IDENTIFYING HEALTHY ALCOHOL CUSTOMS: A CULTURAL

ANALYSIS COMPARING THE ITALIAN AND AMERICAN

ALCOHOL CULTURES

An Honors Fellows Thesis

by

CINDY M. WILLIAMS

Submitted to the Honors Programs Office
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the designation as

HONORS UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH FELLOW

April 2011

Major: University Studies

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Approved by:

Research Advisor: Edward Funkhouser
Associate Director of the Honors Programs Office: Dave A. Louis

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ABSTRACT

Identifying Healthy Alcohol Customs: A Cultural Analysis Comparing the Italian and
American Alcohol Cultures. (April 2011)

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This research utilizes the methodology of qualitative research to investigate the drinking

habits and culture of two countries: Italy and the United States. The thesis highlights

statistical evidence provided by the two individual countries indicating Italy's ability to

limit the probability for unhealthy drinking habits that lead to issues such as drunkenness

or alcoholism. Comparison of these data prompted this research. The research aims to

highlight the underlying cultural values that lead to the drinking habits of each

population in hopes that one culture may learn from another. Five individuals were

interviewed from each country (the first five from a small Tuscan town in Italy, the other

five from a small town in the Southern Bible Belt of the United States) with a pre-

established questionnaire which asked about their nation's cultural habits and own

drinking philosophies. The individuals from each country counter-acted with individuals

from the other country and represented different levels of society being comprised of: a

male mayor, a male bar manager, a female professor, a female faculty member originally

from another country, and an 18 year old girl. The interviews found that among other

factors already discussed in literature, the cultures differed on their level of perceived community connectivity and their perceived role of alcoholic drinks. The Italian's collective mindset seems to result in a healthier relation to others and to alcohol in Italy compared to the American individualist mindset. Also, Italy's role of alcohol as a beverage enjoyed for its taste at a meal seems to suggest a relation to alcohol inhibiting the likelihood of falling into alcoholism rather than the young American's aim to use alcohol as a means of intoxication.

DEDICATION

I would like to thank my family, friends and God for the support and love throughout my research. Specifically, I would like to thank my parents for encouraging me to push forward, never letting me forget how proud they are. I would also like to acknowledge the loving guidance of my oldest sister, Dr. Christi Hemati. She offered a listening ear, an empathetic heart, and a professional, advising tongue to drive me towards my goals. I would further like to acknowledge my best friend, Amber Wilmeth, for taking the time to ask me about my progress and to remind me of the value of my work. Another major advocate, my mentor Angie Dickey, who unintentionally impacted my life in our biweekly meetings, helped me advance through this work with her constant search for updates on my progress and her consistent emphasis that such big projects as this can be only approached as one approaches life, one day at a time. A special thanks to my roommate, Alex Cumpton, for helping keep the house a quiet place to study and to my friend, Katie Ingram for reminding me about the Lord's promises. This brings me to my final and greatest recognition of Jesus Christ who is my Lord and Savior. To Him be all the credit who manifests all the good things I accomplish. For as it says in Romans 8:37, "In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us."

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would first and foremost like to acknowledge the guidance of my research advisor, Dr. Edward Funkhouser. Our weekly meetings motivated me to stay on top of my research and dive into the development of my work, especially in the face of solving many problems. With his direction, seeking solutions to the typical problems of research became less daunting and very much attainable. I thank him for not turning my research into his own work and allowing me to take on my own explorations in my research. His supervision did not strive to take on too much control, but rather empowered me to take on the leadership of my own work. Also, with his own initiative to learn from my interests and my research, I was uplifted to believe in my own abilities as not just a subordinate student but as a fellow researcher who can offer my own legitimate insight to the discovery of knowledge. He has remained dedicated even through his own life challenges and I am very thankful. His help from the beginning of my research in Italy through till the end of my thesis has been monumental.

