

Individual drinking choices of students in a web of culture and institutions

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Abstract

Alcohol (over-) consumption among students is a phenomenon deeply embedded in cultural and social practices. This research explores the influence of (academically related) institutions and adjacent norms on student drinking behaviours in and around Groningen. The study examines the relationship of institutions, culture, and individual choices through a combination of literature review and ethnographic research, including semi-structured interviews and participant observation. Findings indicate that drinking habits are influenced by formal (university events) and informal (parties) settings, with student associations often bridging these contexts. The study reveals a self-perpetuating cycle of individual expectations and institutional offers, emphasising the need for a nuanced understanding of student drinking as a cultural phenomenon rather than merely individual behaviour. This research highlights the role of institutions in creating an arena for alcohol consumption, influencing both the prevalence and perception of drinking among students but also reacting to demand.

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Introduction

Alcohol is a part of our society, and to avoid it is almost impossible. It is served at most restaurants, parties, and social gatherings, and it is widely acknowledged as a tool for stress relief and countering social anxiety (Obst et al., 2018). As a student, I am confronted with alcohol every night that I go out and beyond that, for example, at Dutch 'borrels' (having drinks and snacks together) and even University events. The National Institute for Public Health and the Environment concluded that 73% of students in the Netherlands consumed alcohol the month prior to their inquiry, and 26% qualified as at least heavy drinkers (2023).

That alcohol is an addictive and dangerous drug (WHO, 2011) seems to be overlooked by the students who appear to readily engage in the risky behaviour of its consumption. While every glass of alcohol is bad for the individual physically, the social benefits might outweigh that risk, which is a decision every person has to make for themselves. It seems, however, that this decision is hardly an individual one. Drinking is a cultural phenomenon and, as such, deeply embedded in our everyday lives. It is embedded in the very structure of our society. Raising a glass to happy newlyweds, saying 'cheers' after a person's personal or professional success or going out for a beer with colleagues after work are only a few examples of social activities tightly tied to alcohol consumption. In student life, there are many equivalents involving drinking and many occasions to consume socially, given by various institutions.

A large body of literature is concerned with the negative implications of alcohol consumption among students and the social factors playing into it, like parental involvement and socioeconomic background (Šebeňa, 2022; Crum, 2015). Often, drinking is framed as a problem emanating from students who engage in overconsumption, the so-called binge drinking (Wicki et al., 2010). A significant research gap exists when it comes to how individuals feel institutionally influenced in their engagement with alcohol. This gap is detrimental when framing the alcohol consumption of students. Drinking is culture, and to tell a student to stop drinking is like asking them to disavow it. Alcohol consumption has a rich social history and was already used as a tool

to display prestige and forge alliances long ago. Drinking together can be an exciting collective experience, and bonding with peers is essential for a young person in a new environment. Picking up a glass of wine or beer is an individual choice, but until then, the drinker was influenced by social and cultural norms that are impossible to avoid. Therefore, it is crucial to investigate the roles that institutions play in the choice of drinking.

This research aimed to identify links between the institutional involvement of alcohol-consuming and --distributing people and the social context of alcohol consumption guided by the following research question:

How do students in and around Groningen feel influenced in their alcohol consumption by academically related and other institutions and adjacent norms?

The chosen method of ethnographic research allowed a multifaceted insight into the lives of the participants and the structure of events including drinking. The students could be observed relatively undisturbed in their natural environment but also questioned about their individual thoughts in semi-structured interviews to get an idea of perceived institutional involvement. All of this highlighted that both groups (institutions and students) influenced each other. On one hand, young academics expected or even demanded specific experiences with alcohol, and the institutions created an arena for that. On the other hand, institutions influence the perceptions of alcohol and drinking behaviour of students by reproducing certain norms.

(Over-) consumption of alcohol is stigmatised, but while it surely has adverse effects on health, it also serves a purpose. The reasons for overindulgence can not solely be searched for in students, but one must consider the cultural factors they are influenced by. Understanding drinking as a cultural phenomenon rather than an individual behaviour would have huge implications on how we treat students who over-consume and whom alcohol-related alcohol-related policies are targeted at.

Methodology

A combination of literature review and ethnographic research is used to answer the following research question:

How do students in and around Groningen feel influenced in their alcohol consumption by academically related and other institutions and adjacent norms?

The literature review aims to demonstrate the role of alcohol in student culture and establish the importance of an ethnographic perspective. The research, consisting of semi-structured interviews and participant observation, sheds light on different stakeholders' insights and the way in which themes from the literature are reflected.

Literature review

The narrative literature review was conducted between March 2024 and July 2024. Peer-reviewed literature found on the platforms WorldCat and GoogleScholar was reviewed to gain insight into the culture of alcohol consumption in Europe and the role of students in it. The keywords drinking, alcohol (consumption), students, university, student association, collective effervescence, beer, wine, culture, anthropology, ritual, institution, individual choices, Europe and research were used in various combinations. Furthermore, the articles referenced in the discovered literature were reviewed. The articles were selected based on relevance to the research question and critical topics of the research.

Study design

An ethnographic approach was chosen to gain a deep insight into the reality of students in and around Groningen. The (over-) consumption of alcohol among students is stigmatised, and therefore, simple questionnaires run the risk of being tainted by a desirability bias. This research, therefore, aimed to observe students in their natural environment and directly react to their answers and emotions in semi-structured interviews. Instead of a shallow understanding of the students' choices, the ethnographic approach also allowed to focus on the institutions' (subconscious) influence on young academics. As alcohol consumption is influenced by various

social and cultural factors that might not be obvious to the individual, it was more likely to find meaningful outcomes by digging deeper in an ethnographic manner.

Participant observation

To gain an insight into individual experiences of alcohol consumption in the context of institutions, participant observation was conducted in public spaces. The specific themes to guide the participant observation can be found in Appendix A. Firstly, an open gathering at the bar of the 'cultural student centre' USVA after a theatre class was examined. The centre aimed explicitly at students by providing a student discount on the various offered courses (USVA, retrieved May 3, 2024). Furthermore, the prices for beverages were fairly low, and the bar personnel consisted predominantly of studying people. The location was chosen as it seemed to be a good environment to observe the behaviour of students in social interaction. The second participant observation was conducted at an open student association event. This setting was chosen as student associations are often known to be a place of intense alcohol consumption. The third observed event was a public book release of a professor at the University of Groningen. This event was chosen to provide insight into a formal setting, including alcohol consumption.

