OF PUBS AND PLATFORMS

Daniel Miller

ABSTRACT

This paper argues for a more explicit concern with sociality in Anthropology, illustrated through a study of one of the oldest English platforms for sociality - the English pub. Using an approach derived from the study of social media, the pub is analysed in terms of the balance between structural (mainly commercial) forces and agency (mainly the desire for particular kinds of sociality). The first section, Pub Power, shows how pubs exert control over which population they serve. The second section, Pub Colonisation, shows how groups of people colonise pubs, regardless of the pub's intentions. The third section, Pub Adaption, examines various responses by pubs to this colonisation. The final section, Scalable Sociality, shows how these processes combine to produce a phenomenon called scalable sociality, which is also a definition of social media: a series of platforms that can be sited along various scales and parameters of sociality. This is important because a similar tension between, on the one hand, commercial or state forces and on the other hand, the development of new forms of sociality, is increasingly common within many topics studied by anthropologists.

INTRODUCTION: SOCIALITY, STRUCTURE AND AGENCY

Sociality, the study of how people interact, was not an explicit concern in the development of anthropology, simply because it was a given. There was practically nothing anthropologists studied that wasn't also sociality. By contrast, Simmel (1950: 118-177) a founding figure in sociology, used the fundamental units of sociality, such as the dyad, the triad and the group as the basis for the development of that discipline. The term is more commonly used by anthropologists to contrast primate with the evolutionary development of human social interactivity and communication (Sussman and Chapman Ed. 2017). With their orientation to ethnography, social anthropologists have preferred to consider sociality contextually rather than in the abstract, examining the conditions within which people develop particular modes of social interaction.

In this paper I use the term sociality in its more conventional anthropological usage exemplified by Bruun, Jakobsen, and Krøijer (2011), rather than the more expansive version recently advocated by Long and Moore (Eds, 2012). Within the former volume several of the papers are concerned with the way architecture and space act as a frame, in Goffman's (1974) sense, in demarcating what form of sociality is appropriate for that setting. For example, the editors

regard Gullestad's (1985) *Kitchen Table Society* as an exemplary study of this kind. Gullestad documents the specific sociality of Norwegian working-class housewives constructed around the kitchen-table. All populations have multiple forms of sociality which are mostly framed by particular contexts. This places sociality firmly within the tradition of material culture studies, It is often the study of why people regard particular forms of sociality, as appropriate within particular material environments. Often this implies the study of how we are socialised as children into the normativity of sociality (Højlund 2011, Olwig 2011), the appropriate way to behave in the office, at meals, or within a temple. As such sociality is open to manipulation and powerful forces that may want to encourage exuberance or pacify a crowd. The substances that control us, can be within, as well as without, alcohol being especially relevant to this paper. Where once it may have been

religious authorities or custom that lay behind the material ordering of sociality, increasingly we live in a world where commercial forces dominate and we therefore may need to refocus our attention accordingly.

The development of social media has perhaps made this perspective still clearer for anthropologists. Each social media platforms has been created specifically to act as a frame to facilitate a commensurate form of online sociality. Facebook promotes certain kinds of online friendship, while Twitter was developed as a means to develop new forms of groups based on the exchange of information.. Unlike kitchen tables, social media platforms are almost always associated with business corporations that seek to promote these particular modes of sociality amongst users. As such social media poses an additional question. To what degree are the ethnographically observable patterns of online sociality the results of these corporate intentions as against their subsequent transformation by users? This paper argues that this tension between commercial and social forces, should be an increasing focus for anthropological research; so much of what we regard as sociality is today framed by commercial forces: from sports events to weddings to restaurants. The problem is that anthropologists more commonly study sociality as part of the ethnography of a population. We tend to write separate ethnographies of commerce. This paper employs ethnography to focus explicitly on the relationship between these two forces.

This makes the issue also an example of a much debated concern in anthropology and social science, concerning the relative importance of structure and agency - what makes people and what people make (e.g. Giddens 1984). Structure may stand for forces such as political economy or the state, while agency is rarely just an individual, but rather the way values and social imperatives transform these structural forces. Studies of sub-cultures (Hebdige 1979) revealed how youth groups appropriated and re-configured commercial products such as music and fashion. Anthropologists often talk about collective agency within capitalism as a form of resistance (e.g. Gledhill, and Schell Eds. 2012, Ong 1987). Though as Keane (2003) notes there is a range of approaches to agency. On the one hand, Abu-Lughod (1991) argues the importance of focusing on the lives of recognisable people, while at the other end of the spectrum Gupta and Ferguson (1992) argue for greater acknowledgment of structural forces, outside of our ethnography, such as the global political economy.

The study of social media has placed this tension into the foreground. The relative power of Facebook as a company, as against that of its users, is now part of everyday discussion, as we argue whether the company should be held responsible for the outcomes of its usage. What only anthropologists can provide is the detailed examination of this usage in context. From 2012 to 2017 nine anthropologists conducted simultaneous 16 months ethnographies and then wrote a total of eleven volumes all concerned with the comparative study of the use and consequences of social media. Our comparative volume is called *How the World Changed Social Media* (Miller et. al. 2016). This is a direct repudiation of the expected title *How Social Media Changed the World*. The key finding, documented over thousands of pages, was that both the use and consequence of social media vary considerable between different regions. Furthermore, the project demonstrated that genres of communication, such as playground banter amongst young people, migrated easily between entirely different platforms. This is significant because if the same genre of sociality populates entirely different platforms, owned by different corporations,

then clearly the imperative behind sociality itself must be at least as important as the corporate interests in understanding the observable form and use of social media.

