

Identity Theory-

The roots of identity theory (IT) are found in the work of George Herbert Mead (1934) whose work has been simplified into the formula,

"SOCIETY SHAPES SELF, SHAPES SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR"

Three distinct usages of the term 'identity':

- that which refers to the culture of a people;
- that which refers to common identification with a collectively or social category such as in social identity theory (SIT) (Tajfel, 1982); and
- that which refers to parts of a self, composed of the meanings that people attach to the multiple roles they typically play in highly differentiated contemporary societies.

Identity salience, commitment, and hierarchy

A self-concept of a person is composed of a number of different identities. Each identity is associated with a particular social context. The salience of an identity is the degree to which it is activated in a particular social context. The hierarchy of identities is the degree to which one identity is more salient than another.

Capital and distinction

Bourdieu - Capital - Field-Praxis

"The human life is the combination of two major dimensions: individual and social. Individual dimensions are those of the person as a subject, as a person with a particular history, a particular personality, a particular set of capacities and a particular set of resources. Social dimensions are those of the person as an agent, as a person who is situated in a particular social context, a particular field, a particular network of relations."

Research gap...

Previous research has shown clear links between the relationship between a few specific identities and drug use, including:

- moral identity and drug use (Townsend and Belgrave 2000, Brook and Pohl 2000)
- gender identity and drug use (Baker, Cunningham et al. 2006, Baker, Marcus et al. 2009)
- and drinking identity (Larsson and Gustafsson 2007, Foster and Spencer 2013, Lough, Kavanagh et al. 2013, Foster 2016)

When assessing illegal drug use and identity, most of the literature focuses on drug addiction and dependence, and their relationship with users, identity construction, the Addict vs. Non-addict dichotomy (Dentice-Fleet et al. 1981, McLellan, Roberts et al. 1981, Pihlak and Pihlak 2010, Redner 2005, Hughes 2007). Less research exploring links between non-dependent drug use and identities that those users may develop.



Capital and identity- a theoretical perspective on drug use

6th EUSPR conference
Ljubljana, Slovenia
23/10/2015

Rebecca Crook

Postgraduate research student
Centre for Public Health
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My PhD

An exploration of the concept of 'identity' in non-dependent drug users and their substance related decision-making

Principal research question:
How does drug use and the associated lifestyles and practices function as part of a young adults' identity?

Objectives:
To explore the identities of young adult drug users and to understand how these identities may influence their substance related decision-making.
To investigate what it means to be a drug user and how people may gain a sense of identity from drug use.

References

Adkins, N. (2010) 'The Role of Identity in the Development of Substance Use Disorders', *Journal of Substance Abuse*, 42(1), pp. 1-10.

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Background

- The 2014/2015 Census Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) reported that last year with reported prevalence of use of any drug among adults aged 16-24 years old was 8.8% and for young people aged 16-24 years old was 19.4% (Home Office, 2015).
- Frequent drug use is defined as taking an illicit drug more than once a month in the last year.
- According to the 2014/15 CSEW, 27% of all adults aged 16 to 59 were classed as frequent drug users. The proportion of young adults aged 16 to 24 who were classed as frequent drug users was 51%, over twice the proportion of all adults aged 16 to 59 in the 2014/15 survey.
- Some have theorised, stating that young people experience problems that may require other self-directed solutions (change in behaviour, or intervention from community health services (eg. support from GP)).
- Research in the field of illicit substance use has largely ignored adult recreational drug users as a specific group, instead focusing on problematic drug use (Baker, 2005).



Capital and identity- a theoretical perspective on drug use

This presentation will cover:

- Current trends of drug use in England and Wales
- Drug use and identity
- Theories: identity theory, capital and distinction, my development and application of these theories
- Research gap
- My PhD- objectives, study population and methodology

Drug use and identity

Varying types of drug use:

- experimental user
- recreational user
- binge user
- chronic user

Experimental user:
Those who have used drugs, for or for fun occasions, where consumption is not habitual and often activities are usually part of the leisure environment and try new drugs experimentation and can be seen as informal, development for those (Baker, 2005).

Recreational user:
Those who have used drugs, for or for fun occasions, where consumption is not habitual and often activities are usually part of the leisure environment and try new drugs experimentation and can be seen as informal, development for those (Baker, 2005).

Binge user:
Those who have used drugs, for or for fun occasions, where consumption is not habitual and often activities are usually part of the leisure environment and try new drugs experimentation and can be seen as informal, development for those (Baker, 2005).

