

# The gender gap in young people's drinking

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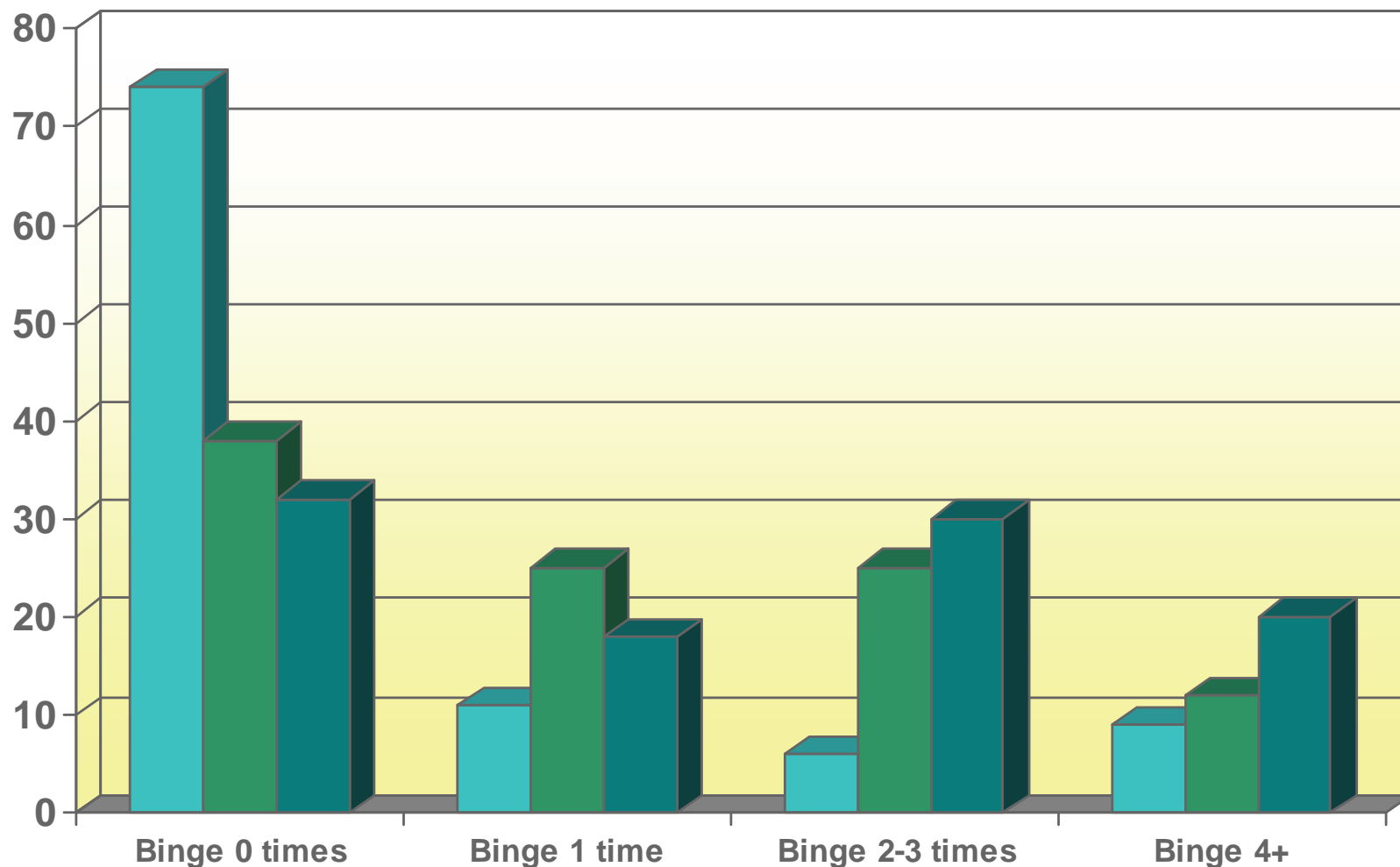
**Danish and British adolescents aged 15-16 years have the European record in drinking – they drink more frequently and more intensively than adolescents in other European countries (ESPAD 2009)**