This project also argued for a new anthropological definition of social media - 'scalable sociality' (Miller et. al, 2016: 1-6). This term highlights how a range of platforms are exploited to create scales of differences, such as from more to less private, or from smaller to larger groups. Previously media represented a simple dualism between the private conversation and public broadcast. Now we have many choices that scale from a small WhatsApp group to share baby photos as against an unlimited Twitter post to advertise a publication. Rather than examining platforms in isolation, anthropologists can see a larger ecology in which each ends up occupying a niche relative to others. Scalable sociality may arise both because new social media platforms look for an underexploited niche, and because users may organise their platforms into a scale. For example, schoolchildren may use Snapchat for a dozen trusted friends, WhatsApp for boys to talk about the girls in their class, the teacher uses Twitter to address the whole class, Facebook includes family and neighbours, while Instagram may attract a stranger to view their photographs. Some of this reflects what companies intended, most of it does not, because these are different companies

Scalable sociality had always been possible offline. We can go drinking with two friends or address a large public meeting. Anthropologists take this for granted. This suggests two potential contributions derived from studies of social media. First we recognise that today the balance between structure and agency, commonly takes the form of a tension between commercial forces and populations developing their own genres of sociality. Secondly it suggests that both offline and online research can focus upon sociality per. se. as genres that are commonly associated with particular material platforms, examining a wide range of these and making sense of each in relation to all the others.

This point may be illustrated by comparing social media, one of our newest frames for sociality, with the pub, one of the most traditional, at least in England... It is now common to describe social media, such as WhatsApp, Facebook and WeChat as platforms. Meaning that they are the foundations upon which people perform sociality through creating content, such as liking a picture. Social media are deliberately created as platforms to facilitate specific forms of sociality encouraged by the architecture of that platform. Exactly the same is true of a pub. It is deliberately designed to facilitate particular forms of sociality based on its own architecture, such as the differentiation of the lounge from the bar. As Gullestad (1985) points out populations have commonly exploited material forms such as kitchen-tables as platforms for sociality. The difference between social media and pubs, as against kitchen-tables, is that the former are commercially designed and will try and promote the commercial interests that own them. By acknowledging that pubs are also platforms for sociality we can now focus upon the interplay between the various forces that account for the actual sociality which arises in pubs, just as we have previously done for social media (Miller et. al. 2016)

THE ENGLISH PUB.

The English pub has gone through many transformations, such as the alehouse and the gin palace and the English brandy, with new roles developing alongside urbanism and the industrial revolution creating a strong linkage to class (Smith 1983). There are many historical accounts of the pub (e.g. Clarke 1983, Jennings 2007), including the study by Mass Observation published as *The Pub and The People* (1943). Based on an extensive

'ethnographic style' study of around 300 pubs in the 1940s this provides a guide to what we might now regard as the 'classic' pub.. Pubs are shown to occupy particular niches. . Particular pubs might be associated with activities ranging from pigeons to prostitutes, from societies such as the Royal and Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes, to pubs that focus upon funerals or people looking for jobs. There were pubs associated with ladies' darts, or dominoes or Irish songs, or Jazz. There were pubs that interlocutors describe as having `beautiful barmaids' that attract a young crowd. There were those with full licences and those with beer licences. There were modernised as against traditional pubs. There were locals where nearly everyone lived within 220 yards, and town centre pubs where people journeyed some distance precisely to get away from the people they knew. Even then being a pub regular was too expensive for young people.

This suggests that there was always a spectrum of pubs reflecting different forms of sociality, often aligned with wider factors such as class differentiation or degrees of informality. The study at least implicitly suggests a balance between the authority and vision of pub landlords and the activities and demands of their patrons Pubs may have adapted in order to exploit their usage by patrons, the process that will be foregrounded in this paper. There are also marked differences from pubs today. For example, in the 1940's the Taproom was taboo to women, as against the Best Room or Parlour where women could enter. Class was more conspicuous as a the basis for differentiation, indicated by rooms that have potted plants as against those with spittoons. By the 1980's researchers were examining class distinctions reflected by differentiation between, rather than within, pubs (Hunt and Satterlee 1986), and gender was also becoming a more diffused factor.

These are the theoretical and historical points of departure for what follows. Can we through ethnography directly observe these same processes. that previously could only be inferred from historical materials? How do commercial forces attempt to create and control certain forms of sociality? Can we see the drive to particular forms of sociality acting as a counter force to these commercial forces, or do the two work in tandem? What appears to be the result of the processes that can help us understand the diversity and nature of the contemporary pub, and how do pubs today act as platforms for distinct modes of sociality?