Chronic user:
Those who have used drugs, for or for fun occasions, where consumption is not habitual and often activities are usually part of the leisure environment and try new drugs experimentation and can be seen as informal, development for those (Baker, 2005).

Thanks for listening

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Acknowledgements:
Centre for Public Health, Liverpool John Moores University
Professor Harry Summell
Dr Melissa Allen
Ananda Wilson

Study population

The research population for this study is non-dependent drug users from a broad section of the young adult population (i.e. 18-35)

- ✓ Participants must be aged between 18-35 years of age
- ✓ Participants must be non-dependent current drug users (has used an illegal substance in the past month)
- ✗ Participants must not be receiving structured drug treatment, or with a clinical diagnosis of dependence



Feedback

Feedback is welcome and will be used to improve the presentation. Please email me at rcrook2014@lmu.ac.uk or tweet me @RCROOK.

Identity Theory-

The roots of identity theory (IT) are found in the work of George Herbert Mead (1934) whose work has been simplified into the formula,

"SOCIETY SHAPES SELF, SHAPES SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR"

Three distinct usages of the term 'identity':

- that which refers to the culture of a people;
- that which refers to common identification with a collectively or social category such as in social identity theory (SIT) (Tajfel, 1982); and
- that which refers to parts of a 'self' composed of the meanings that people attach to the multiple roles they typically play in highly differentiated contemporary societies.

Identity salience, commitment, and hierarchy

A self-concept is a self-referential cognitive structure that is organized in a hierarchy of identity salience. The hierarchy is organized in a hierarchy of identity salience. The hierarchy is organized in a hierarchy of identity salience.

Capital and distinction



Bourdieu - Capital - Field-Process

"The human is the combination of his or her capital (resources, skills, and knowledge) and his or her position in the social field (the social structure). The human is the combination of his or her capital (resources, skills, and knowledge) and his or her position in the social field (the social structure)."

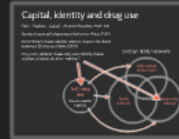


Research gap...

Previous research has shown clear links between the relationship between a few specific identities and drug use, including:

- moral identity and drug use (Townsend and Belgrave 2000, Brook and Pohl 2000)
- gender identity and drug use (Baker, Cunningham et al. 2008, Baker, Marcus et al. 2009)
- and drinking identity (Larsson and Gustafsson 2007, Foster and Spencer 2013, Leigh, Kinnear et al. 2013, Foster 2016)

When assessing illegal drug use and identity, most of the literature focuses on drug addiction and dependence, and their relationship with users, identity construction, the addict vs. non-addict dichotomy (Dentice-Fra et al. 1981, McClellan, Roberts et al. 1981, Pithers and Pollock 2010, Reder 2005, Hughes 2007). Less research exploring links between non-dependent drug use and identities that those users may develop.



Background

- The 2014/2015 Census Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) reported that last year with reported prevalence of use of any drug among adults aged 16-24 years old was 8.8% and for young people aged 16-24 years old was 19.4% (Home Office, 2015).
- Frequent drug use is defined as taking an illicit drug more than once a month in the last year.
- According to the 2014/15 CSEW, 27% of all adults aged 16 to 59 were classed as frequent drug users. The proportion of young adults aged 16 to 24 who were classed as frequent drug users was 51%, over twice the proportion of all adults aged 16 to 59 in the 2014/15 survey.
- Some users that report selling drugs, users will experience problems that may require other self-directed solutions (change in a change in use behaviour, or intervention from community health services (eg. support from GP)).
- Research in the field of illicit substance use has largely ignored adult recreational drug users as a specific group, instead focusing on problematic drug use (Baker, 2005).



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My PhD

An exploration of the concept of 'identity' in non-dependent drug users and their substance related decision-making

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How does drug use and the associated lifestyles and practices function as part of a young adults' identity?

Objectives:
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To investigate what it means to be a drug user and how people may gain a sense of identity from drug use.

