into the context of everyday life at home, for instance, in the form of new leisure interests and consumptive practices. This observation has lead researchers to suggest, that data on risk behaviors at leading nightlife resorts, such as Ibiza, may help understand and predict emerging trends in risk behaviors elsewhere (Bellis et al. 2003).

However, departies do share many of the routine transgressions that take place on a weekly basis in local nightlife environments. Typically these involve the intake of large amounts of alcohol or other drugs (Bellis et al. 2003), public nudity (Forsyth 1992), simulated or actual sex (Redmon 2003), public urination, vomiting, and noise-making (Thurnell-Read 2011), risky games (Tremlett 2010), and vandalism (Calafat et al. 2011). Violence is common in certain departy settings (Hughes et al. 2008), but rarely is it endorsed or encouraged beyond a small section of participants.

A departy will often have one or more signature transgressions that have become its 'trademark' – such as the Mardi Gras tradition of exchanging beads for public nudity (Forsyth 1992). This means that participants arriving at a departy already have an idea of the transgressions that they are about to witness or commit (Milhausen, Reece, and Perera 2006, 102; Sönmez et al. 2006, 904–905). They come prepared for the moral (dis) order of the departy, and this helps them negotiate the transgressions in which they are expected to engage (Tutenges 2015). In preparation for the Norwegian high-school graduation celebration, for instance, some students plan how they will lose their virginity through the signature transgression of having casual sex in a forest (Fjær, Pedersen, and Sandberg 2015) similarly, individuals going to a music festival may decide that this will be the occasion for trying out an illicit drug (Hesse, Tutenges, and Schliewe 2010). Departies incite and enable participants to engage in deviant behaviors that would be difficult or impossible for them to undertake in the settings they normally inhabit.

However, participants do not simply enact the transgressions expected of them, but actively shape, reinvent, and uphold them through their own deviant performances. For example, some friendship groups invent competitions with rules whereby points are awarded, for example, for having sex with the most people or with the most unattractive

individual, or for disrupting and causing embarrassment to a couple having sex (Fjær, Pedersen, and Sandberg 2015; Fjær and Pedersen 2015; Tutenges 2012).

Departies are not simply occasions for the suspension of social norms, and nor do they imply a complete acceptance of extreme moral positions and reckless behaviors. On the one hand, because certain practice-specific transgressions are expected, those who do not partake in such transgressions are in effect behaving contrary to the alternative or modified moral order of the party practice (Fjær and Pedersen 2015). The most fundamental of these behaviors is drinking to intoxication and the corresponding censure of abstinence. On the other hand, alternative forms of behavior are not only enabled, but also restricted. There are norms regulating transgressions at departies too, and often it seems that moral boundaries have not been dissolved altogether, but simply moved. For example, paying for sex is approved by some but not others (Tutenges 2012), and even the signature transgressions of a departy may be construed as immoral and used as the basis of boundary-work (Fjær, Pedersen, and Sandberg 2015).

The modified moral orders of departies thus make it possible to position oneself as a moderate participant, as the axes of 'moral space' (Hitlin 2007) are temporally expanded; the transgressiveness of departies expands the repertoire of symbolic boundaries that individuals can draw by offering even dedicated participants the opportunity to witness extreme transgressions enacted by others, or hear stories or myths about such transgressions, against which their own actions appear moderate (Bhardwa 2014; Tutenges and Sandberg 2013; Fjær, Pedersen, and Sandberg 2015).

Stylistic departures

Departies involve departures from the participants' everyday style and esthetics. This is expressed through alterations in dress, adornment, and demeanor that exhibit a symbolic investment in the departy (Jaimangal-Jones, Pritchard, and Morgan 2010). For example, nightlife tourists may adopt a beach persona, replete with sunglasses, minimal clothing, and hyper-sexualized comportment (Briggs 2012; Tutenges 2012); Mardi Gras participants may put on colorful masks and beads (Jankowiak and White 1999); groups of stag tourists often wear comical costumes (Thurnell-Read 2011); and Norwegian high-school students dress up in overalls and a distinctive cap (Fjær and Pedersen 2015). Through this direct engagement with the symbols of the departy, participants are visible to each other as participants and actively define the temporal period and spaces they inhabit as those of the departy practice. Similar stylistic departures extend to styles of music and dancing, and even to types of intoxicants, such as MDMA or cannabis, which allude to subcultures or neo-tribes that participants can temporarily visit (Bellis et al. 2000; Measham and Moore 2009; Hesse, Tutenges, and Schliewe 2010).

Often these engagements in stylistic departures center on performances underlining a collective identity, such as simple dance moves that anyone can do songs or drinking games that everyone can be part of (Tutenges 2013a), scripted transgressions of established norms (Forsyth 1992), or the celebration of bodily reactions to the shared intoxication (Thurnell-Read 2011). Through these simple, playful, sometimes grotesque performances, participants may collectively depart from the relatively stable and responsible selves that they otherwise present. In this way, these playful performances amplify hedonistic excess and moral transgressions while allowing participants to

experiment with normally hidden or suppressed dimensions of their social selves. Collectively, the 'wild' partying is displayed and the place myth confirmed, to other participants as well as nonparticipants (Thurnell-Read 2011; Tutenges 2013a; Fjær and Pedersen 2015).

Departy spaces and participants are often characterized by seemingly indiscriminate dirtiness. Alcoholic beverages are poured over participants; dancing soaks everyone in sweat; foam, paint, or glitter is sprayed to cover everyone present; participants draw on each other's faces with markers; and fast food litters the streets, along with urinating or vomiting party-goers (Redmon 2003; Thurnell-Read 2011; Sönmez et al. 2013; Tutenges 2013a, 2015; Fjær, Pedersen, and Sandberg 2016). Through the dirtiness it causes, the stylistic departure of a departy also supports the sense of temporary moral immunity by erasing or blurring distinguishing marks, as participants are subject to the same 'processes of being ground down into a sort of homogenous social matter' (Turner 1977, 37). This collective, literal soiling mirrors the collective moral departure where everyone and no-one is held morally responsible because all are supposed to partake in the acts of cheerful indecency and degradation. Participants 'enter into a zone of indistinction' where they are 'transformed from citizen[s] into "almost animal"' (Diken and Laustsen 2004, 102). This experience may be particularly liberating for young women, who are usually held to, and hold themselves to, demanding standards regarding make-up, dress, hair styling, and bodily appearance (Fjær, Pedersen, and Sandberg 2016).