My own research comprised 18 months (between 2012 and 2014) ethnographic fieldwork in a dual village, (two connected villages) that I call the Glades, with a combined population of 17,500. Despite the size everyone in The Glades insists that they live in a village. They may be considered the first 'true' suburbia, surrounded by fields, and yet within commuting distance from central London. ' Despite this proximity to the metropole they were homogeneous containing less than 2% of either migrant or minority populations, according to medical records. They are not dominated by London commuting, but part of a region whose population circulates around several small towns and many other villages. The main employment for women is in services such as education and health, while many men were employed within the building trade, such as plumbers and electricians. The latter had become increasingly affluent in recent years, based on a cash economy.

For the purposes of this paper the 14 pubs of The Glades are labelled from A-O, including two members-only institutions, Pub F - a Working Men's club and Pub G - an ex-Service Men's club. I have not included the bars found in sports clubs and community halls. There are no themed or Irish pubs in this fieldsite though these are a growing phenomenon elsewhere (Brown and Patterson 2000)., They are subject to a varied and constantly changing structure of ownership, including independent pubs and pubs owned by

breweries and other companies who may run a chain of franchised pubs, with a background of increasing financialisation (Pratten 2007 Preece 2008, 2016). Along with my research assistant, Ciara Green, we spent a considerable amount of time in pubs. The pub was our informant's most popular choice of venue for interviews or meetings, other than within the private house. They were the most convenient place to discuss the progress of our fieldwork and we like to drink in pubs. I also interviewed pub managers, owners and staff, alongside most commercial services in The Glades.

Pubs are a constant topic of conversation. As part of my ethnography I recorded interviews with around 380 different individuals. Though the intended topics were mainly social media and the village, the subject of the pub came up in 114 interviews with different people, although this might be just noting them as locations, or telling us how they didn't like to go to pubs, which was true of a significant section on the population, whether born locally or otherwise. The paper is organised in four sections: pub power examines the power of commercial forces. The second section examines the colonisation of pubs by people. The third section strikes a balance between these two, while the final section shows how this results in the same kind of scalable sociality as found in our previous study of social media.

PUB POWER

The power of structural forces can be very clear. An interview with the local police revealed the extent to which pubs had been used systematically and deliberately as an instrument for controlling class relations within The Glades. By class I do not mean people's self-designation, or the result of political analysis (e.g. Evans and Tilley 2017) The ethnography (Miller 2016:10) suggested that while half the population might call themselves 'working class', there were no significant differences between those who called themselves working-class and middle-class. T The dominant male occupation in The Glades is that of builders and associated trades such as plumbers and electricians.. They exploit The Glades' excellent transport links to both motorways and trains. Possibly because of the potential for a cash economy they represent one of the most affluent sectors of the village with incomes that compete with those working for banks and other London institutions. Workers in the building trades own many of the most expensive houses in the village.

Most of those who call themselves working class share living standards and educational and other aspirations with those who call themselves 'middle class'. Far more significant is the division between 17% of the villagers who live in social housing or cheap rental accommodation and the rest of the population. In turn that group divides into about half who now have aspirations to join the larger population, with joining the army seen as a key instrument for 'getting out'. The other half, by contrast, strongly affirmed and celebrated their sense of distinction. Their conspicuously distinct accent and ehaviour came close to the portrayals of such populations found in popular television UK shows such as *Shameless or The Royle Family* that celebrate a life that rejects or exploits the state and establishment virtues Indeed it is likely that such popular culture has influenced the performative element of class affinity. Clear evidence that this is now the significant division came from my study of social media. This class fraction would post on topics such as politics and sex, or use sentimentality and nationalism, in an entirely different manner from everyone else in the village (Miller and Sinanan 2017: 89-94).

The ethnography also made clear that most villagers would be happy to drive out that section of the village. It seemed that ideologically such a class fraction were now understood as an urban phenomenon that had become viewed as an anomaly within this kind of suburban village. Today they would form a higher percentage of the population in the local towns (compare Hunt and Satterlee 1986). So even though their origins mainly lay within families who had been farm labourers, class ideology has re-designated them as more 'naturally' urban.

The local police claim the issue is not one of class, but of a troublesome element in the village population associated with specific pubs. No one denied that the key such pub was notorious as a site for drug dealing. There were plenty of lurid stories: '10 years ago, Saturday night used to be a battle field out there, definitely waring factions. We had a car through this window one night, two blokes fighting, car lost control.' As a result the pub was closed down and is now the location of a popular restaurant. The same 'element' then colonised a pub that was closer to one of the more lower-income areas of the village. So this pub in turn was demolished and not replaced. Villagers claim that thanks to the pub closure that whole area has now 'improved'.

At which point the same population colonised a pub again closer to the centre, Pub C. The response was to temporarily shut the pub and carry out an extensive refurbishment. This proved entirely successful and several other pubs also felt that refurbishments at different stages have ensured that they were not subject to this 'rowdy' element. There was a general assumption that merely to change the décor of a pub was sufficient to ensure that the relevant section of the village stayed away. As one pub owner put it 'Principal may be that if you've broken the habit of those particular people then they won't return. They didn't return, put it that way'. The manager reported 'I watched people who used to come in here and thought they owned the place, actually not feel comfortable. So, for once they felt uncomfortable whereas all the people who had always felt uncomfortable, felt comfortable in here. I think it was the candles. It was just a nice atmosphere, and people say to me, why have you got so many different wines?' In short, there is a good reason this is called gentrification.