## Why are parents left in a paradox?

*If you lay down a whole lot of rules, I think you cut off the dialogue (...) Your kids will do what they like anyway, they just won't tell you (...) Deals are a different matter. You can make deals with your kids, and if they comply with them, you can give them a longer and longer rope. You have to trust your children (...) I have no doubt they will get drunk, at one point or another, like all of us around this table probably have been – and we've been throwing up here and there, driven into the ditch, done stupid things. Those things can't be avoided and I don't worry about them.*

(focus group interview with parents)

# Parents' rules for number of units of alcohol when the adolescent is partying with friends. Percentage

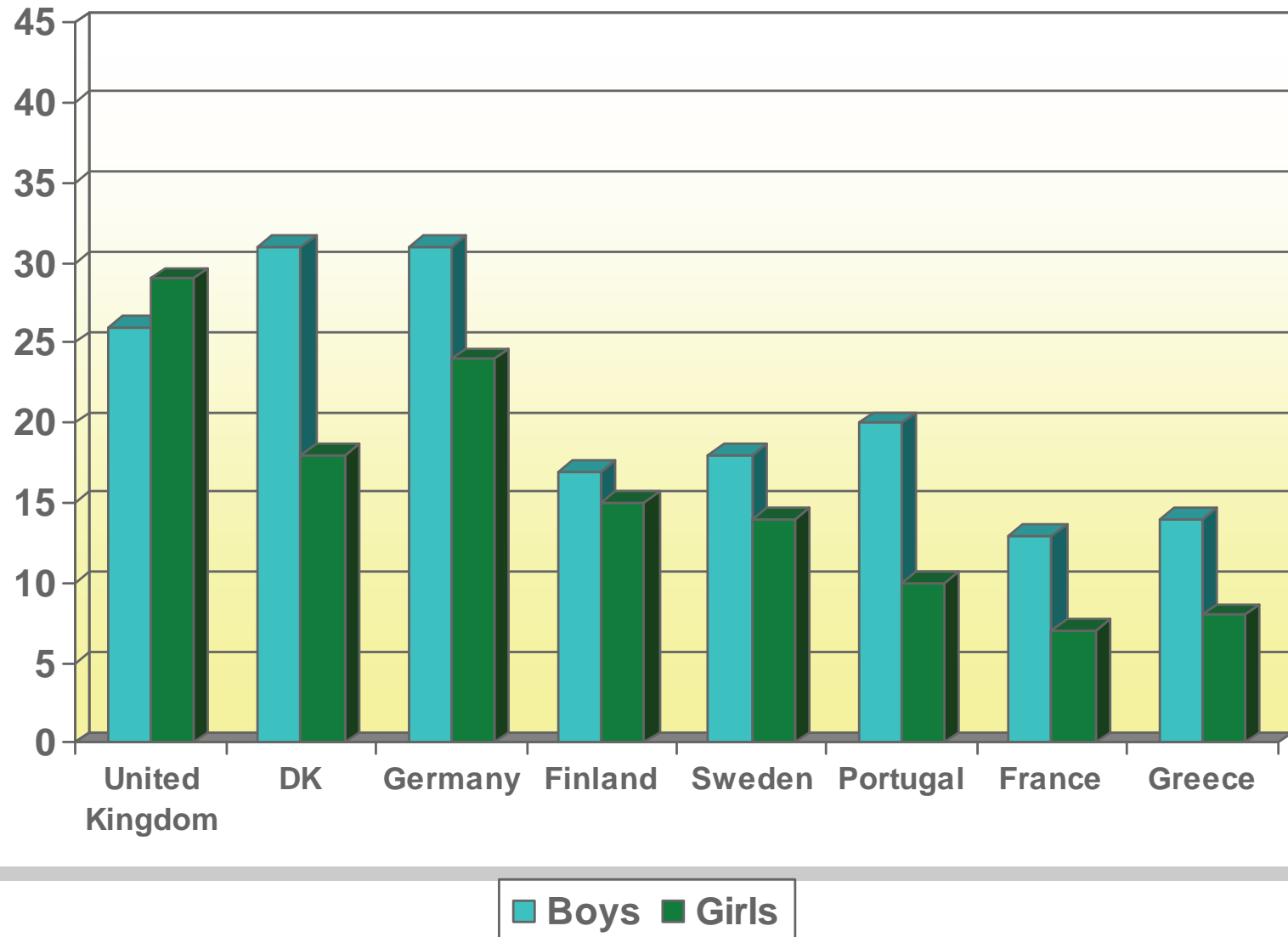


■ Not allowed to drink ■ Allowed to drink 3-4 units ■ Allowed to drink 5+ units

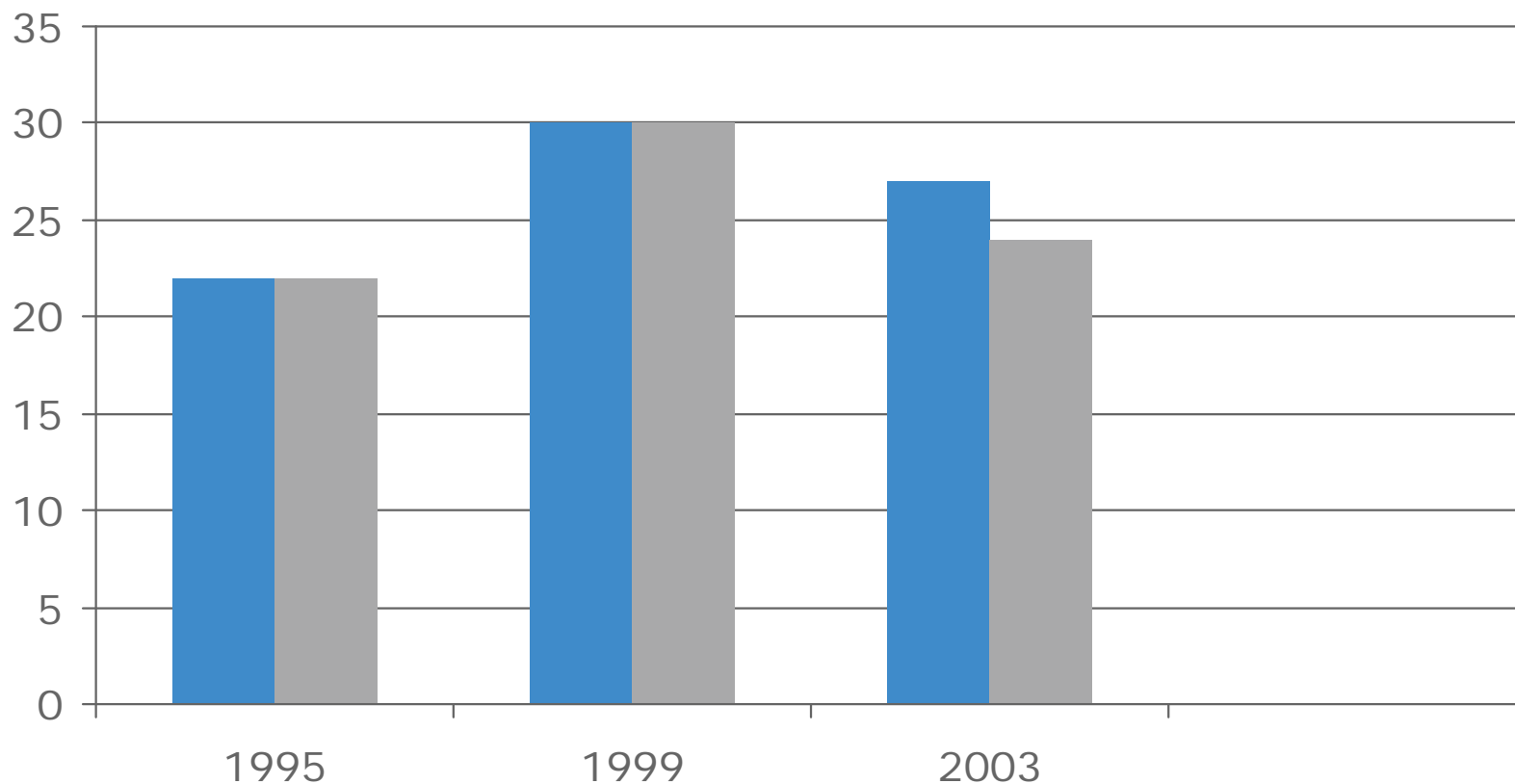
# INTRODUCTION

- The gender gap in young people's drinking
- A decrease in young women's drinking
- The performance of gender through drinking
- How do young women learn to become alcohol users?

# Proportion of boys and girls who have been binge drinking 3 times or more during the last 30 days (2003 ESPAD study)



## ESPAD: A decline in the number of 15-16 year olds who have been binge drinking 3 times or more during the previous 30 days



# Trends in key drinking measures for young women in UK and DK

	<i>UK</i> <i>Women 16–24 yrs (%)</i>		<i>Denmark</i> <i>Women 16–20 yrs (%)</i>	
	<i>1998</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2006</i>
