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Gender and Intoxication: From Masculinity to Intersectionality

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1. Introduction

Intoxication from alcohol has long been associated with men and masculinity (Bales 1962; Hunt et al 2005; Mullen et al. 2007; Peralta, 2007; Peralta et al 2010). Within many cultures, to drink is to be masculine and to drink heavily and become intoxicated is to be even more masculine (Guttman 1996; Messerschmidt 1997; Peralta 2007). Drinking and intoxicated behavior among men is argued as acceptable or normative because it works to affirm masculinity and increase male bonding and solidarity (Bales 1962; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Dunning and Williams 1988; Gough and Edwards 1998; Hunt et al. 2005; Peace 1992; Skeggs 1997). In linking masculinity and drinking, a general discourse exists which suggests that masculine identity is affirmed through group heavy drinking, and questions of male honor can be resolved and upheld through alcohol-related violence (Hunt et al. 2005; Tomsen 1997). Within this perspective, drinkers are viewed as manly not solely because they drink, but because their drinking is linked with other behaviors that are connected to being masculine (Iwamoto 2011; Lemle and Mishkind, 1989). In this way, young men's intoxication is believed to need no further explanation – they are just being men (Ostergaard 2007).

In light of the widespread acceptance of this situation across multiple settings and cultures (Bales 1962; Gough and Edwards 1998; McClelland et al. 1972), it is therefore not surprising that numerous studies investigating gender differences in rates of drinking and intoxication find that men are more likely than women to be either current or lifetime drinkers and to drink more often and in greater quantities (Bloomfield et al. 2001; O'Malley and Johnston 2002; Wilsnack et al. 2009). However, while these gender differences in alcohol use and intoxication remain, cross-sectional survey data in the U.S. and Europe increasingly suggest a trend towards *convergence* in men and women's drinking patterns, with men drinking less and women drinking more (Christie-Mizell et al. 2009; Keyes et al 2011; Keyes et al. 2008; Wechsler and Wuethrich 2002; Wilsnack et al. 2000). This convergence is particularly pronounced for younger people (Johnson and Gerstein 2000; Johnston et al. 2004; Johnston et al. 2006). For instance, Keyes and colleagues (2008), in a nationally representative survey of American adults, found that “gender-related differences in drinking and alcohol use disorders in the U.S. are declining” (2008:27). Kuntsche and colleagues (2011) also found a convergence in the frequency of drunkenness for adolescent and young adult men and women across Europe and North America. Similarly, McCabe

(2002) discovered that among college students who drank heavily, the desire to get drunk was as common among young women as it was young men. Such findings prompted the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the United States to identify binge drinking amongst young women and girls as “a serious, under-recognized problem.” (2013). While a large body of survey and epidemiological research suggests that a “gender gap” in alcohol consumption patterns is narrowing, many questions remain regarding the precise relationship between gender and substance use, and especially between gender and intoxication. Within this literature, we know relatively little about how young people themselves understand, interpret, and operationalize gender as a social construct and marker identity, and how this connects to their intoxication patterns and behaviors. Although gender differences in young people's drinking may be fading, this does not necessarily mean that the *drinking practices*, the *social contexts* of drinking, and the *meanings* of intoxication are also converging. Many of these issues including the gendered meaning of intoxication and the extent to which these meanings alter in different social contexts are left largely unanswered by the existing epidemiological literature investigating gender and intoxication. Consequently, we must seek answers outside survey and epidemiological research and examine the anthropological, sociological, cultural, and historical approaches to intoxication (see for example Herring et al. 2012; Withington and McShane 2014) as well as more recent feminist scholarship to ascertain whether existing theories may help to explain changes in young people's intoxication as well as identify new directions for scholarship.

2. Theories of Intoxication

Two diametrically opposed approaches or perspectives can be identified in the available literature on intoxication. First, public health researchers, prevention specialists, law enforcement officers, and government officials view the issue of intoxication with a deep sense of concern and work tirelessly to ensure that intoxication is curtailed (Holmila 1995; Home Office 2012; Room 2001). This attitude to drinking and intoxication is widespread, and many examples from the UK, the USA, Australia, Denmark, and other European countries can be easily found (Kuntsche et al. 2004; Martinic and Alexander 2008; O'Brien et al. 2008). Overall, this concern would seem to suggest that agreement exists on the notion that intoxication, either from alcohol or from other mind-altering substances, is by definition physically harmful and socially and morally problematic (McClelland 2001). As Becker noted, “the goal of artificially inducing a change in one's consciousness is considered by many to be immoral” (1967:164), and Yardley suggests that the desire to seek intoxication “is at best tolerated and is often stigmatized or even criminalized when it is associated with the use of intoxicant drugs” (2012:1).ⁱ

