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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14733285.2018.1458214>

Posted at the Zurich Open Repository and Archive, University of Zurich

ZORA URL: <https://doi.org/10.5167/uzh-150896>

Journal Article

Accepted Version

Originally published at:

Truong, Jasmine (2018). Collapsing contexts: social networking technologies in young people's nightlife. *Children's Geographies*, 16(3):266-278.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14733285.2018.1458214>

Collapsing contexts: Social networking technologies in young people's nightlife

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Acknowledgements:

A warm thankyou to the interviewees for their time and openness in sharing their nightlife stories with us. I would also like to thank Anna Katz, Pauline Ndong for their assistance in conducting the interviews and transcribing, Vera Bärswyl for transcribing further interviews, Valentine Guenin, Noémie Gass, Annik Gmel, Christelle Morier, and Jonas Valdieck for translating the interview materials. Furthermore, I wish to thank the two referees for their constructive comments. Finally, I am very grateful to Sara Landolt and Itta Bauer for their support, advice, and guidance while this work was being written. This project is part of a research project Youth@Night funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation under grant 150181.

Collapsing contexts: Social networking technologies in young people's nightlife

In the latest discussions of children and young people's new geographies of leisure and pleasure, one controversial issue has been how digital technologies co-produce and reconfigure young people's everyday worlds. This article draws on semi-structured interviews with 40 young people who regularly use social networking technologies in their nightlife experiences in Zurich and Lausanne, two nightlife hubs in Switzerland. Informed by Danah Boyd's concepts of 'collapsing contexts' and 'imagined audiences', this article enables a critical engagement with young people's emerging understanding of their nightlife contexts, which are increasingly permeated by networking technologies. I show how social networking spaces facilitate the coming together, or collapse, of various social contexts which induce young people to imagine multiple audiences, including authority figures, in their nightlife practices. These collapsing contexts and imagined audiences, I argue, present new perspectives on debates about control and surveillance in young people's contemporary urban nightlife.

Keywords: digital technologies, power relations, nightlife, alcohol, surveillance, leisure

Introduction

Young people's nightlife is no longer bound to places such as bars, clubs, home parties, and public spaces in the city. Nightlife activities increasingly emerge in digital spaces too. Amidst a growing interest in how digital technologies offer an expansion of young people's everyday worlds (Wilson 2016; Bond 2014; Boyd 2014; Ruckenstein 2013; Crowe and Bradford 2006; Valentine, Holloway, and Bingham 2000), one strand of research discusses young people's nightlife unfolding across social networking technologies (Lyons et al. 2017; Niland et al. 2014; Brown and Gregg 2012). It addresses young people's constructions of identities and belongings through capturing, sharing, re-sharing, commenting on, and re-living personal photographs depicting their

alcohol consumption practices. Niland et al. (2014), for example, find young people ‘airbrushing’ (877) their drinking photographs on Facebook, and valuing drinking practices through ‘liking’ them. They argue that these ‘sanitised images normalise and reinforce drinking as always pleasurable without harmful consequences’ (883). While this research thread suggests that pervasive social networks create new ‘intoxigenic digital spaces’ (Griffiths and Casswell 2010, 525) that contribute to problem drinking, it first raises the question of how young people’s drinking spaces are produced within social networking spaces, a world in which ‘negotiating fuzzy boundaries is par for the course’ (Boyd 2014, 57).

While considerable research has been published about teenagers’ and young adults’ drinking places (Holdsworth, Lavery, and Robinson 2017; Demant and Landolt 2014; Trell, van Hoven, and Huigen 2014; Landolt 2011; Valentine et al. 2008), less attention has been paid to the spaces and contexts beyond drinking venues in which consumption habits and attitudes towards alcohol are transmitted, maintained, and interrupted. Certainly, academics have argued that parents’ and carers’ attitudes and practices (Valentine, Jayne, and Gould 2012), peer-to-peer drinking stories (Tutenges and Sandberg 2013), and personal alcohol and drinking images (Lyons et al. 2017; Niland et al. 2014; Brown and Gregg 2012) contribute to drinking cultures. However, these spaces and their associated narratives about alcohol are generally discussed in specific contexts, such as homes within the family or among peers. This paper shows young people’s spatial experience of urban nightlife, when these distinct contexts and narratives potentially emerge through mobile networking technologies. This follows what Jayne, Holloway, and Valentine (2006) emphasised in pursuing a more nuanced understanding of the social relations and cultural practices associated with the advent of particular forms of drinking spaces.

