



A survey of drinking behavior among Montana State University students and the potential for problems with alcohol : implications for counseling services, alcohol education, and student personnel services
by Robert John Fleming

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Montana State University

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of selected family, peer, and personal factors influencing the use of alcohol by college students. These sociological and psychological factors were conceptually considered in terms of their possible influence on the respondents' observable drinking behaviors and his or her non-observable attitudes considered in the context of various components of alienation.

A review of literature revealed that the drinking behaviors of college students were essentially a group phenomenon, that even though virtually all collegians drink they nevertheless do so in moderation, and that their drinking practices mirrored, to some extent, those of their parents. Little literature was found regarding alienation and student drinking. The literature reviewed linked alienation with various personality factors but had little to say about its development and maintenance.

The results of this study indicated that the drinking behaviors of college students were influenced by those of their parents and their friends. This study also indicated that students' drinking practices were influenced by their personal experience of alienation.

Some of the major conclusions reached were that: (1) parents drinking behaviors were powerful shapers of those of their children; (2) maternal problem drinking was shown to be associated with the alienation component, normlessness; (3) peer drinking behaviors influenced those of the respondent; (4) peers were "selected," in part, according to their similarity of values with those of the respondents; (5) selected reference group factors were shown to have associations with the several elements of alienation; and (6) the respondent's level of alienation was shown to have associations with his or her quantity and frequency of drinking, age at onset of drinking, and potential for problems with alcohol.

Some of the recommendations offered were: (1) that alcohol and drug education include sociological and psychological material in addition to physiological and pharmacological information; (2) that future research efforts study the differences between male and female drinking practices; (3) that the effects of parental problem drinking on children be investigated; (4) that the origins, development, maintenance, and effects of alienation be examined in depth as it concerns drinking practices; and (6) that people in the "helping professions" be given opportunities to learn about problem drinking.

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STUDENT PERSONNEL SERVICES

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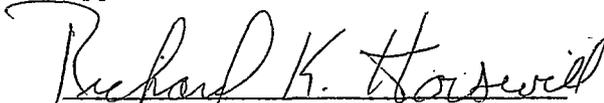
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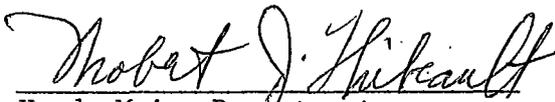
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Mary - "I'm back."

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of selected family, peer, and personal factors influencing the use of alcohol by college students. These sociological and psychological factors were conceptually considered in terms of their possible influence on the respondents' observable drinking behaviors and his or her non-observable attitudes considered in the context of various components of alienation.

A review of literature revealed that the drinking behaviors of college students were essentially a group phenomenon, that even though virtually all collegians drink they nevertheless do so in moderation, and that their drinking practices mirrored, to some extent, those of their parents. Little literature was found regarding alienation and student drinking. The literature reviewed linked alienation with various personality factors but had little to say about its development and maintenance.

The results of this study indicated that the drinking behaviors of college students were influenced by those of their parents and their friends. This study also indicated that students' drinking practices were influenced by their personal experience of alienation.

Some of the major conclusions reached were that: (1) parents drinking behaviors were powerful shapers of those of their children; (2) maternal problem drinking was shown to be associated with the alienation component, normlessness; (3) peer drinking behaviors influenced those of the respondent; (4) peers were "selected," in part, according to their similarity of values with those of the respondents; (5) selected reference group factors were shown to have associations with the several elements of alienation; and (6) the respondent's level of alienation was shown to have associations with his or her quantity and frequency of drinking, age at onset of drinking, and potential for problems with alcohol.

Some of the recommendations offered were: (1) that alcohol and drug education include sociological and psychological material in addition to physiological and pharmacological information; (2) that future research efforts study the differences between male and female drinking practices; (3) that the effects of parental problem drinking on children be investigated; (4) that the origins, development, maintenance, and effects of alienation be examined in depth as it concerns drinking practices; and (6) that people in the "helping professions" be given opportunities to learn about problem drinking.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

George Maddox, commenting on the attitudes and feelings of Americans concerning alcohol use, makes this observation:

Americans seem unable to take drinking for granted, as an aspect of life to be enjoyed graciously or ignored. We talk a lot about drinking. Drinkers frequently feel they must explain why they drink as much or as little as they do. Abstainers seem compelled to justify their behavior, as though it mattered, or to mask their abstinence by the appearance of drinking. Drinking in our society is far from incidental behavior which follows incidentally and naturally when good friends get together; the prospect of having a few drinks is as likely, if not more likely, to be the occasion for getting together (Maddox, 1970:13).

The history of alcohol in the United States is a fascinating portrait of shifting attitudes, feelings, and trends. Contemporary attitudes and feelings about alcohol are the product of our historical ambivalence. Harry S. Warner, a contributor to Maddox's anthology, presents a history of collegiate drinking in America. According to Warner, collegiate drinking is a "vivid cross-section of the prevailing attitudes, customs, and trends at different periods" in the history of American drinking (Maddox, 1970:45).

This history Warner outlines demonstrates the shifting trends in attitudes toward alcohol in this country. Just prior to the Revolutionary War collegiate drinking was an accepted part of college life. Collegiate drinking practices were influenced largely by English, French, and German university traditions. Somewhere between the 1780's and 1800's the seeds of pietism had been sown, finding roots in

the next couple of decades in early temperance and abolitionist movements. By the 1840's and 50's, temperance had gained enough support so that total abstinence was the goal and legal enforcement the proposed means. Legal prohibition was attempted by various states in the 1850's and again in the 1880's. Each time legislation was significantly modified or repealed, the third wave of prohibitionist sentiment culminating in national prohibition. By 1933 the Eighteenth Amendment had been repealed. Warner points out that at each point in this history of alcohol use in the United States, student attitudes accurately reflected those of the larger society. Warner provides several examples to demonstrate this. In a 1926 study of various social issues, it was found that 77 per cent of the college students surveyed felt that the Eighteenth Amendment should be rigidly enforced. The same study showed that 69 per cent of the students surveyed felt that the Eighteenth Amendment should not be repealed (Maddox, 1970:58).