Along with Dr. Funkhouser, I would also like to recognize those in the Honors Office who have encouraged me in my achievement. Dr. Dave Louis, who has been a leader to the entire fellows group, has played a major role in simplifying the research process for us so as to lessen the intimidation of accomplishing an entire senior thesis. His smile and consoling attitude telling us, "You can do it," always lifted our spirits. Also, I want to thank the advisors in the office who helped me attain my dream major during my stay at

NOMENCLATURE

AA	Alcoholics Anonymous
B/CS	Bryan/College Station
CHD	Coronary Heart Disease
Istat	Italy's Institute of National Statistics
SAMHSA	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Many people have struggles with alcohol abuse and alcohol dependency throughout

history. Recent changes in economy, culture, and technology has dramatically increased

the availability of alcohol, the popularity for large alcohol consumption by individuals,

and the desire to use alcohol as a medicating substance to cope with stress. These trends

have thus propelled the prevalence of alcoholism among many Western nations. The

consequences of this disease are long term and lethal for many individuals, families, and

societies (McLellan & Meyers, 2004; Minkoff, 1989; O'Brien, 1994; Tims, 2001; Wesa

2004). "Slow suicide" is the term often heard when referring to the realistic danger

alcoholism can cause. To allow this bio-psycho-social disease to dominate our future

generations is a threat to our growth as individuals, as families, as communities, and as

nations. Alcohol consumption rates have resulted in the prevalence of alcohol

dependency and so, maintaining alcohol consumption rates at a stable level is a global

priority.

High alcohol consumption rates have significantly contributed to many types of global

health issues which puts research for the purpose of understanding drinking behaviors

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This thesis follows the style of *Drugs: Education, Prevention and Policy*.

and pinpointing healthy drinking lifestyles at the forefront of our exploratory endeavors. Apart from the resulting presence of alcoholism, alcohol consumption brings about social problems affecting not only the drinker but also the community at large (Room, Graham, Rehm, Jernigan, & Monteiro, 2003). As much as each individual must decide their own drinking habit, the consequences of those decisions affect everyone around them. Thus, as Room, et. al. suggest, "alcohol consumption is a major factor for the global burden of disease and should be considered a public health priority globally, regionally, and nationally for the vast majority of countries" (2003).

Being a global health concern, research must thus explore alcohol consumption issues at the international level. Illuminating culture norms, governmental legislation, and community influences that guide local alcohol cultures will help to distinguish those interactive forces that result in different alcohol cultures around the world. Identifying and examining various alcohol cultures helps to recognize healthy drinking habits and what influential factors attributed to these healthy lifestyles. Hence, as an increasingly interactive world, international research offers a way for each nation to learn from the trial and errors of other nations in order to collectively progress towards a healthier way of life.

Research already completed for the topic of alcohol consumption is varied. A global comparison of national policy considerations and options has been evaluated finding that volume of consumption is a major factor in the prevalence of harms from drinking

(Room, Graham, Rehm, Jernigan, & Monteiro, 2003). Different national alcohol control policies across Europe have been assessed and scaled as to their effectiveness (Karlsson & Österberg, 2007). Similarly, different policies within our own country have been evaluated as to their effectiveness (Wechsler, Lee, Nelson, & Kuo, 2002; Wechsler, Kelley, 2000; Paschall, Mallie, Paschall, Mallie, 2009; Wagenaar, 1994). We have seen how the volume of consumption and different drinking habits has contributed to the burden of disease (Room, et al., 2003; Rehm, Room, Graham, Monteiro, Gmel, & Sempos, 2003; Bondy, 1996). We have seen how trends of alcohol trade and production have contributed to consumption rates (Lehto, 1997; Walsh, 1997; Godlee, 2009). Researchers have looked into the cost-effectiveness of alcohol prevention programs (Holder, 1997). Even individual demographics and socioeconomic correlations to alcohol consumption have been analyzed (Diala, Muntaner, & Walrath, 2004). But as much as each country has analyzed its own cultural and historical drinking habits, a qualitative study assessing the community involvement and attitudes towards drinking has not been conducted so that we may compare cultural influences of drinking behaviors of different nations.

The specific research conducted, to gain better understanding of what appropriate cultural relations with alcohol would include, used an international study experience to understand how alcohol consumption is treated in another nation. The research committed to conduct qualitative research by asking individuals in the community how they and others in their community relate to alcohol so that the underlying cultural

values in connection with drinking could be identified. The nation chosen for this past research was included among the leading Western nations and so had many similar cultural elements as a fellow industrialized nation. The nation chosen also had a unique connection to alcohol considering it plays a key factor in their economy. The nation chosen was Italy. During the study abroad experience in spring of 2010, research was conducted around the local Tuscan town. The data from this research will be used in the current study.