Even so, gender differences tend to be emphasized more than downplayed at departies. Participants are almost constantly in close proximity to each other, on dance floors, in bars and clubs, on party cruises, at concerts, in pools, on beaches, in busses, and so on. The physical proximity, dancing to uninterrupted music, and warm weather heat up the participants' bodies, and this legitimizes minimal clothing while contributing to the sexualized atmosphere of departies (Diken and Laustsen 2004). Commercial actors may also contribute to this by requiring that their employees wear little clothing and flirt with customers (Tutenges 2012). Some women appreciate the permission to expose their bodies and publicly engage in activities which, outside the departy context, would be punished by 'slut-shaming' (Redmon 2003; Thomas 2005; Tutenges 2012; Fjær, Pedersen, and Sandberg 2015). However, departies are characterized by an intense objectification of female bodies (Andrews 2009), reflected in the widespread promotion of lap dances, strip shows, and prostitution offered predominantly by female sex workers (Tutenges 2012). Gender identities are also emphasized and stereotyped through role-play, for instance, in 'Miss Wet T-shirt' contests and other scripted performances, which may include imitated or actual sexual behaviors (Thurnell-Read 2011; Tutenges 2012; Ellen 2014).

Experiential departures

Departies are perceived as bounded occasions that offer the potential for exceptionally pleasurable and stimulating experiences (Tutenges 2012; Miao, Lehto, and Wei 2013; Fjær, Pedersen, and Sandberg 2015). Departies center on 'high-intensity rituals' (Collins 2004, 149, 161) that may lead to significant alterations in how participants experience themselves, their surroundings, and other people. Accordingly, when describing departies, many participants use forceful expressions such as 'crazy' (Tutenges 2013a), 'mental,'

'messy,' 'fantastic,' and 'not reality' (Briggs 2013), and it is widely agreed among participants that these parties provide 'room to be radically different' (St John 2001).

These experiences often have a strong 'orgiastic' element to them (Maffesoli 1985), in the sense that they are of an intensely passionate, sensuous, and erotic character (St John 2001), including when they emerge in same-sex heterosexual groups (Thurnell-Read 2011). These changes may not simply be of 'nuance and degree' (Durkheim 1995, 212-213), but can involve a sense of going out of oneself (Gauthier 2011) and being in a 'special world inhabited by exceptionally intense forces' (Durkheim 1995, 220).

Altered states of consciousness come in multiple varieties (Lapassade 1990). At departies, most participants aim for mind alterations that fall within the experiential spectrum of what may be called 'collective effervescence' (Durkheim 1995), meaning states of intoxication marked by high levels of emotional energy combined with strong fellow feelings and antinomian behaviors (Tutenges 2013b). This is an intense experience, one of being alive, free from restraints, and part of a large and powerful whole (Durkheim 1995; Malbon 1999; Tutenges 2013b). These altered states of consciousness are one of the key goals of departies, perhaps even their *raison d'être* (Malbon 1999, 105).

Departies are collective celebrations where participants are brought closely together in the same place, both during their waking hours and often also during their sleep, which tends to take place in shared tents and hotel rooms. This physical proximity per se is a strong stimulant that can be mood- and mind-altering (Wellman, Corcoran, and Stockly-Meyerdirk 2014). When multiple bodies come close to one another in ritual situations, there is a tendency for the affective flows to run faster and for the mutual awareness to increase (Collins 2004, 34). Moreover, the combination of proximity and sustained bodily movement generates heat, which may contribute to dehydration and disorientation while legitimizing minimal clothing, erotized behavior, and sexual experimentation (Diken and Laustsen 2004; Thomas 2005; Hesse and Tutenges 2011).

Alcohol and other drugs are key factors that enable the experiential changes at departies. For example, when young tourists travel to nightlife destinations, alcoholic beverages are accessible and consumed nearly everywhere and at all hours (Sönmez et al. 2013). There are drinks on sale onboard the airplane as well as in restaurants, hotel rooms, by the pool, on the beach, and during organized parties, some of which include all-you-can-drink specials and drinking competitions where large amounts of beer, cocktails, or hard liquor have to be downed as quickly as possible (Briggs 2012; Tutenges 2012; Sönmez et al. 2013). Illicit drugs are also sold quite openly by local drug dealers as well as by public relations workers who want to earn some extra money (Kelly, Hughes, and Bellis 2014, 10057). If substances are overpriced or difficult to access, departy participants are likely to smuggle them into the scene. For example, strong, cheap liquor may be mixed with sweet drinks and carried in a bottle hidden in a pocket (Fjær, Pedersen, and Sandberg 2016). Intoxication is part of the package, much to the satisfaction of the participants, who belong to a generation with a strong and recurrent will to experiment with altered states of consciousness (Measham and Brain 2005, 266–267).

Some participants deliberately engage in high-risk activities, such as poly-drug use or fights, out of a desire to get away from 'mundane reality' and enter 'a world of sensual immediacy' (Lyng 2005, 24). The affective grip of these situations may be so intense that it helps those experiencing it to momentarily forget about the drama in their everyday lives. The engagement in high-risk activities may afford rewarding experiences, including

acute thrill, flow, shared transcendence, togetherness, and euphoria (Cronin, McCarthy, and Collins 2014), and allow risk-takers to show mastery of dangerous situations, to gain recognition for their exploits, and eventually to get good stories from these escapades (Tutenges and Sandberg 2013). Participants may derive immediate pleasure from purposively plunging into situations that verge on chaos and harm, but for most young people, the fun stops if somebody is severely hurt, whether physically or emotionally (Martinic and Measham 2008, 9). Many departy participants voluntarily take risks, but they prefer to come home in one piece (Tutenges and Sandberg 2013).

However, the experiential changes at departies are not provoked simply by a few single factors. One of the main reasons that departies have such strong effects is that they last for several days or weeks on end. Sustained celebrations can do 'a sort of violence to the individual's body and mind' and disrupt 'their normal functioning' (Durkheim 1995, 228). The sustained engagement in highly stimulating activities serves to destabilize the bodies and minds of the participants so as to enable them to transgress the confines of their ordinary consciousness (Malbon 1999, 106; St John 2008; Tutenges 2015). The noise, music, swarming crowds, dancing, lack of sleep, mind-altering substances, sexualized atmosphere, and junk food produce a sensual overstimulation (Gopal 2013, 164) that may provoke a rupture with the ordinary and lead to new ways of experiencing and being in the world (Fontaine and Fontana 1996).