That American attitudes and feelings are confused and ambivalent is amply demonstrated by an historical review of the temperance movement. Commenting on American education, Bacon and Jones say: "The history of public school instruction about alcohol is closely related to the development of the temperance movement (Bacon and Jones, 1968: 126)." Discussing contemporary alcohol education, Bacon and Jones observe:

The present trend is all in the direction of a more objective approach based on new physiological knowledge, and great strides

in this direction have been made. But it is difficult to eliminate entirely the old aura of propaganda; the material presented is still largely concerned with the pharmacological effects of alcohol and the dangers of drinking. The total message communicated to young people has continued to be, clearly and simply, "Don't drink"--hardly an adequate message in a society in which two thirds of the adult population do drink (Bacon and Jones, 1968:127).

Alcohol education is required in the schools of every state in the Union. In most instances, as Bacon and Jones point out, the predetermined goal of such instruction is abstinence. Often alcohol education is not integrated into the larger educational program. University courses in alcohol and drug education are generally more adequate, partly because instructors have substantially more training. Yet they too suffer from educational materials that stress pharmacological, physiological and psychological considerations (Milgram, 1975:419). Plaut comments on this point when he says:

While factual information about the nature of alcohol and its effects on the human body should be made available to youngsters, this alone is not adequate alcohol education. Behavior in relation to alcohol, for young people as well as adults, involves attitudes, values, and feelings (Plaut, 1967:155).

In fact, alcohol education has often utilized scare techniques (Fort, 1973:146). Guest lecturers are frequently former addicts, drug policemen, or physicians. Media presentations often dramatize the harmful effect of alcohol on tissues or psyche. "One must question also the effectiveness of any one-dimensional scare technique," writes Fort (1973:146).

Realizing the historical background from which present alcohol

education has grown, the legal requirements of alcohol education, and the currently limited modes of teaching alcohol education, Plaut says:

Alcohol education should come in many different parts of the school curriculum. Alcohol use and alcohol problems can be discussed in relation to a great many subjects--chemistry, social studies, English, history, biology, and health education (1968: 156).

Alcohol education tends to focus attention on the pharmacological effects of alcohol and, implicitly, the dangers of drinking. College students are in a period of transition between adolescence and adulthood and need information not only about the effects of the drug, but other kinds of practical information as well. College and high school students alike are moving, year by year, away from parental influence toward other sources of influence. Drinking in college is primarily a social function. Students are intensely interested in the drinking behaviors of their peers partly because they have conflicting feelings about alcohol and its use. Yet, alcohol education seldom provides an opportunity to learn about the sociology of alcohol (Milgram, 1975:419).

Attitudes toward the use of alcohol have been changing since the early 1930's. Educationally we are more willing, perhaps, to offer an expanded form of alcohol education. Another significant move toward open-minded concern with alcohol problems is the comprehensive alcohol abuse and Alcoholism Prevention and Rehabilitation Act of 1970. This Act is directed toward primary prevention of alcohol problems and

treatment of existing problems. Part of this Act provides for the training of professionals for treatment of problem drinkers. This Act also provides for the development of expanded treatment facilities. Alcoholism and related problems are massive. In the United States, as many as nine million persons are problem drinkers. In discussing the effects of alcoholism on the family, Fort says, "It is estimated that at least four other persons are directly affected by each alcoholic in the United States (Fort, 1973:115)." Alcohol problems certainly do not need exaggeration; they are large enough when perceived realistically.

The need for counselors in particular, and teachers in general, to have some basic knowledge about alcoholism is suggested by Kammeier. In her study, "Adolescents from Families With and Without Alcohol Problems," she found that adolescents from alcoholic homes experience adolescent conflicts more intensely, tend to be absent from school more frequently, and show distressed family and social relationships (Kammeier, 1971:368). An understanding of parental influences on these students would be invaluable for teachers, counselors, and administrators.

Warner outlined a history of collegiate drinking from pre-revolutionary America to the 1940's. He suggested that collegiate drinking was a reflection of the prevailing attitudes and feelings of the larger society (Maddox, 1970:45). If this is true, the immediate

question that springs to mind is, "what is student drinking reflecting at this point in time?" College students live in a time where inter-generational communication appears strained, where the struggle for a personal identity is intensified, and where society is changing almost exponentially. Collegiate drinking may, therefore, reflect a deepening sense of alienation current among American young people.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem for this dissertation has been to investigate the role of selected family, peer, and personal factors influencing the use of alcohol by college students. The context within which this problem was placed included sociological, psychological, historical, and educational considerations. This context suggested that the direct as well as indirect influence of selected family and peer factors on student drinking be investigated. The factors selected were chosen because they appeared to have a direct correlation to student drinking and an indirect influence as well. The direct influences of some of these factors have been examined in other research. The indirect influence of these same factors have not. In this study, these indirect influences were examined from the point of view that they exert their influence by helping to shape the student's perceptions of himself, as well as his attitudes toward life.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

Contemporary American society is exceedingly complex. This complexity is a product of such factors as mass and instantaneous communication, unmatched industrialization, almost unlimited opportunities for education, and unprecedented mobility. These and other factors contribute to a rapidity of social change no other society has experienced. Two byproducts of these factors are stress and alienation.

Alcoholism is our nation's third largest health problem and our biggest drug problem. In terms of the number of deaths per year, alcoholism is outranked only by heart and vascular disease and by various forms of cancer. Some research is beginning to find connections between stress and coronary disease and cancer. It is becoming increasingly obvious that alcohol and various prescription drugs, most notably the tranquilizers, are being used in great quantities to cope with stress.