Most villagers supported the changes 'If you're trying to upgrade and you've still got that old clientele that get into drink or drugs, it's a job to get rid of them. And you've got to get rid of them, otherwise you'll never get rid of the tarnish.' Villagers constantly repeated the same historical sequence about how 'they' originally used one specific pub, then another and another. Terms villagers used included 'ruffians' 'druggies' and 'dodgy'. As one informant put it - 'I think the clientele from …. have been swirling around looking for different places to go.' Occasionally the story would be embellished, as when I was told the pub had 'miraculously burnt down'.

 Not everyone avoided this niche. pub that had been popular with families shifted course, unbarred all those who had been excluded and instead excluded children. The intention was to attract the now latent demand from lower income males who wanted a banter, drinking, football-watching space, separated from the family. Having worked in the army the manager felt he could cater to that population while keeping away the undesirable element. At the time of fieldwork he seemed to have largely succeeded within this niche. Though the local police were keeping a careful eye on this tightrope and had recently reduced the pub's opening hours. . The pubs could also fail. In another small nearby village I worked in, the main pub was unable to prevent its use by a group of 'travelers'

who had settled into an area nearby, and every villager I encountered, claimed this had in effect 'destroyed' that village.

For pub power to work the targeted population must respond accordingly. My informants from this stigmatized population within The Glades generally corroborated these accounts, telling us how they no longer felt comfortable in any of the village pubs and lamenting the loss of the class values it stood for: 'I could remember sitting on a Sunday and it would be a massive family place, mums and dads and kids coming in, Sunday lunches, food on the bar and the church bells going across the road, and it was a wonderful place. Might have been the roughest pub in the village, but it was definitely still a real real community. There would never be any hassle if there was kids in there - might be round the corner. It did have to go, it ended up a brothel, didn't it? Now people want a place they can bring their grandparents to.'

Several women were amongst the most vociferous proponents of this group, exemplifying the in-your-face or fuck-you assertiveness of their authenticity as a community. In the same way that one informant characterised her street as Jeremy Kyle (a programme similar to Jerry Springer where couples, friends and families publicly abuse each other over often intimate confessions) street, again taking a TV series as an icon for self-identification. In conformity to the wishes of the majority they agreed that now they needed to go into town to find 'their' pubs. 'We go into…, we know everyone who goes in there. You know when you go into a pub and it's like hi hi hi hi.' By contrast he says of the local pub 'When I first started drinking in the pub I knew everybody. Don't go to the pub here really, not anymore. It's just, sort of dwindled out.' To conclude, gentrification in the form of a sort of 'décor determinism', or even more forceful, the destruction of a pub, would seem a clear instance of structural causation. By changing the platform, the behaviour and population are controlled by more powerful forces including the companies or individuals that own the pubs and the police.

PUB COLONISATION

If we examine the current usage of pub C, based on both fieldwork observations and our interviews there are clear patterns, indicated here by quotations from both the manager and the owner A core clientele in the mornings were women with children, including a regular Wednesday morning crèche, that had been created by a group of mothers simply because they started coming to the pub around the same time. By contrast 'Mondays and Thursdays are quiet, maybe a few elderly people having coffee in the morning who have been for walk.' In common with all the village pubs, 'If you come between four and six-thirty the client base are mainly builders who stay for round two and half hours and have bar snacks like squid. If they remained, they would actually put off the kind of customers that come in for the evening.' The same women who might come early as part of a mother and toddler group, could reappear late as part of a mums-night-out group, without the toddlers.

Lunch is different from dinner in that the restaurant is generally used by regular groups, who might come from local firms. 'Then you will get those in their 40s who are bringing in their parents who are visiting and they will go out together to the pub. Also a lot of couples or two women in the 60 to 70 age group. A few business parties such as some schools or hospitals - may be eight or 10 people coming at a set time, often on the lunch hour, or after a training session. Usually come to bitch about their institution, moan about some new policy. What they eat and drink is determined by the fact that they only have a short time.'

Similar groups were noted at other pubs. It is now very common for villagers to receive visits from other family members, especially at weekends, and expect to take them out for a meal at a pub. Once people have an established presence in a pub they take these as a kind of ownership or right they will protect: 'Pub on a Sunday night. We have our specific table, and if there's someone on our round table we give them the evil eye'.

Pub J shows a similar diurnal rhythm, and again affirms the importance of the builders around 5.00. An additional important component is young people at weekends. The pub also shows how often a pub cannot determine its own character. The pub tried quite hard to establish itself as a place for dinner, given that it has both a restaurant and a kitchen and this is an important way of raising revenue. The pub is near the only industrial area of the village which had been hugely important in creating demand for their restaurant as a venue for breakfast and lunch. But for the same reason the pub failed as an evening venue for food, since this clientele had gone home or dispersed.