‘Intoxigenic digital spaces’ (Griffiths and Casswell 2010, 525) have been relatively neglected by geographers, so this paper goes some way towards filling this gap. In doing so, it contributes to deepening understanding of young people’s new geographies, in which digital networking technologies, particularly in the wealthier parts of the world, are increasingly becoming an integral part of their everyday lives (Bond 2014; Boyd 2014; Crowe and Bradford 2006; Valentine, Holloway, and Bingham 2000; Wilkinson 2016). While recognising digital technologies to be nonhuman actors in shaping emergent relations, I foreground young people’s social networks, within which networking technologies are embedded. Inspired by media scholar Danah Boyd’s (2014; 2002) reflections on how social networking technologies create networked and ‘collapsed contexts’, I explore how young people generate new understandings of nightlife and leisure spaces increasingly permeated with mobile networking technologies. By considering how alcohol is presented in or excluded from digital spaces, I show that collapsing contexts induce young people to consider ‘imagined audiences’ (Boyd 2007, 114), including peers, siblings, parents, teachers, and potential employers during their nightlife activities. This, I argue, provides new perspectives on debates about control and surveillance in young people’s contemporary urban nightlife experiences.

I next elaborate on this paper’s analytical lens by introducing Boyd’s ideas on the ‘collapsing contexts’ and ‘imagined audiences’ in social networking spaces. Before delving into empirical findings gathered in interviews with 40 young people, I detail the methodological process of this study, which has evolved from a larger research project in Switzerland.

Context collapses and imagined audiences

Drawing on various studies in human geography that, from various perspectives,

advance the idea that ‘online’ and ‘offline’ and ‘cyber’ and ‘real’ are entangled spaces (Longhurst 2016; Richardson 2016; Downing 2013; Ruckenstein 2013; Thompson and Cupples 2008; Valentine and Skelton 2008), I start from the premise that understanding more about young people’s nightlife requires us to take account of the increasing presence of mobile networking technologies in these spaces. The ubiquity of mobile technologies, as Plowman (2016) observes, challenges our ‘default understanding of context’ (190). She suggests moving ‘to a more fluid, emergent and multiscalar understanding of context without boundaries’ (191) which gives a new perspective about the relationships between practices, people, and things.

I agree with Ruckenstein (2013) that we must learn to think beyond either/or, virtual/real, and online/offline dichotomies if we are to understand the emerging ‘techno-worlds’ (476) that shape our everyday and ‘everynight’ (Wilkinson 2017, 744)¹ doings. I also agree with Valentine and Holloway (2002) that research needs to map the complex ways in which online practices are embedded within the everyday – which raises a broad question: How is space produced through the ever-changing evolution of hardware, software, technologies, and design? Substantial scholarship in human geography has produced a close focus on the nonhuman agency of digital technologies co-constituting spaces (Ash and Simpson 2016; Kinsley 2014; Kitchin and Dodge 2011; Thompson and Cupples 2008). While much of the recent literature challenges what it is to be human, Simonsen (2012, 11) raises concern over ‘the human in human geography’: The extensive attention devoted to the specific capacities and agencies of digital entities has attenuated engagement with questions of lived experience and social relations. In the same vein, Rose (2016a) remarks: ‘There is a need, I think, not to focus

¹ Wilkinson’s (2016; 2017) use of the term ‘everynight’ refers to Malbon’s notion of the every-night (1998).

so much on the agency of machines and their code that we neglect the networks of humans within which digital technologies are embedded, and the thoughts, feelings, processes, and practices which are then mediated by such technologies' (4).

Embarking from Rose's remark, I take inspiration from Boyd. She argues that electronic media redefine our sense of context and self-presentation. With regard to social networking spaces, Boyd coins the concept of 'collapsed context' (2002), and later in her works she uses the term 'context collapse'². Her concept is useful when considering the active roles that networking technologies play in shaping power relations within human networks. She explains: 'A context collapse occurs when people are forced to grapple simultaneously with otherwise unrelated social contexts that are rooted in different norms and seemingly demand different social responses' (Boyd 2014, 31). Delving into the social lives of networked teenagers in the United States, Boyd (2014) describes numerous examples of teenagers who contend with context collapses as part of their everyday lives: While using mobile networking technologies to manage and maintain friendships, teenagers are simultaneously aware of 'fuzzy boundaries' (Boyd 2014, 57) and the coming together of usually distinct social contexts in a single environment. Boyd argues that these fuzzy boundaries induce teenagers to imagine their audiences including authority figures such as parents and teachers. The presence of imagined audiences, in turn affects how they navigate a networked world now seemingly shaped by multiple norms requiring diverse social responses. Boyd (2014) explains that collapsing contexts can occur in physical environments; teenagers' 'natural response is to become quiet' (33). In fact, when young people encounter authority figures while drinking in public spaces, for example, they can choose how to

