

Drinksituaties en drinkgedrag : alcoholgebruik in het dagelijks leven

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Summary

In this study, the drinking habits of the Dutch population are described.

In chapter one, theoretical explanations of regularities in behavior and systematic differences in behavior between individuals are presented. Drinking is described as an act. The smallest meaningful unit of behavior is the activity, acts are parts of activities. All behavior occurs in situations. The way situations are perceived and interpreted in terms of rules for adequate behavior are determined by and form the basis of the social structure actors are part of. In our society the social order has a strict mathematical temporal character. Temporal 'signs' guide social behavior. Time of day and day of the week are social facts that direct 'judgements' of adequacy of behavior.

A large part of all drinking behavior may be considered as a social habit (Knibbe, 1984; Gadourek, 1963). Social habits are shared semi-automatic responses to stimuli in social situations. Both primary activity and temporal characteristics of situations are regarded as stimuli that are related to the occurrence of drinking in situations.

Regularities in drinking behavior may be explained as a result of similarities in the situations in which people participate. Systematic differences between people can be understood as the result of systematic differences in expectations about adequate behavior. Such systematic variations in expectations are roles.

Three types of roles may be distinguished: status roles, positional roles and situational roles. Status roles are ascribed. They consist of expectations based on characteristics of social identity such as sex, age, social class or religion. Status roles offer general behavioral orientations which may direct behavior in all kinds of situations. Positions are places in social systems like the family or working organization. Positional roles are acquired. To keep a position, actors have to fulfill the requirements of the positional role. This implies a certain degree of regularity in behavior, fixed timing and duration of activities. Positional roles structure everyday life.

Situational roles are expectations of adequate behavior within specific situations. Situational roles may be more oriented towards objective characteristics of situations (traffic) or towards relationships with other people (guest, friend). Situational roles only apply to the concrete actual situation in which an actor is present.

Like habits, situational roles can only explain differences in behavior within specific situations. Structural differences in drinking behavior between individuals can be explained by positional and status roles. Such roles partly determine in which situations actors will participate in the course of everyday life and thus partly determine the opportunity to drink. A second way in which these roles may be related to alcohol consumption is through their relations with the perception of the adequacy of drinking within situations.

In chapter two, the instrument used in this study to gather the data is described. Since it was concluded in chapter one that drinking is determined by situations and that temporal aspects of situations and primary activity are of importance, an instrument measuring time-use seemed appropriate. Several time-budget instruments are compared: observations, activity checklists and time-budget diaries. Diaries appear to be highly reliable and valid instruments to measure time-use. To measure timing and duration of activities and acts in large populations, diaries are the only viable method.

However, time-budget diaries have never been used before to record alcohol-use. With regard to time-use and the use of alcohol, measures recording actual behavior in a short recent period

appear to yield the most valid and reliable results. Some measures of actual drinking behavior are described: the weekly recall or retrospective diary, the time-line method, the last occasions method and the alcohol diary. The time budget diary combines the advantages of these methods. It does not require respondents to summarize their behavior. It offers respondents a frame (time and activity) for memorizing drinking and the time between the actual behavior and recording it is one day at the most. Furthermore, the diary provides detailed information about the circumstances (activity, time) in which drinking occurs. It enables the examination of the extent to which such circumstances occur in everyday life without drinking taking place. Thus the 'normality' of drinking in specific circumstances can be assessed.

The data used in this study were acquired by means of a time-budget survey (n=916) performed in 1985. A national random sample of respondents (16-70 years) were asked to record their primary activity and use of beverages during seven consecutive days. For every quarter of an hour an entry in the diary was made. Data were gathered in several periods spread over the year. The response rate was 72%.

In chapter three the social drinking habits of the Dutch population are described. First a graph of the number of drinkers per hour was constructed. Based on this graph three periods in the day were distinguished: Mornings (06.00hrs to 14.00hrs), Afternoons (14.00hrs to 20.00hrs) and Evenings (20.00hrs to 06.00hrs). Drinking was considered to be normal only during periods in which more than 5% of the population actually drink. For each period and for men and women separately, the activities with which drinking may be considered socially appropriate were determined. All activities with which at least 1% of the population reported alcohol-use during a specific period were considered as circumstances defining normal drinking occasions. For all possible normal drinking occasions the probability that drinking occurs was computed as the number of drinkers in specific circumstances (day, time and activity) divided by the number of people participating in these circumstances. Occasions only differing in the day of the week, thus not in time of day, primary activity and probability of drinking, were considered as drinking behavior in the same typical drinking situation.

For men 60 and for women 34 different drinking situations were defined. The characteristics of these situations were used to describe the social drinking habits in the Dutch population.