Capital and identity- a theoretical perspective on drug use

- This presentation will cover:
- Current trends of drug use in England and Wales
 - Drug use and identity
 - Theories - identity theory, capital and distinction, my development and application of these theories
 - Research gap
 - My PhD- objectives, study population and methodology

Drug use and identity

- Varying types of drug use:**
- experimental user
 - recreational user
 - binge
 - chronic user
- Experimental user:**
Those who have used drugs, for or for fun occasions, when experimenting with psychoactive substances and other activities are usually part of the social environment and try new drugs, experimentation and can be seen as a normal developmental pattern (Baker, 2005).
- Recreational user:**
Those who have used drugs, for or for fun occasions, when experimenting with psychoactive substances and other activities are usually part of the social environment and try new drugs, experimentation and can be seen as a normal developmental pattern (Baker, 2005).
- Binge:**
This is a pattern of substance use in which pleasure and sensation are the prime motivations for use of psychoactive drugs (Baker, 2005).
- Chronic user:**
This is a pattern of substance use in which pleasure and sensation are the prime motivations for use of psychoactive drugs (Baker, 2005).

Thanks for listening

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Study population

The research population for this study is non-dependent drug users from a broad section of the young adult population (i.e. 18-35)

- ✓ Participants must be aged between 18-35 years of age
- ✓ Participants must be non-dependent current drug users (has used an illegal substance in the past month)
- ✗ Participants must not be receiving structured drug treatment, or with a clinical diagnosis of dependence



Feedback


Feedback is an important part of the research process. It allows researchers to understand how their research is perceived by their audience and to make improvements accordingly.

References

Baker, R. (2005) 'Drug use and identity: A theoretical perspective on drug use', in R. Baker (ed.), *Drug use and identity: A theoretical perspective on drug use* (pp. 1-10). London: Routledge.

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Background

- The 2014/2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) reported that last year self-reported prevalence of use of any drug among adults aged **16-59 years old was 8.6%** and specifically among young people aged **16-24 years old was 19.4%** (Home Office, 2015).
- Frequent drug use is defined as taking an illicit drug more than once a month in the last year.
- According to the 2014/15 CSEW, 2.2% of all adults aged 16 to 59 were classed as frequent drug users. The proportion of young adults aged 16 to 24 who were classed as frequent drug users was 5.1 %, over twice the proportion of all adults aged 16 to 59 in the 2014/15 survey.
- Some non-treatment seeking drug users will experience problems that may require either self-directed behaviour change (e.g. a change in use behaviours), or intervention from community health services (e.g. support from GP).
- Research in the field of illicit substance use has largely ignored adult recreational drug users as a specific group, instead focusing on problematic drug use (Notley, 2005).



"The great unmentionable"

(Hunt and Evans, 2008)

For prevention and harm reduction efforts to engage users, the potential pleasures and functions of consuming illicit drugs needs to be acknowledged.

Drug use and identity

Varying types of drug user;

- *experimental user*
- *recreational user*
- *binger*
- *chaotic user*

'Experimental' users-

Those who have used drugs, licit or illicit, on few occasions... where experimenting with psychoactive substances and other activities are usually part of the desire to experiment and try new 'risky' experiences and can be seen as a normal development pattern (Hussain Rassool, 2011).

In terms of 'recreational use'-

"this is seen as a form of substance use in which pleasure and relaxation are the prime motivations for use of psychoactive drugs whether they be alcohol, caffeine, nicotine, cannabis, LSD or ecstasy" (Hussain Rassool, 2011).

The 'binger' is usually characterised as repeated use of drugs over several days (Ovenden and Loxley, 1996).

Problematic or 'chaotic' drug use tends to refer to drug use that could either be dependent or recreational; not necessarily the frequency of drug use which is the primary 'problem' but the effects that drug taking have on the user's life (Drugscope, 2015).

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Three distinct usages of the term 'identity':

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- iii) that which refers to parts of a 'self', composed of the meanings that people attach to the multiple roles they typically play in highly differentiated contemporary societies.

Identity salience, commitment, and hierarchy

- A multiplicity of selves, or a differentiated self composed of multiple aspects.
- A person's salient identity is the identity that comes into play in a specific situation.
- When a person shares a certain identity with a greater number of people, their commitment to that identity tends to be higher.
- The higher the level of commitment a person has to a particular social identity, the higher the level it occupies on the person's salience hierarchy.
- Commitment shapes identity salience, shapes role choice behaviour (Stryker and Burke 2000)

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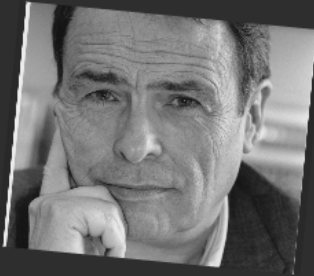
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Capital and distinction