² She uses both terms in close coordination. See explanation on Boyd's blog:

<http://www.zephoria.org/thoughts/archives/2013/12/08/coining-context-collapse.html>

conduct themselves in front of that visible audience at that specific moment. They may, for example, stop whatever they were doing. However, reacting online is more challenging, both because contexts collapse much more frequently and because the audience remains invisible. Perhaps, as Boyd (2014, 33) says, ‘viewers who aren’t commenting might also be watching’, either simultaneously or later.

Digital spaces have become new grounds of cultural production (Longhurst 2016; Rose 2016a; Paiva 2015): Social networking spaces allow self-expressions, meaning, and value to emerge daily from users. Using Boyd’s concepts of context collapses and imagined audiences to explore young people’s nightlife spaces helps understand ‘the networks of humans’ (Rose 2016a) emerging in young people’s leisure spaces, increasingly permeated as these are with mobile networking technologies. From this analytical angle, I recognise mobile networking technologies as nonhuman actors in supporting ‘our weblike existence in the world’ (Berners-Lee 2000, 133). Nonetheless, I foreground how young people negotiate nightlife practices, in particular through drinking images in digital spaces where contexts can collapse. The understanding of audiences imagined as monitoring young people’s leisure spaces helps to reconfigure the relationships between practices, people, and technology.

Situating the study: design and context

The findings presented in this article are based on fieldwork conducted as part of a wider study titled Youth@Night, which explored urban nightlife practices, mobility, and the social context of young people, aged 16-25 years, in Zurich (a German-speaking city) and Lausanne (a French-speaking one). Both cities are major hubs for nightlife activities in Switzerland. The Youth@Night project involved an online questionnaire ($n = 367$), in-situ surveys that collected visual and sensor data through a mobile application downloaded onto participants’ personal mobile phones ($n = 168$; 96 in

Lausanne and 74 in Zurich), followed by semi-structured interviews with a selected sample ($n = 40$; 20 per city)³.

In this article, I draw primarily on the interviews (for more details on the project, see Santani et al. 2016). The interviewees were purposively sampled on the basis of the preceding survey's results to include a balance in terms of gender, a deliberate spread across the age and educational background spectra, a diversity in drinking patterns ranging from non-drinkers to heavy drinkers, and a range in the use of mobile networking technologies during nights out (for more details on the sampling of the overall project, see Labhart et al. 2017). Although neither the sampling nor the survey took either ethnicity or religion specifically into account, approximately a third of the interviewees indicated that they came from non-Swiss cultural backgrounds during their conversations. This broadly represents the proportion of foreigners in major Swiss cities (Brechtbühl, Tschirren, and Zimmermann 2016), specifically, 32 % for Zurich⁴ and 40 % for Lausanne⁵.

The interviews, 1.5 hours in length on average, were conducted between November 2014 and March 2015. They took place at the participants' choice of site: in coffee shops, in restaurants, at participants' homes, and at university. German is my first language, so I conducted the interviews in Zurich. To avoid 'hierarchies of language power' in the interviews (Temple and Young 2004, 162), two assistants⁶ whose mother

³ Ethical approval was obtained for the study from Zurich's and Lausanne's Cantonal Ethics Commission for Research on Human Beings.

⁴ See: https://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/prd/de/index/statistik/themen/bevoelkerung.html#ueberblick_bevoelkerungstadt_zuerich

⁵ See: <http://www.lausanne.ch/lausanne-en-bref/lausanne-un-portrait/un-portrait/statistiques/une-ville-des-chiffres.html>

⁶ Anna Katz and Pauline Ndong

tongue is French carried out the interviews in Lausanne. Research interviews are purposely produced with regard to research questions. Meanwhile, no interviewer is entirely free of the risk that they will pose suggestive questions or even put words in the mouth of an interviewee and then take the responses at face value (Bourdieu 2002, 782). However, the fact that three interviewers conducted the interviews in this study may have lessened a unilateral bias in the process of data collection.