Weekly drinking	62	55	73	63
Frequent drinking	9	3	6	5
Immoderate drinking	42	35	14	12
Binge drinking	23	21	36	31

# Key drinking measures by socio-economic classification for women aged 16 and over in the UK, 2006

	Socio-economic classification		
	Managerial and Professional	Intermediate	Routine and manual
Weekly drinking	66	56	48
Frequent drinking	15	12	8
Immoderate drinking	39	31	26
Binge drinking	17	14	13

# Drunk & disorderly

Independent On Sunday, 22 Oct. 2006

**Official:** Women in England and Ireland are the worst binge drinkers in the world

By Roger Dobson, Sophie Goodchild and Mark Woolf

Women in England and Ireland are officially the world's biggest binge drinkers, according to a unique study of global alcohol consumption.

One in three 15- to 30-year-olds is now classed as a heavy drinker, by taking on four or more drinks in one session at least once a fortnight.

These disturbing figures are 11 times higher than those of Germany and Italy, prompting

warnings that record numbers of women face liver damage and premature death unless they curb their alcohol consumption. The findings are based on a survey of more than 17,000 women and men from 21 countries, including Britain, France and the United States, in the largest study ever carried out into worldwide drinking habits.

The disclosure will alarm policy-makers struggling to combat Britain's growing drink

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



Were for more one-in-four women has a serious drink problem

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Paula Hamilton on her battle with the bottle