However, this approach to intoxication as a deeply problematic activity is not shared by all researchers, especially anthropologists, sociologists, and cultural historians, many of whom have sought to examine the role and meaning of intoxication not from a problem perspective but instead have sought to explain why it is that so many people of different ages, from totally different social backgrounds, in so many different cultures, at so many different times in history should seek to alter their state of consciousness. Intoxication, here defined as the

ⁱSee also Keene 2009.

use of substances to alter consciousness, has featured as a “universal human theme” from the early Bronze Age's affinity with alcohol to the Neolithic period's cultural use of cannabis and the classical epoch's rituals with opium to youthful fascination with dance drugs like ecstasy (Bancroft 2009; Rudgley 1993; Walton 2001; Weil 1972). Anthropological and sociological theories of intoxication sought primarily to understand the role of intoxication in different societal contexts and the norms that influenced the resulting behaviors (Sulkunen 2002). Some of these early theorists analyzed the different functions of intoxication from both alcohol and drugs in different non-industrialized societies, developing structural theories of intoxication thereby identifying universal characteristics (Horton 1943). While some of these early theories have been largely discarded, partly because of critiques of functionalism,ⁱⁱ they did emphasize the importance of seeking explanations at the social level rather than at only an individual level. Although the state of intoxication is an individual or psychological component of drinking, it is nevertheless “inextricably conjoined with the social and collective part of drinking practices” (Partanen 1991: 223). This latter element is extensively detailed in the “path-breaking” but now somewhat neglected book *Drunken Comportment* by MacAndrew and Edgerton. Published in 1969, and using a wide range of comparative ethnographic material from different non-industrialized societies and examining different types of drunken behavior, they showed that “over the course of socialization, people learn about drunkenness what their society ‘knows’ about drunkenness; and accepting and acting upon the understandings thus imparted to them, they become the living confirmation of their society's teachings” (1969:88). As such, drunken behavior is primarily a matter of socio-cultural learning, and while it may differ from behavior that is acceptable when sober, it nevertheless remains within “certain culturally sanctioned limits” (Partanen 1991:224). MacAndrew and Edgerton further argued that intoxication operated as a mechanism of “*time-out*” which was “a state of societally sanctioned freedom from otherwise enforceable demands that persons comply with conventional properties.” (MacAndrew and Edgerton 1969:89). While becoming drunk allowed the drinker to behave in ways not normally acceptable within society, this period of time-out was nevertheless bounded by societal norms within specific social settings. The significance of their seminal work was to establish the view that the interpretations that individuals make of intoxication are only partially shaped by the chemical or pharmacological effects of the substance (Paton-Simpson 1996). Intoxication is not solely the result of the pharmacological qualities of the substance but, instead, is also dependent upon the combination of the substance itself, the mind-set of the user, and the social setting in which the substance is used (Zinberg 1984).

This crucial role of alcohol (and notably psycho-active drugs in general) in sociable interactions in many diverse societies and cultures has led researchers to argue that intoxicants operate as important mechanisms both as “a medium of sociability,” and as ways of encouraging commensality (Partanen 1991:221). Intoxicants allow people to relax, de-stress, be more open, be more one's real self, have more confidence, and more easily relate to others. Finally, the meaning of intoxication, as with the meaning of drinking or drug use, does not occur in a vacuum but rather in particular social settings, in the context of perceived

ⁱⁱFor a further discussion see Coser 1977 and Holmwood 2005.

potential consequences, and is accomplished through socially-situated practices (Moore 1993 see also Duff 2007; Parker et al. 1998; Tseng and Seidman 2007). In general, social science theories of intoxication have been important in emphasizing not merely the universal nature of intoxication but also the extent to which intoxication is primarily a matter of socio-cultural learning.