Along with tranquilizers such as librium, thorazine, and others, these account for about 20 percent of all doctor's prescriptions. Somewhere in the vicinity of 200,000 pounds of prescribed and black market stimulant drugs, such as amphetamines, are manufactured each year in the United States. It is, therefore, safe to estimate that as many as 35 million Americans use either a stimulant or a sedative-tranquilizer drug, and sometimes both (Fort, 1973:74).

The magnitude of drug use is clearly evident. It is estimated that approximately half the population of the United States are users of alcohol and that of those approximately nine million are problem

drinkers (Fort, 1973:66). Estimates regarding college students suggest that 90 per cent use alcohol (Fort, 1973:67).

This study was prompted partly by our need for area-relevant sociological information regarding collegiate use of alcohol, and by our need to examine the role of family, peer, and personal factors influencing that use.

Alienation is a relatively recent phenomenon. The literature of collegiate drinking has not focused a great deal of attention on this factor. This study has attempted to determine if alienation is in fact a relevant variable at this point in time.

GENERAL QUESTIONS EXAMINED

Some questions considered in this study were:

1. What influences do selected family variables exert on student drinking?
2. What influences do selected peer variables exert on student drinking?
3. What influences do selected personal variables exert on a student's drinking?
4. What are some of the drinking behaviors of Montana State University students?

Some of the questions in the review of literature have been:

1. How does the social milieu affect contemporary student

drinking?

2. How do family background factors interact with reference group and personal factors?
3. What is the scope of alcohol use and alcohol related problems in this country?
4. How can alcohol education be improved?
5. What are some general collegiate drinking practices?
6. What are some indicators of problem drinking?
7. How are the children of problem drinkers affected?
8. What are some commonly held but erroneous beliefs about drinking?

GENERAL PROCEDURES

The procedures followed in this study were:

1. For the purposes of this study, a specification of family, peer, and personal factors of possible influence in the development of student drinking behaviors was made.
2. The researcher examined a wide variety of literature oriented toward developing an understanding of problem drinking and related issues. Particular attention was focused on theoretical considerations concerning the etiology of problem drinking. The author made an extensive and thorough review of the literature specifically pertaining to collegiate drinking. Throughout the review of literature

the writer sought to determine how family, peer, and personal factors interacted with one another.

3. A questionnaire was developed and submitted to a randomly selected sample of all full-time Montana State University students enrolled during the Winter Quarter of 1976. The questionnaire obtained information concerning family, peer, and personal drinking practices, indicators of potential problems with alcohol, and a measure of alienation.

4. Results have been discussed and recommendations have been made which, it is hoped, will prove helpful to persons interested in alcohol education, counselors, and researchers.

LIMITATIONS

This study is limited in the following ways:

1. All the data of this study were obtained by means of a mailed questionnaire. Corollaries of this limitation include:
(a) the likelihood that students with potential drinking problems would either discard the questionnaire or respond defensively; (b) the fact that other means of obtaining potentially significant data were not attempted; and (c) the data obtained concerning family and peer drinking behaviors required a subjective judgment by the respondent.
2. This study has focused its attention exclusively upon selected variables thought to influence the personal drinking behaviors

of the respondents. Other factors not considered may be influential as well.

3. There is a dearth of research in the field of alcohol studies specifically concerning alienation as a contributing factor to personal drinking behaviors. This part of the present study is theoretical and untested.

4. The majority of sources used in the development of this paper were obtained from the Montana State University Library, a personal library containing approximately twenty titles dealing with problem drinking, and other libraries by means of inter-library loans.

5. Only Montana State University students were sampled in this study. To generalize the findings of this study to college students as a whole or to Americans in general is unwarranted.

6. This study is not longitudinal. For the purposes of this study, the assumption was made that potential or actual problems with alcohol could be accurately predicted by means of selected screening questions obtained from other sources.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

For the purposes of this dissertation, certain terms have been considered in the following context.

Alienation. Five components of alienation are identified: powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, social isolation, and

self-estrangement. Melvin Seeman defines each of these components. Powerlessness can be thought of "as the expectancy or probability held by the individual that his own behavior cannot determine the occurrence of the outcomes, or reinforcements he seeks (Seeman, 1959:784)." Meaninglessness is "when the individual is unclear as to what he ought to believe--when the individual's minimal standards for clarity in decision-making are not met (Seeman, 1959:786)." Normlessness for the individual "denotes a situation in which the social norms regulating individual conduct have broken down or are no longer effective as rules for behavior (Seeman, 1959:787)." Social isolation refers to the individuals who "assign low reward value to goals or beliefs that are typically highly valued in the given society (Seeman, 1959:789)." Self-estrangement "means to be something less than one might ideally be," other-directed, dependent upon others for self-validation (Seeman, 1959:790).

Alcoholism. ". . . excessive use of the drug (alcohol) to an extent that measurably impairs the person's health, social functioning, or vocational adjustment (Fort, 1973:7)."

"An alcoholic is someone whose drinking causes a continuing problem in any department of his life (Mann, 1950:66)."

SUMMARY

The fundamental question posed for this dissertation has been, "How are selected family, peer, and personal factors reflected in an individual's drinking behaviors?" In order to provide some insights into this basic question, the present study has assumed, in agreement with Maddox, that "collegians stand out in the social portrait of our society as a vivid cross-section of prevailing attitudes, customs, and trends (Maddox, 1970:21)." It is argued that collegians are socially very visible, partly because they are the source of future leaders, and partly because they are in a period of transition. In a sense this time of transition provides a dispensation from traditional ways of thinking and behaving. But along with this liberty to question and experiment is the task of searching for a personal identity. The combination of freedom on the one hand and imperative on the other exists in a state of tension which establishes collegians as very sensitive monitors of the sometimes subtle currents alive in the larger society. If students are particularly sensitive social barometers, if their struggle for a personal identity is intense, and if exponential social change is a fact, then the expectation that alienation is a contemporary contributor to personal drinking behaviors is warranted.