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Women who lived to tell the tale



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**Lotto Lout**

Robert Chalmers talks to Patsy Cunniff

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## We've gone from the ladette to the thugette

By JANE MOORE  
Sun Columnist  
Published: 27 Oct 2009

Add a comment (4)

**YOUNG** British women are in the grip of a binge drinking epidemic.

Yesterday The Sun revealed horrific images from towns and cities of females being sick in the street and erupting in violence.

81% rise in female student crime in a decade  
5,000 schoolgirls treated in hospital for booze  
11% of 15 & 16-year-olds have had unprotected sex

Enlarge

Undergraduate ... half-naked student who nicked cop's hat in Sheffield is nicked  
Images International

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# The 'public spectacle' of young woman's binge-drinking

The 'work hard-play hard' female equivalent of the 'lad', the so-called 'ladette', with clothes askew stumbling around the city centre streets at night, the 'doubly deviant' figure of drunkenness in a dress"

(Measham and Østergaard 2009)



**If you drink like a man  
you might end up looking like one.**

Public campaign run by the Drug and Alcohol Service for London, (2008)

- Do girls become like boys when they drink like boys – such as implied in the notion of ladettes?
- Or do the girls drink like boys because girls now do what boys used to do?
- How do girls learn to become alcohol users – is this process different from boys?

