



Street Drugs Discussion: A Deep Dive into Afterparties

“Where’s the afters?”

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- Drug use at parties 'at home'
- What is an 'afterparty'?
- Where's the afters?
- Research challenges
- Drug use at afterparties
- Concerns & concepts





Drug use at parties 'at home'

Parties in private domestic spaces ie. 'at home' are the 'hidden' & sometimes messy spaces/times of contemporary substance use in the UK & beyond



What is an afterparty?

- ❑ A 'subtype' of party involving specific practices
- ❑ A *post* (dance, main) event party in your own or someone else's' home (**space**)
- ❑ The penultimate or final part of a 'big night out' (**time**)
- ❑ A typically pleasurable journey with friends and 'randoms' (**sociability**)
- ❑ Likely site of prolonged polydrug use alongside music consumption (**technologies**)
- ❑ Contested definition, needs empirical data (**Lisa!**)

Not an
afterparty?

Day 23 of your bender and your mate
says his boy is having an afters



and 167 others

70 comments 87 shares

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Write a comment...



how did we do it for so long and days and
days went past 🤔🤔🤔 longest I have done it was 6 days
straight xxxx

Like Reply 21 w



it's crazy mate! Fuck knows how
we did it 🤔🤔🤔 or how we are still alive 🤔🤔 xxxx



After Party



Where's the afters? The near-absence of (drug) research on parties 'at home'

1. Longstanding Soc/Crim/drug research tradition of researching *visible* youth (sub)cultures. Early 1990s rave studies
 2. **Public & semi-public spaces dominate research on recreational drug use ie. NTE, festivals, holiday resorts**
 3. Public safety concerns around visible intoxication in public space, gendered and classed. Harm reduction interventions *in-situ*
 4. Ultra-realist/social harms of mainstream & alcohol-focused NTE; music scene-based pharmacological specialism & prosocial aspects of dancing & partying together obscured (but P&DF!)
 5. Alcohol use 'at home'. Off-premise. Match days & DV. Predrinking
 6. PDUs dominate drug use 'at home' studies. Risk/harms framework
- BUT...**critical/queer studies on drugs as technologies of 'enhancement & transformation of self' among gay men (Pienaar 2020), esp. around chemsex scene in London (Hakim 2019)



There, but 'hidden'!

"It's the most fun you can have for twenty quid" (Moore & Measham 2008)

- ❑ Sample of dance club attendees
- ❑ Ketamine use 'at home' after clubbing event
- ❑ K deemed largely unsuitable for use in public, inc. in clubs, but...
- ❑ 'K bumps' at main event (dose), now popular in NW techno scene (*highest rate of MD and K use in GDS of all genres 2021*)
- ❑ Communal 'social' & introspective 'asocial' use (K-holes) in party-ready rooms
- ❑ 'Problematic use' = anything outside of weekend/party times/spaces

Ketamine use risen in UK & globally since 2008 (Flatley 2018; GDS 2021)

Why now?

- ❑ Covid-19 stay at home rules
- ❑ Capturing changes to alcohol & drug use 'at home' during lockdowns (Release 2021)
- ❑ Closure of youth leisure spaces. No main events to precede 'afters'
- ❑ Young people, intersectional inequalities & liminal leisure spaces (Moore et al 2021, Woodrow & Moore 2021)
- ❑ Pandemic shone light on parties; Tory 'party-gate'
- ❑ UK Drug Strategy 2021, 'crackdown' on 'recreational drug users'



Behind Closed Doors & Safer Partying

- ❑ Changes in personal proximity/distance to research topic
- ❑ DJ-ed at afterparties in NW England 2004-2014; occasional host
- ❑ Stopped attending all afterparties in 2014 due to ill health

Two interlinked projects on parties in private domestic spaces

- ✓ Autoethnographic data (diaries, discussions) over 10 years
- ✓ Collected 'digital traces' (see for eg. Enghoff & Aldridge 2019)
- ✓ Highlighted how TPS help capture drug use in recreational settings including 'at home' (Moore & Matias 2018, p.108)
- ✓ Received funding (finally!) for SP to run focus groups with after-partying friendship groups, plus online TPS survey (Rob, Kira)



Afterparties: Research Challenges

- ☐ Range of ethical and practical challenges
- ☐ Partial insider positionality
- ☐ 'Dangerous' knowledge production
- ☐ Sensationalism, stigma & criminalisation
- ☐ Access is invite only. Impractical. Exhausting
- ☐ Personal & professional toll on researchers
- ☐ Engaging with ethics committees (& assumptions)
- ☐ Hard to make 'familiar' **strange** & mess 'make sense'

FRIDAY



SUNDAY



WHERE THE FUCK AM I?



The strange world of 'afters'

When The Afters gets to the weird level where ya dressing up in random stuff you find round the gaff



What do we 'know' about drug use at afterparties?

- ❑ At the **end of a 'big night out'** we have to go home, yet (stimulant) drug effects do not simply stop when we leave main events
- ❑ **Wakefulness:** reasonable to assert that *at least some people* frequenting main events (clubs, festivals etc) remain awake when they do get home
- ❑ **Prevalence data** hard to capture, but proxy measures suggest polydrug use occurs at afterparties



What do we 'know' about drug use at afterparties?

1. **Gen pop survey data:** 16-24 year olds who regularly frequent UK night-clubs more likely to use illegal drugs than their counterparts in general population (Flatley 2018)
2. ***In situ* targeted population survey data:** Those who attend dance music events have high rates of drug use when surveyed *in situ* (Moore & Measham 2009; Moore & Matias 2018)
3. **Online survey data** ie. [GDS](#) (Winstock et al 2022)
4. **Ethnographic research, interview-based data & digital traces data**

Understanding afterparties: concerns and concepts

- ❑ Build on history of concern with space/time in drug research
- ❑ **Spatiality, temporality, & sociality** are coordinates of celebration (Rusu & Kantola 2016); stage of journey/end of a 'big night out'
- ❑ Joyful, playful social interactions & artful practices long been aspect of raving/clubbing culture (Jackson 2004; Malbon 2002)
- ❑ Discourse & narrative analysis. Afterparty stories & role of humour
- ❑ Embodied and affectual aspects of afterparty practices within neoliberal consumer cultures, drawing on queering chemsex parties literature (Hakim 2019; Race 2009, 2015)

Understanding afterparties: concerns and concepts

- ❑ ANT & STS capture role of human/non-human actants, including '**technologies of the self**', eg. drugs (Pienaar et al 2020)
- ❑ Technologies central to afters, eg. music & sound environments (Nowak and Bennett 2014)
- ❑ **Music** preference central to drug preferences/prevalence (Winstock et al 2022) and to afterparty practices
- ❑ From the 'drug assemblage' (Duff 2016) to **party assemblages** (Karenza)
- ❑ Novel concern with drug use 'at home' & material cultures (**Lisa**)
- ❑ Harm reduction & ethics of care (Duff 2015) of relevance to afterparty-goers



The image is a complex digital collage. In the center, a giant panda wearing a red bandana acts as a DJ, standing behind a turntable setup on a bamboo cart. To the right, a monkey in a basketball jersey is mid-air, about to shoot a ball into a hoop. A giraffe stands in the background on the right. In the foreground right, a bulldog sits wearing sunglasses and a chain, with a cigarette in its mouth. On the left, a small monkey plays a keyboard. The background is a desert landscape with a city skyline in the distance, a cactus, and a fire hydrant. A large, dark, arrow-shaped graphic points from the left towards the center, containing the text 'Thank you!'. The bottom of the image shows a chicken and a 'STOP' sign painted on the ground.

Thank you!

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