This study has attempted to determine if alienation, in combination with selected family and peer factors, is a contributor to the development of personal drinking behaviors. It is hoped that the

insights garnered from this study will prove immediately useful to alcohol educators and counselors as well.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The field of alcohol studies is like an ecosystem; one is led almost involuntarily to study elements that at first seemed unimportant, irrelevant, or uninteresting. However, as in an ecosystem, to gain an understanding of the field requires a willingness to explore the complex interrelationships that exist between the various factors in operation. This chapter will attempt to explore some of the major elements relevant to understanding the factors which influence the attitudes and behaviors of college students regarding the use of alcohol.

The beginning section of this chapter will discuss some of the statistics that reflect the scope of alcohol related issues. The second section will focus discussion on the social environment of college students. In the third section, discussion will focus on the influences of family and reference groups on student drinking. With a shift of attention from essentially sociological considerations, the fourth section will focus discussion on the influences of self-concept and alienation on student drinking. Flowing from the preceding sections the fifth section will comment on indicators of problem drinking or potential problem drinking. The final section of this chapter will briefly discuss some of the "mythology" of college student drinking.

THE SCOPE OF ALCOHOL RELATED ISSUES

There seems to be a subtle implication whenever alcohol related statistics are discussed that in some essential way alcohol is an "evil." This, perhaps, is a product of our American ambivalence toward alcohol with its roots deeply set in Puritanism and the Temperance Movement. There are significant problems associated with the use of alcohol, but to condemn alcohol is to fall to the temptation of simplistic thinking. A sense of perspective must be maintained in order to avoid this subtle temptation. This perspective must include a sense of social dynamics, a sense of historical perspective, and a sense of psychological-emotional understanding.

The Need for Perspective

To be more specific, these statistics must be viewed from a vantage point that recognizes the tremendous pressures that Americans experience in a culture that is changing with alarming speed. Every segment of American society is fraught with the stresses that rapid social change produce. This factor suggests a rationale for the expanded use of alcohol as a means of coping with stress. Perspective, regarding the use of alcohol, must also include a realization that this country, unlike many others, has no clear set of traditions governing the use of alcohol. This factor in itself helps to provide a basis for understanding our national ambivalence toward alcohol. A third

factor in maintaining a sense of perspective involves an appreciation for the kinds of psychological considerations that help to make sense out of the phenomenon of alcohol abuse. The apparently unintelligible behavior of alcoholics begins to make sense when various psychological factors, such as stress, are understood.

Economic and Social Costs of
Alcohol Misuse

In the beginning pages of an anthology of articles on collegiate drinking, George Maddox makes this comment:

Alcohol-related problems do not need exaggeration; even conservative estimates of overdrinking and drinking abuses in our society suggest a serious and disturbing situation. The seriousness of some common problems among drinkers surely concerns all thoughtful people, drinkers and abstainers alike (1970:15).

It is estimated that 90 to 100 million Americans use alcohol, roughly 50 per cent of the population of this country. Estimates of the numbers of problem drinkers range from five to nine million.

These statistics are not based on a head count, but represent an estimate computed from a formula developed by the late E. M. Jellinek. The critical variable in this formula is death because of cirrhosis of the liver, a common but indirect result of prolonged excessive drinking (Blane, 1968:11).

Blane continues by saying that based on this formula estimates reveal that for every five or six-and-a-half male alcoholics, there is one female alcoholic. This estimate may be misleading so far as female drug problems may be concerned. It does not adequately reflect the more essential fact that alcohol is not the only drug in the United

States that is abused. According to Fort (1973:74), as many as 35 million Americans use either a stimulant or a tranquilizer drug or both. Barbiturates, sedatives, and tranquilizers account for about 20 per cent of all doctors' prescriptions. In a sometimes overly dramatic account of female alcoholism, Patricia Kent (1967:63) comments that "Well over half, in fact almost eighty percent, of all alcoholics coming to A.A. or to alcoholic treatment hospitals for help are addicted to pills as well as to alcohol." Kent continues by suggesting that drugs, whether alcohol or tranquilizers, are interchangeable. They appear to be serving the same function: coping with stress, fear, anxiety, loneliness, depression, and self-hate.

With these comments in mind, it easily can be seen that estimates of alcoholism are not adequate as a reflection of the scope of drug-related problems in the United States. Perhaps the real issue is not alcohol abuse or other drug abuse but something much deeper. Kent says that "Alcoholism, very simply, is individual reaction to stress (1967:3)." Perhaps the more essential problems involve factors within our national value system that encourage the extreme rapidity of social change. That contemporary American society is changing with staggering rapidity goes without saying. However, it is essential to note that larger social factors are not the only reasons for alcohol abuse. These factors will be discussed in other sections of this chapter.

Issues involving alcohol can be viewed from an economic

perspective as well. For example, alcohol related injuries account for an estimated 800,000 accidents costing approximately \$8 billion annually (Fort, 1973:108). In our labor force of approximately 83 million, perhaps 5 per cent are problem drinkers. The cost resulting from alcoholism among the labor force is estimated to be between three and six billion dollars annually (Fort, 1973:117). Perhaps half of the five million annual arrests for all crimes are arrests for public drunkenness. These arrests cost as much as \$250 million per year to process (Fort, 1973:113).

Factors demonstrating the scope of problems associated with alcohol suggest other kinds of social costs. For example, it is estimated that of 120,000 "accidental" deaths in this country perhaps 70 per cent are associated with the use of alcohol (Fort, 1973:107). However, when suicide is correlated with cirrhosis of the liver, a theoretical rationale is established suggesting a link between "accidental" deaths related to alcohol and self-destructive behavior (Roberts, 1975:164).

A second example of other than economic costs of alcohol misuse focuses on the numbers of persons institutionalized for mental and emotional reasons.

It is now believed that 50 percent of first admissions, and 40 percent of all admissions to state mental hospitals are alcohol related, with between 10 and 20 percent of the long-term patients in such hospitals institutionalized because of permanent organic psychosis from alcohol. This has increased about 20 percent within the past decade (Fort, 1973:111).