Many of these patterns are well established. So Pub L noted that 'on Tuesday night it's going to be ale drinkers and football players, based on the five-a-side team who come in at 8:30. Monday and Tuesday tend to be people who like real ale. Thursday the 18 to 25-year-olds'. But they also note that the night they would like to be busiest, which is Saturday night, is actually the night they are pretty empty. Most of their customers come from social housing estates, and want to go into the local town for Saturday nights rather than frequent their local pub.

The differentiation of pubs is generally common knowledge. Almost any villager might note that Pub B is more a local's pub or that Pub J is the best music pub. A male informant noted: 'I think each pub has their own sort of, just unique brand of people. My lot, they are middle aged.' Many village societies like to complete an activity by going to the pub, for example, the football team try and encourage the away team visitors to socialise after a game. Each has its regular pub for these purposes. One result is that pub differentiation is still quite limited, conforming to what people expect of a pub. Not just the mix of drinks, but even items such as desserts will rarely vary from standards such as sticky toffee pudding and apple pie.

However more recently we see a different form of colonisation thanks to digital technologies, which is towards transient and ad hoc usage: a young male informant noted: 'with WhatsApp, which is a group conversation, when you could have say 24 of my friends, you literally say 'pub' '8pm' and anyone who wants to be on it or doesn't can be'. So instead of long term commitment, an individual can note whether a given pub has lots of room or something interesting going on at that particular moment and bring a much larger group to exploit that temporary niche.

Another alignment that has evolved without reflecting any intention of the pubs, is a very close relationship to the church. This is because the most important functions pubs host are now funerals/wakes and weddings. Villagers who neither frequent pubs nor the churches, may find the only times they visit either are for one of these life-cycle events, which usually start in the church and end at the pub. Several pubs expect to host at least one wake/funeral per week. Weddings are a bit less common, but generally larger and some pubs can be extended with a marquee. Less frequent events that bind pubs to churches are christenings and communion. The link is even clearer with the ex-service men's pub and working men's pub. Both have function halls hired out at cheap rates to members, who see them as the obvious location for such life-cycle events. So the contents

of this section comprise the extensive usage of pubs that were neither intended nor created by the pubs or their commercial interests. This is what is meant by the term pub colonisation.

PUB ADAPTATIONS

Pub power exemplified the ability of the pub to determine its clientele, while pub colonisation concerned the ability of populations to determine the function of the pub. The balance between these are in continual development. For example, we might see the rise of *Tripadvisor* as a shift towards the authority of the customer, in that poor service or food is rapidly exposed. Pubs are very aware of this. A good review by a wedding group had clearly resulted in further wedding bookings. In one instance, I found evidence that a village pub had deliberately planted a poor review about a meal in another pub on Tripadvisor, and been exposed, since it had gone about this in a rather ham-fisted manner. A pub managers also reported that some customers have started using Tripadvisor as a threat to try and win freebies.

The pubs may or may not succeed in exploiting their own colonisation. A pub that was being used more by older people consolidated this shift by offering a 2-for-1 meal deal for people over 50. But a pub that responded to family use by hiring a local comedian found him to be 'quite rude to local people and unsuitable for kids.' Pub B didn't want to become a TV sports pub, but succumbed to the pressure of women wanting to watch tennis and men to watch football. A pub increased its takings by 50% through shifting from its self-conception as a more traditional `larger, spirits and bottle pub' to `a lot of wine, a lot of real ales.' Favouring the right New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc can facilitate the kind of diner who wants to impress their companions, while signature cocktails signals a welcome to mum's-night-out groups at weekends. One pub feels they are good at spotting and catering for first dates. While pubs are not responsible for their colonisation between 4-6pm by males from the building trades, they can choose to have mainly young adult female staff at that time, that they believe will appeal to that clientele. One pub realised that customers thought its restaurant was part of a chain so they demonstrated their independence through changing their menu in response to diners' feedback. Pub staff can show themselves as `people persons', by getting to know a drinker's name and their favourite drink. But there is sometimes ambivalence. A niche of drinkers are lonely single men, including a sub-category of the recently divorced, who have daily rituals of certain drinks at certain pubs and may stay for long periods of time. They are regular customers, but from the pub managers point of view present a 'sad' ambience, which may put off other potential drinkers.

Providing music can add £3-4,000 in takings for a costing of a few hundred pounds. A manager of a London pub that I frequent told me `getting the music right according to the vibe in the room can mean everything - while some evenings are perfectly complimented by New Orleans violin jazz, other have profited from a younger audience enjoying an 80's rock playlist, turning the place into a dive bar for a few hours.' Pubs compete for the patronage of groups. Most lucrative are philanthropic organisations such as Rotary and Lions which represent the wealthier villagers. Pubs also try to attract football supporter groups, or hobby groups, such as toy train aficionados or car club groups. Pub M was unique in having an associated tea shop and craft/gift shop, which may be an emerging fusion for village pubs. Pub N is frequented by up to 30 schoolchildren who wait in a designated area to be collected by parents. Pub K is trying to develop more unusual

events such as fashion shows or a clairvoyant. One pub has an opera quiz to keep the patronage of the opera society. Sometimes the pub is not certain what to make of its colonisation. A Methodist minister told how `I run a discussion group in a local pub called agnostics anonymous. I've been discussing it with (the pub manager), all these sandal wearing bible bashing Christians going to invade his pub. I did feel slightly sorry for him. He had presumed that we would all be fundamentalists, creationists. Two of our guys are retired scientists, and he was just stunned. I think that we were more open minded than he thought we were going to be.'

