

4. Basically, if you want to fit in, you've got to drink": Understanding the Experiences of Non-Drinking and Light-Drinking Students at University

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Presentation: 15.42 – 15.52



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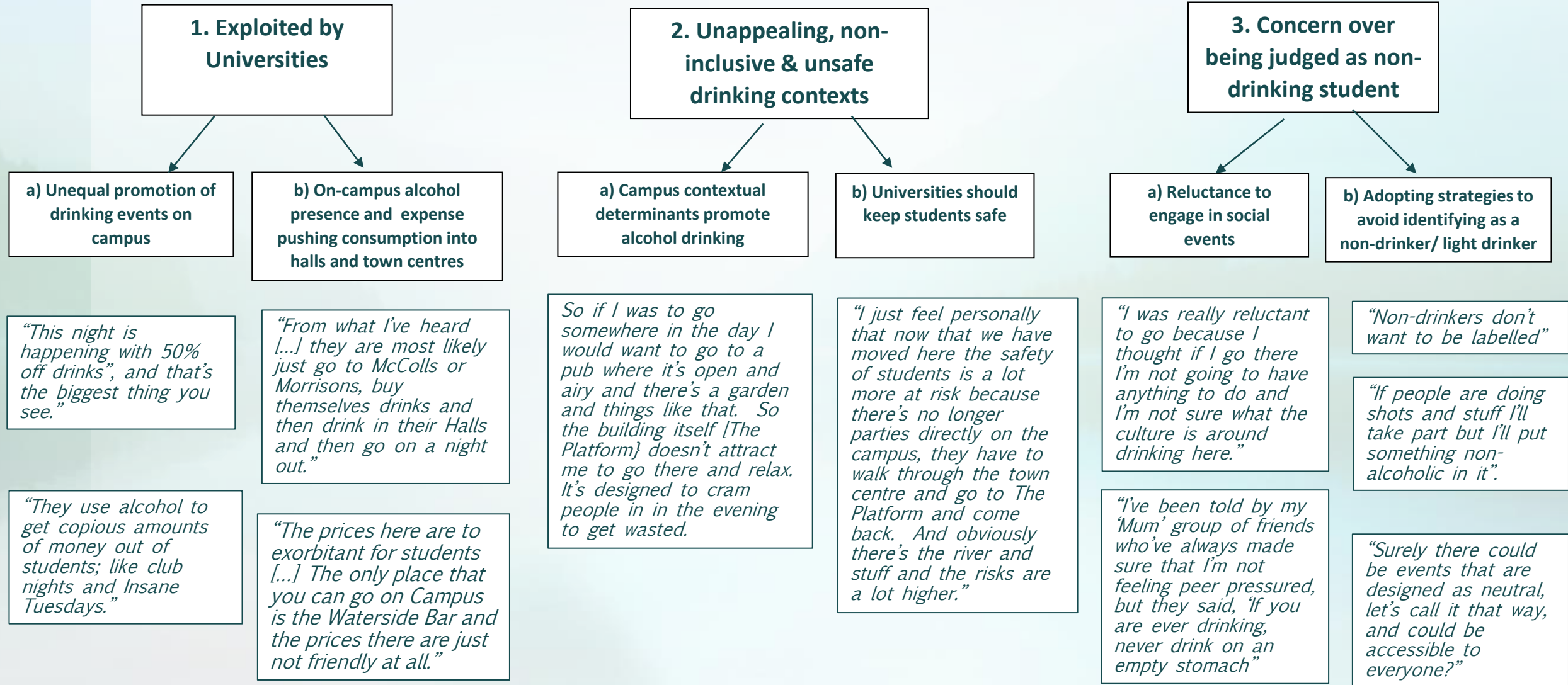


Background

- Alcohol misuse harms well-documented^{1,2}, but continued focus on alcohol misuse prevention not related social practices/ performances.
- Most UK young adults drink, but emerging pattern of non-drinkers³, particularly within student body⁴.
- Drinking participation and non-participation has great implications for identity, inclusion and social-cultural practices.
- Excessive consumption viewed as part of university culture and many experience difficulties as part of their non-drinking status⁵.
- Need to tackle ‘cultures of intoxication’, make universities more inclusive⁶.
- **Methods:** Student-led: 2019, 2 semi-structured focus groups with UG UoN students (N=10, AUDIT: 5 light 5 non-drinkers, 6 M, 4 F, 21-26 yrs), Thematic analysis.

University drinking cultures

"I have heard stuff about the University drinking [...] Those expectations that this is what uni is all about."



Implications and Conclusions

- Research to focus on a range of drinking behaviours, not just preventing alcohol misuse.
- Alcohol an important part of university life, with participation and non-participation important for students.
- Universities key in constructing inclusive, safe and responsible campus cultures which reflect the diversity of the student body.
- Importance of social events and belonging for students, at a time when lifetime behaviours are created, reinforced and have a lasting influence.
- Students as partners: putting students at front and centre of research and enhancing student voice.
- Joined up approach required in tackling perceived drinking cultures – university marketing, Welcome Week, Student's Union events, halls of residence, off-campus alcogenic environments.

References

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