Overall, these theories have contributed significantly to a societal, sociological, and socio-cultural understanding of intoxication, emphasizing its social nature, including its importance for enhancing sociality and the importance of the social setting in influencing the social definition of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors related to intoxication. However, these theories have been criticized for ignoring or failing to explore the possibility that there may exist a variance of norms or competing norms of “drunken comportment” within Western societies (See Abel and Plumridge 2004). If these researchers had been more interested in examining possible variations in norms, they might have noted that different norms of acceptable and unacceptable behavior operate for women and men. Because these theories viewed intoxication as a primarily male activity, they did little to further our understanding of gender and the ways that societal notions of intoxication reflect important aspects of gendered behavior. This focus on men in studies of intoxication is not surprising given the field's history of privileging men, overlooking women, and failing to consider the importance of the fluidity of gender in studies of intoxication (Campbell 2000; Hunt et al. 2016; Simonen 2011). While it is not entirely true that early socio-cultural theorists ignored issues of gender, given that they highlighted social prescriptions about masculinity and the role that intoxication played in men's ability to access or display a masculine status (Bales 1962; Dunning et al. 1988; Peace 1992). However, these discussions lacked a critical lens, were limited, and failed to incorporate discussions of women's intoxication or, more broadly, gendered meanings of intoxication. The essentialist way in which gender was addressed within these early theories may also have been related to the failure of anthropological and sociological theories of intoxication to examine issues of power or the extent to which certain social groups within different societies have limited access to mind-altering substances.ⁱⁱⁱ Given their adoption of a functionalist cohesive perspective, few of these early researchers sought to explore social relations of power within these societies and the extent to which definitions of acceptable or unacceptable drunken behaviors conceal notions of power and specifically relations of gender power.

We are therefore fortunate that feminist researchers emerged and began to highlight the contradictory discourses about young women's intoxication. They situated women's drinking both within an analysis and critique of neo-liberal discourses within Western societies concerning the position of women as well as exploring the possible relationships between the culture of intoxication, young women's desire to have fun and experience pleasure, and contemporary debates on post feminism (Griffin et al 2013; Ringrose 2007; Tasker and Negra 2007). Although these developments are framed by the gender binary which arguably fails to accommodate or fully explain young people's performances of gender or gendered experiences with intoxication today, these developments have been crucial in light of the

ⁱⁱⁱSee Morgan [1983] as a possible exception

period in which they were constituted and they have contributed tremendously to the emancipation of women in our field as well as highlighting notions of power and gendered meanings of intoxication.

3. Research on Women and Intoxication

In contrast to the more traditional sociological and anthropological work on male drinking cultures, research on women and intoxication was under-developed until recently (Martin 2001). Women's intoxication was stigmatized, and women, who became drunk, were viewed as not respectable (Ettorre 2007; Bergmark 2004; Fillmore 1984; Warner 1997). Although the norms and values surrounding intoxicated women have evolved in recent decades, women's intoxication is still typically viewed more negatively than men's (Griffin et al. 2009; Hutton et al. 2016; Measham and Ostergaard 2009). Given that until the 1970s, research on men dominated the alcohol and drugs fields, the extent to which feminist researchers began to study young women and intoxication is significant and draws attention to issues of power inherent within our fields of research. This shift was due in part to the increasing numbers of women involved in alcohol and drugs research, who advocated for the development of research on women (Ettorre 2004; 2007) and was connected to a growing interest, throughout the 1980s, in gender issues in the social sciences (Gilligan 1982; Griffin 1993; McRobbie and Gerber 1975).

By the 1990s, feminist researchers in the fields of alcohol and drugs research started to challenge the “pathology or powerlessness” perspective that had dominated research on gender (Anderson 2008; Hunt et al. 2016; Maher 1997; Moore and Devitt 1989; Murphy and Rosenbaum 1999; Taylor 1993). Researchers began to shift the lens of inquiry from young women as abusers to consumers (Ettorre 1992; 1997); from women's use as problematic to that of recreational (Henderson 1993; 1996; 1999), and from abnormal or deviant to normal (Anderson 1995; 1998; Ettorre 2004; 2007; Measham 2002). This paradigm shift highlighted the visibility of women in alcohol and drugs research by investigating young women's engagement with alcohol and drugs in contemporary settings, and specifically in public settings (Enefalk 2015; Hunt et al. 2002; Hunt et al. 2016; Miller and Carbone-Lopez 2015; Moloney and Hunt 2011). Moreover, research at this time began to emphasize women's agency (Ettorre 1992; Henderson 1993a, 1993b, 1997; Maher 1997; Measham 2002; Taylor 1993). Studies began to situate women's alcohol and drug use as active (though not always explicit) symbolic acts of resistance or power (Anderson 2008; Miller and Carbone-Lopez 2015) or as markers for the construction of identities and lifestyles for young women (Ettorre 1992; Hutton 2006; Mullins 2008; Pini 2001).