In the Netherlands drinking is more common in the evening than in the afternoon. Drinking in the morning is only common on Sunday. Drinking is also more common on weekenddays than on weekdays. Temporal variations in the 'normality' of drinking result in more activities combined with drinking that are located in the evenings or in weekenddays. These temporal variations are also reflected in higher probabilities of drinking with specific activities in the evening as compared to the afternoon or on weekenddays as compared to weekdays. Since probability is computed for participants in drinking situations only, patterns in time-use do not determine these temporal patterns in the probability that drinking occurs. With regard to drinking Sunday evening does not belong to the 'wet' weekend. Sunday evening does not differ from the evenings of Monday through Thursday. The 'drinking weekend' starts on Friday evening and ends on Sunday afternoon. Activities characterized by high probabilities that drinking occurs are visiting public drinking places and visiting friends or relatives on Friday or Saturday evening. There are no activities with which no drinking at all occurs.

Based on the probability of alcohol consumption three categories of drinking situations were defined: Dry situations ($.05 \leq p \leq .20$), medium situations ($.20 < p < .50$) and wet situations ($p \geq .50$). A fourth category of drinking behavior covers all consumption that does not occur in drinking situations, namely abnormal drinking.

Two hypotheses were formulated with regard to differences between drinkers. The first hypothesis states that differences between light, moderate and heavy drinkers are only of a quantitative nature. Though heavy drinkers use more alcohol, differences between them and light or moderate drinkers should be the same in all kinds of drinking situations. The second hypothesis supposes qualitative differences between drinkers. Heavy drinkers drink more in specific situations or drink in other situations than light or moderate drinkers. These hypotheses were tested by comparing the drinking behavior of light, moderate and heavy drinkers within the four different categories of drinking situations. Per category of drinking situations frequency of drinking, quantity per occasion, number of drinkers and the share of the consumption within that category in the total consumption were computed. Differences between light, moderate and heavy drinkers appear to be both of a quantitative and a qualitative nature. Heavy drinkers drink more often and more within all categories of drinking situations. The differences between heavy, moderate and light drinkers are most pronounced within the dry drinking situations in which probability that drinking occurs is low. It was concluded that heavy drinkers add new (dry) situations to their individual range of drinking situations. Intensified drinking leads to or is a result of a broader range of situations in which the drinker considers alcohol-use to be appropriate.

Since there are many normal drinking situations in the Netherlands, heavy drinking can not easily be detected. Heavy drinkers can easily restrict their drinking to socially acceptable drinking situations. The detection of heavy drinking is even more difficult because differences in drinking behavior within drinking situations (quantity per occasion) are small (statistically not significant) and because drinking in inappropriate situations (situations in which almost nobody drinks) is not uncommon. More than half of the population (men and women) drink in an inappropriate situation at least once during the diary week.

In chapter four, relations between roles and drinking as presented in the literature are examined. Hypotheses are formulated, variables are made operational and techniques of analysis are described.

A model describing the way in which alcohol-use is realized is presented. The correlation between opportunity to drink and consumption is central in this model. Factors influencing opportunity to drink should be distinguished from factors influencing the intensity of drinking given the opportunity.

The alcohol-literature and literature on time-use were the basis for a set of hypotheses about relations between positional and status roles and opportunity and intensity of drinking.

Opportunity to drink was measured as the *time spent in drinking situations*. It was supposed that structuring positional roles (work, partner, parent) reduce the time spent in drinking situations (hypothesis 1). It was also supposed that work should specifically reduce the time spent in dry situations (hypothesis 2), since these situations are mainly located on working times. When controlling for positional roles some influence of status roles on *opportunity to drink* will remain (hypothesis 3). Furthermore the assumption was posed that the more time people spend in drinking situations, the higher their alcohol consumption will be (hypothesis 4). This relation

between opportunity and consumption should be stronger in situations that are characterized by a higher probability that drinking occurs (hypothesis 5).

These first five hypotheses represent the general class of 'leisure-time' hypotheses as reported in alcohol-literature. Another generally used class of hypotheses explaining differences in drinking behavior are the so called 'stress hypotheses'. This kind of explanation presupposes higher alcohol consumption as a result of intensified drinking (for example as a result of stress or tensions). In the literature no reports of measures of opportunity to drink were found. Thus it cannot be determined whether differences in consumption are the result of differences in opportunity or differences in intensity. In this study the difference between opportunity and intensity was made.