Discussion

The five departures described in this paper are aspects of the same type of celebration, not a list of independent features. It is the combination and intensity of these departures from everyday life, which constitute a departy: the break with habitual spatial practices, the search for immediate yet memorable gratifications, the playful and scripted deviance from prevailing morality, the spectacular performances and stylistic experimentations, and the sustained alterations of consciousness. These five elements all have to be present simultaneously in order for an event to conform to the departy concept.

Departies form a significant break with everyday life, and participants often experience them as exceptional. However, this should not lead to the conclusion that departies are culturally isolated events. They belong to the cultural mainstream (Calafat et al. 2011) and are composed of activities that the participants know well from their home environments and everyday lives. For example, the binge drinking, violence, and casual sex at departies may be unusually frequent, but these activities are certainly not unknown to the participants. Similarly, package tours, road parties, and strip shows may not be a central part of the participants' day-to-day lives, yet these phenomena are within their cultural horizon. In this sense, the present paper supports the argument that departies form extensions of, rather than radical breaks with, regular, everyday leisure activities (Carr 2002).

However, departies certainly have elements of exceptionality. They revolve around mainstream activities, but take many of these activities to a level of excess. This may create something new in the lives of the participants. Departies are widely understood as windows of opportunity for engaging in risky pleasures, such as binge drinking for days on end, and for having unprotected sex (Maticka-Tyndale, Herold, and Mewhinney 1998; Apostolopoulos, Sönmez, and Yu 2002; Bellis et al. 2004). Some participants also

seize the opportunity to partake in behaviors of a more criminal character, such as paying for sex or trying an illegal drug for the first time (Bellis et al. 2003, 2009; Hesse, Tutenges, and Schliewe 2010; Hesse and Tutenges 2011).

Departies form a risky but also highly valued leisure activity for young people across the world. This poses a number of challenges to public health agencies, and it also raises a series of ethical questions: For is it morally tenable to prevent risky activities that people find pleasurable? How can we dissuade people from engaging in risky activities, when they are hell-bent on doing just that? And might there be a way to reduce the harms without reducing the perceived benefits of departies? There are many answers to these questions, but there appears to be growing consensus among researchers that health promotion at departy spaces (e.g. festivals and nightlife resorts) should be based on collaborative strategies that involve a broad range of actors, including the authorities in home and destination areas, health services, travel agencies, venue owners, bartenders, security staff, as well as the departy participants themselves (Hughes and Bellis 2006; Tutenges 2009; Sönmez et al. 2013; Kelly, Hughes, and Bellis 2014).

The general characteristics of departies, which we have described, are not intended to conceal individual differences or conflicts between the participants. Some participants may exercise relative caution, whereas others may attempt to overturn and redefine core elements of a departy, for example, by emphasizing abstinence from popular substances or introducing previously banned ones. Friendship groups are also likely to establish differentiated social roles, and conflicts between participants are at least as likely at departies as elsewhere. Moreover, the spatial, temporal, moral, stylistic, and experiential departures offer opportunities to experiment with different modes of self-expression, and witnessing other participants engage in seemingly extreme activities offers even dedicated participants opportunities to draw symbolic boundaries that position themselves as moderate. Departies are interesting contexts for studies of expressions of identity and group dynamics, not only in and of themselves but also in comparison with shorter and more regular celebrations closer to home.

Alcohol, drug, and public health researchers tend to portray departies from a critical angle, focusing on health problems, crime, and economic costs. There certainly are many problematic sides to departies, including the short- and long-term health risks, the profits that go to local drug dealers and other criminals, the burden on local healthcare services and on police forces, and the sexism that prevails at many events. Nevertheless, if we wish to understand the socio-psychological dynamics and attractions of departies, it is crucial to study them in an open-minded and nonjudgmental manner. This involves analyzing the modified moral orders of such events without holding them to predefined standards (which is not the same as refraining from drawing political conclusions from findings).

Given the centrality of partying to the lives of young people across the world, we believe that it would be possible, and helpful, to build a comprehensive typology of celebrations among youth. In addition to departies, such a typology should take into account shorter events, such as New Year's Eve celebrations, more routine parties, such as weekend binge drinking, and family-centered celebrations where intoxicants may have a secondary role. A comprehensive typology of youth parties would be valuable not only for youth researchers, but also for researchers engaged in promoting safer and healthier nightlife environments.

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IV

In defense of qualitative interviewing

Eivind Grip Fjær

Abstract

Methodological critiques of qualitative interviewing come in two basic forms. The situationist critique holds that because people adapt to situations, their talk in the interview situation should be understood as a sort of performance for the interviewer, rather than reflecting anything beyond the interview. The dualist critique holds that because people do not have discursive access to the culture to which they are practically adapted, in interviews, people cannot talk about the practices they engage in, only make up stories to make them seem meaningful. After presenting these critiques, I reformulate them as methodological challenges to researchers using qualitative interviews. Then I review a number of earlier responses to these challenges, and present three elements of qualitative interview practice which I argue enable researchers to draw valid conclusions from qualitative interview data. These elements of practice are *the facilitation of stories*, *using multiple indicators in analysis*, and *comparative analysis*.

Keywords

Qualitative interviewing, morality, methodology, stories, indicators, comparative analysis

Introduction

Prominent social scientists have repeatedly expressed doubts about the usefulness of qualitative interviews. According to them, what people say is not a trustworthy source for information about what people do and the cultural processes of which these actions are a part. If we want to know *what* people do and *why*, we therefore have to use other methods. Researchers who use qualitative interviews cannot ignore these critiques, as they may cause undue distrust of studies based on interview data and limit future use of interviewing in social science. Against these critiques, I will defend qualitative interviewing as a useful method, and do so in several ways. First, I will briefly outline the two main strands of critique, namely that qualitative interviews do not provide useful data because (1) people do not *do* what they *say* they do, and because (2) people do not *know* what they do and therefore cannot talk about it. After reviewing a number of earlier responses to these critiques, I will describe three common elements of qualitative interviewing practice and demonstrate how, in concrete studies, they have enabled researchers to draw valid conclusions from their data in the very areas in which critics claim qualitative interviews fall short.