There are limits to pub adaption. On the one hand pubs would like to attract younger drinkers, but my younger informants reiterated that prior to secure employment they simply cannot afford to drink in pubs. They tend to get `tanked up' on supermarket alcohol before going into the local town. If they drink in a pub it needs to be outside The Glades, where they are less likely to be recognised as below the 18 years of age when it becomes legal to buy alcohol in a pub. The upside for pubs is that drinking at pubs is now a public sign that individuals have work and incomes. On the other hand the affluent owner of Pub I had in effect driven out the older clientele and replaced them with his own friends, much to the chagrin of most villagers for whom the pub's central location had made it an important site of sociality. One of these villagers noted: `He's on his computer all the time, unwelcoming, which is criminal for a pub.' But being rich the owner probably didn't need to worry if the results were less profitable. It was now his pub, to use as he pleased. So in this case no attempt was being made at adaption.

Pubs struggle to encourage cross customer socialising, as families tend to talk only to those they know, though they can encourage talk with bar staff. Recent studies suggest the pub is used more to sustain existing friendships for working class users, while buying rounds develops relationships that are consolidated elsewhere for the middle class (Hunt and Satterlee, 1986, Markham and Bosworth 2016). They have also documented how women have struggled to gain equal access to pub culture (e.g. Hunt and Satterlee, 1987 Leyshon, 2008). Informants were positive about the quiz nights and darts teams, but used them within established friendship group of `mates.' As one woman noted `they had a quiz night every other Sunday, it was just my social event sorta thing, I loved it, sit and have a drink, my sister and I and this other girl.' More generally villagers note that it is hard to broach conversations with strangers in pubs though `people with dogs actually get into far more conversations'. Many villagers refer to the pubs they don't go to as cliquey, while at the same time claiming this is not true of their own pub. .

My concurrent work with hospice patients (Miller 2017) also showed there were limits to what could be discussed in a pub. Many personal issues remain taboo. Merely having cancer or chemotherapy could make customers unwelcome `I went down the pub, I had a glass of red wine and sipped it for an hour. But one of the girls I knew at the bar, just wouldn't acknowledge me. And then my taxi came and I was just getting into the taxi and she came running out, and she said `I'm so sorry, I didn't know what to say.' I was like `I haven't changed.' Another terminal patient recalled a sort of public melt down, when she started discussing her impending death in the pub.

Against these relatively recent adaptations, are the long term 'cultures' associated with particular pubs. The general demeanour of the regulars at Pub A is such that they basically freeze out any non-regulars who try to enter this tiny space. I was never able to penetrate that barrier and get to know much about that pub. But I knew from repute that it

was once associated with trade between pheasant poachers and rabbit catchers, suggesting long term continuity within this very tight community. I wasn't alone. A person living very close by noted that he had only been in there 4 times in the 26 years he was living in The Glades and just had no idea `what goes on there.'

SCALABLE SOCIALITY

So far causation has been presented as the intentions of pub owners/managers, the intentions of customers, and the adaptations of each to the other. In combination these processes create a process that applies equally to the pub as a traditional platform of sociality and social media, one of the most recent platforms for sociality – social media. Both equate to 'scalable sociality'. (Miller et. al. 2016: 1-6). Applied to social media this refers to the way platforms have become aligned alongside scales such as degrees of privacy or the size of groups using those platforms, .

An example of scalable sociality in the contemporary pub would extend from those pubs primarily associated with drinking to those now largely a place for dining. At one end would be the two gastropubs. Pub N is in every respect a conventional restaurant with waiter service, with merely a vestigial bar used as a waiting area prior to being seated. Yet everyone sees it as a pub. Others, such as Pub E, are largely restaurants, but there is still a recognisable bar, from where customers purchase both meals and drinks. Pub K has a dual structure. It has no qualms in presenting itself as a chain pub with an associated carvery restaurant. It has a large Sunday lunch clientele, and provides breakfast for a nearby hotel. But also drinkers frequent the bar, in a separate room, mainly to watch football at the weekends, though there are some regulars. Such a pub has none of the olde worlde décor or the stylish modernism that one finds in gastropubs.

Pub C is a restaurant, in equal balance with its thriving bar. Pub B and L are dominated by their bar and drinking, but have quite a few tables where people can eat a full dinner.. Next comes Pub J, which serves breakfast and lunch but failed as a dinner restaurant. Finally, there are pubs such as Pub A and D which, apart from a few snacks are entirely devoted to drinking. Pub F, has no food, but customers may order fish and chips from elsewhere and consume these within the pub. So fourteen pubs today constitute a spectrum, giving customers access to whatever balance they desire between drinking and dining based sociality. This would correlate quite closely to the price of beer as a sliding scale. The cheapest beer in The Glades was Pub F, the ex-working men's club at £2.40 a pint. Next came Pub G, the ex-services club, with beer at £2.80 a pint. While at a gastropub, the cheapest beer or lager could be £4.00 a pint or more.