It proved challenging to find an environment that specifically excluded alcohol. To get a feeling of whether the involvement of alcohol changed the atmosphere of an event or the participants' interactions, an open event of the study association NCF at Campus Fryslan, a faculty of the University of Groningen in Leeuwarden, was observed. Alcohol was provided in small amounts but not highlighted, and drank considerably less than in the student association.

Interviews

The interviews involved nine people, either students, student association board members, or other stakeholders in the alcohol economy. They lasted around 45 minutes each, with the aim of getting an overview of diverse perspectives and claims regarding alcohol consumption, distribution, and use. The specific themes and questions posed in the interviews can be found in Appendix B.

The participants were determined via convenience sampling. The stakeholders were approached by email or in their work environments (bars), and the students at various observed events. All were asked to get in contact if they were interested in participating in the study. In total, five students participated, among them drinkers and non-drinkers and people who viewed themselves as more and less socially active to have a diversity of viewpoints on alcohol. Additionally, two people working in the hospitality sector were interviewed. One of them owned a bar and offered an economic perspective on drinking. The other stakeholder worked at a restaurant that offered events and weekend party nights to shed light on the social dynamics around drinkers they observed. Lastly, a board member of a study association was chosen to get some insights into the student-made politics around alcohol, and a student association member was chosen to get a more informal view of gatherings involving drinking.

Using latent, deductive thematic analysis, their interviews were searched for common topics, ideas, and patterns.

Safety measures

The obtained data was anonymised and stored on the platform osf.io according to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) rules.

Literature review

This section sheds light on the ties of alcohol to society. First, the data on students and alcohol is reviewed to stress the importance of drinking for young people. Then, the prominent role of alcohol in (European) culture is examined and how it was established, building on the history and cultural implications of specific beverages. Drinking among students was further explored with the notion of Durkheim's collective effervescence. After an excursion into personality psychology and individual choices, the review of the literature concludes with the latter's connection to culture and institutions.

Students and alcohol

In 2023, the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment studied mental health and substance use among university students. According to the survey, 73% of students in the Netherlands consumed alcohol in the month prior to filling in the questionnaire, and 26% of the students qualified as heavy or excessive drinkers. Poor academic achievement and physical complaints like cardiomyopathy and gastritis are (among many others) reported as side effects of alcohol consumption (El Ansari et al., 2013; WHO, 2011). So why do so many young people drink when a large body of literature indicates the adverse effects it can have on academic performance and health? Only limited literature attests to its physiological benefits under particular circumstances (Mukamal et al., 2008), so a different appeal must exist. What the individual feels is responsible consumption differs, whether it is a glass of wine at every formal event or a few bottles of beer every weekend. However, alcohol is a drug that needs to be treated, if not with caution, at least with consideration, and that alone validates enquiry of the choice that many young people make in its favour.

Most of the students in the Netherlands reported drinking alcohol at their or other people's homes (84%) or when going out (80%) (National Institute for Public Health and the Environment & Trimbos Institute, 2023). Of these students, 89% never or seldomly drank alone (National Institute for Public Health and the Environment & Trimbos Institute, 2023), so the consumption of alcohol seems to be somewhat related to social life. Across all years of the university, the amount of alcohol consumed by students exceeds that of peers outside the university (Carter et al., 2010). However, first-year students especially score high in drinking amounts (Wechsler et al., 2000). According to Šebeňa et al. (2022), that is due to the transitory nature of this phase. The students experience a shift in responsibilities and social networks. Furthermore, most of them move out of their parental home and encounter fewer restrictions regarding their lifestyle. That the consumption of alcohol serves as a bonding activity is confirmed by Schulenberg et al. (2002),

who describe it as an event supporting identity development. In the process of studying, the consumption of alcohol declines, but drinking seems to remain a cornerstone of social bonding (Merrill & Carey, 2016).

Alcohol consumption leads to making hasty (or, on a more positive note, spontaneous) choices and generally lowers one's inhibition (Obst et al., 2018). It, therefore, seems useful as a social lubricant (Cooper et al., 1995). Drinking and 'loosening up' appear helpful while navigating a novel and possibly highly interactive environment like a university that can pose many (social) challenges. However, there are nuances to the topic, as the benefit of social bonding comes with physical and mental health drawbacks. Therefore, it is valuable to have a close look at alcohol consumption among students and unravel the network in which the drinking takes place. What influence do institutions like Student Associations, bars, or even the university itself have on the alcohol consumption of the students? As of now, the interplay between these stakeholders has barely been researched. This is startling as full-time students in Groningen (Netherlands) have in-person lectures between 12 and 25 hours per week and meet up with peers for group assignments and study sessions, often in university-provided buildings. Furthermore, many commercial offers target students, such as discounts at bars or the cultural student centre USVA. Students are among other students frequently out of necessity and design. So, how does this shared environment influence their alcohol consumption? This research aims to answer the question.

Alcohol in (European) culture

Simplified, alcohol as a category lumps together everything that contains ethanol, a chemical component resulting from fermentation. When exactly humans first consumed alcohol is unclear. However, some of the earliest physical traces of its production date back to 7000 BC, when fruit was fermented in pottery jars in China (McGovern et al., 2004). Ethanol as a substance

was only described in 1834 (Brock, 1997), so the chemical categorisation of substances as alcohol has only begun relatively late compared to its intentional production.

Before the advance of 'modern' science, a beverage's classification depended on its role within a culture. Alcohol and its psychoactive effects were utilised, for instance, in religious or ritualistic contexts (for example, Catholicism) or as a substantial part of feasting and special occasions. However, fermentation could also be used simply to make water more durable and less prone to bacterial contamination, which is necessary to secure hydration in challenging environments. Some alcoholic beverages like beer even have a substantial caloric value. Beer is made out of wheat, but so are bread and porridge. Dietler (2006) proposes to, therefore, see alcohol as a particular type of food rather than drink. Alcohol can be made out of many ingredients in many different ways, involving ritualistic intentions, hygienic concerns, or culinary purposes. Alcohol is not merely 'one thing'. The term itself is trying to capture something interwoven with our society's very fabric.