Won't say: The situationist critique

The oldest and most common critique of interview studies is based on the distinction between what people *do* and what they *say* they do (Atkinson and Silverman, 1997; Becker and Geer, 1957; Dean and Whyte, 1958; Dingwall, 1997; Jerolmack and Khan, 2014a: 174; Murphy et al., 1998: 120–123; Silverman, 2017; Whitaker and Atkinson, 2019). These critics' argument is not that talk is somehow 'not real'. On the contrary, situationist critics see talk as a form of action, and interviews therefore as a form of observation of such actions (Atkinson and Coffey, 2003; Jerolmack and Khan, 2014a: 190; Silverman, 2017: 145). However, people do not always do what they say they do, because they adapt to the specific situation they find

themselves in (Dean and Whyte, 1958: 35; Deutscher, 1973: 240; Dingwall, 1997; Jerolmack and Khan, 2014a: 186). An interview situation will normally be very different from the situations or actions researchers are interested in studying, giving the interviewee the opportunity to use the interview to present themselves in a certain way. Thus, far from providing a trustworthy account, the interview instead becomes a performance for the interviewer. As a part of this self-presentation, participants adapt the attitudes they convey, and if they are asked directly whether they breach some commonly shared moral standards, they will not admit to doing so, even when they are observed to do so in other situations (Jerolmack and Khan, 2014a: 182–184). Some extend this argument even further, to the participants' accounts of beliefs, thoughts, feelings etc., amounting to a radical skepticism regarding the possibility of reliable accounts (Atkinson and Coffey, 2003; Atkinson and Silverman, 1997; Whitaker and Atkinson, 2019). In other words, researchers cannot, through talk, gain access to some stable, personal interior that can be analyzed in order to explain earlier actions or predicts future ones (Atkinson and Silverman, 1997; Jerolmack and Khan, 2014a). Consequently, situationists argue, if researchers want to study phenomena that are not observable in the interview situation, interview data should not be used as a substitute for other forms of observational data on those phenomena.

Can't say: The dualist critique

The second critique of qualitative interviews comes primarily from cultural sociologists who theorize a split within individuals between practice and discourse (Lizardo, 2017; Lizardo and Strand, 2010; Martin, 2010; Vaisey, 2009; Pugh, 2013 gives a critical overview). According to these researchers, it is only meaningful to talk about culture shaping actions if we understand culture as learned, practical adaptions to situations where there are already many cues about what is the correct or useful way to act (Lizardo and Strand, 2010; Martin, 2010).

Culture is not simply something everyone carries around in their head – we do not have sufficient cognitive capacity for that – but also the surroundings that scaffold the actions of actors who have learned to read those surroundings. This understanding of how culture shapes actions has methodological consequences, since it implies that people do not have discursive access to the culture they participate in, and that their talk is therefore not a reliable source of data on this culture, firstly because this culture is not primarily in the heads of its participants but also in their surroundings, and secondly because their cultural knowledge is practical and not discursive. This second reason is related to the now uncontroversial psychological argument that one cannot, through introspection, transparently appear as an object to oneself – that is, one cannot simply make one's own practical knowledge an object of self-observation. However, although the *real* causes of people's actions are structural and unavailable, people will still try to find a meaning in their actions by constructing a narrative about how they came to do what they did (Martin, 2010: 231; Wilson, 2002; Mills, 1940 gave an early version of this argument). Therefore, if we want to know *why* people do what they do, there is little point in asking them to explain their actions, since neither researchers nor the participants themselves can know, without other forms of information, whether the accounts are correct. Some researchers therefore draw the conclusion that 'if we want to learn about culture, the last thing we should do is to conduct in-depth interviews with a selection of informants' (Martin, 2010: 240).

The two challenges

Both critiques of qualitative interviews conceive of interaction as some form of adaption to situations and view interviewees' accounts as being in some ways disconnected from other forms of action. However, they also differ in a number of ways. Importantly, critics do not agree on which methods *are* useful. Dualists tend to like experiments and surveys, while

situationists mostly seem to prefer ethnography (which, of course, usually includes interviews). In addition, the emphasis on performance and potential deceit that is central in the situationist arguments is mostly absent from the dualist critique. For the situationists, people behave like celebrities, making an effort to perform to an audience from whatever flattering position or identity they have chosen for themselves (Atkinson and Silverman, 1997; Silverman, 2017: 145, 149). For dualists, participants are more like distant observers, even to their own past and practical adaptions, trying to stitch together a narrative based on whatever information they recall – they are strangers to themselves (Wilson, 2002). Concerned with situated interactions, situationists generally dismiss ideas of any stable and authentic self (Atkinson and Silverman, 1997; Jerolmack and Khan, 2014a: 201; Silverman, 2017: 149; Whitaker and Atkinson, 2019). By contrast, a form of stable, individual singularity is essential in the dualist argument – in the form of practical dispositions – even if such individual characteristics are not discursively accessible. Accordingly, situationists tend to presume that people can control how they present themselves in interaction in a way that seems unlikely if one accepts the premises of durable practical adaptions in the dualist critique – a point to which I will return later.

Morality, in the sense of evaluations of people with regard to a plurality of virtues (Graham et al., 2013), is a central element in both critiques in the sense that people who are being interviewed will present themselves as morally good, or at least emphasize relevant moral virtues in their accounts of events (Whitaker and Atkinson, 2019: 622–3). However, morality comes into play twice in the dualist idea of a split between practice and discourse. A defining contribution to this thinking is the theory of moral intuitions, where people are presented as making snap moral judgments and adapting to the situation on the basis of their *intuition*, while moral *reasoning* follows later and does not significantly affect these judgments (Haidt, 2001). In other words, morality is not just a factor that distorts data as

people present themselves as good to the interviewers, since the dispositions that enable practical, adapted responses are also moral and evaluative.

These critiques thus pose two different challenges to anyone using qualitative interviews, and in particular to researchers who use interviews to study morality or particularly moralized practices:

> Situationist challenge: How can researchers use qualitative interviews to say something valid about *events* outside of the interview situation, *even when these events contradict the morality participants otherwise express* in the interviews?

> Dualist challenge: How can researchers use qualitative interviews to say something valid about *processes and structures* outside of the interview situation *that the participants are not themselves giving (reliable) accounts of* in the interviews?

Earlier responses

These methodological challenges to qualitative interviews have stimulated different responses (Hammersley, 2017; Pugh, 2013; Trow, 1957; see also Lamont and Swidler, 2014). Some critics even offer their own solutions (Atkinson and Coffey, 2003; Silverman, 2017; Whitaker and Atkinson, 2019). I will discuss some highlights from these responses before I present my own.