A growing emphasis on women's agency and substance use was also given a fillip as a result of the development of the global rave/club scene (Redhead, 1990; 1993; 1997), which provided an important alternative space for young women to use mind-altering substances allowing them a greater degree of freedom. As a result, a series of feminist researchers examined the extent to which young women sought pleasure from drug use in the club/rave scene (Henderson 1993; Hunt and Evans 2008; Hunt et al 2009; Pini 2001). However, while in the 1990s the primary substance of choice was ecstasy (Hunt et al 2010), by early 2000s, young consumers, both men and women, had begun to shift from ecstasy back to alcohol.

This shift in consumer preference, noted by researchers in the UK (Measham and Brain 2005), was encouraged by the drinks industry, which marketed a new range of alcoholic drinks and re-designed bars, pubs, and clubs to attract more young customers and especially young women. Consequently, changes in the gendered make up of public drinking venues began to occur (Chatterton and Hollands 2003; Measham 2003; Measham and Moore 2009; Szmigin et al. 2008). Such changes in public drinking provoked increased social concern, coupled with additional concerns about changes to the culture of intoxication for both young women and men, especially in the U.K. “Representations of young women across United Kingdom media constitute young female drinkers as irresponsible, dissolute, and a social problem” (Bailey 2015:748). Researchers began to suggest that the aim of young people was no longer merely to drink moderately but instead become intoxicated (Beccaria et al. 2015; Hunt et al. 2014; Measham and Brain 2005). Instead of wishing to maintain control when intoxicated, they sought to get ‘wasted.’ This youthful culture of intoxication was not one of moderation but one of “determined drunkenness” (Measham and Brain 2005).

Although researchers (Henderson 1997; Measham 2002; Pini 2001) had examined young women’s use of ecstasy and other illegal substances, the development of more public drunken intoxication encouraged more researchers in the UK, Australia, New Zealand, and the US to examine the role and meaning of intoxication for young women (Bailey et al 2015; Griffin et al 2013; Hutton et al 2016; Peralta et al 2010). Unlike alcohol survey researchers and epidemiologists, who saw these behaviors as deeply problematic, feminist researchers sought to explain these developments by documenting the experiences of young women in order to uncover the meanings of these behaviors. They also sought to locate intoxication behaviors within a wider analysis of the contemporary social and gendered position of young women.

4. The Deterioration of Gender

In spite of the significant contributions from feminist scholars, who have emphasized the importance of gendered analyses and situated their analyses within discussions of structure and materiality, the most recent contemporary research can be viewed to have somewhat retreated from these developments. In fact, feminist researchers themselves have argued that this is due in part to the emergence of a neo-liberal order where individuals are viewed as “totally responsible for their own destiny” (Walkerdine 2003:240; Griffin 2009). Within a neo-liberal framework, there is an increasing importance or focus on the individual who “is subject to continual (self-) surveillance, transformation and improvement” (Griffin 2009:460). Individuals are seen to be responsible for “display[ing] themselves as distinctive, authentic selves, discerning consumers” (Ibid.). In light of this emphasis on the individual and subsequent decline in “collective ties and long standing social relationships,” (Harris 2004:4; See also Beck 1992), a discourse of “girl power” (Harris 2004) or post-feminism has emerged whereby girls and young women are now considered to be equal to boys and young men. Postfeminism, described as “a set of assumptions...having to do with the ‘pastness’ of feminism” (Tasker and Negra 2007:1), promoted the assumption that the goals of the traditional feminist movement had now been achieved (Taft 2004), and consequently feminism had become both “simultaneously self-evident and redundant” (Griffin 2004:33).

Arguably the alcohol and drugs fields were not immune to this discourse, and feminist scholars have found themselves engaged in the same arguments. They were responsible for countering both contemporary media notions of “girl power” and the independent individual on the one hand and tropes of the “bingeing boozing bird” (Redden and Brown 2010) and young women as “excessive, unhealthy, irresponsible or undisciplined” (Griffin 2009) on the other hand. While noting the recent increase in young women's involvement in “extreme drinking... and the normative practice of drinking to intoxication” (Griffin 2013:187), feminist researchers (for example Bailey et al 2015; Griffin et al 2013; Hutton 2013) still found themselves in the position of having to defend the importance of understanding contemporary women's specific experiences with intoxication and the meanings attached to becoming intoxicated. For example, in a recent debate in the *International Journal of Drug Policy*, feminist researchers critiqued a paper on drinking stories by Tutenges and Sandberg (2013) for providing an analysis that was “starkly silent regarding the relations of gender, sexuality and the taken for granted hetero-normativity” (Radcliffe and Measham 2014) and wondering why “in 2014 are articles like Tutenges and Sandberg's [were still] being published?” (Ettorre 2014:358).^{iv}