In light of the research conducted in Italy, I propose to conduct a parallel qualitative research in America. Considering the limited funding and time available for this research, our American study will be limited to interviewing individuals who live in local cities located in the Southern "Bible belt" of the United States. Therefore, conducting qualitative research instead of quantitative is necessary considering lack of resources and the importance of understanding each culture in its true, living nature rather in a laboratory setting. Utilizing the human faculty as our primary tool, we can seek a full comprehension of the varying elements personally important to each citizen as they represent their unique culture. Considering the cultural aspects this study will be examining, there will be some cultural bias. This is not to dismiss the importance of this study. Understanding cultural trends can help identify underlying cultural values and how they influence our society. Learning from another Western culture trend can also help distinguish different cultural values between Western nations and how they have produced the effecting alcohol cultures. Considering the excessive alcohol consumption

rates in America, observing other cultures with long standing alcohol customs resulting in admirable communities would help us to recognize harmful cultural values. Knowing our destructive customs would further aid us to discover possible ways to address these issues.

Since current government statistics indicate alcohol abuse to be an exponentially prevalent problem in America as compared to Italy, statistical methods will be studied to illuminate further cultural differences. How each nation conducts its studies, what parameters and definitions are used, and the results found are huge indicators of cultural differences. These differences will further help to illuminate the issue at hand and clarify how each nation is approaching drinking habits and alcohol prevention within their country differently. Exploration of historical elements influencing each culture's perception of alcohol coupled with sociological backgrounds will further elucidate how each nation's government and people will observe drinking issues within their own community.

Another aspect influencing each culture is the entire workings of each political system as well as economic system. If one is to understand the underpinnings of culture in order to rehabilitate not just the alcohol drinker, but rather the entire society's relation with alcohol, one must fully evaluate the sociological elements grounding that society. In understanding the elements of one culture that advocate constructive customs leading to

a healthy relation with alcohol, we can begin to integrate such practices into our own culture.

Considering the cultural differences found between the American and Italian cultures, I expect a community based culture such as Italy's to produce a healthier approach to social health. Communication and social wellbeing would be aided by communities advocating awareness of societal issues, connectivity with others, consideration of others' issues, and mutual supporting relationships. This type of community based culture could have implications for others areas beyond social health such as mental health and physical health. I also expect the multigenerational, family-based communities found in Italy to prove healthier than a typical American community encouraging its citizens to seek the ideal of individuality and independence. The implications of this research may advance Americans to challenge their own perceived value of complete independence in order to promote the healthy kinship a communal environment can offer.

This study hopes to address some of the main questions that would help guide our evaluations of cultural standards and how they influence its citizens. For instance, what are some differences in culture that could account for the current situation in each nation? In evaluating these differences, we can gain an understanding of what cultural elements have benefited each country and which elements have been to the detriment of the society. Another question to consider is with respect to alcohol, what is the status of

healthiness in lifestyles as seen in America as opposed to Italy? This helps to identify to what extent each culture is managing the cultural dynamics to influence a healthy drinking practices. The intention is to investigate these cultural differences while maintaining a focus on the varying philosophies and social theories of alcohol abuse and alcohol addiction.

Some cultures naturally encourage more alcohol consumption and so could possibly encourage its citizens to overindulge in these substances. We want to illuminate how the people feel about their own alcohol culture so that we may use social theories to understand what underlying social values are represented by the various participants' responses. Identifying these underlying values in turn, can help current theorists understand some of the metaphysical aspects of alcohol abuse, especially abuse that leads to a high probability of alcohol addiction. If findings show that one nation is more prone to alcohol addiction because of its alcohol culture then that would help to understand some key factors influencing the prominence of alcoholism. While this study will not be able to provide all answers, this research begins the search to discover why alcohol abuse takes place, how does this affect the prominence of addiction, what is culture's role in the encouragement or discouragement of these trends, and how can individuals encourage its citizens to effect change that would reduce the abuse of alcohol or the prominence of alcoholism.

My objective is to conduct qualitative research that investigates the current alcohol culture as perceived by Americans. Examining how a segment of Americans perceive their alcohol culture will help to understand underlying cultural values and trends that have led to our current habits and distinguish us apart from other Western nations. This study's aim to evaluate cultural implications of how Americans perceive their alcohol culture and compare these findings to the results of the research conducted in Italy. My goal is to assess these differences to see how underlying cultural values and trends play into the effecting alcohol cultures and what can be learned to be healthier customs when approaching alcohol in our society.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

To begin the study at hand, a brief review of literature is needed. First, recent alcohol studies will be outlined and discussed so as to reveal what current scientific research already knows about alcohol's effect on communities and cultures. The extent to which alcohol has been a burden to societies will be addressed as well as theorize how the prominence of alcohol and certain drinking habits may affect members of society inclined towards alcoholism and their loved ones. Additionally, positive aspects of alcohol consumption as revealed by scientific study will be brought forth into the discussion.