The amount of alcohol consumed differs widely among Europeans. The average Norwegian over 15 years drinks about 6.8 litres of pure alcohol per year, whereas the average Czech consumes almost double with 13.3 litres (Our World in Data, 2020). Alstrom-Laakso (1976) draws up compelling evidence that the behaviours accompanying drinking are similarly diverse. According to his research, only in Sweden, out of all Scandinavia, alcohol is primarily drunk during meal times instead of afterwards or on other occasions. In Finland, most drinking happens on private premises, and less than 25% is done in public restaurants, whereas Swedes prefer restaurants (Alstrom-Laakso, 1976). Heath (1976) confirms that there are very few universals regarding drinking behaviour and which rules and conduct are appropriate. What all the countries, however, have in common is that drinking seems to be tied to some social activities, especially eating a meal or meeting others. A study by Robin Dunbar (2019) sheds light on the particular influence of alcohol on what he calls 'feasting' (eating and drinking together) and the social bonding happening meanwhile. Out of the participants in his study, 76.4% agreed that sharing a

meal was a good way for people to bond (Dunbar, 2019). Furthermore, the people who ate socially more often reported more reliable friends and family members. In the subsequent stage of the study, where people were asked to feast together, the most significant variables for the perceived social success of the feast were the number of dinners, laughter, reminiscences, and alcohol consumption. Alcohol turned out to be a significant factor in the bonding process of strangers and acquaintances alike.

Robin Dunbar conducted another study, enlarging the scope of his research to include pub visitors in Great Britain. Pubs were made out to be a primary place for alcohol consumption. According to Dunbar's study, the visitation of pubs increased one's sense of life being worthwhile and the level of trust in and connection with one's local community. After taking a close look at causality, he concluded that people who visited pubs more often, therefore, had a more significant number of intimate friends, rather than the other way around (people with more friends being more likely to frequent pubs in the first place). Of course, complex feedback processes are involved in both scenarios (influences of personality, individual life satisfaction, etc.). However, Dunbar's research leads to the conclusion that there are social and well-being benefits to be derived directly from the visitation of social contexts in which significant alcohol consumption takes place.

Different drinks, different associations

It seems inappropriate to raise a bottle of beer to congratulate newlyweds or drink red wine at a football game. We associate different situations, moods and people with different kinds of alcohol. This insight is paramount to understanding why we drink alcohol in the first place and why it is so difficult to replace it. To illustrate this point, alcohol consumption can be separated into two settings: formal and informal.

The choice of serving prosecco and wine as leading drinks at an economically important event or ritual is no mere coincidence. For thousands of years, this type of alcohol has been commonly associated with the upper class, one reason being its durability and, therefore,

tradeability (Dietler, 2006). Most of the alcoholic beverages used to be made for immediate consumption. Fruit liquors spoiled after a few days (before the invention of distillation), and grain beer only became durable in the ninth century due to the discovery of the effects of hops. Beforehand, those alcoholic drinks were made for and drunk during specific festivities (Dietler, 2006). Beer and liquor could not be stored or traded over long distances and, therefore, had limited value as a commodity (Dietler, 1990). Wine, however, was the one alcoholic beverage that was preservable and, therefore, gained a significant value as a tradable good. Excavated Egyptian wine jars and seals show markings pointing to the year of production, the region of origin, the quality of the wine, and more (McGovern et al., 1996). Only people with money and connections had the opportunity to acquire wine from far away and develop a taste for its differences. To have and drink wine was, therefore, a status symbol and is, to a certain extent, until today. When a young student raises a glass to their success, the moment is solemnised, and the implications of the drink make the occasion special.

Drinking beer happens more often in informal settings (except special craft beer), for example, among students at a party, at a student association event or a get-together in someone's home. Beer is often drunk from the bottle it comes in, which can be held in any way, conversely to wine, which comes in particular glasses which require a learned grip and is never 'chugged', no matter how wild the party. Beer is more casual, and drinking it together, too. The consumption of both types of alcohol is constructing a specific group identity, whether through the choice of beverage or the commitment to the customs and rules regarding consumption. It creates social relationships and serves as a powerful social tool, not only due to its psychoactive properties.

Alcohol and elation

Humans want to belong and be together, which can be called 'collective effervescence' in its extreme, as described by Emile Durkheim in 1912 (Durkheim et al., 2008). Usually, this state of intensely felt unity is reached in religious or political contexts, but Sebastien Tutenges (2022)

makes a compelling argument that intertwines substance use with what Durkheim describes. According to Tutenges, collective effervescence can be felt strongly when alcohol is consumed. Durkheim is not very specific when he talks of collective effervescence; for him, the essence of it is that people are spatially united, express their shared feelings in common acts, and feel like part of a larger whole (Durkheim et al., 2008). This can happen in religious or non-religious contexts across an entire era or more punctually.

All in all, he, however, argues that collective effervescence is the foundation of all religions (Durkheim et al., 2008). Durkheim describes five criteria that mark collective effervescence: unity, intensity, transgression, symbolisation, and revitalisation. In his work, Tutenges (2022) lays out how people participating in various drinking cultures experience all these criteria and, therefore, find themselves in a state of collective effervescence (with slight deviations from the original concept of focusing on specific and small-scale events). With his application of Durkheim's framework, Tutenges implies that the collectivity facilitated by drinking resembles the feelings arising in ritualistic contexts, which essentially draws a parallel between joined alcohol consumption and religion. To understand why students, and really people anywhere, drink, it is worthwhile to examine the feelings connected to drinking culture and the powerful, religion-like interconnectedness that can be achieved.

Firstly, drinking together in designated contexts creates unity, the feeling of being part of a common body. Alcohol creates a strong common interest where there might have been none before. Doing something together as a group can be exciting, even if it is just playing drinking games or raising a glass together. Tutenges (2022) speaks of the feelings of freedom, power, and solidarity. Some bonds that result from common drinking experiences are fleeting rather than unifying long-term. This fleetingness can, however, be precisely what the drinker seeks. There are no obligations, and many people anticipate that their crush of the night has already forgotten all about their encounter the morning after, waking up with a hangover. This mindset can liberate

young people trying to find their path in life. They possibly have to organise a full study load during the day, but they merge with the forgiving crowd at night.

Secondly, common alcohol consumption has a certain intensity. The collective experience connected to intoxication lets people step out of themselves to a point where they forget the stress and anxiety of everyday life, of which students have plenty, whether due to exams or a lack of money. Drinkers feel emboldened to the point where they do things with their group that they would never do were they alone and sober (Tutenges, 2022).