Critiques of the critiques

One type of response to the critiques of qualitative interviews is to criticize the critique itself. When situationists argue that observations are more useful than interviews, they tend to compare what they see as the limitations of interviews with the benefits of ethnography

(Becker and Geer, 1957; Jerolmack and Khan, 2014a). This is the equivalent of medical researchers comparing the healing effects of one medicine with the side effects of another and finding the first medicine superior (this faulty comparison was noted by Trow, 1957: 33). When situationists have argued that researchers have to *infer* from interviews what has really happened in a way they do not have to from observational data (Becker and Geer, 1957; Jerolmack and Khan, 2014a), others have noted that it is a methodological dead end to 'try to minimize or do away with the process of inference by dissolving it back into data collection and somehow apprehending reality directly' (Trow, 1957: 35). In other words, underneath the situationist skepticism towards data shaped by social interaction lies an obscured 'primitive empiricism' of direct observation (Hammersley, 2003: 122). Moreover, the *possibility* that a form of data may be distorted because it is shaped by participants' self-presentations is not a sufficient reason for treating all such data as unreliable. And if it *were*, the same skepticism should reflexively extend to the presentation of research results, because they are just as much shaped by scientists to fit academic situations (Hammersley, 2003: 123). Similarly, if people in principle cannot be trusted to give reliable accounts of their practices, as dualists would argue, then we should not just be critical of the method sections in research reports, but treat them as post hoc rationalizations.

While such responses certainly undermine the critiques, they do not advance a *positive* defense – a description of possible or existing research practices that take the possibility of distortion into account. A pragmatic approach that abandons ideals of direct observation providing unconstructed data and inference-free findings, would be a more useful response to the challenges.

Truth matters: a thought experiment

Some critics have suggested that one solution to the situationist challenge is to clearly limit what qualitative interview data should be used for (Atkinson and Coffey, 2003; Silverman, 2017; Whitaker and Atkinson, 2019). For example, Atkinson and Coffey (2003) argue that interview data should be analyzed as observations of 'accounts'. Researchers may then analyze the shapes of narratives, presentations, repertoires, moral content etc. – phenomena that may occur in the interview and are therefore observable there – but avoid considering whether or how the analyzed accounts are true. This limited approach, focused only on 'meaning', makes them 'constructionists' according to Silverman's typology of epistemologies for qualitative researchers, where the alternatives are 'positivists', who are concerned with facts (that is, truth), and 'naturalists', who are interested in experiences (Silverman, 2014: 183–8).

While there is nothing wrong with studying phenomena that can to some extent be observed within the confines of an interview situation, what happens outside of the interview cannot be *irrelevant*. Imagine conducting an interview study of a social phenomenon that is often hidden and therefore usually has to be studied retrospectively, and which is traumatic to some of those involved – say, sexual abuse, domestic violence, or trafficking. After you have done a few interviews, it becomes clear that one of the participants was never the victim she presented herself as being – it was all a lie. Naturally, you begin to doubt whether you can trust your participants. One constructionist solution here would be to get rid of any initial aim of studying anything beyond the interview situation. However, it would then not make sense to exclude the liar from the interview sample, since you have suspended your interest in anything you cannot observe. After all, the whole constructionist solution is that you are now only interested in phenomena contained within interviews, such as performances, narratives, and repertoires, and the liar offered you all of this just like the others. If you still consider

reframing your study as a constructionist study, you would also have to consider the ethical implications of this new approach. Can you interview likely traumatized victims if you might have to tell them that, although you believe what they say, it does not matter whether their stories are true because you have limited your study to 'performed victimhood' and 'trauma narratives'? Do you think the *possibility* that someone lies, and the methodological problems that follow, will convince your participants that you are right to preemptively treat their stories as nothing but constructs? This is not an ethical argument against analyzing narratives or performances, but against a methodological principle that suspends ideas of truthful talk altogether. (For a similar discussion, see Hammersley (2013) on the ethics of interviewing for discourse analysis. Silverman (2017: 156) notes that his critique does not entail treating stories as irrelevant, but his examples of their importance are all about *consequences* of stories.) Alternatively, if you abandon interviews but still want to know something about these mostly unobservable phenomena, and not just narrative structures or performances, you are then left with the difficulties of generating useful data while denying yourself the option of talking to people who have experiences with them.

Truth about events outside of the interview situation matters, then, (1) methodologically, because participants who lie should be distinguished from those who do not, (2) ethically, because treating participants merely as performers can undermine their sense of worth, and (3) practically, because sometimes you have few other options than asking people about what happened. Several critics of qualitative interview studies would seemingly agree, although they provide no reasons for why they do. In their extensive critique of interviewing, Jerolmack and Khan note that interviews are useful for studying hidden phenomena (2014a: 180), but they offer no argument or technique that ensures that interviews are suddenly reliable under such circumstances. Similarly, Whitaker and Atkinson state that 'any critique of interviewing does not mean that interviews should be denied any referential

value' (2019: 631), but this comes at the end of an article in which they have demonstrated how one single interview is a 'display of an authentic self' (2019: 625), without any illustrations of what in that particular interview referred to anything outside of it or how such inferences could be trusted.

Pugh vs. dualists

Pugh (2013) has presented a more promising response, primarily to the dualist critique. Rather than treating talk as an unreliable source of data on culture, Pugh notes that interviews do not produce only one type of information. In addition to presenting as morally good (honorable), participants also provide cues that convey the framework through which they perceive the world, they respond emotionally in ways that reveal a more fundamental morality than the one they explicate, and they respond by relating to their emotional responses, generating meta-feelings (Pugh, 2013: 50–51). The honorable self-presentations may then be contradicted by the other three types of information (Pugh, 2013: 57), and rather than treat such contradictions as a problem to be explained away, as dualists would, Pugh treats them as revealing moments that through proper analysis provide access to the 'emotional landscape that brings a broader, social dimension to individual motivation' (2013: 43).

While this approach pokes several holes in the critiques – and not only the dualist version it is a response to – the idea that interviews provide access to an 'emotional backstory' and 'emotional landscape' (Pugh, 2013: 43, 62) can easily be dismissed by situationists both for implying that a relatively stable, authentic self can be accessed through talk, and because it does not show how interviews can be used to say anything valid about *events* outside of the interview situation, even though the cultural schemas that surface *presumably* reflect cultural practices outside of the interview situation. In this way, Pugh's approach is more compatible with the dualist social ontology she criticizes than that of the

situationists – people come to interviews with a history, not with new personalities they invented for the interview.