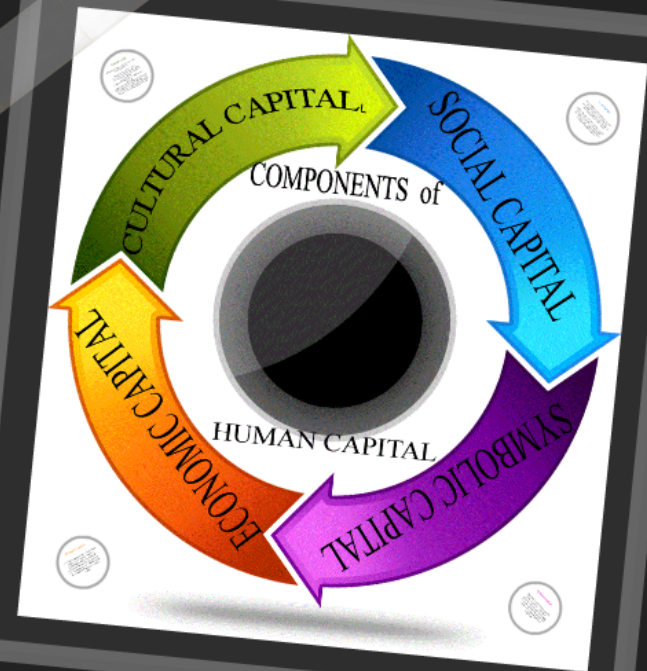


The idea that our social world can shape our behaviour can also be understood in the work of Bourdieu, in his formula: '(Habitus × Capital) + Field=Practice'.

In his book *Distinction* (1984), Pierre Bourdieu moved away from rigidly vertical models of the social structure and located groups in highly complex multi-dimensional space.

'(Habitus × Capital) + Field=Practice'.

- The 'habitus' is the collective term for the array of dispositions that individuals of a social network use to respond to themselves and their surroundings (Bourdieu 1984).
- 'Capital', whether it is social, cultural, economic or symbolic, is the understanding of the social structure and social networks in highly complex multi-dimensional space.
- 'Fields' refer to the always existing, obligatory boundaries of experiential context.





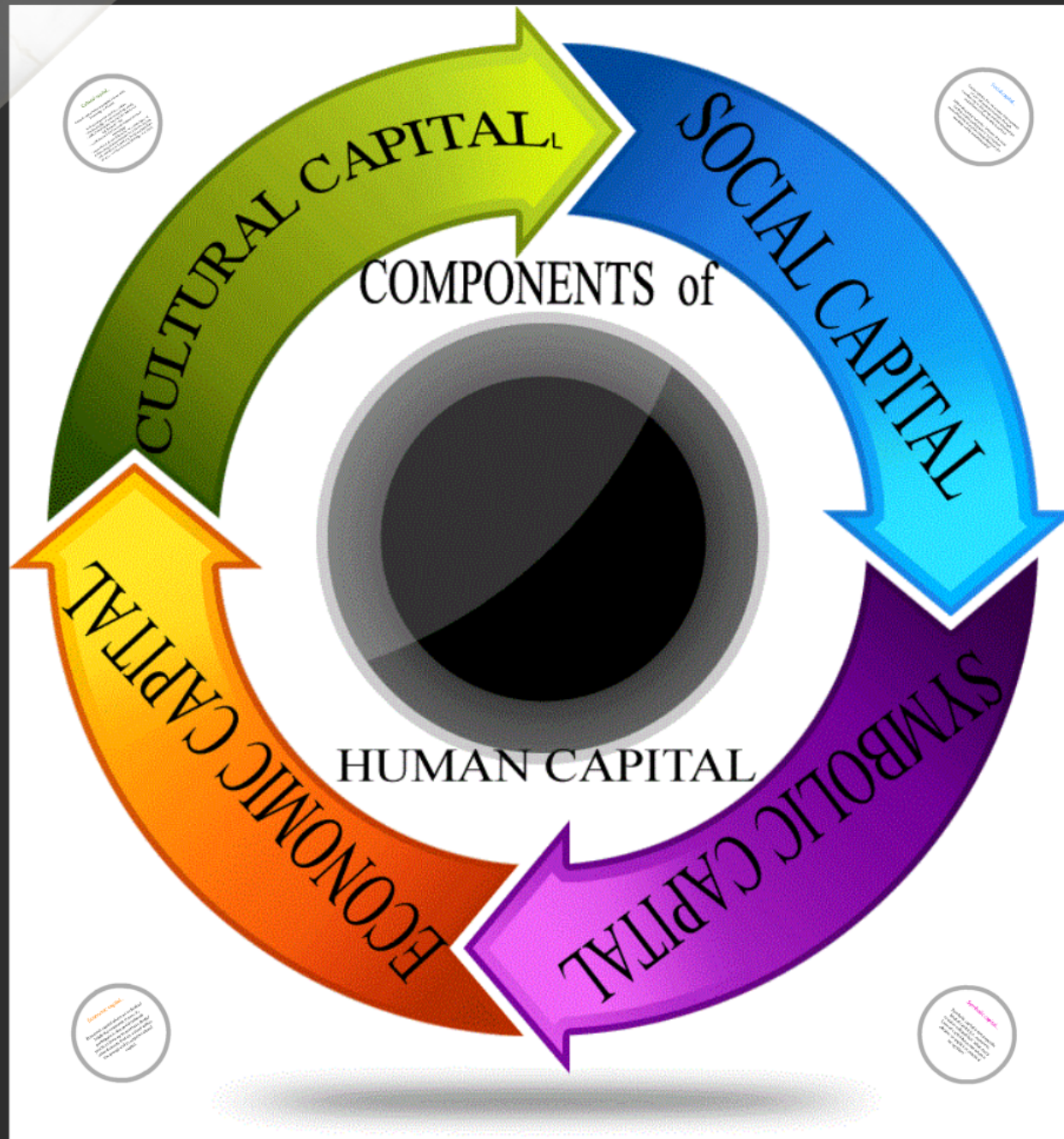
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Cultural capital...