Commenting on the fact that alcohol is the nation's number one drug problem, Girdano and Girdano (1972:35) suggest that on the average each alcoholic or serious problem drinker affects the lives of four family members and more than sixteen friends and associates.

Family conflicts ranging from verbal abuse to physical assault, runaways or disappearances of a parent or child, separations, accidental or suicidal death, disabling illness, and up to 70 percent or more of our 500,000 annual divorces involve the use and abuse of alcohol (Fort, 1973:115).

These statistics are impressive but reflect only a fraction of the costs of alcohol-related problems. Some of the statistics noted suggest the emotional costs that appear in terms of divorce, separation, family disorganization, suicide, incarcerations, mental illness, and death. Somehow statistics do not convey the depth of suffering that alcoholism and alcohol-related problems create. How can the loss of respect one spouse experiences for the chemically dependent spouse be measured? How can the insecurity and confusion of children from alcoholic homes be gauged? How can the pain of resentment and bitterness be assessed? How can self-reproach and self-doubt of everyone involved with a problem drinker be quantified? How can a number be affixed to the guilt, self-hate, and suffering the alcoholic experiences? These questions do not require an answer, only a realization that these emotional costs are high and painful.

Attitudes and Alcohol Education

The last consideration demonstrating the scope of alcohol-related problems centers on alcohol education and attitudes toward alcoholism.

Neither education nor treatment has really been tried in the United States. Despite laws in practically every state requiring alcohol and tobacco education, there has been only token adherence to these and even less understanding of their spirit. With the extraordinary national attention being given to drugs other than alcohol, we will end up with even less time and quality for alcohol education unless special effort is made (Fort, 1973:145).

The scope of alcohol-related problems is not limited to economic or emotional costs; it includes attitudes that do not encourage the understanding of deeper issues that are at the root of the problem. It is interesting to note that while practically one-fourth of our population is in some way affected by alcoholism, only about \$39 million in federal research money is granted for the study of the problem (Fort, 1973:144). This hardly seems adequate when the enormity of the problem is considered.

In a sense alcohol and drug education in this country reflects our primary values regarding alcohol. Alcohol and drug education in the United States tends to suffer from temperance and prohibitionist attitudes. Milgram analyzed 832 pieces of alcohol education materials for use in all levels of education and for consumption by the general public. The main concepts discussed in much of the literature reviewed by Milgram concerned alcoholism and the effects of alcoholism almost

to the exclusion of sociological considerations of interest and importance to students. Milgram comments, "Considering the importance of drinking and the interest in drinking by teen-agers, as well as the position of alcohol education at this time, the proportion of the materials devoted to teen-age drinking is surprisingly small (Milgram, 1975: 419)."

Robert D. Russell, in an article appearing in Maddox's collection of literature pertaining to collegiate drinking, comments in reference to an approach to alcohol education that does not begin with a predetermined conclusion of abstinence, that:

This educational approach encourages health education about alcohol to include the effects of alcohol on the physical body and its physiological processes (immediate and long range); its effects on learning, on various emotions and motivations, and on the development of self-concept; its social uses, effects on human relationships, and the sociological consequences of its use. Here learners begin to see, in the dynamic, how one choice may favor maximum physical well-being, but at the expense of social acceptance; that when another choice is made social well-being may come at the expense of a completely clear conscience, etc. Well-being is not automatically guaranteed by any particular decision. Abstinence is thus not the predestined condition for good total health--but neither is drinking a necessity. "The answer" is not determined before study begins, and hence the possibility of real learning taking place is much increased (Maddox, 1970:439).

Russell's point is well taken and reflects not only a deep appreciation for the complexities of alcohol studies but the basic fact that negativistic teaching about alcohol and drugs is not effective. The study of alcohol-related issues is broad enough to excite the imagination of almost anyone, yet our educational attempts are based

largely on subtle injunctions against the use of alcohol. Perhaps a multidisciplinary approach to alcohol studies would be more interesting, useful, and effective than our current emphasis on pharmacological and physiological factors.

THE SOCIAL MILIEU OF THE COLLEGE STUDENT

The social environment of college students is a complex mixture of values, attitudes, beliefs, expectations, and behaviors. The role of the college student, especially the undergraduate student, is an ambiguous one at best. At times the student is expected, and expects, to be an adult. At other times, the college student is viewed, and views himself, as an adolescent. The college student, in some sense, exists in a state of limbo between adolescence and adulthood. In a sense, during the time when a college student is pursuing his studies he is also postponing his adulthood.

The drinking customs or practices of college students are, to some extent, a response to the dominant culture, as well as the cultural milieu of the college environment. The interactions between the dominant culture and the student subculture are complex and often lead to confusion, animosity, and misunderstanding. This is especially true with regard to the use of alcohol by college students. In a literal sense, college students are similar to any other minority. The larger society, in its effort to make sense of the role of college student,

places more stress on some elements of that role than do the persons playing that role, the result being a discrepancy in role definition. The role definition of the larger society tends to emphasize study, learning, and preparation for adult responsibilities, whereas the emphasis of some segments of the student population is in the direction of social learning. This dichotomy of role definitions illustrates an important point: that even within the student population the use of alcohol means different things to different groups. Therefore, what is considered appropriate drinking behavior is defined differently by not only the larger society but by different groups within the student subculture. The drinking practices of students must, therefore, be viewed from a student's perspective if they are to be understood.

These vague and sometimes conflicting attitudes and expectations regarding the use of alcohol by students is more easily, and perhaps more accurately, understood from a developmental perspective. College students, perhaps more than young people of the same age not attending college, are in the latter stages of a transition from the normative abstinence of youth to the normative occasional use of alcohol as adults. Park substantiates this point of view when he says, "Drinking among young adults, such as college students, by and large represents beginning stages of drinking careers and, in extreme cases, incipient phases of what will eventually become alcoholism (1967:473)." It is important to keep this in mind because of the temptation to view

"non-adult" drinkers as deviant or less well integrated personalities (Maddox, 1966:856).