The interviews involved watching video clips of nightlife to elicit participants' usage of their mobile phone and its software in their nightlife activities. These video clips were recorded by the interviewees with the study phone application during ten evenings over seven consecutive weekends prior to the interviews. The clips were automatically transferred onto the study server whenever access to Wi-Fi was available to avoid high transmission costs.

The study presented here is therefore based on transcripts of around 60 hours of tape-recorded interviews. They were fully transcribed into the original language by the interviewers and two additional research assistants⁷. The French transcripts were then translated into German⁸ for analysis. The transcripts were analysed through iterative rounds of coding using MAXQDA qualitative software. In the following, I use pseudonyms when referring to participants.

Imagined employers in the context of nightlife

Matthew goes out once a week, normally Friday night. He used to drink 'way too much', he says. That was during the period that he went to high school. Today, at the age of 19, he and his circle of friends consume much less alcohol. Apart from special

⁷ Vera Bärswyl and Valentine Guenin

⁸ By Noémie Gass, Annik Gmel, Christelle Morier, and Jonas Valdieck

occasions such as birthday parties or New Year's Eve, he normally drinks a couple of beers, until he feels tipsy and jolly, yet only up to a point where 'you still know what you are doing and you are still able to speak to each other', Matthew makes clear. Talking about what alcohol means to him, he elaborates: 'For me, alcohol is just a cool thing to drink in company'. In Matthew's narration, his alcohol use appears to be neither excessive nor unusual. Rather, he rationalises alcohol consumption as a means to facilitate social interaction and bonding, a use which has been widely discussed in previous studies (MacLean 2016; de Visser et al. 2013; Gordon, Heim, and MacAskill 2012; Jayne, Valentine, and Holloway 2010). This social bonding also emerges from group pictures: It has become a ritual that Matthew and his friends take pictures of them all standing side by side 'like in a team photo', as Matthew describes it. Such processes of recording friendships and pleasure are important aspects of young people's nightlife. Tutenges (2013) shows that young people place high value on collecting and retaining collective stories, photographs, video clips, autographs, and other symbols that connect them to past nightlife experiences.

Matthew normally shares such 'team photos' through his mobile phone using WhatsApp group chats. Every now and then, he also places nightlife photographs of special occasions on Facebook. However, when it comes to posting images that depict alcoholic beverages, Matthew has a firm opinion:

With all the photos I post on Facebook and Instagram⁹, it is important that I don't hold any alcoholic drink in my hand. So I can say I was totally sober that evening, in case my employers broach the issue (of that photograph) someday. Even if

⁹ Instagram is a photographs and video sharing social networking service launched in 2010. It allows users to take images and edit them with a selection of digital filters. Instagram was acquired by Facebook in 2012.

everyone else holds a beer in their hand, I never have anything in my hand.
(Matthew, 19 years)

As a nurse, Matthew is in apprenticeship training in a hospital and is highly sensitive to being searched for on Facebook. ‘We have read a lot about employers searching for you on Facebook’, Matthew explains. He considers it gives ‘an irresponsible impression’ to be seen drunk in party photographs by working colleagues or employers through social networking profiles. Matthew adjusts his personal Facebook profile to his professional context because people from work are potential viewers of his profile, at any time and from anywhere. Matthew clarifies that he does not pretend to his working colleagues that he is entirely abstinent, for he does consume alcohol at business gatherings, for example. On such occasions, however, his employer knows that he has the next day off. ‘So it doesn’t matter; even if I have a hangover, I won’t harm any patients’. In contrast, the context of a drinking photograph on Facebook is less obvious, as the viewer of the photograph may not have been present at the time the expression was created. As scholars have argued, drinking and drunkenness is socially structured and evokes different expectations and consequences in different contexts (Dorn 1983; Duff 2012). However, networking technologies create fuzzy boundaries between these contexts: Viewers from another, very different context may follow the thread of Matthews’ activities online as they unfold. Matthews’ traces can also be reposted and spread by other Facebook users, which increases the likelihood of context collapses, as viewers may read the content in a different light again.