This behaviour can also be sorted into the category of 'transgression'. Drinkers are known to behave contrary to the norm or even break the law; this topic is explored by Durkheim himself (Durkheim et al., 2008). Alcohol alters the state of one's mind, people for example have less self-inhibition and control, and according to Tutenges (2022) that is precisely what strengthens the drinker's capacity to transgress.

Fourth, Durkheim mentions symbolisation as a characteristic of collective effervescence. The energies of an event are channelled into symbols, usually objects like a flag or a totem, but in the drinking context of students, those could be photos, stories, or even inside jokes. When reminiscing about past drinking experiences, these symbols connect the people to the prior moment and its energy (Tutenges, 2022). Conversely, if you were not there, you might not understand the significance of a photo or the humour of an inside joke and are therefore not part of the group, unable to re-feel a bit of the elation.

Lastly, an experience must be revitalising. Sometimes, students are hungover after drinking together, their bodies are depleted of energy, and the individual must nurse a headache or sore stomach. After that has passed, however, the experience of joint alcohol consumption can lead to a feeling of freedom and solidarity. According to one of Tutenges' (2022) interviewees, one returns to everyday life with a sense of ease after having experienced moments of reduced tension and stress.

Shteynberg et al. (2014) explain how assembling heightens emotions and has a positive impact on the social climate. Based on the research of Tutenges (2022), the addition of alcohol intensifies this further, especially for students leaning on the concept of collective effervescence.

The concept of collective effervescence fits well into the drinking behaviour of students and might be one of many reasons students consume alcohol.

Culture shapes personality

Students are prone to binge drinking alcohol, and one could think that this is part of their personality development. Indeed, humans show the highest levels of impulsivity and sensation-seeking in their early twenties (Harden et al., 2011), which could facilitate reckless behaviour like overconsumption. So, while the assumption that drinking alcohol, especially in large amounts, is tied to age is valid to a certain extent, the concept of 'evoked culture' explains the connection better. Personality varies across cultures and is usually explained by a model that includes evoked culture, transmitted culture, and cultural universals (Larsen et al., 2020). The approach of transmitted culture stresses that certain attitudes and themes are passed on to people through interaction (Tooby & Cosmides, 1992). Transmitted culture shapes large parts of our lives, from dietary customs to death management (Larsen et al., 2020). Alcohol has been around for a very long time, and so have the rules surrounding it. It is not merely a beverage but ingrained in celebration (e.g. raising a glass to newlyweds) and setting a particular atmosphere (e.g. offering a beer to someone after a long day of work). Students grow up with this evoked culture, and it shapes their personality. Drinking is connected to relaxation, feasting and getting to know people (Obst et al., 2018; Dunbar, 2020). It might not be as hard to refuse a glass of wine at a PhD defence as opting out of a funeral rite, but it certainly requires conscious choice against transmitted culture (which shapes everyone's personality) itself.

Many students leave their homes to move to a university city, maybe even across countries. When arriving in a new place with new people, they must make new friends, which can

be challenging depending on their personality. Drinking as a collective activity, for example, in student associations or introduction weeks, offers an opportunity to bond (Gambles et al., 2022). At the same time, refusing to drink immediately puts a student in the minority (National Institute for Public Health and the Environment & Trimbos Institute, 2023). Humans want to be part of a group (Brewer, 2007), and if drinking is what connects people within our society, refusing alcohol seems like refusing to be social. Of course, you can ask for orange juice at a party, but being the odd one out instead of part of the group can lead to feelings of anxiety and loneliness (Major et al., 2005).

To pick up a glass of wine might be considered an individual decision, but the thoughts and influences that lead to that action are not. Our personal choices are influenced by our personality and who we are as a person, but that, in turn, depends on how and with whom we grew up. The evoked culture that proclaims drinking alcohol as a social activity influences the individual student who chooses to drink, as does the desire to belong to a group and avoid feelings of isolation. To drink is not only to swallow but to socialise, bond, party, and even establish one's status; that is what young people learn and what shapes their decisions.

Institutions

In one sense, an institution is an accepted and recognised organisation with an administrative and functional structure (Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary). Another understanding of the word relates to 'systems of established and prevalent social rules' (Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary), in other words, norms 'that structure social interaction' (Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary). The university, bars, and study associations are institutions (first definition) and also contain many institutions (second definition). They consist of employment contracts and offices but also of norms, attitudes, and implicit rules.

Institutions have a historical and cultural context and are led by people who grew up with certain morals and values. Rather than making up their own rules, institutions, therefore, channel

a set of norms belonging to the society in which they are embedded. Discussing who enforces rules and constructs culture (the people or the institution) is like thinking about what came first, the chicken or the egg. Institutions make culture visible. Why they are needed and how they function sheds light on the society they operate in. They also serve as points of reference within the cultural world. When someone, for example, speaks of 'official', they most likely mean something authoritative; they refer to an institution that is the symbol of a norm. 'Professional' means conforming to standards, standards that an institution embodies.

How universities, student associations and other stakeholders incorporate alcohol into their concept and identity is based on all the influences mentioned previously in this review. How they influence and are influenced by students remains to be described in the following.

Results

Drinking as a (compelling) norm

Some students felt compelled to drink sometimes, either by assumptions of the people around them or the perceived attributions of certain drinks.

Several participants used the word 'normal' in the context of alcohol consumption. Also, all the studying participants expected the availability of alcohol at certain events like association gatherings and university events. Even students who did not or only seldom drank themselves mentioned that it would be unusual if alcohol were not served at specific events. One person said, "It would be weird if there was none." in regard to an event of her study association.

Sometimes, the compelling nature of norms surrounding alcohol consumption was mentioned more directly. One participant explained how they and their friend group got a free shot at a restaurant, the waiter assuming they all drank. After that, the participant felt compelled to keep drinking, in their words, 'keep it going', to not stick out of the group. The interviewee from the hospitality sector explained: "Our personnel are trained to refill.", pointing to the assumption that people want to keep drinking once they have had one glass and hinting at their own economic

ambition. Another stakeholder from the hospitality sector mentioned: "Alcohol consumption is super normalised in HOREKA [the hospitality sector in Dutch]".

A student mentioned that if one of their friends asked 'to go out for a beer,' they would order beer, even if they disliked it, as a commitment to the desired atmosphere instead of choosing a different drink. They said: "You kill the vibe if you do not order a beer.". Another student mentioned that they preferred the taste of wine but often drank beer because of the perceived social effect. They explained how different types of alcohol were for different types of days and different occasions. According to them, beer was drunk for having a chat and socialising, and hard alcohol and cocktails were consumed to party.