Cultural capital refers to peoples' values, skills, knowledge and tastes.

In drug using networks this could be:

- the knowledge of how to use drugs safely
- skills of making the most out the substance
e.g. the best 'roller'
- could also be linked to music tastes/ access to
events/gigs
- research has shown links between certain types of
culture, drug taking and music; for instance, hip hop
and cannabis use (Sandberg, 2012) and stimulant
drug use and dance music (Aldridge et al. 2011)

Economic capital...

Economic capital where an individual holds the economic means to participate in the social network practices (money to purchase drugs/ attend events that are valued within the group) and to acquire cultural capital.

Social capital...

Social capital is the social value that members of a social network maintain through membership to this group and the relationships and influence they are able to uphold.

Within drug using networks- features of a social life that enable participants to act together more efficiently to pursue shared objectives (to use drugs safely and pleurably)

Symbolic capital...

Symbolic capital is not a specific kind of capital (i.e., economic, social or cultural) but “what every form of capital becomes when it obtains an explicit or practical recognition.”

Research gap...

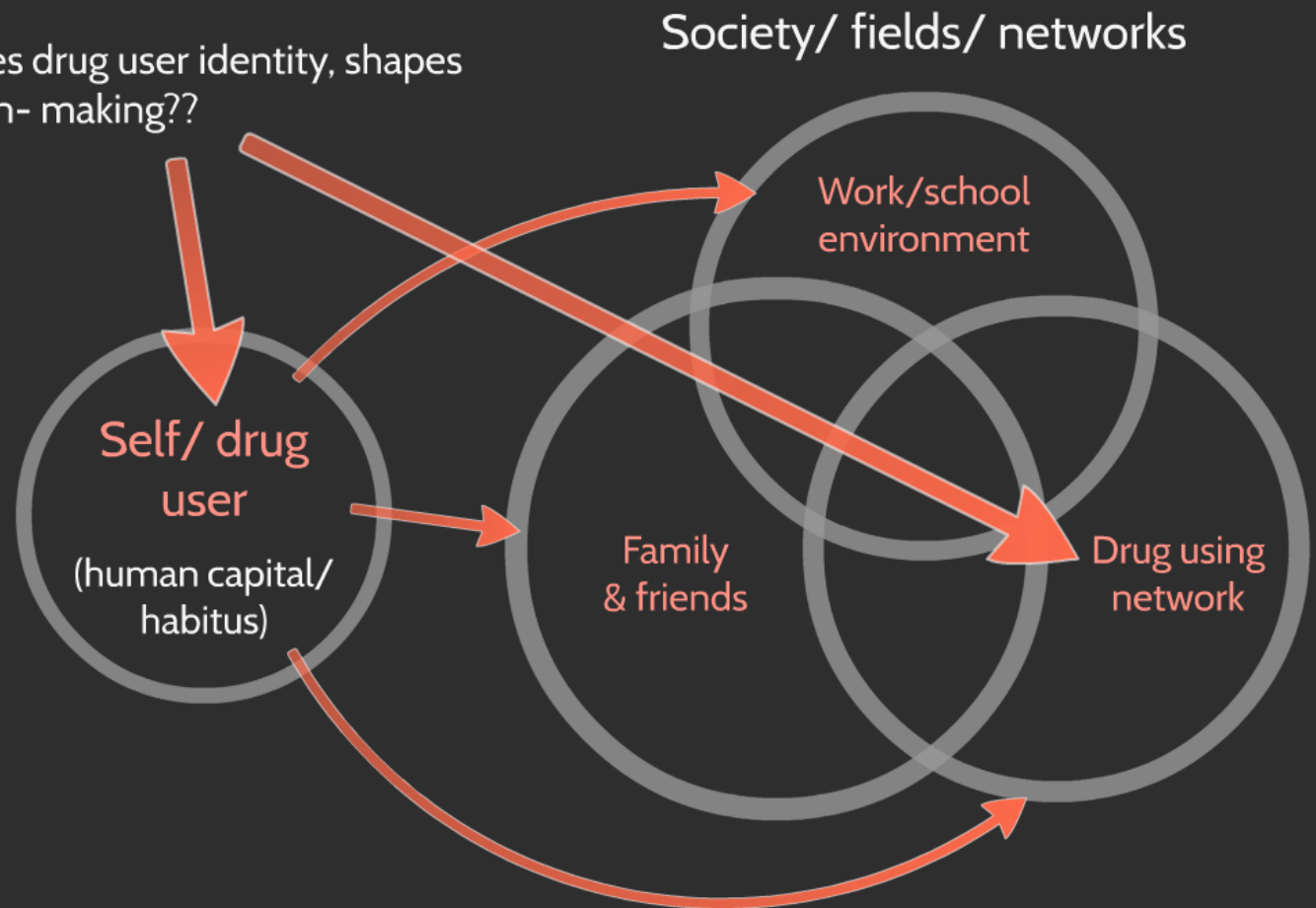
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- racial identity and drug use (Townsend and Belgrave 2000, Brook and Pahl 2005)
- gender identity and drug use (Kulis, Marsiglia et al. 2008, Romo, Marcos et al. 2009)
- and drinking identity (Järvinen and Gundelach 2007, Foster and Spencer 2013, Laghi, Baiocco et al. 2013, Foster 2014)