Consequently, we would suggest that this pre-occupation with post-feminist discourses in the alcohol and drugs fields may have tended to stunt theoretical developments related to gender and intoxication, with researchers failing to adequately examine the complexity and diversity of gender in the lives of young people today. In spite of the importance of this feminist research, their findings and analysis have yet to yield a significant impact on mainstream alcohol and drug research. Moreover, given the continued focus, especially in the US, on young white college-based women and men, young women who are not white and middle class remain largely invisible in research on intoxication (see Hunt et al. 2000; Hunt et al. 2002; Miller and Carbone-Lopez 2015; Peralta 2008; 2010 for exceptions). Even though feminist researchers, especially in the UK (Bailey et al. 2015; Griffin et al. 2013), have examined the importance of social class on the meanings and consequences of intoxication, little work has examined other important differences, especially in terms of ethnicity and sexuality (see Emslie et al. 2017; Griffin et al. 2013; Hunt et al. 2000; Hutton et al. 2013; Montemurro 2005; and Peralta 2008; 2010 as exceptions). The absence of research on the inter-relationship between gender, ethnic minorities, and intoxication is particularly striking both in the UK and even more so in the US, where drinking and ethnicity is a well-developed research area, at least in epidemiological and survey research. Furthermore, nearly all the sociologically-inspired research, and especially much of the feminist research, even that which has explored issues of intoxication, gender and sexuality, have been based on studies of heteronormative women. This is unfortunate as it limits, for example, the extent to which we can explore how gender roles, performances, and culturally constructed femininities and masculinities shape intoxication for sexual and gender minorities (SGM).

As feminist scholars have noted, all women are not created equal; their power and privilege or lack thereof is distributed inequitably, and consequently, their experiences with

^{iv}See also Tutenges and Sandberg 2014; Griffin 2014.

intoxication, the meanings that they communicate through intoxication, and the ways in which they negotiate those meanings are shaped by intersectional identities (Crenshaw 1991; McCall 2005). While a few feminists in the alcohol and drug fields did argue for the use of an intersectional approach much earlier (See Ettorre 1992; 2004), it is also the case that only more recently have researchers studying intoxication (Griffin 2013, Miller and Carbone-Lopez 2015; Peralta 2008; Peralta et al. 2010) introduced discussions of intersectional identities that work to identify differences among young people whether on the basis of social class, ethnicity, or sexual orientation.

Notions of intersectionality are not new, in fact as early as the late 1960s, Black feminists argued that women's oppression was not created equal (Davis 1983, hooks 1984) yet the term intersectionality wasn't coined until 1989 by Crenshaw (1991). An intersectional approach “strives to understand what is created and experienced at the intersection of two or more axes” (Handivsky 2012:275, see also Handkivsky and Christoffersen 2008) of identity. It is at this point of intersection that a completely new status is constructed, which is more than the sum of its parts. This type of intersectional approach is called intercategory complexity, where the intersection of traditional social identity categories (e.g. Woman, Lesbian, Transgender, African-American, Latina.) are considered to produce different experiences of oppression (Ludvig 2006; McCall 2014). One limitation of such an approach is that these traditional categories may obscure other significant axes of homogeneity that are important for understanding health inequities, and with regard to gender specifically this approach may nevertheless serve to reinforce gender as a binary construct (Ludvig 2006; Mereish et al. 2014). For instance, focusing on women vs. men (traditional demographic categories) as important categories of difference as opposed to feminine vs. masculine presentation (theoretically significant categories) which may be more salient in terms of identifying meaningful differences in experiences, particularly in studies of alcohol and drugs where a relationship between gender presentation and intoxication may exist (Butler 1988; Ettorre 2007; Morris 1995). For example, a few studies investigating alcohol-related risk among lesbians and bisexuals have found that butch (e.g. masculine presenting) women experience higher risk of hazardous drinking compared to femme (i.e. more feminine presenting) women (Condit et al. 2011; Rosario et al. 2008). As noted above, contemporary research in the alcohol field on heterosexual, cisgender men suggest a relationship between traditional and expected masculine norms of drinking (e.g. drinking competitions, being able to drink heavily, and aggression) as ways of affirming masculinity and male solidarity (Hankivsky and Christoffersen 2008; Hunt et al. 2005; Peace 1992). As gender expression becomes more widely recognized as nuanced and fluid and not exclusively tied to sex, understanding how masculinities connect to alcohol and drugs use may help to shed light on the ambiguity of existing research documenting disparities in intoxication (Callis 2014; Peralta 2008). Given this situation, we argue that an alternative intersectional approach is warranted—one that also “focus[es] on...neglected points of intersection” (McCall 2005:1774), such as gender expression. This alternative intersectional approach is called intracategory complexity.