It was supposed that the proportion of drinking participants in drinking situation should be higher in categories of respondents lacking structuring positional roles (hypothesis 6). Also, the intensity of drinking should be higher in those categories of the population (hypothesis 7). Based on differences between heavy, moderate and light drinkers and differences between men and women as described in chapter three, it was supposed that relations between intensity of drinking and roles should be most pronounced in dry situations (hypothesis 8 and 9). Also status roles should be related to intensity of drinking and proportion of drinking participants (hypotheses 10 and 11).

If there are general effects of roles on opportunity and intensity this should also be reflected in relations between roles and the distribution of light, medium and heavy drinkers. It was supposed that in categories of the population lacking structuring roles there would be relatively more heavy drinkers (hypothesis 12) and less people that do not drink during the diary week (hypothesis 14). Status roles will also be related to the distribution of non-drinkers, light, moderate and heavy drinkers in the population (hypotheses 13 and 15).

Hypotheses 1 through 10 were tested by means of logit and multiple regression analyses. The logit analyses were used to analyze the effect of roles on the number of drinking participants in drinking situations. The multiple regression analyses were used to analyze relations between roles and opportunity to drink, relations between opportunity and consumption and relations between roles and consumption controlling for opportunity (intensity). Because there is a curve-linear relation between alcohol-use and age and because positional roles are not evenly distributed across the different sex and age categories, all logit- and multiple regression analyses were performed separately in different categories of respondents defined by sex and age.

Relations between roles and the distribution of non-drinkers, light moderate and heavy drinkers (hypotheses 12 through 15) were analyzed by means of chi-square tests.

In chapter five results of the analyses with regard to opportunity to drink and the relation between opportunity and consumption are presented.

The general hypothesis that structuring roles are negatively related to opportunity to drink can not be confirmed in all cases. Work is indeed negatively related to the time men (≤ 24 , 25-54) and women (25-55) spend in dry situations and the time men (25-54) spend in medium situations. However, young working men spend more time in dry situation than their age companions that go to school or college. Older housewives spend more time in medium situations than the other older women. Partner is positively related to the time men (25-54) spend in medium situations but at the same time this role is negatively related to the time these men spend in wet situations. Among men the total time spent in drinking situations is not

related to the role of partner. Among older women, those with a partner spend less time in medium drinking situations.

Although, in none of the categories of drinking situations significant relations were found among men, taking care of little children is negatively related to the total time men between 25 and 54 years old spend in drinking situations. Young women taking care of little children on average spend more time in dry situations. Women between 25 and 54 years old with little children spend less time in medium situations than their age companions who do not have little children. Both among men and women status role variables did explain some of the variance in exposure to drinking situations after controlling for positional roles (hypothesis 3). Social class was negatively related to the time middle-aged men spend in dry situations but positively related to the time they spend in wet situations. Among women social class was negatively related to the time spent in dry situations (≤ 24) and medium situations (≤ 24 and $24-54$). Protestantism is negatively related to time spent in drinking situations. Indirectly through positive effects of no religion on the time spent in wet situations (men 25-54) or Roman-Catholicism on the time spent in medium (men 55-64) and wet situations (men ≥ 65). Directly through negative relation between Protestantism and the time women spend in wet situations (≤ 24) or medium situations (25-54).

Exposition to drinking situations is positively related to consumption in those situations (hypothesis 4). The more time people spend in drinking situations, the higher their alcohol-consumption in those situations. With the exception of the younger women, the strength of this correlation increases with the wetness of the situations. In some cases no correlations were found. This can be explained either by the small number of drinkers (older men and women) or by the assumption that alcohol-use is not a prominent behavioral option in dry situations (men ≤ 24 and 55-64) and thus time spent in these situations is not significantly related to the consumption in these situations. Also the total time spent in drinking situations is moderately related to total consumption within drinking situations.

In chapter six, results of analyses concerning relations between roles and intensity of drinking are described. Drinking was made operational in three ways: as the number of drinking participant in categories of drinking situations, as the consumption of drinkers within categories of drinking situations and as the total consumption-level during the diary week.

Work (men ≤ 24) and having a partner (men (25-54) are positively related to the proportion of drinking participants in dry and medium situations. Among young women work is positively related to the consumption in wet situations. Also the proportion of drinking working women (25-54) in medium situations is higher than that among housewives of this age.

The role of partner is positively related to the proportion of drinking participants in dry situations and in wet situations (men 25-54). Among women (25-54) the role of partner is positively related to the proportion of drinkers in dry situations.

Thus all results are contrary to the expectation formulated in hypothesis 6. The proportion of drinking participants in drinking is higher in categories of the population with structuring roles. Status roles do explain some of the variance in the proportion of drinking participants in drinking situations after controlling for positional roles (hypothesis 10). Among Protestant men, the proportion of drinking participants in dry situations is relatively low. Among women the proportion of drinking participants is relatively high among those without a religious

denomination. Social class is positively related to the proportion of drinking participants in wet situations (men 25-54 and 55-64) and dry situations (women 25-54).