Following discussion of what current alcohol studies can reveal, this chapter will review statistics provided by the governments of the United States and Italy. Trends within and between each country will be illuminated in order to highlight the problem of drinking habit differences and how these trends may be affecting these two distinct cultures. With the problem at hand, this study can realize a need for understanding and a need for change to address these troubling statistics; and thus, can begin its search into discovering what could possibly explain such problematic differences.

In light of these disconcerting figures, this section will initiate investigation into the backgrounds of each nation's culture and their histories of drinking habits. Sociological trends between these two countries as understood by current studies will be elucidated and theorized upon. Economic differences and movements within each country will be included in the discussion. Finally, research findings discussing the different cultural values guiding the social trends of each country gives further insight into the possible underlying values influencing the differing drinking habits and their behavioral effects on Italian and American citizens.

Next, this chapter will discuss research in the field of community psychology. This section explains the importance of researching the community in order to understand the environment's strong influence on an individual's habits. Understanding that individuals' behaviors are influenced by context, a review of ecology theory and contextual philosophy will be brought forth as the means by which this study plans to investigate its objectives. The possibilities that a community empowerment program could offer are suggested and the wisdom of addressing the prevalence of alcoholism by intervention at multiple levels within the community is emphasized.

To put these theories into a real world context, this chapter will lastly acquaint the reader with an example community intervention program called Xperience. This program studied a United States city using the community empowerment paradigm to evaluate the effectiveness its implementation had on the participating community. This example

illustrates psychology theory in a practical setting so the reader can appreciate the possibilities that accompany an awareness of underlying cultural values. After recognizing unique cultural principles, programs that reflect these theories can be implemented to revitalize our communities in pursuit of healthier lifestyles.

Alcohol studies

Current research on alcohol and its affect on individuals and communities shows it to have a great deal of possible harm, complexity, and controversy. Much is known about the overall harm alcohol abuse can cause as well as the substance's burden on society. However, little research has been conducted on the benefits alcohol could offer as well as some of the harmless aspects to healthy alcohol consumption. In light of the overwhelming evidence against the substance, many people still push for complete abstinence to protect us from alcohol's harmful effects. However, there is controversy over whether complete abstinence is either realistic or truly beneficial when looking at different drinking behaviors. It seems that the substance does not harm the drinker on its own - rather, it is the behavior of the drinker and the way the drinker utilizes or abuses the substance that causes such damaging effects.

As revealed by a study investigating drinking's burden from a global perspective, while alcohol negatively affects health issues, the bulk of the burden on society results in the form of social problems and criminal justice issues (Room, Graham, Rehm, Jernigan, & Monteiro, 2003). While this study thoroughly investigated the physical injuries and

diseases caused by drinking, it noted that the worst impact was on society as a whole. The burden of the social and medical ramifications of alcoholism fell not only on those lives who were physically injured, but also fell to abusive drinkers who were not physically harmed, then trickled on down to those closely connected to the drinkers, and finally spread out to permeate through society (Room et al., 2003). Societal problems arising from drinking include, but are not limited to, loss of friendships, interpersonal problems, unemployment, child neglect, isolation, sexual problems, disharmony, and alcohol-related aggression. This study cites data from three Canadian surveys indicating 'that an alcohol-related problem relating to friendship and social life was the second most frequently endorsed problem,' in which problems lasted for a lifetime for a significant amount of men and women (Room et al., 2003). In essence, it has been seen in both real life and through scientific research that alcohol has had serious effects on many societies should be addressed.

Studies have also shown the prevalence of alcohol problems to be more widespread and prominent in developed countries (Room et al., 2003). Considering the advanced technology in developed countries, more effective ways of mass producing alcoholic beverages, advertising them, selling and distributing them to the public are well established. Also, developed countries have the monetary support and economic means to produce and consume such beverages in an overwhelming amount. Nations that are still on their way towards development do not have the luxury to indulge in, and much less gorge themselves on, such beverages for entertainment. Because of this trend, it

seems that more responsibility is due to those who live with the economically advantaged and have the means to abuse alcoholic beverages. A need to learn such self-restraint is commonly seen with many other effects of technology. Similar to citizens needing to learn nutrition, portion sizes, and how to incorporate exercise in their lives to overcome the tendency towards obesity, we find many ways in which the material excess offered by technology calls for citizens to learn other self-control measures. Such self-control is better applied with a community offering support, encouragement, and an environment apt towards self-discipline. However, few studies offer measures to guide a community-wide program to cope with such issues.