# Qualitative and Quantitative Data

- In 2005 a representative survey about alcohol and drug use was conducted among 2000 young Danes aged 15-16. (Project Youth and Alcohol (PUNA))
- 28 focus groups were carried out by a colleague (Dr. Demant) among young Danes aged 14-17 years old, in one city and two towns in Denmark. (Project Youth and Alcohol (PUNA))

# Becker's three learning steps:

Learn:

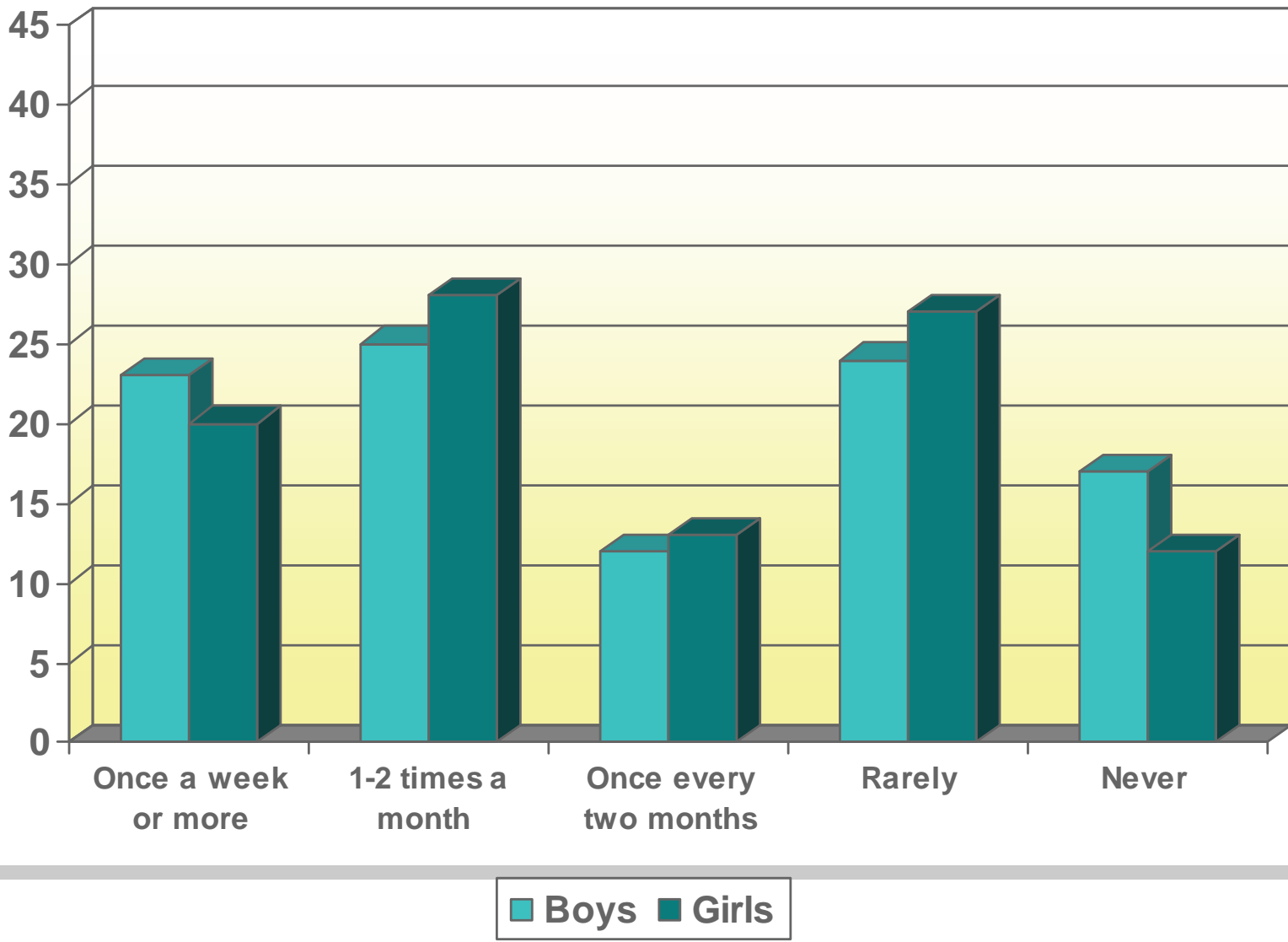
The techniques to produce the real effects (i.e. become intoxicated)

To perceive the effects and connect them to drug use

To enjoy the feeling

The three learning steps are merged with socio-cultural theories of risk (Lupton 1999, Fox 1999) and the term 'controlled loss of control' (Measham and Brain 2005).