Hypothesis 7 must be rejected in several cases. Relations between roles and consumption after controlling for exposition were interpreted as relations between roles and intensity of drinking. Work is positively related to the intensity of drinking of younger men (medium situations) and men between 25 and 54 (dry situations). Also among women between 25 and 54 the consumption in dry situation controlled for exposition is positively related to work. The role of partner is negatively related to intensity of drinking in dry situations (men 55-64).

Hypothesis 11 supposes relations between status roles and intensity of drinking, after controlling for exposition and positional roles. Social class is indeed positively related to the consumption in wet situations (men 25-54). It is negatively related to the intensity of drinking in wet situations among women 25 between 54 years old. Among younger women (≤ 24) social class is negatively related to total controlled consumption.

Religion is also related to intensity of drinking. Intensity of drinking is lower among Protestants. This can be concluded from the negative effect of Protestantism on the consumption in medium situations (men ≤ 24 , 25-54) or dry situations (women ≤ 24) and the positive effects of no religion on the consumption of women between 25 and 54 in dry situations.

Though there are relations between roles and consumption, the variable explaining most of the variance in consumption in drinking situations is the exposition to these situations. Specifically in wet situations, almost no effects of roles on the consumption remain after controlling for exposition. This confirms hypothesis 9.

The third way in which drinking was made operational was through the total consumption-level in the diary week. The population can be divided in non-drinkers, light, moderate and heavy drinkers. Among working men and men with partners, as compared to those lacking these structuring roles, relatively more heavy and less light drinkers or non-drinkers were found. In the male population the proportion of light drinkers is largest in the category without any structuring roles.

Thus also hypothesis 12 and 14 have to be rejected. There are no negative relations between structuring roles and consumption level during the diary week. The only status role variable significantly related to the distribution of light, moderate and heavy drinkers was age. Among the middle-aged (35-44, 45-54) relatively more heavy and less light drinkers were found. Among the young (≤ 24) and the old (≥ 65) relatively more light and less heavy drinkers were found. The number of people that do not drink during the diary week is also relatively high among the younger and the older men.

With regard to social class and religion no significant relations with total consumption level were detected. Hypotheses 13 and 15 must be rejected.

Chapter seven contains a summary of this study as well as some general conclusions and remarks.

It is argued that the likelihood of drinking within drinking situations, is probably stronger related to the meaning social actors give to these situations than to the objective characteristics of these situations. Furthermore, it is concluded that only through studies into the meanings of situations the large number of different drinking situations as described in this study, may be reduced to fewer typical drinking situations without running the risk of oversimplifying the social drinking

habits in the Netherlands.

An important conclusion of this study is that there are few general effects of roles on drinking. Influences of roles on opportunity to drink must be distinguished from influences on intensity of drinking and effects of roles on opportunity or intensity within different categories of drinking situations must also be distinguished.

In contrast to generally held expectations, structuring roles (work, partner) seem to be positively related to intensity of drinking in drinking situations. With regard to the positive effects of work on intensity of drinking in dry situations, it is argued that these situations may be experienced more as leisure time by workers than by (especially long-term) unemployed people. The positive effects of unemployment on drinking as (sometimes) reported in the literature probably are more a coincidental result of differences in time-use than a result of tensions, stress or lack of structure in everyday life.

Positive effects of the role of partner were found in situations that are mainly family/home oriented. Having a partner seems to be more of a risk than a protection against drinking in situations like watching television in the evening or social contacts with family members.

A general population sample as large as the one used in this study is not really suited for studying relations between drinking and structuring roles. The relative number of unemployed in the population is too small while variations of positional roles across age-categories are too large. Oversampling of different categories of non-working people and restricting the population to specific age categories (preferably 25-55) as well as measuring social meanings of drinking situations will probably enable more thorough conclusions.

Finally, possible future development and effects of changes in time-use on drinking are described. Several authors predict that in the future, people will work less and time will be organized more flexibly. It is highly likely that a prolonged weekend, by an extra day off per week or per two weeks, will lead to heavier drinking. If extra free days are spread across the week, they will not be experienced the same way and effects on drinking will be probably be less rigorous. Flexible temporal organization of everyday life will result in less strict norms or expectations regarding appropriate (drinking) behavior. Whether this will lead to more or less alcohol consumption remains unclear. With regard to these questions, studies on the way people give meaning to social situations, especially in reference to drinking, might provide very useful information.