When accessing illegal drug use and identity, most of the literature focuses on drug addiction and dependencies, and their relationship with users' identity constructions- i.e. the 'Addict vs. Non- addict' dichotomy (Venkoba Rao et al. 1981, McCusker, Roberts et al. 1991, McIntosh and McKeganey 2000, Rødner 2005, Hughes 2007). Less research exploring links between non-dependent drug use and identities that those users may develop.

Capital, identity and drug use

- Field + (Habitus × Capital) = Practice (Bourdieu, 1984: 101)
- Society shapes self, shapes social behaviour (Mead, 1934)
- Commitment shapes identity salience, shapes role choice behaviour (Stryker and Burke 2000)
- Drug using network shapes drug user identity, shapes substance related decision- making??



My PhD

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Principle research question:

How does drug use and the associated lifestyles and practices feature as part of a young adult's identity?

Objectives:

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Study population

The research population for this study is non-dependent drug users from a broad section of the young adult population (i.e. 18-35)

- ✓ *Participants must be aged between 18-35 years of age*
- ✓ *Participants must be non-dependant current drug users (has used an illegal substance in the past month)*
- ✗ *Participants must not be receiving structured drug treatment, or with a clinical diagnosis of dependence*





Methodology

Mixed methods cross- sectional design:

- Anonamous online survey
- Semi- structured interviews

Quantitative techniques used to analyse different profiles of drug use and drug user identity through clustering of the student population.

Qualitative investigation used to explore concepts of identity further.

Thanks for listening

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Acknowledgements-

Centre for Public Health, Liverpool John Moores University

Professor Harry Sumnall

Dr Rebecca Askew

Amanda Atkinson

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