Pugh does not present any skepticism regarding events outside of the interview. However, if one were to turn her approach into a program about what one *can* study – for the sole purpose of illustrating how her article is a response to the two challenges – the same problems that surface in the constructionist response return here: Is it ethically defensible to interview someone solely with an interest in their emotional responses and the cultural schema they draw on? Why should a false account not be included if that account drew on the same cultural schema as the true ones? (One solution to the latter problem is offered by Sandberg (2010), who argues that truth in stories does not matter because lies tell us about the ideals of cultural practices.) Pugh's approach has other limitations as well. One limitation is that it places emotions at the center of interviewing and subsequent analysis, and while emotions are undoubtedly important and too often overlooked by sociologists, the approach provides few answers to how one may study social phenomena of little emotional significance, or, say, phenomena where people have learned to cope with certain emotional responses. Another limitation is that Pugh's approach is based on the conception that interviewers have a distinct talent for picking up non-verbal cues, such as 'facial expressions, sighs, pauses or laughter' (2013: 51). While researchers always have to rely on some personal competencies, it is unclear how students may train to grow their 'emotional antennae' (Pugh, 2013: 56), how these are deployed in analysis, how one may do without them in secondary analysis, and how their use should be presented, say, in a journal article.

Three elements of qualitative interviewing practice

In response to the situationist and dualist challenges, I will describe three elements of interviewing practice that demonstrate some basic ways researchers use qualitative interviews to say something valid about events, processes and structures outside of the interview

situations: facilitation of storytelling, analysis of multiple indicators, and comparative data analysis. These three elements are not the only relevant ones, and they are certainly not in and of themselves sufficient for good research. Accordingly, they are not described here as one-shot refutations of both critiques. For illustration, I use studies of the same type the situationists use as examples in their critique, namely of different types of moralized phenomena where people present themselves as in some way morally upright, while at least some of their behavior contradicts that morality. If the situationists are right, participants would, in such instances, try to hide certain actions and attitudes and display others, and an interview study will therefore not be able to reveal whether or how participants engage in practices that many, including the participants themselves, regard as morally flawed. As I will show, not only do interviewers get to hear participants contradict the morality they otherwise express in the interview, through analysis they are also able to identify and examine cultural factors that individual participants do not have an overview over, know about, or understand the workings of. Because I do not think this form of interview practice rests on the adoption of a very specific research program or social ontology, I avoid basing my account of each element on specific theories.

Two shortcomings in the critiques of interview studies are central to the following elements functioning as proper responses. First, the critiques *imply* that interview data should be treated as homogenously distorted – as though self-presentations and misconceived constructions contaminate the data and spread unreliability through all of it – and therefore that interview data can be used only for studying self-presentations and misconceived constructions (note, for example, the equation of research interviews with celebrity interviews by Whitaker and Atkinson, 2019: 21). Against this presumption of homogenous distortion, the elements of qualitative interview practice will show that researchers, while interviewing and analyzing, are sensitive to and treat as a resource the variations in what participants do with

their words. Second, the critics presume that researchers using qualitative interviews lack critical distance to their data. Some point out that their critiques take aim at researchers who 'simply presume that self-reported behaviors are accurate' (Jerolmack and Khan, 2014b: 239, see also 2014a: 180, 192, 194), others that it is 'methodologically harmful' to analyze interviews as if they provide 'unproblematic access to' cultural practices (Lizardo, 2017: 97), and others that even with 'sophisticated versions of research interviewing' there is 'an implicit appeal to the authenticity of narrated experience' (Atkinson and Silverman, 1997: 305; see also Whitaker and Atkinson, 2019: 620). This presentation of researchers who use interviews implies that they are easily duped by their interviewees and naively adopt the lay explanations they are offered without objectifying them as accounts. In some instances that might be an accurate image, but as the following paragraphs will show, being an uncritical researcher is not a precondition for using qualitative interviews (see also Pugh, 2013: 54).

Facilitating stories

In good qualitative interviews, the interviewer facilitates the telling of stories (regardless of any plan to conduct a 'narrative analysis'). That is, rather than asking for minimal pieces of information, the interviewer allows the participant to offer an excess of information in a structured way, potentially tapping into the way the participant structures the information. Important to facilitating stories is to ask open questions about topics and events of mutual interest, and then shutting up and listening. The extreme opposite of this would be asking leading questions and then expecting a confirmation or a denial, but in practice, such a limited search for information without regard to how the participant might structure that information will often entail overly specific questions, brief responses, and few openings for the participant to add detail. As well as generating mostly useless data, such a staggered, questionnaire-like interrogation will often turn specific questions into invitations to contradict

earlier responses or to directly admit to moral transgressions, and participants with any concern for how they appear can decline to answer or distort their answers. However, the same inconsistencies might be included willingly as nuance, exceptions or challenges in a story on the same subject, because participant-structured stories allow for more ambivalence and contradictions. A story 'provides a way for the inevitable inconsistencies that one observes in human behavior to be more easily interpreted and retained in memory' (Baumeister and Newman, 1994: 678) and is therefore more likely to include information that contradicts earlier self-presentations, information that speaks of some moral transgression, or information that is relevant to analyses of cultural processes the participants are either not aware of or misunderstand.

Take the example of John, described by Järvinen (2001: 269–272), who lived in the long term section of a hostel for alcohol and drug abusers and, by his own account, could drink a bottle and a half of liquor a day, was divorced three times from wives 'who could not stand [his] drinking' and had been told by doctors that he would have two years to live if he carried on 'like this'. When he was interviewed at the hostel for a study of the drinking careers of 'heavy alcoholics', he nevertheless insisted that his drinking was normal, not a problem, and that (in his words) 'contrary to all expectations, [he was] in perfect self-command' and 'managed without the help of society'. When the interviewer, by asking questions such as 'When did your drinking become a problem?' in effect asked him to *justify* his long history of alcohol abuse, John refused to acknowledge the premise that his drinking was uncontrolled and causing him problems. These first questions seemed to place alcohol abuse as John's main characteristic, effectively labeling him in a way he disagreed with. However, when he – triggered by the question 'When did you start drinking?' – halfway through the interview established a narrative structure where it made sense to link specific periods or instances of abuse to other events in his life, he described 'craving for a repair

drink in the morning' and 'bury[ing] beer depots in the garden' to hide it from his wife. The alternative story allowed him to continue to present himself as being in control, while at the same time describing instances of abuse he saw as formative or consequential. Instead of justifying being a person with an alcohol problem, these later stories were about himself meeting a series of challenges which he dealt with by drinking.