Another significant scale would be the degree of local identity. There are many different ways in which people can associate with their neighbourhood pub (Markham and Bosworth 2016), which historically was often referred to as their `local'. The best approximation to this idea is Pub F, still part of the national working man's movement. I heard it referred to as a bit of a `spit and sawdust' establishment. Founded over 150 years ago, a core to their clientele are described by the manager as `Old-age pensioners for bingo on Thursday night - don't sit in the wrong seat or its war.' The local taxi firms may have twenty cars outside at 10.00 pm when bingo ends. Other activities for its 600 members include Irish dancers, reflecting one of the local communities. It takes pride in its many local 'characters' who might, for example, play card tricks. It was only four years prior to fieldwork that women were allowed into the main bar. But today it promotes itself as family friendly, offering tubes of sweets to well-behaved children. . The pub's acute

sense of locality was evident in its charitable focus upon funding a war memorial. War memorialisation is hugely important to The Glades.

Next on this scale is an ex-serviceman's pub, opened during WW2, seen as slightly higher in class terms. Again, it only recently allowed women to become full members, and still gives free membership to ex-servicemen, or those who have paid dues for ten years and reached retirement age. Events include snooker night, bingo night, ladies' darts team night and free jazz practice night. Their hall can host 120 for engagement or birthday parties, amateur dramatics and sports clubs. They provide Christmas lights with seasonal foods and drinks, raise money for the local hospice and have a strong relationship with the local football team. To be viable they have around 500 members who pay dues and around 100 active members. They have had the same staff for 15 years.

The commitment to locality may derive from the pub manager living at the pub, such as the manager of Pub J. She can therefore spot any of the local schoolchildren who are trying to by alcohol while under the legal minimum age. Most of her employees are also local school children aged 16-18, hired as a favour to her customers, to keep them employed prior to their going up to university. Several of the pubs noted that they try and employ only local staff. In Pub B many of the drinkers, in their twenties or late teens, are the children of the owner's friends. Pub K is a non-local chain, but they still make sure that customers are aware that their chef supports the local football team. Pubs differ in the degree they expect bar staff to drink with customers, which would be one of the ways to create more personal allegiance between drinkers and their local pub (Sandiford and Seymour 2013). Most villagers felt that pubs had a positive role in helping newcomers feel part of the village if they wished.. But much of Pub K's trade is mainly non-local, from a nearby hotel.

Pubs can present themselves as more or less local, irrespective of whether their beer and other products are actually sourced locally (Maye, Ilbery and Kneafsey, 2006). Though other studies suggest a gradation in authenticity often based on the degree to which a 'real' pub serves 'real' ale (Watson and Watson 2012).The more restaurant-like pubs tend to hire staff more widely. In one case from 'Slovakia, South Africa and Ireland, also get them from Australia and New Zealand'. Pubs can also attract custom precisely by being non-local as young people gravitate to pubs where managers will not know they are underage. TripAdvisor has also become important in attracting a non-local customer base. At the same time several villagers noted how prior expressions of localism have declined. For example, pubs no longer sponsor floats at the annual village carnival.

Social media provide a new means to relate to locality.. The key to localised pub sociality is banter – the friendly exchange of teasing remarks. Pubs have started to post on social media, both banter between staff and banter with customers. The manager of pub L conveys his dry sense of humour through a remark about someone getting a parking ticket, or employs English self-deprecation by offering a free pint to the first person who spots his spelling mistakes.. He posts classic male banter about his support for one of London's premier league football teams, flaunting successes, acknowledging his humiliation in defeats. He also posts about the band coming on in ten minutes, or hints of a forthcoming quiz. While this builds upon traditional face-to-face communication, it now transcends those physical constraints to create a wider online space that is just as resonant of locality.

There are many other scales that could be aligned with the two just described, that is the role of food and the degree of local identification. Pub J has the clear lead as a music pub,

with high quality cover bands and original bands. So other pubs will provide music intended for different audiences, for example, Pub C has a regular Elvis Presley cover slot, another has a Freddy Mercury cover slot. Ultimately a villager would have a sense that a given pub is more or less 'classy' when it comes to the music they provide, contrasting sophisticated indie music against cover bands for older crooners. There is also a subtle scale alluded to by the local term 'female friendly,' as pubs range from those dominated for much of the day by mothers and other women, to those where it is very unlikely a single woman would enter. Pubs can also influence gender use through which kind of alcohol they promote. More conservative pubs such as Pub K respect a traditional gender division where men are expected to drink beer and women to drink wine. . The manager confessed that he is shocked if he sees a woman asking for a beer. On social media, I found this to be an absolute distinction such that males from the village only ever associate with beer and women with wine, when posting on Facebook (Miller and Sinanan 2017: 86). But there are pubs which would be less conservative in this regard.