When addressing the problem of alcohol abuse and alcoholism, there is a common misconception concerning the role of will power. Most would think that all such choices are merely the result of the will and so expect people to adjust their behaviors and solve their addictions with sheer will power. In actuality, the environment and the underlying values of the individual in many ways influence people's behaviors and self-concept. This debate over nature versus nurture still prospers. The strict opponents of all drinking would advocate that availability and related social phenomena predicate all forms of alcoholism (Lolli, Serianni, Golder, & Luzzato-Fegiz, 1958). While these factors may have important influences, they do not serve to show effective solutions. With alcoholic beverages being valuable food items to many, the elimination of availability would seem unlikely to deter all drinking (Lolli et al., 1958). Defenders of alcoholic drinks would cite deviant personality traits that lead to excess as the sole causes of alcohol problems

(Lolli et al., 1958). However, while emphasis on excessive drinking is justified when considering alcoholism, there seems to be an underestimation of the influential environmental factors conducive to the manifestation of addictive traits or the prevalence of people harboring latent traits of addiction. Additionally, the view that alcoholism originates before or at birth has not been proven - environment matters (Lolli et al., 1958).

Unfortunately, the definition of an alcoholic is limited by the same difficulties of describing and organizing any human behavior. The psychologist unfortunately finds that "to define means to limit and therefore to crystallize, but human behavior is dynamic, ever-changing and shifting, and can be described better than defined" (Lolli et al., 1958). The dynamic view of psychology is limited in this way. In viewing the spectrum of alcohol drinkers, some traits often attributed to the alcoholic are also seen in those who do not drink or have been able to drink thus far in moderation (Lolli et al., 1958). Such traits can "remain latent for a time, flaring up only under exceptional circumstances, or they might remain latent forever" (Lolli et al., 1958). In most instances, it only takes a blood alcohol concentration sufficiently high enough to cause a flareup for a specific individual to satisfy his drives, thereby setting in motion a series of addictive drinking patterns (Lolli et al., 1958).

Beyond looking at the role of will power, the role of alcohol as the primary culprit also offers some complexity and controversy. As noted by Room et al., (2003), some

drinking patterns have healthy benefits such as reducing the likelihood of coronary disease, suggesting that only heavy drinking patterns are the main factors that cause a disproportionate amount of consumption and alcohol related harms. Their study revealed that most of the alcohol-related "injuries tend to be linked to how much is drunk on a specific occasion, rather than the overall volume consumed during the previous month or year" (Room et al., 2003). This was also found to be the same with chronic health consequences. This seems to suggest that alcohol itself is not inherently bad, rather drinking behaviors exhibiting a "drinking-to-excess" attitude seem to be the main cause of harm.

Other studies also suggest that individuals' drinking patterns as well as those seen among different cultures affected the outcomes of alcohol involved activities. One such study investigated the effects of the volume of alcohol consumed over an extended period of time such as weeks, months, and years (Rehm et al., 2003). This could have included large volumes by those who drank small amounts every day or large volumes consumed by those with a sporadic, heavy drinking behavior. They found that, while overall volume of alcohol consumption increases likelihood of largely detrimental diseases and injuries, drinking patterns were shown to influence these outcomes (Rehm et al., 2003). Specifically, frequent drinkers consuming smaller amounts of alcohol were shown to have a beneficial influence on CHD, stroke and diabetes mellitus (Rehm et al., 2003). Thus, both studies seem to suggest that drinking patterns influence the outcomes of alcohol drinking and that alcohol related consequences are linked specifically with

how much is consumed on a specific occasion. Additionally, both studies show that there are healthy benefits from a drinking behavior that consumed small amounts of alcohol frequently.

These studies have presented various views and factors affecting the alcohol problem around the world. Drinking has had a largely detrimental impact on both the drinker and those around them in many societies, specifically instigating the social problems and criminal justice issues in developed countries where alcohol is easily produced and prone towards over-consumption. The problem of alcohol abuse leading to alcohol dependence also has revealed itself to be influenced by the environment as well as the underlying values of the individual. Raw will power has shown to not be enough to be enough to escape the struggle of alcohol addiction. Lastly, drinking patterns among societies have been known to influence the health consequences of drinking. While some may argue that abstinence is the only positive approach to alcohol, studies have revealed this to be an over-simplistic understanding of the problem by identifying some healthy benefits from drinking patterns modeling a frequent consumption of small amounts of alcohol.