With regard to the situationist critique, it is therefore possible to get even individuals who strongly oppose the moral implications of a question to talk willingly about events outside of the interview situation that contradict their self-presentation. Obviously, people are not under any obligation to tell the truth when they tell stories, but stories make it easier for them to be truthful, because stories allow people to present themselves as coherent and rational, in spite of ambiguities, inconsistencies and moral failures. As a prepared interviewer, you will often know about the common or typically feared challenges participants face, and you learn how to ask relevant questions that direct their attention in that direction, especially in the case of participants who present themselves as consistent and morally upright. With regard to the dualist critique, John's *explanations* for his abuse were not necessarily right (they were also inconsistent), but having data in the form of stories does not mean having to treat those stories as good explanations. The data can still be used to construct an alternative explanation, unless one wants to doubt, say, that he hid alcohol from his wife and craved alcohol when he woke up.

Given the time to talk, participants may volunteer contradictory information in a form that is not strictly a story, depending on what theory of stories one operates with. On the other hand, participants may of course refuse to accept premises when invited to tell specific *types* of stories where they are cast in a certain role, say, of victim, hero, or criminal. It might seem more fitting, then, to call the ideal form of interview data 'rich' or 'thick', while seeing the facilitation of storytelling as a strategy for obtaining such data. Whatever term one prefers, it

is important to recognize that it is not enough merely to ask more questions to obtain more information, and that longer interviews do not help either, since interviewing to produce data on contradictions, exceptions and ambiguities is not a matter of adding variables.

Multiple indicators

Most phenomena of interest to social scientists are complex. They manifest and are observable in different ways, and conceptualizations, definitions, and operationalizations vary and are contested (as is the case, for example, with class, gender, power, and norms). To study the constitution and development of any social phenomenon and its relation to others, researchers will have to rely on and interpret multiple indicators. For example, participants in a study might say a certain form of behavior is correct and alternative actions are wrong, which can lead a researcher to say the participants are describing a norm. Of course, those would not be the only possible indicators of the existence of a certain norm. Norms are unlikely to last if they are not sanctioned, and fear of, stories about, or desire for sanctions should also be observable or reported, as should emotional 'self-sanctions' such as shame or guilt. If norms are seen as being very important, one would also expect there to be stereotyped conceptions of those who transgress them and those who uphold them, among other possible indicators. Including multiple indicators in an analysis ensures a more precise description, and might improve definitions, not least because it increases the chance of finding negative cases that can be analyzed to account for more of the variation in the data. However, not all indicators are equally reliable.

Indicators in interview data can be unreliable when they are based on replies to direct questions about the phenomenon of interest, as both critiques of interviewing have shown. In relation to the dualist critique, this is linked with the premise that people's discursive understandings of social phenomena are not generally correct, or the same as that of the

researcher. If, for example, you ask people what social class they belong to, this will give you a class distribution that differs significantly from the one you would get if you instead asked questions about income and education, and used those replies as indicators for class. As the situationist critique points out, direct questions also tend to produce distorted replies because many of the topics that interest social scientists are moralized. Asking participants 'Are you a racist?' is unlikely to elicit many confessions, but many other direct questions – for instance, 'Do you think one should tolerate people with skin colors that differ from one's own?' – will effectively be understood by participants as a similar invitation to admit they are not morally upright.

While the unreliability of responses to direct questions forces interviewers to rely on other indicators, it does not force them to pick a different method, since one unreliable indicator does not render all indicators that can be used with that method unreliable. Participants will generally not have a *full overview* of what in their stories can be analyzed as indicators. And even if they did, they would probably not be able to *control* all expressions that can be read as indicators. So even if participants are deceiving or confused in some of their responses, *other* expressions are more reliable. Even the basis of the dualist critique – that people are practically adapted to practices – can be used to argue that participants cannot control all parts of an interview. If participants misunderstand the cultural processes of which they give accounts in the interviews, questions that necessitate some *use* of practical knowledge about those cultural processes should produce accounts with contradicting information. Engaging participants' dispositions can also expose more intentional deceitfulness of the kind that concerns situationists. For example, moral responses are often based on intuition (Haidt, 2001), so if a respondent were to deliberately try to hide or distort a controversial moral position, or hide or distort events that contradict the morality they otherwise express, the inaccuracy of their self-presentation could be revealed by their more

spontaneous judgments. It is possible, then, for people to misunderstand or intentionally distort their responses while at the same time participating in generating data that contradicts their misunderstanding or distorted presentation and supports another, scientific understanding.

In interviews where unpopular norms or sets of norms are relevant, it is not uncommon for participants to claim to be tolerant but then go on to justify the existence of the unpopular norms, judge others in accordance with them, or otherwise confirm their existence and that they are still deployed, even if their validity is denied by the same participants. For example, participants might claim that 'race' should not be relevant in ordering social relations, but then go on to justify practices that uphold the color line, and judge those who cross it (Bonilla-Silva, 2018: 81–2, 90, 98, 132, 139). Similarly, young women can actively participate in hookup practices where they believe the usual norms regarding sexual interaction are suspended, while drawing on the same norms when they describe more transgressive participants in a way that positions themselves as hygienic, decent and in control (Fjær et al., 2015). Such an application of a norm indicates that the individual participant sanctions and supports it, but even in the absence of such applications in interviews, other indicators, such as stories about shame and fear of sanctioning, can be used to demonstrate that the norms are still operable, because the participants adapt to them. Therefore, the dualist concern that participants' accounts are misunderstandings is of less relevance. Participants can *believe* that they only oppose marriage across the color line out of concern for the children (Bonilla-Silva, 2018: 138–9), or that young women should limit their participation in hookup practices out of concern for hygiene or privacy (Fjær et al., 2015: 968), but they are still *applying* racialized and gendered norms. Material identified using such indicators can then be used in further analyses – for example, of these norms and their applications – and describe larger social patterns that they produce or sustain, such as an 'ideology of colorblind

racism' (Bonilla-Silva, 2018) and a 'sexual double standard' (Fjær et al., 2015). Here situationists could repeat their argument that there is no stable relation between such talk and events outside of the interview, and therefore that researchers should not *infer* that the same people would apply unpopular norms similarly outside of a research context. But such a theoretical possibility goes against the situationist idea of how people adapt to situations. If people generally try to behave in a way that is favorable to themselves or a group they identify with, and they *actually* align with a popular morality of tolerance, why would they then in the interview *pretend* to support a principle of social ordering that is widely seen as immoral and simultaneously try to conceal this fake support?