Five participants laid out that during the interviews, they realised that they had never thought about the social implications of drinking before or why alcohol was so important to them and in their daily lives. One mentioned: "I realise that I say 'I don't know.' for many questions". Another person mentioned that it was hard to say if alcohol influenced an event because it had always been there, and hence, they had no comparison. During the participant observation in the student centre in Groningen, the guests ordered a beer at the bar without looking at the menu, needing no clarification that it was, in fact, available.

Judgement

Another emergent theme connected to norms was judgement, either by participants themselves or towards them. One of the students ordered a tea at the bar of the student centre in Groningen. They received the tea and many laughs and comments from their peers (although not malicious). Another student told us about a bar visit with a friend where they ordered juice, and the barkeeper was visibly confused about their choice of drink.

Two participants who described themselves as non- or infrequent drinkers expressed worry about their peers and the 'unhealthy student culture'. One of them said they would judge people who drank alcohol, except if it was at official events and/or to celebrate. Several people

agreed that there were spaces designed for drinking and that outside of them, alcohol consumption would be inappropriate. One person, for example, mentioned that they would never get drunk at university as that would be disrespectful. Another student mentioned: "I have mad respect for people who drink twice a week and still keep up with studying".

Two people agreed that they found it hard to speak up against alcohol consumption in some settings, especially when larger groups were involved. Overconsumption was seen as a 'downer' by one student who felt responsibility for overindulging peers. The other participants saw alcohol-related issues as "... the personal fault of people who don't know themselves well" and marked them as individual complications with no further influence on the organisation of future events.

Drinking as symbol

Drinking extended over the mere act of swallowing and was perceived as tightly connected to factors like atmosphere and culture. One of the students explained that they would only 'have a taste' if alcohol was seen as part of a new culture, for example, accompanying food. They further mentioned that for them, alcohol consumption belonged to a certain situation, like a wedding. Another student mentioned: "I think it's [the serving of alcohol] sort of fulfilling the normative purpose of making it seem an official event". Another participant agreed: "The drinks are put up very aesthetically. I think the uni wants to impress external partners." another one vaguely mentioned: "I think it has to do with the social ladder" [That wine is served]. The participants agreed that there was a difference between different beverages and how they influenced the atmosphere of an event. "Getting a beer [together] brings you in a relaxed headspace. It's like, the day is done, now you can drink.", said one of the students. Others explained that for them, drinking beer coincided with relaxation and 'letting go'.

Furthermore, alcohol helped to structure events that were observed. During the break time of a study association event, everyone got up, picked a drink at the bar, talked to peers on their

way back, and sat down again. This also happened when people chose a non-alcoholic drink. One student said, "Alcohol makes an event better; it's almost a ritual."

Transformation

Alcohol was perceived to have the power to transform events. According to several participants, it made some situations official and solemn, and others relaxed or ecstatic. One person said: "Without it [alcohol], it's [an event at university] less official", even though they labelled themselves as a non-drinker. The board member of a student association explained:

In an effort to professionalise, for a lot of committees, it seems logical to model it [association gatherings] after the official events that the university hosts and those include a banner on the side, a nice little tablecloth, and a couple of drinks on top.

They further mentioned the prestige that came with serving semi-expensive alcohol and said: "It makes it seem like a well-renowned thing. I don't think there would be much understanding for an alcohol budget cut.". An interviewee from the hospitality sector pointed to a literal transformation. They expressed that drunk customers were the most rude, demanding, and unpleasant to serve, even though they further said this was their primary target audience as a bar. During the participant observation, that change was apparent. At a gala of a student association, people started in formal outfits, taking 'professional' pictures and elegantly clanking prosecco glasses. As the evening progressed, the crowd became clumsy, and inhibitions dropped. Several people openly made out on the dance floor later in the night, disheveling each other's formal robes and intricate make-up. A student said: "Without alcohol, this wouldn't be a party, more a networking event.". An association board member explained a similar thing happening at 'KONSTI's (gatherings of the boards of different associations). They start with people in matching suits (per individual board) as a networking event and escalate into 'mindless drinking'. According to the participant: "A KONSTI without alcohol would just become an adult networking event". Further, in the night, people hook up with each other according to a point system: the higher the position of

the board member you make out with, the more points you gain for your own board: “In that way, it is networking, only that the main thing exchanged is saliva.”. Others also mentioned alcohol consumption as a tool for social decompression. While wine was mentioned to make an event formal, other types of alcohol were seen to do the opposite. One participant explained that when student events happened at university at night, the indulgence in alcohol facilitated de-formalisation. As one would never drink a relaxed beer at university during the day, doing that now transformed the atmosphere. Alcohol consumption further marked different parts of one event. While something could start as fancy, the mood would loosen up once alcohol was served. One participant expected a less fluid transition without alcohol.

Community

The interviewees from the hospitality sector stressed that they served the most alcohol to students when they were in groups. They also observed that students almost always paid separately, although that was a great struggle for the servers. Furthermore, students were said to be the most likely to smuggle alcohol into the venue to save money. One waiter said: “Our DJ sucks, but the people come for the party”. They were sure that the guests would leave early if there was no alcohol and go somewhere else to dance. During one of the participant observations, every student was patted down before entering the venue. Most people drank alcohol, and the special offers were soon sold out. The students celebrated, danced, and started conversations with people at the bar they had not known before. The interviewed board member said: “Our members expect alcohol at socialising events.”. They further explained how alcohol brought people together at the board parties (KONSTI), which are officially networking events. As a tradition, new boards had to host a party and were given a bottle of wine by every other board attending, which they, in most cases, had to drink immediately on the stage and then hold a speech. Over the night, those speeches got increasingly slurred, and at the end, at least the hosting board would be passed out from alcohol. The interviewee explained that this forced social

norm violation was deliberate humiliation as a basis for becoming part of the group. If a board member did not drink, they could opt out, but then naturally, the others had to drink more. The interviewee mentioned that their board always brought a plant instead of wine, which was received very well by the hosting board. The interviewee said: "This is the epitome of people being peer pressured into drinking". Furthermore, students could bond over their joint drinking experiences at the KONSTI:

Somehow, you immediately have something to chat about: 'Can I bring you a drink?'. Even if you both get blackout drunk at the end of the night, you run again into each other it's probably this odd companionship: 'Oh man, we got so fucked up that one time; it was nice meeting you though'. It establishes a different kind of bond.