Nowlis has a great deal to say regarding the ambiguity and confusion that college students experience. She discusses, for example, the transition from adolescence to adulthood, the development of a set of values by which one can live, the evolution of an identity, the stress placed upon achievement, the impersonal quality of college bureaucracy, and the sense of a promise not kept (Nowlis, 1969:21-22). These elements are a point of contact between the social milieu of the college student and the concept of alienation to be discussed in another section. The essential point is that for the college student, perhaps more than an age-mate not attending college, this period of time is a transition, a time when self-concept is in the final stages of polishing, and a time when separation from family begins in earnest.

The concept of a developmental transition is helpful in understanding various drinking practices of college students. Various social contexts existing within the collegiate environment may be viewed as socializing mechanisms. The fraternity, for example, is such a mechanism. Gusfield, in discussing the socializing function of campus groups, comments:

The drinking behavior of the student may be partially attributed to his response to the norms and values of the fraternity or non-fraternity cultures. Upon entering college the student may be exposed to a number of potential structures, each of which may exert an influence upon his behavior: the college religious groups, via chapel, the college drama interests,

the athletic teams and the fraternities are instances of the possible structures which are part of the (college) social organization. Some of them never become available to some students, who may not be motivated to enter into them. Those structures which do become accessible to a student and to which he becomes affiliated may be seen as his absorptive structures. They absorb his loyalty, his commitment, and his activities. To them he refers his behavior for approval or disapproval (Gusfield, 1961:432).

Each of the possible "absorptive structures" to which a student might commit himself or identify with has norms regarding the use of alcohol. These norms will be reflected in quantity and frequency of consumption, preferred locations for drinking, reasons or purposes for drinking, and attitudes toward alcohol. To the extent that these groups exist over time, they develop traditions and values regarding various activities, drinking being one of them. Those groups, fraternities for example, that persist over long periods of time without disintegrating when portions of the membership change, would be expected to have the most strongly developed traditions and values. Those students who seek to identify with a given fraternity will be reinforced for behaving in traditionally accepted ways and punished in some manner for behavior not considered appropriate. The same will hold true for all social groupings. The more enduring a group is over time, the more likely that membership will be highly valued, that specific demands for commitment will be made, and the more likely that the group will have great influence upon its members. These factors will be discussed in greater detail in the following

section. Suffice it to say that the groups to which one commits himself will exert a strong influence on his decisions regarding the use of alcohol.

In addition to the developmental tasks that college students must negotiate, and the various socializing mechanisms available to students, there are also academic structures that students must be involved with. These academic structures such as classes, fields of study, the academic year, and professors all contribute to the shape of a student's world. Jessor, Carman, and Grossman, in an article on student needs and drinking patterns, comment on two primary needs:

Within the college environment a large variety of needs or motivations are involved in the goals toward which students strive. Two goals, however, seem to be of pervasive importance: the goal of academic achievement or recognition, and the goal of social affection or interpersonal liking (1968:102).

With the expectation of academic achievement comes the possibility of failure. With the hope for social success comes the possibility of dissatisfaction and rejection. For some, the possibility of failure provides the motivation for misuse of alcohol.

The social environment of the campus community and the academic expectations of collegiate life, in addition to the period of transition the college student must live within, are factors of the social milieu that shape the attitudes and behaviors of college students regarding the use of alcohol. To discuss these factors apart from one another gives a false picture. An example reveals that the collegiate

environment is not simply an intellectual enterprise but a social one as well. Students come into contact with other students, professors, new ideas, possibly a new geographical location, and new expectations. The student not only meets new people and ideas; he must also make difficult decisions about his future. The essential point is that the social milieu of the college student is one of change, decision, transition, and new social and intellectual influences.

PATTERNS OF ALCOHOL USE AMONG STUDENTS AND INFLUENCING FACTORS

An understanding of the social context of the college student can provide a framework within which drinking in college may be accurately understood. This section will build on what has been offered by focusing attention on the influences of family and reference groups.

The Influence of Reference Groups

Perhaps the single most significant observation that can be made regarding student use of alcohol is that it is almost exclusively a group phenomenon. Commenting on this observation, Everett M. Rogers says:

It may be said at the outset that the drinking of alcoholic beverages by college students is a social behavior. The typical student seldom drinks in isolation. He drinks at parties and in other situations where other people are present. Alcohol containing beverages are regarded as social media and the decision whether to drink or abstain is influenced by the various groups whose expectations are important to the individual (1958:244).

The ambiguous nature of a student's place in the larger society and his need for a personal identity combine to make the student's reference group extremely important to him. The reference group performs a normative function for the student by establishing what are in their collective opinion desirable goals, worthwhile values, appropriate behaviors, and realistic attitudes. The group becomes the standard against which the student evaluates himself. A reference group's influence is not limited to its members alone but to those non-members who aspire to membership. An interesting finding by Rogers (1958:253) is that students belonging to several groups whose attitudes toward alcohol differ resolve the discord by either conforming to the norms of one group and rejecting the others', or by compromising the cross-pressures in some way.

The importance of students' reference groups can hardly be denied. A wealth of information points to this conclusion. In an article by Gusfield (1961:441) on "The Structural Context of Student Drinking," attention is focused on the socializing function of campus groups. It is Gusfield's contention that the values, expectations, and aspirations of campus social groups reflect those of segments of the larger society. Gusfield (1961:428) questions the validity of the concept of a college culture existing independently of the larger culture. If, Gusfield argues, a college culture did exist, one would expect to see a common college drinking pattern. This, Gusfield

suggests, does not appear to exist. His contention is that the selection and entrance into various campus social groups is largely influenced by one's prior social class. There are, according to Gusfield (1961:429), selective mechanisms operating in all campus groups which govern the entrance into those groups in such a way as to influence the fit of campus social groups and the larger community from which the aspiring member comes. Regarding the use of alcohol by college students, the more significant influences remain those of family socio-economic status, religious affiliation, and ethnic background. The very same values, expectations, and behaviors are reflected in the various campus social groups with which students might identify.