Statistics

Comparing some of the statistics surrounding alcohol cultures in America and Italy illuminates the core issues of this study. According to Results from the 2006 National Survey on Drug Use and Health conducted by the United States Substance Abuse and

Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA], slightly more than half of

Americans aged 12 or older reported being current drinkers of alcohol in the 2006

survey (50.9 %) (2008a, s. 3). This percentage is not as overwhelming as Italy's Institute

of National Statistics [Istat] reporting in 2009 that alcohol consumers in Italy age 14 and

over remaining steadily around 70% (2010, p.1). This data is displayed in Figure 1

below
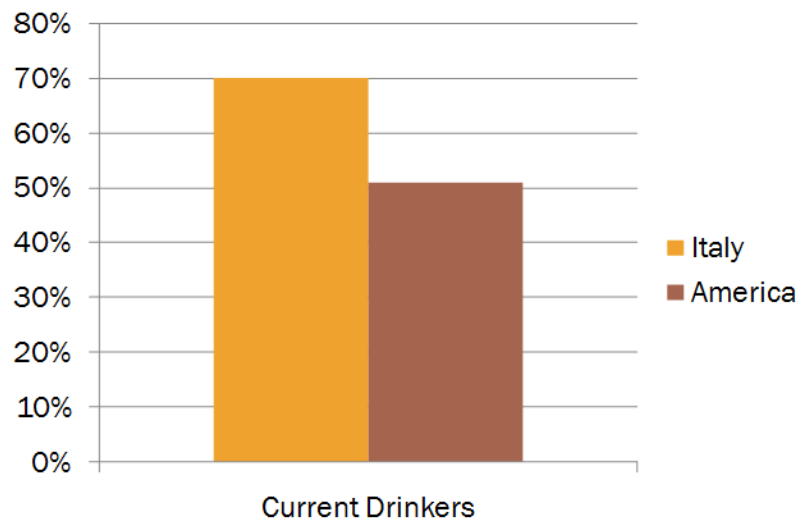
Figure 1 Current Drinkers in Italy vs. America. Current drinkers as assessed from total
population of those 14 and older in Italy (70%) vs. total population of those 12 and older in the
US (50.9%).

Italy has been known historically to be a country with both culture and economy

dominated by wine and the fine art of drinking. It is no surprise the larger prevalence of

drinking in Italy compared to the United States. However, does this extensive alcohol

consumption indicate an unhealthy environment? Prohibitionists would advocate that

any amount of alcohol is unhealthy and can only have negative repercussions.
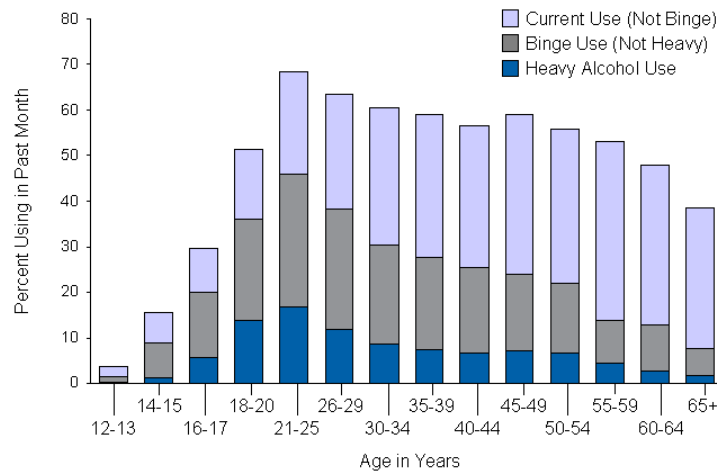
Figure 2 American Data of Current, Binge, and Heavy Alcohol Use Among Persons Aged 12 or Older, by Age: 2006. Taken from United States Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2008b). [Graph illustration of American Alcohol Use in 2006]. Figure 3.1 Current, Binge, and Heavy Alcohol Use among Persons Aged 12 or Older, by Age: 2006. Retrieved from http://oas.samhsa.gov/nsduh/2k6nsduh/2k6results.cfm#Ch7