In a recent review paper, Richardson (2016, 3) argues that ‘postwork places’ emerge through digital technologies. She explains that the attachment to and encounters with work through digital technologies constitute mobile connections with work, which, Richardson says, ‘possess an amorphous, spreading presence so that working space has

provisional dimensions' (13). This spreading presence enabled by social networking spaces involves the blurring of leisure and labour time: While updating personal status and uploading photographs extend the pleasures of going out for a longer period (Lyons et al. 2017; Brown and Gregg 2012), these 'longer temporalities and shifting spatialities' of leisure (de Jong 2015, 211) also mingle with forms of labour (Flisfeder 2015; Fuchs 2013).

The topic of postwork places, in fact *pre-work places*, also emerged in conversation with Jessica, who did not yet have to apply for a job. She is 16 years old and uses her mobile phone to take photographs and video clips of her and her friends while out. However, she only posts 'normal' nightlife pictures, 'nice and smiling', on social networking sites such as Facebook and Instagram. Jessica stresses that she would 'never' post an 'embarrassing photo', by which she means a picture displaying her 'fairly drunk'.

I think this (posting on social networking sites) is particularly a problem when you get older. You get older, you become a little more mature, you can better control your drinking, I think, your consumption, whatever. And when such pictures appear from older days, when you were younger, you are judged by them (the pictures). That's what I believe, at least. I don't know. I've never applied for a job <laughs>. (Jessica, 16 years)

Even though Jessica is still at school, her greatest concern is the durability and searchability of today's photographs and other forms of self-expression in social networking spaces. As Boyd (2014) notes, content placed on social networking spaces often 'sticks around' (11), as technologies are designed to enable persistence. Consequently, self-expression with and through social networking technologies is far from ephemeral; it endures. Being '“on the record” to an unprecedented degree' (Boyd 2014, 11) prompts Jessica to filter her photographs before placing them online.

Similarly, Brad expresses hesitancy in relation to pictures displaying him drinking or smoking.

I don't think I've ever posted any (pictures from my nights out). I think it's because my parents have always said that the image you show on Facebook is the image people will have of you in future. ... They said: 'If you have a photo of yourself smoking or drinking, it'd be a shame if your employer or your future employer sees it and then decides: "We take someone else" '. (Brad, 19 years)

Valentine et al. (2012) refer to the ideological extension of neoliberalism into the realm of home and parenting; this has raised the insecurity and anxiety of parents about giving the 'best start in life' (777) by providing the 'right' pieces of advice. It is currently unclear what happens with images and texts saved on social networking sites. In Europe, it is only last year that the General Data Protection Regulation adopted a right of erasure, which applies from 25 May 2018. In Switzerland, the revision of the Data Protection Regulation is still ongoing¹⁰. These legal gaps and the ability of social networking technologies to make their content visible, durable, searchable, spreadable, replicable, and mutable makes adults and young people wary when moving in digital spaces. Most of the participants, therefore, showed great awareness of the unintended consequences of having data stored and accessible: that it can be taken out of context, both today and later. In Julia's words (17 years): 'You really want to take control over what of yourself goes onto the Internet'.

Asking young people about their social networking practices regarding alcohol shows how they practise their online self-censorship to maintain a respectable appearance. However, social networking sites are also designed to enable other users to spread photographs and 'tag' other people. Flora tells me that she only shares her

¹⁰ <https://www.edoeb.admin.ch/dokumentation/00153/01448/01450/index.html?lang=de>

nightlife photographs online the next day so that, once sober, she can check whether a picture ‘is truly good’.

Then you might also ask your friends ‘hey, is it ok, when I post that (online)?’
Because otherwise someone will complain ‘how can you post that (online), see what I look like’, and so forth. (Flora, 20 years)

Boyd (2014) notes that many popular social networking systems are equipped to help people to disseminate information. Software features encourage the spreading of content, implicitly through liking and commenting, or explicitly through posting, sharing, and re-sharing. This enhances visibility. As Pariser (2011) elaborates, users need to take active steps to limit the visibility of any shared content. Crucially, the default setting of social networking spaces favours visibility, while online privacy is only reached through effort (Boyd 2014; Pariser 2011).

Collapsing contexts in social networking spaces ‘disrupt’ (Richardson 2016, 13) social and temporal boundaries, which prompts young people to limit the visibility of their relation to alcohol. Young people are wary of authority figures such as employers and future employers, unsettled by the feeling of doing something today they could regret at some point in the future. Clearly, there are individual participants who claim to move freely in social networking spaces without feeling restricted, such as Leo. Although he observes ‘a fear of data misuse’ among his peers, he has never experienced an authority figure examining his personal Facebook profile.