That the college campus is without unique subcultural peculiarities and that students are not affected by these factors is not entirely accurate. It is indeed tempting to reduce the attitudes and behaviors of college students, anyone for that matter, to the environmental influences of early childhood and the family. To fall prey to this temptation is to deny sociological considerations involving peer pressure, the conception of college years as a period of transition, and the influence of new social environments. Perhaps a distinctly unique college subculture does not exist; the point, however, is that the college experience itself is unique, contributing something to the socialization of the individual.

Gusfield, in commenting on the deficiency of research and

theoretical evidence supporting the existence of a campus culture, says:

The most definitive study of college drinking, that by Straus and Bacon, was unable to discover a common "college drinking pattern." Based on their study of 27 colleges, these investigators concluded that background variables of religion, economic status, family drinking habits and ethnic affiliation were more closely related to the student's drinking habits than were facts of college residence. Either "college culture" was a myth or the hard shell of home and community breeding was impervious to change (Gusfield, 1961:428).

A brief quotation from Straus and Bacon may put the issue in a clearer perspective.

Our survey brought out clearly the relative significance, in molding behavior, of cultural forces as opposed to individual determination. The closest correlations of individual behavior with the cultural norms of social groups were seen in the matter of drinking or not drinking, and in the attitude toward drinking. Factors of family behavior and attitude, religious and ethnic tradition, and economic status all showed a marked and consistent relationship to student behavior and attitude.

Among the drinkers, correlations with sociocultural phenomena were sometimes high, as in the male-female patterns; sometimes not so high, as in the case of choice of beverage and frequency of drinking. The cultural impact was still clear, but often less decisive than in the case of drinking or abstaining.

Among that small proportion who may be called potential problem drinkers most of the correlations with sociocultural factors fell sharply, and individuality was most pronounced.

Perception of drinking as a custom, rather than a biological phenomenon, a matter of individual choice, or an activity determined by some immediate situation, will facilitate understanding the problems which attend it and planning realistically to meet them (Straus and Bacon, 1953:197-198).

The Influence of Family Factors

Straus and Bacon do not simply say that family background considerations are the most significant in all cases. What they appear to be suggesting is that, regarding the decision to drink or not to

drink, the individual's family background is important. Interestingly enough, Straus and Bacon appear to recommend that drinking be understood as a custom since to do so would facilitate a deeper understanding of the issues involved.

The Straus and Bacon study found that family income was indeed related to whether one drank or not, but in an unexpected way. "A student is more likely to have consumed alcoholic beverages if his family income is high, more likely to be an abstainer if his (or particularly her) family income is relatively low (Straus and Bacon, 1953:50)." In discussing the influences of religious identification and ethnic background, Straus and Bacon (1953:54) observe that both considerations influence the probability that a student will use alcohol. For example, if the use of alcohol is a part of their religious and ethnic tradition, students are likely to drink. They conclude, however, the reverse is also true, that factors associated with religious affiliation are more significant than those associated with ethnic background.

Parental drinking practices are another factor related to one's decision to use alcohol. For example, when both parents use alcohol, 92 per cent of the men and 83 per cent of the women students use alcohol. However, when both parents abstain, only 58 per cent of the men and 23 per cent of the women use alcohol. Apparently parental example is quite important regarding one's decision to use alcohol or

not. Interestingly, it appears that parental behavior influences women more than men (Straus and Bacon, 1953:56).

The socio-economic environment of the student's background influences his drinking behavior in unexpected ways. The level of education one's parents have is such a factor. For example, whether one's father is well educated seems to be less significant than if one's mother is well educated. Straus and Bacon found that of those students whose fathers had only an elementary school education 36 per cent abstained from alcohol while 64 per cent used alcohol. If, on the other hand, one's father had one or more years of college, the number of abstainers dropped only 6 per cent. When a student's mother had only an elementary school education, 68 per cent of the students surveyed were abstainers while 32 per cent used alcohol. Again, if a student's mother had at least one year of college, the number of students who abstained dropped by 30 per cent, from 68 per cent to 38 per cent (Straus and Bacon, 1953:79).

To simply report that families have a great influence on students' attitudes and behaviors regarding the use of alcohol is insufficient. E. David Burk (1972:191), in an article discussing the impact of parental alcoholism on children, suggests that observational learning is of primary importance. Burk defines identification as model-choice and imitation as model-like behaviors. "No-trial learning" or observational learning may not be exhibited for a long time but may

nevertheless be expressed when the appropriate opportunity presents itself. Vicarious learning may include attitudes in addition to specific behaviors. Burk, in commenting on these learnings, says, "The children of alcoholics, I believe, learn complex patterns of behavior from their parents that provide a preset series of responses that may be readily available in their own adult life when faced with stress (1972:195)." Clause Steiner's book, Games Alcoholics Play: The Analysis of Life Scripts, provides a detailed discussion, from a Transactional Analysis point of view, of these subtle learnings. Commenting on the significance of the childhood home of the alcoholic or future alcoholic, Steiner suggests, in agreement with Burk, that the early home environment of the alcoholic was characterized by a prevalence of certain situations conducive to the development of an alcoholic life script or pattern (Steiner, 1971:xviii). The entire book is devoted to an explanation of Transaction Analysis Theory, the characteristics of the alcoholic's childhood home environment, and the mechanics of script development.

If Gusfield represents a position stressing parental influence, then Haer would appear to represent a position emphasizing the influence of reference groups. In a study of the influence of friends and family on drinking patterns, Haer found that:

One general conclusion which may be drawn from this analysis is that drinking patterns of individuals conform more closely to those of their contemporaries, friends or spouse, than those of members of the previous generation. This finding, which certainly is not unexpected in a dynamic society, seems to imply that

friendship cliques and the primary family constitute reference groups of great significance in regard to drinking norms and behavior (Haer, 1955:184).