The statistics concerning the amount of alcohol consumption in each country suggests

otherwise. American statistics, as shown in Figure 2 above, measure the percentage of

those who are current drinkers, who partake in binge drinking and those who are heavy

drinkers. Among those aged 18 to 25 which represented the age group with the greatest

rates, binge drinking constituted 42.2 % (SAMHSA, 2008a, s. 3). As derived from

Italian statistics, we can see that of Italy's age group with the greatest risk for binge

drinking, individuals aged from 18 to 24 years, 15.4% participated in binge drinking

(Istat, 2010, p. 2) (see Appendix A). It occurs that Italy experiences almost a third of the

prevalence of binge drinking than America. When looking at overall binge drinking,

Italy measures that out of its citizens 11 years and older, 7.58% participate in binge

drinking while out of Americans aged 12 and older, 23% participate in binge drinking

(Istat, 2010, p. 2; SAMHSA, 2008b)(see Appendix B). These statistics are represented in

Figure 3 below to fully illustrate these differences in data. This further shows how Italy experiences less than half of binge drinking than the United States. Clearly, Italians must have a different understanding of alcohol consumption than Americans to show such results. One way we can identify how their understanding is different is by investigating the approach used to conduct the statistical analysis.
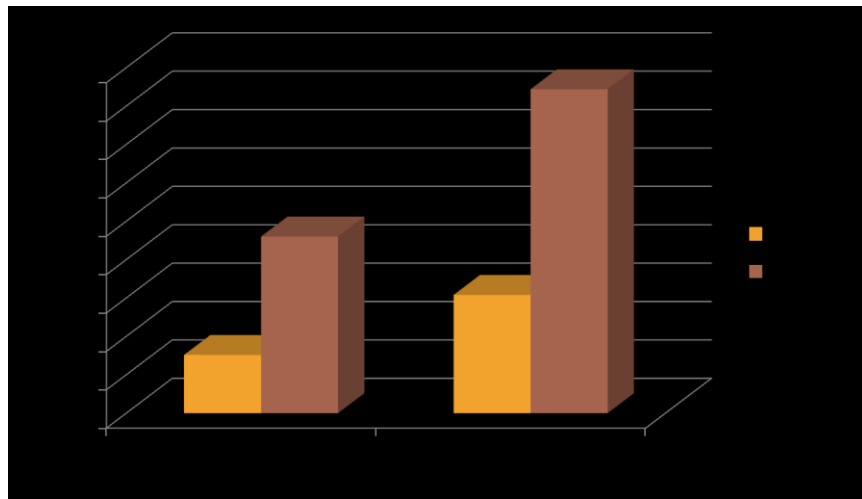
Figure 3 Rates of Binge Drinking in Italy vs. America. As derived from national statistics found in United States Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2008a). Results from the 2006 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings. [Data File]. Retrieved from http://oas.samhsa.gov/nsduh/2k6nsduh/2k6results.cfm#Ch7; United States Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2008b). [Graph illustration of American Alcohol Use in 2006]. Figure 3.1 Current, Binge, and Heavy Alcohol Use among Persons Aged 12 or Older, by Age: 2006. Retrieved from http://oas.samhsa.gov/nsduh/2k6nsduh/2k6results.cfm#Ch7; and Istat - Istituto nazionale di statistica. (2010). Use and abuse of alcohol in Italy in Year 2009 [Data File]. Retrieved from http://en.istat.it/salastampa/comunicati/non_calendario/20100422_00/consumo_alcol_INI.pdf (see Appendix B)

Cultural differences are apparent in how the data are categorized. Since these are two sets of data gathered by each country's government on the extent of alcohol consumption in their own nation, it is important to highlight how each government decides to utilize this data. Each government will come into this research with their own conceptual

viewpoints of what key issues lie in their own country, and so each use its own unique

measurements and analysis to gain insight into the vices of their own society. As can be

seen in Figure 4 the guidelines for the American study are as such:

"The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) includes questions about the recency and frequency of consumption of alcoholic beverages, such as beer, wine, whiskey, brandy, and mixed drinks. An extensive list of examples of the kinds of beverages covered is given to respondents prior to the question administration. A "drink" is defined as a can or bottle of beer, a glass of wine or a wine cooler, a shot of liquor, or a mixed drink with liquor in it. Times when the respondent only had a sip or two from a drink are not considered to be consumption. For this report, estimates for the prevalence of alcohol use are reported primarily at three levels defined for both males and females and for all ages as follows:

- *Current (past month) use* - At least one drink in the past 30 days (includes binge and heavy use).
- *Binge use* - Five or more drinks on the same occasion (i.e., at the same time or within a couple of hours of each other) on at least 1 day in the past 30 days (includes heavy use).
- *Heavy use* - Five or more drinks on the same occasion on each of 5 or more days in the past 30 days.