I have some weird photos (on Facebook). Maybe it’s a bit naive, but I don’t care much. I always think, if someone doesn’t want to hire me because I once drunk a beer too many, then I don’t want to work there. But maybe that (attitude) is going to change when I have to apply for a job for the first time <laughs>: even very probably. (Leo, 22 years)

Although Leo claims not to pay so much attention to how he appears online, his statement refers to an understanding that online alcohol display seems to be disadvantageous for a professional career. Leo believes that he may regret his current behaviour as soon as he attempts to enter the job market. Lovink (2013) notes that social networking spaces ‘provide little freedom anymore to present yourself in multiple ways’ (41). Taking a critical perspective, he terms social networking technologies commercial ‘self-promotion machines’ which favour presenting ‘ourselves as the best, fastest, and smartest’ (42).

This section has elaborated on how the work sphere intermingles with young people’s nightlife context; the next section addresses to what extent imagined family relations affect young people’s nightlife.

Imagined family members in the context of drinking

Research has shown that young people search for places outside the surveillance of authority figures during their nightlife activities. These ‘informal spaces’ (Valentine, Holloway, and Jayne 2010, 14) or ‘dark drinksapes’ (Wilkinson 2017, 752) can become drinking places where young people enjoy privacy and intimacy, especially when their consumption exceeds the tolerance of parents, carers and other adults in positions of authority (Holdsworth, Lavery, and Robinson 2017; Valentine, Holloway, and Jayne 2010).

However, the preservation of these intimate spaces among peers is increasingly challenged through social networking spaces, which render intimate boundaries porous or fuzzy. Georg discussed heavy binge-drinking sessions. These tend to occur at a specific open-air festival that he attends once a year. There, his friends and himself drink alcohol the whole day and listen to concerts.

You just have this feeling of freedom, you are weightless, you have no sense of balance anymore – which is not so positive <laughs> at an open-air festival – but somehow it’s just this feeling of freedom that you can let it all out during these 3 to 4 days. (Georg, 19 years)

Indeed, youth research has well established that drinking collectively can give rise to strong feelings of freedom, power, and communion (Tutenges 2013; Jayne, Valentine, and Holloway 2010; O’Malley and Valverde 2004). However, the feeling of ‘letting it all out’ described by Georg is attenuated through the omnipresence of mobile phones equipped with digital cameras and running a variety of digital networking applications. Georg uses Facebook to maintain contact with family members overseas. Facebook, as he explains, enables his relatives to keep ‘up to date’ with what he is doing. He would like to preserve his family members’ good impression of him. Consequently, even though Georg finds certain drinking photographs ‘cool’, he generally avoids being pictured in binge-drinking sessions.

I avoid being in photos with masses of alcohol. This is because of my relatives, of course, because of the culture. (...). They don’t know these things culturally <laughs>. I mean, they know that I drink but they don’t know about binge drinking, not to this extent. (Georg, 19 years)

Georg’s parents, living in Switzerland, are also ‘friends’ on Facebook with Georg. Though they know and tolerate him drinking and smoking, they do not appreciate his publishing these practices on social networking sites. Three years ago, Georg presented himself smoking a joint on Facebook. His cousin abroad ‘liked’ the picture, after which the image became visible for Georg’s uncle, who is digitally linked with his son.

And then it spread of course. They questioned me about that: ‘Hey, do you smoke pot?’ I mean, my parents knew it already, but for them (the relatives abroad) it was

new ground. They are very religious, they are Catholics, and they dislike any form of drugs. (Georg, 19 years)

Wary of the fuzzy boundaries and collapsing contexts on Facebook, Georg has since changed his security settings to allow only ‘friends’ of him to see what he posts. Today, Facebook allows the user to define a friends’ list, on which specific persons can be included or excluded, for each item of content. This creates the appearance of choice and control. However, as the Internet activist Pariser (2011, 227) points out: ‘Options largely exist only to the degree that they’re perceived’. He criticises the fact that Facebook offers all sorts of setting options but makes it difficult to find, understand, and manage the filters. These filters in turn become obsolete once a Facebook ‘friend’ spreads a picture further, which can happen at the touch of a screen and within seconds.