Terms such as structure and agency (Giddens 1984 can mask some of the more nuanced negotiation of forces. The wealthy pub owner who simply exploited his position with scant regard for the consequences of public opprobrium because he didn't need to make a profit exemplifies power that is not reducible to such commercial imperatives Often 'structure' is actually the whim, sensibility or values of a particular manager or staff member and therefore closer to what is otherwise being termed agency. Similarly the people colonising the pub may themselves represent structural forces, as when a business insists that meetings take place in a pub because they are trying to engineer a particular atmosphere that they hope will enhance profitability. The builders, plumbers and electricians are clearly exchanging information about work opportunities (Markham and Bosworth 2016: 5). Nevertheless this ethnographic account has demonstrated a general dynamic between mainly commercial as against mainly social forces that accounts for most of what we now can see as scalable sociality.

CONCLUSION

As noted in the introduction this paper represents a mid-level analysis that could be broadened or narrowed. Following Ferguson and Gupta (1992) with regard to wider structural forces, one could note that the influence of capitalism is far broader than merely the business strategy of pubs. We could consider the pub in competition with the restaurant trade or coffee shop, or the more general supply of alcohol through the shops, of considerable importance to young people, since it is cheaper in shops than pubs. Highly significant are changes in pub ownership and state interventions that constitute a wider political economy, which helps to explain the decline of the English rural pub (Pratten 2007, Preece 2008, 2016). A wider focal lens would incorporate the relationship between pubs and the global political economy of brewing (Cabras, Higgins and Preece Eds. 2016)

Equally, following Abu Lughod (1991), rather than simply referring to agency, here a rather abstract concept standing for the impact of the people who use pubs, one could provide a much more extended and humanistic sense of the individuals I came to know well and provide more extended stories about the role of the pub in their lives. Hunt (1991), for example, compares middle-class sociality in pubs with other contexts such as the dinner party. The wider ethnography provides considerable details about how pub sociality relates to patterns of loneliness, couple formation, and the role of alcohol in getting people through the day, often acting as a pre-condition for any form of sociality. Sociality within

the pub could also be linked to the more general patterns of sociality that characterise the contemporary English (Miller 2016, 2017). Finally the historical perspective provided by the mass observation study discussed in the introduction showed that, at least since the 1940's, there has been a considerable diversity of pubs. There was already pressure at that time to organise sociality along class and gender lines balancing the commercial interests of pub landlords. What this paper has provided is an ethnographic portrayal such that we can observe the dynamic of these forces as they develop in front of us.

The paper has also demonstrated the benefits of an explicit focus upon sociality, which arose from the study of social media, since these consists of platforms specifically designed to construct particular modes of sociality. The concept of scalable sociality suggests that to understand any specific genre of sociality we need to consider the larger ecology within which they are related to each other. While sociology has tended to take sociality as an abstract concept (Simmel 1950, Wittel 2001),this paper suggests the potential for a more anthropological approach derived from the study of context. What does it mean to argue that the English Pub is a form of scalable sociality, analogous to social media? Why is the scale from eating to drinking a component of this? The point is that sociality has never existed as a pure abstraction. It always consists of genres of associations between people determined, in Goffman's (1974) sense, by the frame of context, which creates normative expectations. We study Norwegian working class kitchen-tables or the social media platform Twitter, as frames within which certain specific forms of sociality become normalized. But then we find that other populations use kitchen-tables or Twitter in different ways than either we or companies anticipate. So we cannot account for this relationship just from the material properties of the kichen table or the commercial interests of the company that owns Twitter.

There are several versions of object-centred sociality found in sociology (e.g. Cettina 1997, Law and Moi 1995). But the approach used in this paper is most closely associated with material culture studies as exemplified by Gullestad 1985, where it is assumed that all sociality is also material. This is equally true of online sociality (e.g. Miller and Sinanan 2017). The key theoretical term within this paper, *scalable sociality* is concerned with the way sociality may be aligned alongside the material forms with which it is associated. Sociality has always been scalable offline and now this is also possible online. So this paper has not discussed sociality in relation to a set of platforms, either social media platforms or the pub. For example, the spectrum that is found today between pubs focused upon drinking, with certain expectations of how sociality operates through banter and sharing, such as buying a round of drinks. By contrast, pubs that focus upon eating generate a different genre of sociality, depending upon the type of food, which may range from fine dining to sharing a pizza.

This paper is not attempting to encompass all forms of sociality studied by anthropologists. It is most unlikely, however, that the situation described here is particular to either pubs or social media. The reason why these issues matter is because anthropologists work within a contemporary world in which commercial forces are constantly increasing their range, and attempting to commodify fields of social behaviour that may previously have resisted commodification. Obvious examples cover the field of leisure activities, from music gigs to games and from sports to eating out. But many other sites of sociality, such as holding political meetings, or organising key family events such as weddings, are subject to commercial pressures, because of a range of requirements from venues to victuals. In each case there will be a tension between those commercial interests trying to engineer

this alignment in their search for profit, as against something that anthropologists have always studied, which are the non-commercial forces that incline us to particular forms of sociality, whether family, friendship, community or other forms of association. Careful ethnographic observation, that can assess the dynamic tension between these competing pressures, and which thereby allows us to account for the resultant forms of sociality in their respective contexts, is likely to become an ever more common requirement for contemporary anthropologists.

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