In the only category in Haer's study that overlaps with Gusfield, namely education, Haer found that with higher levels of education drinking behavior tends to conform with friends, then spouse, then father, and finally with mother. These findings are dissimilar to those of both Gusfield and Straus and Bacon.

Mechanisms of Influence

To conclude that various family factors are the more fundamental determinants of one's attitudes and behaviors regarding alcohol is inviting but probably inaccurate. Alexander and Campbell have investigated consensus and mutual attraction in adolescent drinking groups. Their work is an effort to understand, from a balance theory point of view, the mechanisms through which members of a group influence one another. In an article by Alexander, balance theory is briefly defined:

It is reasoned that the necessities of adjustment to the environment require that some degree of perceptual consistency--consistent and stable attitudes and orientations--be maintained with regard to it. The socialized human organism comes to depend upon agreement with others in establishing and maintaining stable attitudes toward himself, others, and non-person objects (which may be norms, values, or any cognitive unit) in the environment. Thus, the theory postulates that an uncomfortable psychological condition, "strain" (tension, stress, etc.), results from a perceived disparity between one's own attitude and an attitude attributed to an attractive other with respect to an important object of perceived common relevance (Alexander, 1964:395).

An essential point in Alexander's definition is that of

perceived support from significant persons regarding self, attitudes, values, or any other meaning structure. It is important to note that balance theory as defined here is as applicable to the family group as any other reference group. Commenting on factors in operation in a balance theory of consensus, Alexander states:

The strength of forces toward balance varies directly with (1) the degree of positive attraction among group members, (2) the importance (valence) of the object, (3) the extent to which attitudes toward the object are of common relevance, and (4) the extent of actual disagreement that exists concerning the object. Reduction of these forces may occur through reduction of any or all of these four variables (Alexander, 1964:396).

The fundamental postulate of balance theory is that individuals do not exist independently of one another but seek support and affirmation of themselves, their values, and their behaviors from persons they consider significant. Comment was made earlier about the role of compromise between the influences of various reference groups on individuals. E. Rogers, in discussing this point in an article regarding reference group influences, comments, "Individuals who are located in a situation where the influences from two normative reference groups operate as cross pressures seem to compromise their behavior for both groups (Rogers, 1958:252)."

That reference groups are significant factors in one's decision to use alcohol is demonstrated when the impact of close friends is considered. When close friends drink, 89 per cent of the male college students drink, and 79 per cent of the women drink. However, when

close friends abstain, 16 per cent of the men and only 5 per cent of the women drink (Straus and Bacon, 1953:57).

Within the college environment itself, various factors are in operation influencing the likelihood of one's use of alcohol. Drinking increases each year from freshman to senior. According to Straus and Bacon, 69 per cent of the male freshmen and 46 per cent of the female freshmen use alcohol. By the time they are seniors, 87 per cent of the men and 77 per cent of the women use alcohol (Straus and Bacon, 1953:55). This finding is certainly to be expected since with each advancing year the likelihood of experimentation increases, the ever closer approximation of adult norms becomes evident, and the imitation of peers becomes more probable.

Alexander and Campbell hypothesize that the more drinking friends a drinker has the more likely he will be to use alcohol frequently. They hypothesize also that non-drinkers are more likely to try alcohol if they experience some social pressure to drink and as the number of companions who drink increases. In testing these hypotheses, Alexander and Campbell found that 23 per cent of their respondents with no drinking friends drank with their parents. On the other hand, they found that 43 per cent of their respondents drank if they had two friends who drank. They found too that if a non-drinker had no drinking friends, 60 per cent reported that they had experienced some pressure to drink, with one drinking friend 64 per cent reported pressure, and

if they had two friends who drank, 68 per cent reported encouragement to drink (Alexander and Campbell, 1967:448). These findings suggest that as a student remains in the social environment of the campus he is increasingly likely to encounter and develop friendships with other students who drink, thus increasing the probability that he will experience pressure to drink himself.

The findings of Alexander and Campbell regarding balance theory and reference group influence is given greater validity by the work of Jessor, Carman, and Grossman. They comment that:

Within the college environment a large variety of needs or motivations are involved in the goals toward which students strive. Two goals, however, seem to be of pervasive importance: the goal of academic achievement or recognition, and the goal of social affection or interpersonal liking (Jessor, Carman, and Grossman, 1968:102).

Though the work of Jessor, et al, was directed more toward an investigation of pre-problem drinkers among college students, the results, in addition to indicating support for their hypotheses, indicate that social goals of affection and recognition are very important to college students. The satisfaction of social needs and the forces postulated in balance theory suggest that drinking is indeed influenced by reference groups.

General Findings Regarding Student Use of Alcohol

Straus and Bacon developed a Quantity-Frequency Index to gauge the amount of alcohol consumed by college students. This index for men

consisted of five levels of consumption ranging from infrequent drinking of once a month at most and small quantities, to several times each week with medium or large amounts consumed. The index for women consisted of two levels of consumption ranging from infrequent drinking of small amounts to several times per month with medium to large quantities consumed. The rationale for one index for men and another for women is not expressed directly by Straus and Bacon. However, the implication appears to suggest that since male drinking behavior is more heterogeneous than that of women, a more sensitive screening device is necessary (Straus and Bacon, 1953:105).

Straus and Bacon used this Quantity-Frequency Index as a conceptual tool to facilitate thinking about the correlations between the extent of alcohol use and various other factors. The variables Straus and Bacon considered were age, drinking by parents, family income, sex of drinking companions, beverage preferences, religion and nationality, times drunk, special stress placed on drinking, social complications, and attitudes toward the extent to which women of college age should drink.

In concluding the chapter on the extent of drinking by college students, Straus and Bacon summarized:

Findings on amounts consumed and frequency of drinking indicate clearly that stereotypes of college drinking which include notions of widespread, frequent, and heavy drinking are unrealistic. The proportion of students who drink frequently and heavily is very small (Straus and Bacon, 1953:116).