In the eyes of the board members, alcohol consumption transformed a somewhat 'awkward setting' into a joint experience.

Some non-drinkers showed the same socialising mechanisms as drinkers. They used the opportunity to get a drink to make a round to talk to people and meet new ones at the bar. For them, the drink's nature was unimportant to their social contacts. One of the non-drinkers said regarding alcohol consumption: "For some people, it's part of their identity."

Institutions

Most of the university's events were formal, such as receptions or festivities for external guests, staff, or graduates. At least the professionals attending the events wore somewhat formal clothes or business casual. The people responsible for the catering and beverages wore uniforms. The drinks served were prosecco, red and white wines, water, and juices, but occasionally also beer.

Both businesses the interviewed stakeholders were part of, for example, lowered their prices on weekdays to appeal to non-working young adults. Orders were taken in rounds, and employees were trained to supply constant refills. Overall, the participants agreed that drinking

alcohol happens anyway, regardless of institutions: "People who don't take part in student associations still drink somewhere else". Peers were perceived to be consistent in their decision to drink, no matter the environment: "Someone either drinks or not". Overall, drinking was described as 'normal'.

According to one participant, universities provide a norm for student associations' events regarding the setup (tablecloths) and beverages (wine). The students who usually perceived drinking as inappropriate during the day found university events involving alcohol consumption during the day unproblematic and further assumed the alcohol to be there. As long as the norm was upheld, not to 'get drunk at uni', all parties respected drinking. Some participants suggested that only a 'fancy' drink like a mocktail might be able to replace alcohol here. At none of the observed university events was anyone's age controlled. The participants agreed that no one had ever checked whether they were old enough to drink. One interviewee explained that their student association checked IDs and further had a policy regarding group pressure, which demanded equal amounts of alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks at every event, although they admitted that this was difficult to enforce. The interviewee further stated that their board had chosen not to finance alcohol-centred events in the past. As a board only lasts for one year, that policy had, however, already changed since then. For some association events, an organiser said alcohol was used to attract participants. If alcohol were left, it would be shared among the students. The observed student association was mainly funded by the university; consequently, so were the alcoholic drinks (mostly beer and wine). This was unique, as the associations frequently organising KONSTIs relied on outside sponsors, like wealthy alums and companies. According to an interviewee, those spent as much money on one KONSTI as their association had for one whole year. The students who make up the boards of rich associations usually take time off studying and are compensated by their universities. One of the board's main tasks is to organise and attend KONSTIs.

The type and amount of alcohol consumed were tied to the price and availability. The barkeeper said that the sort of alcohol they served at events depended on the customer's budget and how much revenue they got as a bar. At events where alcohol was very cheap or free, the availability determined the consumption. "They had an endless supply of beer, so no one cared," said one student. Several participants stated that they only attended some university events because they wanted to pick up one or two glasses of wine. One student said: "You don't get drunk [in the university building], then you better take a bottle of wine home." Another participant felt discouraged to go to association events: "I don't want to spend time with drunks, so I don't go." Furthermore, one said that they thought alcohol was not as necessary at certain events, for example, gatherings of the student association that had a different purpose already (like a guest lecture). However, they were in the minority with that opinion.

Discussion

The perpetuum mobile of drinking culture

On the one hand the students demand drinking experiences, which leads to institutions providing them. On the other hand, institutions set an example regarding drinking culture and students follow along. This self-reinforcing cycle reminds of a perpetuum mobile, a movement that once in motion knows no beginning or end (with the deviation that culture is never a closed system and can always be subject to change).

The norms and expectations around drinking that emerged from the literature were reflected in the thoughts and behaviours of the participants. Young people come to university with the idea that alcohol is a symbol of either formality or informality. At university events, serving alcohol was perceived to make an event 'official', referring to cultural standards set and embodied by institutions. By aesthetically arranging expensive drinks like wine and prosecco, the university created an air of impressiveness and solemnity, playing into the cultural history and importance of the beverage. Even the participants who did not drink themselves mentioned this transformative

character of alcohol, which clearly did not need to be drunk to have that effect. Student associations took the set up of university events as a model for their own gatherings. By emulating the events of this big institution with tablecloths and wine, they aimed to professionalise their smaller gatherings. The university perpetuates the idea that the serving of wine and prosecco stands for prestige and serves as an example for smaller contexts in which, consequently, alcohol is also expected by students. Drinking alcohol was seen as symbolic of status and atmosphere and as a marker creating a frame for an event. The university set the tone for what was 'official'. At important events and celebrations, they played into the cultural relevance of beverages like prosecco and wine, instead of, for example, a Mocktail. The university had enough authority to back up drinking alcohol in the middle of the day without age controls, which was usually perceived as inappropriate. As long as the norm was upheld, not to 'get drunk at uni', all parties respected drinking. The university facilitated consumption, perpetuated drinking norms and was an authoritative influence on students' views and, ultimately, their choices. Sometimes, the university even indirectly funded consumption by supporting student associations or students taking a board year, which almost inadvertently includes drinking. However, the students also expected certain experiences with alcohol, and the university provided an arena for their realisation.

For-profit institutions deliberately created an atmosphere that facilitated and reinforced drinking for students as part of their business model. Guests were encouraged to steadily order alcohol through various techniques, and students received discounts on alcoholic beverages. However, the participants from the hospitality sector also mentioned that they reacted to demand; the students expected alcohol when stepping into a bar. Among the students, an increase in alcohol consumption or a change of beverage was thought to make an event or situation informal, for example, the exclusive availability of beer. Drinking it marked, for example, the end of a working day, allowing for private conversation, and establishing a relaxed and chatty mood. With increased consumption and intoxication, serious events, whether gala or networking gatherings,

transformed into parties where sexual advances, clumsiness and screaming became common and welcomed. At events where alcohol was very cheap or free, the availability determined the consumption. The students drank until it was gone, or they were physically unable to. Alcohol achieved a 'de-formalisation', allowing students to have uninhibited fun and step out of one's everyday persona. The participants attributed this fluid transition to drinking alcohol. The institutions with economic interest play into these dynamics for financial gain but also responded to a demand, which again reminds us of a reinforcing cycle.

