

**KBS Thematic Meeting: Youth cultures and subcultures:
functions and patterns of drinking and drug use**

Organiser: Robin Room

Place: Skarpö, Sweden

Dates: 23 - 27 April 2001

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Youth cultures and subcultures: functions and patterns of drinking and drug use

An international research conference



ANNOUNCEMENT & CALL FOR PAPERS

Skarpö, Sweden, 23 - 27 April 2001

An international research conference on “Youth cultures and subcultures: functions and patterns of drinking and drug use” will be hosted by the Centre for Social Research on Alcohol and Drugs (SoRAD), Stockholm University. The conference is a thematic meeting of the Kettil Bruun Society for Social and Epidemiological Research on Alcohol.

Among teenagers and young adults in the modern world, there is a considerable cultural differentiation. Young people seek identification and are identified with a wide range of youth cultures and social worlds. These youth cultures and looser social groupings may reflect differentiation by age, class, ethnicity, gender and/or region, but the youth cultural patterns also often cut across such differentiation. Often youth cultures or social worlds are oriented around choices about leisure time, for example music and dancing styles, sports and politics.

Research on such youth cultures and social worlds is a prominent part of an emergent international literature of cultural studies. Such studies emphasize not only the expressive

commonalities within youth culture, but also the expression of boundaries and distinctions. Bourdieu's concept of "cultural capital" conveys the idea that membership in a cultural group, and specialized knowledge that comes with it, is often highly valued and can be dearly won. Particularly valued is the "inside" knowledge associated with a group, which an outsider would not know.

Patterns of alcohol and drug use or non-use can be important in expressing and defining youth cultures and social worlds. Choices about drinking and drug use may express different personal preferences and orientations to pleasure and to the balance between the present and the future. As a largely social behaviour, drinking together is often an expression of collective solidarity. Drug use is also frequently a collective cultural activity. Knowledge about alcohol and drugs is part of the cultural capital of the social group. That illicit drug use and underage alcohol use is not accepted by the adult world can give a special value to alcohol and drug lore within youth cultures.

The aim of the conference is to bring perspectives and approaches from various traditions of cultural and subcultural studies to bear on issues related to drinking or drug use in different youth cultures/subcultures. All participants are expected to prepare for precirculation and introduce a paper (maximum 16 single-spaced pages) on a relevant topic and take part in the following discussions. Some of the papers will be invited presentations on the application of cultural theories to the alcohol and drug field.

Call for papers

An informative abstract (maximum 200 words) proposing a paper to be presented and discussed at the conference should be submitted by 15 December 2000, along with the enclosed registration form. Participation at the conference is limited and preference will be given to abstracts which are most central to themes of the conference. On the registration form you can also mark with a cross whether you are interested in our making arrangements for you to stay in Stockholm the weekend before and/or after the conference.

Acceptances for papers and attendance together with further information about payment, hotel reservations and activities/excursions in Stockholm during the weekends will be sent by the end of January 2001.

To maximize time at the conference for discussion, papers will be precirculated prior to the conference, on a website for conference participants. Accepted papers are due in Stockholm by 14 March 2001. At the same time the conference fee of SEK 2,000 (or USD\$210) should be paid.

The fee includes lodging, meals and a boating excursion in the archipelago. Scholars without access to institutional resources may apply for support to attend the meeting. To apply for such support, send a request with a budget of total estimated expenses specifying the portion for which support is requested, by 15 December 2000.

Conference site

The conference will be held at the Training Centre of Systembolaget, the Swedish Alcohol Retailing Monopoly. The Training Centre is situated at Skarpö, an island in the scenic archipelago of Stockholm, less than one hour from the main Stockholm airport (Arlanda). We will co-ordinate travel from Stockholm City centre to Skarpö.

About SoRAD

The Centre for Social Research on Alcohol and Drugs (SoRAD) is an interdisciplinary research centre at Stockholm University with the status of a university department. SoRAD became active in March 1999 and presently has 20 staff with training in criminology, epidemiology, ethnology, psychology, social work and sociology.

The research program's focus is on both alcohol and drugs and includes epidemiological studies in the general population, ethnographic studies of youth cultures, studies in the treatment systems for alcohol and drug problems and studies of prevention and policy issues and impacts. Information is also available at <http://www.sorad.su.se/>