Various scholars have emphasised the ability of social networking technologies to expand young people’s social networks (Boyd 2014; Holloway and Valentine 2003) and to escape adult surveillance (Thompson and Cupples 2008). However, the ubiquity of mobile phones, today mostly equipped with digital camera lenses and apps to edit photographs and videos, makes it possible to immortalise, edit, or modify any item at any time. The capacity to multiply and disseminate within seconds and without any effort through networking technologies enabled what Tufekci (2012, 40) calls ‘grassroots surveillance’: People connected through social networking sites can monitor all manner of everyday and mundane activities through status updates, photographs, and videos.

The feeling of inhabiting nightlife spaces with disruptive boundaries also emerges in the discussion with Deborah. Like Georg, she has family members abroad with whom she is connected through social networking technologies. Her father is of Tunisian origin, so Deborah grew up in a family where ‘we didn’t have any alcohol at

home. I had to get that from somewhere else'. Deborah's mother doesn't drink at home out of respect for her father's Muslim faith but it was with her that Deborah had her first drink in her life. She wanted to accompany her daughter's first experience with alcohol. Deborah didn't state that her father ever prohibited her from drinking, but she knew that his faith-based culture of abstention leads him to view alcohol 'with disfavour'. She therefore avoids her father and her relatives in Tunisia seeing her related to alcohol consumption in any way. While Deborah consumes alcohol and goes to public nightlife venues, she stands back when photographs are taken whilst alcohol is being drunk.

Everything goes online. Really, everything just goes online. And it's also because I don't really want -. I have family in Tunisia. I really don't want them to see me among drunk people. It is self-protection, because I don't really have the energy for discussions <laughs>. And also, I don't want anyone to see me looking drunk or boozing somewhere <laughs>. (Deborah, 20 years)

In order to conceal her drinking from her father and the family in Tunisia, Deborah also asks her friends to show her any nightlife pictures taken of her and claim to ask her consent before posting them online.

Deborah: The photos stay on my friends' mobile phone. Not because I am ashamed to drink, but because I don't want my father to see them at all.

Jasmine: Through the Internet, for example?

Deborah: Exactly. You tag someone on Facebook and there you go. And since I deleted the Facebook app on my phone, I'm not on Facebook very often. So if I forget to go online the same night to check (the photographs), it's quite possible that I don't go online (on Facebook) for four days. So when a (drinking) picture goes online and I don't see it for four days, my whole family has a long time to take a look. I think, why get into trouble, if it's easy (to avoid). It's not that I hide (it) from them, but if no one asks me directly, I don't give an answer.

Valentine et al. (2010, 12) elaborate on the phenomenon of the 'absent presence' of alcohol in the Pakistani Muslim community in Great Britain: the Muslim community

there know that members of the community, in particular the males, drink, but they do not do so publicly, nor is the practice publicly acknowledged. Those who drink do so in marginal spaces such as in parks, cars, and bus shelters rather than at home or in mainstream nightlife venues. Many in the Pakistani community work as taxi drivers in British city centres, which evokes ‘a sense that the eyes of the community are always on the street’ (Valentine, Holloway, and Jayne 2010, 11). While participating in mainstream nightlife venues, Deborah also imagines the ‘eyes of her community’ on her: not through the windscreens of taxis but through her family’s computer screens in networked spaces.

Zhara, 17 years old, is Muslim and remains abstinent due to her faith. Her father thinks that ‘alcohol is not good’. Yet, she attends nightlife and meets friends who consume alcohol. The omnipresence of digital technologies and the potential of these technologies to capture moments, spread content, disrupt boundaries, and collapse social contexts makes Zhara averse to appearing in photographs depicting alcohol consumption. She fears that someone in her family could see these pictures, because ‘you never know where these pictures go’, she says. I asked her whether her parents knew that her friends consume alcohol:

Zhara: No.

Jasmine: Ah ok.

Zhara: Not of the friends they know. Of the other people, I believe they expect that they are doing that (consuming alcohol).

Jasmine: Ok. Is this why you don’t want your friends being associated with alcohol, either (on photographs)?

Zhara: Exactly, because then they will think badly of them.

Valentine et al. (2010) argue that Pakistani Muslims who consume alcohol are concerned about ‘bringing shame both on the drinker and on their family’ (14) if they

are seen. Zhara is concerned about her drinking friends' reputations with her parents. Potential visibility in proximity to alcohol increases through mobile digital technologies to the extent that the abstinent teenager even avoids saving nightlife pictures in the first place: Possibly, Zhara notes, she might lose her phone and someone in the family 'who is not supposed to see them' might see her digital records relating her to a companionship that consumes alcohol.