As suggested by the literature, students were usually served alcohol in groups. Even though they were financially constrained, they enjoyed going out together. The students chose to go through the trouble of smuggling alcohol into a club rather than drinking at home or not drinking as much on-site. They wanted to experience the collectiveness of the club and the collective effervescence while dancing and being drunk with peers. Especially at socialising events of student associations, alcohol was always present, either to drink or as part of elaborate rituals aiming at getting the participants drunk. The members expected the serving of alcohol and bonded over their joint drinking adventures. The overconsumption created a common theme and was something that could be remembered together. Getting a drink during the break time of a study association event allowed for socialising on the way to the bar and while waiting. The consumption of alcohol seemed almost like a ritual to start and end parts of an event. Non-drinkers showed the same pattern of socialisation; it remains unclear if they merely emulated what the drinkers did. Students felt compelled to drink by peers and customs but also readily engaged in alcohol consumption as a behaviour perceived as typical. Drinking tea or juice at a bar provoked ridicule and incredulousness. Alcohol and its consumption were so intertwined with contexts like going out and places like a bar that deciding against drinking clearly confused the other drinkers as 'rejecting culture'. Alcohol was tightly connected to the creation of atmosphere, and many participants wished to reinforce that. Indeed, none of the interviewed students drank alone; they always drank in the company of peers or other people. A shared sentiment pointing towards the

subconscious norms regarding drinking behaviour was that many students never consciously thought about drinking as a practice deeply embedded in their culture. Furthermore, they could not picture many situations without it. In the Cultural Student Centre USVA, the students ordered beer without clarification it was available; they simply expected it as part of the setting.

The worry about peers was expressed in relation to 'unhealthy student culture', instead of pointing towards students' individual drinking decisions, marking drinking as a culture. Overconsumption to a point where it impaired an event in turn was seen as a shortcoming of the indulgent individual. This leads to the fact that drinking, what, where, and how much is highly specific to the context, which for example institutions provide and determine.

There seemed to be a tension field between a formal context, including the university and its events, and an informal context, including parties and leisure events. The student associations moved somewhere in the middle, alternating between the contexts. Different types of alcohol were a symbol for different institutions. Wine stood for the university, the official, the prestigious. Beer, hard liquor or overconsumption seemed almost counter-institutional, representing relaxation, fun, or party. The individual student navigates this field of association and hardly makes the decision to drink independently. They are influenced by a culture they and/or their peers create and facilitate, and many students ride along rather than stick out of the crowd. The university, bars, and associations create an arena for alcohol consumption as a response to the expectations of students. Both influence each other; hence, both are responsible for the culture surrounding alcohol consumption.

Conclusion

This study explored how students in and around Groningen felt influenced by institutions in their alcohol consumption, using a combination of literature review and ethnographic research. Participant observation and semi-structured interviews gave in-depth insight into students' experiences and culture as naturally as possible.

According to the literature, the majority of Dutch students regularly drink alcohol. Despite known adverse effects on academic performance and health, students continue to drink, often as a social activity. Drinking plays a crucial role in adapting to new social networks and changing lifestyles. Alcohol serves as a social lubricant, and some experiences of drinking together can even be compared to Durkheim's notion of collective effervescence, an impactful feeling characterised by unity, intensity, transgression, symbolisation and revitalisation.

Historically, alcohol has been closely tied to social and cultural practices, with varying consumption patterns and drinking norms across Europe. Different types of alcohol are associated with different social contexts, reinforcing and building group identities. Institutions such as student associations, universities, and bars perpetuate cultural norms and, therefore, play significant roles in shaping drinking behaviours, yet their influence remains under-researched.

This study confirmed that many students felt compelled to drink due to social norms or expectations at events. Students arrive at university with the idea that alcohol symbolises prestige as well as a party. University events featuring alcohol are seen as more "official," with the institution using aesthetic arrangements of expensive drinks like wine and prosecco to create an impressive atmosphere. In those formal contexts, even non-drinkers acknowledge that it would be unusual if alcohol were not present. Student associations emulate these setups, aiming to professionalise their gatherings, thus reacting to and perpetuating the expectation of alcohol at events. Students often switch to more casual drinks to signal the end of the formal day, possibly transforming serious events into parties with increased consumption and fewer inhibitions. Drinking together as a tradition was perceived to foster connections and a sense of belonging. Alcohol was seen as integral to the atmosphere and cultural relevance of events. Some participants only discovered the extensive impact of alcohol on their lives during the study, indicating the subconscious influence of these norms.

For-profit institutions respond to student demands for alcohol, offering discounts and encouraging continuous ordering. This interaction reinforces the drinking culture. Non-drinkers

are often ridiculed or at least judged, highlighting the deep cultural embedding of alcohol in social settings. Overconsumption is seen as an individual fault rather than a cultural issue, though there is worry about the unhealthy student drinking culture.

Institutions play a role in normalising alcohol at events. On the one hand, they encourage drinking, but on the other, they only react to a demand coming (among others) from the students. Drinking culture, deeply embedded in university life and social events, is perpetuated by mutual expectations and behaviours. Students' demand for drinking experiences leads institutions to provide them, creating a self-reinforcing cycle. In conclusion, while what a student drinks seems like an individual decision, it is actually heavily influenced by (academically related) institutions and the norms they are influenced by and which they perpetuate.

As this research focused on gaining in-depth insights into individuals' perceptions in an ethnographic manner, the outcomes are not generalisable. The results obtained from interaction with a relatively small and non-randomly selected sample size cannot indicate the sentiments of a larger population. Furthermore, no stakeholder from the university was interviewed. In future research, that could add a valuable layer to the enquiry and shed light on the awareness institutions have of their impact. Exploring how institutions and cultural expectations influence students beyond their university years could also yield valuable insights.

While alcohol overconsumption is stigmatised due to its adverse health effects, it also serves specific social purposes, like bonding, transformation of atmospheres, and creating a sense of belonging. To understand and possibly reduce drinking, one must understand that the causes of excessive alcohol use cannot be attributed solely to individual choices but must be understood within the context of cultural influences and institutions. Formal policies, such as restrictions on alcohol availability, might fail to address the root causes of overindulgence while providing alcohol-free socialisation programmes might be a step in a more successful direction.

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Appendix A.