Comparison

Probably the most common technique of data analysis, and so obvious that it may be banal, is comparison – within and across interviews, at different levels of analysis (e.g., feelings, individuals, situations, practices and institutions) and levels of detail (e.g., general accounts, specific episodes, rumors and myths). By largely ignoring that researchers categorize, extract and compare pieces of interview data, it is as though the critics presume that reports using such data are based merely on the most frequent themes from a series of individual interviews. Decades ago, after Becker and Geer criticized 'the interview' (Becker and Geer, 1957), Trow noted that they ignored how interviews are usually parts of 'a body of comparable data' (1957: 35). Since then, contributions to the debate have continued to discuss interviewing as though interviews were independent pieces of data (Hammersley, 2017; Silverman, 2017; Whitaker and Atkinson, 2019). Because most interviews are parts of larger data sets, a minor lie or distorted account will have little consequence. If the distorted accounts the critics point to should make their way into researchers' explanations, these distortions would therefore have to be quite systematic and detailed across many of the different ways researchers can categorize their data, despite each individual often not knowing

how they compare to other participants, and despite their not having an overview of the indicators the researcher will use in the analysis.

Take the example of the 21 mothers in the illegal hard drug economy, interviewed by Grundetjern (2018). The interview guide did not contain questions about children, but the participants brought the topic up themselves. By comparing their stories of motherhood, Grundetjern found that the participants negotiated their combination of drug dealing and mothering in roughly four different ways. While some presented mothering as central to their identity, despite having lost custody of their children, others who had lost custody saw their role as a mother as a phase that had passed. Among those who had not lost custody of their children, or had done so only briefly, some integrated drug dealing into their identity as a mother while others developed strategies to keep the two roles separate. Further comparisons revealed that the way they combined mothering and drug use and dealing corresponded with factors such as how young they were when they got pregnant and what position they had in the drug economy.

Of relevance to the dualist critique, Grundetjern was able to arrive at both the typology of mothering and the factors that seemed to affect why participants ended up mothering in a certain way, independently of the participants' opinions on that analysis. The participants might not have an overview of the other ways of combining mothering with the use and sale of drugs and might themselves fail to see any link between their mothering and the factors Grundetjern identified. In other words, Grundetjern was able to identify structures and processes the participants themselves might not have known about or could have other explanations for.

Regarding the situationist critique, comparisons *within* interviews are essential in identifying contradictions and inconsistencies in participants' accounts so as to avoid accepting their more general self-presentations. Moreover, the structures and processes that

can be revealed through comparison *across* interviews can in turn be used to make sense of particular accounts that are hard to understand independently. For example, Liv, one of the drug dealing mothers, gave rosy descriptions of her family life, but she also handled the problem that her daughters were using drugs offered to them by men dealers by selling 'cheap, high-quality amphetamines to (…) men dealers who were below her in the hierarchy so that her daughters were more likely to get clean drugs (…) and sometimes gave her daughters drugs directly' (Grundetjern, 2018: 408). This example not only shows how comparing, within an interview, idealizing self-presentations with specific episodes can reveal nuance, contradictions, or different understandings of ideals. It also shows how these apparent contradictions can be made sense of, because the comparison across participants showed that some of the drug dealing mothers adopted the strategy of integrating mothering and drug dealing. Liv's account was perhaps an outlier in such an integration of the two roles, but comparisons made it clear in what *sense* she was an outlier.

Conclusion

Taken together, the elements of qualitative interview practice described above show that it *is* possible for researchers using them to say something valid about events, processes and structures outside of the interview situation – without presuming that people are always truthful or that interviews provide access to some stable, authentic self, and without taking it as a given that people are always able to give reliable descriptions and explanations of the practices they participate in. This possibility is crucial because, although the elements are common, and may seem obvious, or even banal, the argument of this article does not rest on how commonplace the elements are. Because I have shown that it is *possible* to do what the critics claim interviews are not fit for, their critiques can only be valid for specific studies, not the method itself.

The situationist and dualist critiques challenge in particular researchers who use interviews for studying morality and moralized practices. However, while telling stories, participants may not only present as honorable, but include exceptions, nuances and challenges that contradict the morality they otherwise claim to behave in accordance with. By using multiple indicators in their analyses, which is possible in part because they engage with participants' moral dispositions, researchers can go even further beyond participants' initial self-presentations. Comparative analysis can reveal how non-moral, structural factors affect participants, even when participants themselves provide morally laden reasoning to explain their actions. The three elements therefore show that it is possible to use qualitative interviews to study not only moral ideals that participants readily offer through their self-representations, but also contradictions, moral dispositions and external factors that can affect these, even if the participants are unaware of it.

Other elements that could have been included are contingent on the three outlined above, and therefore not as fundamental. Notably, by analyzing how multiple participants position themselves with regard to a particular topic, researchers can draw up a relational pattern (e.g., moral hierarchies or symbolic spaces) where participants take up different positions. This is possible because interview participants often position themselves in relation to others, by explicating or demonstrating some social *difference*, with the *principle* of this difference usually being clear or implied by the context – such as when a Filipina American woman says 'We don't sleep around like white girls do' (Espiritu, 2001). Similarly to how we understand a language as a norm-governed whole, such a relational structure is sustained in practice by many individuals who cannot easily disentangle themselves from it but at the same time can never know, understand or engage with it in its entirety (more elaborate theories are provided by Bourdieu, 1998; Fiske, 2011; Lamont and Molnár, 2002). However, in and of itself, the use of interviews to study culture in this way is unlikely to convince any

critic, since it necessitates engaging with participants' relevant dispositions to enable a comparative analysis of multiple indicators.

Similarly, the three elements are more fundamental than the practice of supplementing interviews with other forms of data, which might seem like a tempting response to the situationist and dualist challenges. While I have mostly argued as if it were not the case, qualitative interviews are never used in isolation from other types of information. Researchers recruit participants based on information about their gender, class, organizational affiliations and so on, they have participants fill out questionnaires and use information from those in the analysis, and some researchers conduct brief field visits, not only to observe, but also to recruit participants and interview them in the field. Supplementing interviews with other forms of data in such ways is often useful, and the defense of qualitative interviewing presented here is not intended as an argument against these kinds of practices – there is no point in *denying* oneself useful information. At the same time, however, researchers should not plan to 'test' the truthfulness of participants in their interview study by comparing responses in interviews with other forms of data, imagining this as an alternative solution to the problems posed by the situationist and dualist challenges. For example, such solutions might end up 'proving' that participants lied in their interview, when the real mistake was that the interviewer failed to give them the opportunity to include contradictions, nuances and exceptions, which again would hinder a comparative analysis of multiple indicators. While triangulation can have distinct benefits, it cannot by itself prevent researchers from making the mistakes the situationist and dualist challenges warn against. The necessary solutions are more fundamental, and rest on skilled interviewing and data analysis.

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