Distinct from intercategory complexity, intracategory complexity is the foundation of intersectionality but has so far remained at the margins in social research. This approach acknowledges the relevance of traditionally-defined identity categories, but intracategory

complexity also raises questions about the appropriateness of those categories.^v Conceptually, this allows a focus on i) traditional categories (e.g. man, woman), ii) a consideration of the fluidity of identities and their ability to change (Parks 1999), and iii) the ways in which traditionally-defined categories may obscure other important dimensions of inequality that link individuals, including for example, their performance of gender (Ludvig 2006; McCall 2014).

The relatively late adoption of intersectionality in studies of alcohol and drugs^{vi} may reflect the extent to which the alcohol and drug research fields, and especially that of alcohol research, are consistently behind in their adoption of new developments within sociology, anthropology, cultural studies, or feminist research (For a more extended discussion see Hunt and Barker 2001). Moreover, as we remain entrenched in battles about women's invisibility, our field continues to be defined by a binary gender discourse that considers male and female bodies as opposites. This tendency is especially problematic given contemporary theoretical developments in the social sciences which present bigenderism as a social construction dictating normative standards of masculinity and femininity, and marginalizing those who fail to perform appropriately (Gilbert 2009). As a result, the mainstream field, in spite of the exceptionally important research by feminist scholars, remains limited in the extent to which it considers the boundaries of gender by exploring gender roles, performances, and culturally constructed femininities and masculinities which shape intoxication for all young people.

5. Conclusion

Research on intoxicating substances has developed considerably in the last 20 years, especially in the social sciences and social history. We now know much more about the cultures of intoxication whether within contemporary Western societies or within different historical periods. We also have many more studies highlighting the boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable intoxication for different groups in society and the ways that these changes are determined by changing societal norms and values. Much of the more recent research has explored how the boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable behavior are influenced by societal norms about gender performance. While this recent feminist research has been critically important in providing data on an under-researched area, there still remain important gaps within these research fields if we are to understand the role and meaning of intoxication for all young people.

Contemporary research on young people is beginning to take account of intersectional identities and increasingly challenging a focus on binary notions of gender; however, the fields of alcohol and drugs is still somewhat impervious to these developments, with the exception of some feminist research. If we aim to understand the variation in experiences with intoxicants and intoxication, we must re-direct our research and begin to explore the role and meanings of intoxication for those who are currently ignored. Furthermore, our aim should not only be about doing research on those who are currently ignored, but should also

^vFor a fuller discussion of the differences between intracategorical and intercategory see McCall 2014.

^{vi}See exceptions above.

aim to accurately represent the experiences of young people “who are actively working—to a greater or lesser degree—to force their bodies into a binary that doesn’t exist in nature” (Wade and Marx Ferree 2015:25). In this sense, the binary notion of gender is real in that it is a social construction that critically influences how young adults negotiate their gender in intoxicating situations. To more accurately represent these experiences, we already possess the theoretical framework in the form of intersectional approaches. As Miller and Carbonne-Lopez (2015) have recently noted, we need to step outside the confines of binary normative notions of gender and a too heavy reliance solely on a “doing gender” approach by adopting an intersectional approach, which steps outside an “exclusive emphasis on gender” (2015:704). By doing this we can begin to examine the ways in which gender expressions are performed through intoxication and the ways in which they vary by other markers of social identities. Adopting an intersectional approach will not only include those who tend to be excluded but also such an approach will enrich our understanding of the complexities of gender. Instead of focusing solely on notions of masculinity and femininity within a rigid binary framework, we can begin to explore how masculinities and femininities, as gender expressions and gender presentations, are connected to drinking, drug use, and intoxication. Understanding the processes and pathways of gender expressions and performances among young adults, among different social classes, different ethnicities, different sexualities, and different genders, in various social contexts, has critically important implications for understanding intoxication.

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