Framework for participant observation

The event

- When, where, who, what
- My own state of mind, emotions
- Individual alc consumption
- Drinker/Non-drinkers
- Reasons/Factors for consumption (*What are the reasons they drink?*)
- Influences on consumption (*Are there specific factors that influence if or how much they drink?*)

Role of alc during gathering

- *What is served (beverages and food)? What kind of alcohol is served? How much?*
 - *Do people demand/expect the serving of alcohol (who and what)?*
- Places of consumption and serving
- *When is the alcohol served?*
 - *Does it serve a specific purpose?*
 - *Could you imagine another beverage taking that place? / What makes alcohol special in that context?*
- *Are there specific guidelines regarding alcohol (serving)? Is there control over who drinks (age limit)?*
- *Who drinks?*
 - *Are there people who drink more/less?*
 - *How would you characterise them?*
- *How do you imagine this event with/without alcohol?*

- *Atmosphere, interpersonal communication*
- *If alcohol was not served, would you think people drank somewhere else during or after the event?*

Alcohol-related problems at the event?

- *What did they look like?*
- *How did what happened influence the atmosphere of the event?*

+ Notes on the order of events, behaviours, patterns

Appendix B.

Semi-structured interviews

Themes and Questions for Students

- Introduction
 - *What is your name?*
 - *How old are you?*
 - *What do you study?*
 - *What does your perfect free evening look like?*
- Individual alc consumption
 - Drinker/Non-drinker?
 - *Do you drink alcohol?*
 - *What kind of alcohol do you drink?*
 - *How often do you drink alcohol?*
 - Reasons/Factors for Consumption
 - *What are the reasons you drink?*
 - Influences on consumption
 - *Are there specific factors that influence if or how much you drink?*
 - Places of consumption
 - *Where do you usually drink?*
 - *What does the situation typically look like when you drink?*
- Perception of other people's consumption
 - Reasons/Factors
 - *What kind of alcohol do your peers drink?*
 - *Why do you think your peers drink?*
 - Influences on consumption

- *Do you think there are specific factors that influence if your peers drink?*
- *Do you think there are specific factors that influence how much your peers drink?*
- Places of consumption
 - *Where do your peers usually drink?*
- Perception of institutions' role
 - *What social events do you attend that are targeted at students (uni, bars, associations, etc.)?*
 - Role of alc during gatherings
 - Uni (Who drinks?)
 - *What does a typical event look like?*
 - *Who typically attends that event?*
 - *Who organises the event?*
 - *Do you expect the serving of alcohol (what kind)?*
 - *What kind of alcohol is served?*
 - *When is the alcohol served?*
 - *Does it serve a specific purpose?*
 - *Could you imagine another beverage taking that place? / What makes alcohol special in that context?*
 - *How much alcohol do you/your peers/professors/others(?) drink?*
 - *How do you imagine this event with/without alcohol?*
 - *Atmosphere, interpersonal communication*

- *If alcohol was not served, would you think people drank somewhere else during or after the event?*
- *How do you perceive alcohol consumption at university events?*
- Associations
 - *What do typical gatherings look like?*
 - *Who typically attends that event?*
 - *Who organises the event?*
 - *Do you expect the serving of alcohol (what kind)?*
 - *What kind of alcohol is served?*
 - *When is the alcohol served?*
 - *Does it serve a specific purpose?*
 - *Could you imagine another beverage taking that place? / What makes alcohol special in that context?*
 - *How much alcohol do you/your peers/professors/others(?) drink?*
 - *How do you imagine this event with/without alcohol?*
 - *Atmosphere, interpersonal communication*
 - *If alcohol was not served, would you think people drank somewhere else during or after the event?*
- Other student-targeted contexts
 - *What do typical gatherings look like?*
 - *Who typically attends that event?*
 - *Who organises the event?*
 - *Do you expect the serving of alcohol (what kind)?*

- *What kind of alcohol is served?*
- *When is the alcohol served?*
 - *Does it serve a specific purpose?*
 - *Could you imagine another beverage taking that place? / What makes alcohol special in that context?*
- *How much alcohol do you/your peers/others(?) drink?*
- *How do you imagine this event with/without alcohol?*
 - *Atmosphere, interpersonal communication*
 - *If alcohol was not served, would you think people drank somewhere else during or after the event?*
- *Were there ever alcohol-related problems at an event you attended?*
 - *What did they look like?*
 - *How did what happened influence the atmosphere of the event?*
 - *Did this incident impact further events? How?*
- *How does your perception of alcohol change, depending on the context (uni vs. party)?*
 - *How does the function of alcohol change?*
 - *Do you feel like in a specific setting, it is good/bad, appropriate/inappropriate?*
 - *In which setting do you feel like it is more/less important, and why?*
- *Have you ever had any discussions about having alcohol, or is it 'normal'?*
- *Are there any more things you would like to bring up? Is there anything you feel we have not talked about?*

Themes and Questions for Stakeholders

- Introduction

- *What is your name?*
- *How old are you? You can also give me a range.*
- *What does your perfect free evening look like?*
- Technicalities
 - *What kind of institution are you part of?*
 - *What is your general function within your institution?*
 - *What type of events do you organise?*
 - *Who generally attends those events?*
 - *What is the usual structure of the events?*
 - *What is the primary/secondary purpose of the events?*
 - *Since when have you been involved in the organisation of events?*
- Alcohol
 - *How do you decide what is served (beverages and food)?*
 - *Who decides if alcohol is served?*
 - *How do you decide if alcohol is served?*
 - *Do people demand the serving of alcohol (who and what)?*
 - *Do you think people expect the serving of alcohol (who and what)?*
 - *How do you decide what kind of alcohol is served?*
 - *How do you decide how much alcohol is served?*
 - *When is the alcohol served?*
 - *Does it serve a specific purpose?*
 - *Could you imagine another beverage taking that place? / What makes alcohol special in that context?*
 - *Are there specific guidelines regarding alcohol (serving) issued by your uni/board/employer?*
 - *Do you control who drinks (age limit)?*

- *Who drinks?*
 - *Are there people who drink more/less?*
 - *How would you characterise them?*
- *Impact*
 - *The perceived difference between events where alcohol is/is not served*
 - *How does the dynamic of an event change over time?*
 - *Is that different with/without alcohol?*
 - *How do you think the atmosphere of your event would change if you served/did not serve alcohol?*
 - *If alcohol was not served, would you think people drank somewhere else during or after the event?*
- *Issues*
 - *Have you ever had alcohol-related problems at an event you organised?*
 - *What did they look like?*
 - *How were they resolved?*
 - *Has that impacted how you have organised events since then?*
 - *Are there any more things you would like to bring up? Is there anything you feel we have not talked about?*