# Proportion of boys and girls in the 9th grade who go to house parties. Pct.



# The party – a leisure lifespace

- House parties are usually held in private homes or in rented premises.
- The size of the party can vary from 10 close friends to very large parties where several adolescents jointly invite all their friends.
- Usually begins around 9 o'clock – best friends arrive first.



From Stine Larsen's *Teenagetøzer* (2005)

## The 'party atmosphere'

*Interviewer: But when... How does the atmosphere change from a relaxed get-together where you just ... and then into something where there is more of a party?*

*Simon:... If people start to get drunk, actually, and perhaps two start to be together ... well ... it depends on how we define being together, right? [Iben giggles] ... then people become like: 'Yeah, okay they can, then maybe I can too,' and then they try ... They get a little enthusiastic, right? And then it becomes more of a wild party... That's my experience, anyway...*

# Drunkenness: zoning the teenage party

*Per: Let's say that you are not drunk at those parties [house parties] and the other people are drunk, then you just don't find the same things funny, at least sometimes this is the case, then it quickly becomes boring...*

*Ulrik: If everyone does not drink, then it's somewhat funny, but if there are just one or two [people] who drink...*

*Per: When you get a little drunk, then you end up saying [silly] stuff and then everybody just starts to laugh...*

## The amount of alcohol boys and girls consume at the party – and their experiences

- Subjectively, girls like boys report they were intoxicated at the previous house party, but boys still report to drink more units of alcohol at the house party
- Girls party to a higher degree with adolescents who are older than themselves compared to boys
- Girls also do different things at the party...

Did you experience any of the following at the party?	Boys	Girls
Talked to someone I don't usually talk to	53	63**
Danced	38	65***
Got drunk	49	43
Flirted	35	48***
Talked intimately to someone	20	30**
Did something I don't usually do	24	21
Made out/kissed with someone (scored/pulled)	14	15
Vomitted	12	9
Saw someone getting into a fight	9	10
Had a quarrel with someone	9	7
Made a fool of oneself	9	8
Got injured	6	5
Was together with someone and regretted it afterwards	4	4
Got into a fight	4	1*

## The 'controlled loss of control' is bounded differently for boys and girls

- Only the boys find the the party is still fun, if they vomit at the party.
- The heavily drinking boys have, to a far greater extent, experienced getting into a fight. The heavily drinking girls, on the contrary have, to a greater extent, experienced regretting making out with someone.
- Boys and girls are of the same opinion of how acceptable it is for a girl to drink so much that she throws up. But boys find it more acceptable than girls, if a boy drinks so much that he throws up.

*Jacob:* There are some from your school class, that girl Maria, she doesn't know how to control alcohol. It's so obvious. When she gets drunk, she can hardly stand up and then she just continues to drink. And her boyfriend, he just watches, but does nothing. And then of course she throws up. And then her pal Pia comes along, and says that we should feel sorry for her, and that her parents are so evil. But, hey, then she might learn to drink less! Yeah right, we should feel sorry for her [said ironically], shut up, man!



- The young women can enjoy life, seek the pleasure and the fun of partying, but not completely lose it like the boys, who do not hold back in telling admirable and glorifying stories of sickness, hospitalisation, i.e. how they take the risk of 'losing it'.
- Learning to become an alcohol user is different for girls than for boys
- Intoxication is bounded differently for girls than for boys (Brain 2000, Measham 2002, Østergaard 2007)

Thank you for your attention