Concluding thoughts

Over a decade ago, Jayne, Holloway, and Valentine (2006) suggested pursuing a more nuanced understanding of the social relations and cultural practices associated with the emergence of particular kinds of urban leisure and drinking spaces. I started this paper with the premise that understanding more about young people's nightlife relations requires a closer look at the pervasive mobile networking technologies in their everyday lives, including their nightlife and leisure spaces. I used Boyd's concepts to foreground young people's human networks, within which mobile networking technologies are embedded and shape social power relations. This broader network within which the online and offline intermingle, I argued, provides new perspectives on debates about control and surveillance in young people's contemporary urban nightlife experiences.

The tensions between young people's freedom and their safety has been extensively negotiated in academic debates (Valentine 1996). Scholars have discussed a range of factors, such as regulation and deregulation practices (Demant and Landolt 2014; Hadfield, Lister, and Traynor 2009), parental and peer control (Holdsworth, Lavery, and Robinson 2017), and religious constraints (Valentine, Holloway, and Jayne 2010), which are thought to shape young people's use of urban night spaces for drinking. This paper pursued a further aspect: As Thompson and Cupples (2008, 96) phrase it, one's digital network is 'ever present symbolically in the mobile phone'. This

has extended the scope of relations to physically absent people and places and enables new territories to enact and affirm relationships (Longhurst 2016; Su 2016). I agree with Thompson and Cupples's (2008) attempt to elaborate a reductionist understanding that constructs technologies simply as having negative effects on vulnerable young people (see also Valentine, Holloway, and Bingham 2000), but I also suggest that mobile networking technologies can both enlarge and diminish social relations. As this paper clearly shows, the augmented capacity of connections through digital social networks to contexts beyond young people's nightlife contributes to a sense of the presence of imagined authority figures. Most of the participants did not express substantial limitations of their actual nightlife practices, such as drinking alcohol in real terms. However, they did show great reservations about their appearance in social networking spaces, in which they imagine fuzzy social and temporal boundaries that allow authority figures to watch and judge their current self-presentation in an unforeseeable future.

Scholars have discussed social networking spaces as spaces of cultural production (Rose 2016b; Paiva 2015). I acknowledge the serious concern surrounding social networking spaces as contributing to an intoxicogenic drinking culture (Lyons et al. 2017; Brown and Gregg 2012). My purposes here did not require that I endeavour to contradict or disapprove these findings; scholars have long shown differences in drinking cultures, even though different attitudes towards alcohol seem to grow more similar (Gordon, Heim, and MacAskill 2012; Beccaria and Sande 2003). Instead, I introduced new insights through the lens of Boyd's analytical concepts. As different social contexts come together within and through networking technologies, young people orientate towards imagined authority figures in their nightlife contexts, which has a normalising effect: Collapsing contexts produce self-censorship practices in a space, where content is visible, spreadable, searchable, and persistent. In fact, social

networking spaces give rise to forms of self-discipline in performance in a quasi-Foucauldian sense (Foucault 1977), even if young people's performances are in effect not extraordinary. Tufekci (2012) understand this dynamic as 'grassroot surveillance': Users of social networking spaces feel themselves under the constant observation of communities that include parents, teachers, and employers. This makes the performance of different identities more problematic. Therefore, collapsing contexts in social networking spaces engender proactive concerns rather than reactive considerations (Tufekci 2012). This conflicts with young people's nightlife and leisure contexts which have widely been shown as crucial spaces in which young people can test limits and explore identities (Kolind 2011; Lyons and Willott 2008; Demant and Järvinen 2006), build and maintain relationships (MacLean 2016), explore bodily boundaries, and simply have fun (Fry 2011), also within digital spaces (Lyons et al. 2017). Having said this, I suggest that further research is needed into how young people's leisure spaces and practices alter when intertwined with digital realms within which practices and performances spread, persist, and become searchable and visible to an unprecedented degree.

Finally, this article contributes more generally to advancing the idea of 'online' and 'offline' and 'cyber' and 'real' as entangled spaces that can, as Longhurst (2016) argues, reconfigure our understanding and orientation towards spaces and contexts. There are still relatively few examples of how exactly this reconfiguration happens and what that means to young people's everyday and everynight lived experiences. I hope to stimulate the interest of others in further examining the meaning of context emergent within and through networking technologies.

Acknowledgements

See title page.

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