Figure 4 Guidelines and Definitions Used for United States Government Statistics. Taken from United States Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2008a). Results from the 2006 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings. [Data File]. Retrieved from http://oas.samhsa.gov/nsduh/2k6nsduh/2k6results.cfm#Ch7

One such unique measurement is their definitions used to study. The American

government's study highlights those who currently drink alcohol, those who participate

in binge drinking, and those who participate in binge drinking often. This may seem

normal until we realize that Italy also distinguishes between daily alcohol consumption and occasional, has a unique measurement set out to highlight prevalence of outside meal consumption and distinguishes the difference between non-moderate daily alcohol consumption and binge drinking. Using these different measurements reveals a lot about the underlying culture values surrounding alcohol consumption. It seems that the approach used by American studies illuminate the conceptual viewpoint that alcohol is either not to drink at all, or to drink and probably drink to excess.

However, Italy's measurements, as illustrated below in Figure 5, highlight important distinctions that show an overall balanced approach to alcohol consumption. Instead of focusing on such extremes, the Italian knows how drinking outside meals can adversely affect an individual's drinking behavior. Similarly, the Italians focus on risky tendencies developing when the individual begins to drink to the point of feeling any physical side effects of the alcohol depending on weight and age. This shows how the Italian's understanding has evolved to include intricate insight about what stimulates risky behavior. At the point in which an alcoholic beverage becomes not just a drink to enjoy with the meal but rather a drink to consume on its own could lead to a new motive to utilize not the taste but the physical effects of the alcohol. Also, drinking to the point of any excess so that the individual will feel side effects, even if this is earlier than the point of binge drinking, shows a similar desire to use the alcohol for the effects on the body rather to enjoy drinking a considerable amount of liquid.

Alcohol consumption: consumption of at least one type of alcoholic beverage (wine, beer, other drinks) at least once a year.

Daily alcohol consumption: consumption of at least one type of alcoholic beverage (wine, beer, other drinks) on a daily basis.

Occasional alcohol consumption: consumption of at least one type of alcoholic beverage (wine, beer, other drinks) on an occasional basis (less than once a day).

Outside meal alcohol consumption: consumption of at least one type of alcoholic beverage (wine, beer, other drinks) at least once a year outside meals.

Alcohol units: one alcohol unit corresponds to the quantity of alcohol contained in a small glass (125 ml) of medium-strength wine, or in a can (330 ml) of medium-strength beer, or in a small glass (40 ml) of spirits.

Non-moderate daily alcohol consumption: consumption in excess of: 2-3 alcohol units a day for adult males; 1-2 alcohol units for the elderly aged 65 and over; any daily quantity for minors aged 11-17.

Binge drinking: consumption of 6 or more glasses of an alcoholic beverage on a single occasion.

Alcohol-related health-risk behaviour:
- consumption in excess of: 2-3 alcohol units a day for adult males; 1-2 alcohol units for adult women; 1 unit for the elderly aged 65 and over; any daily quantity for minors aged 11-17;
- consumption of 6 or more glasses of an alcoholic beverage on a single occasion (binge drinking);
- consumption of at least one alcoholic beverage during the year for minors aged 11-15.

Figure 5 Definitions Used for Italian Government Statistics. Taken from Istat - Istituto nazionale di statistica. (2010). Use and abuse of alcohol in Italy in Year 2009 [Data File]. Retrieved from http://en.istat.it/salastampa/comunicati/non_calendario/20100422_00/consumo_alcol_INI.pdf

These statistical data raise questions about the origins of these radically different frames of reference. If 70% of Italians consume alcohol and 50.9% of American consume alcohol, one would expect Italians to have a larger problem with their drinking habits. Yet, Italians experience less than half as much binge drinking as Americans. The statistics also reveal that of the age groups with the worst binge drinking, Italian's age group (11-17) engages in only a third of binge drinking habits as American's age group (18-25). This implies that the American drinking populace has been polarized – separated into low/moderate and binge drinkers. Thus, this study seeks to investigate why that occurs. With comprehension of the foundation of each cultures values, we might be able to understand what distinguishes our American culture from the Italian culture. Highlighting these differences might reveal how the American community

environments might be prone to alcohol abuse more so than another country and how we can influence our societies norms to promote healthier drinking habits.

Sociological and historical considerations

In order to gain an understanding of the foundation of each culture's values, we must take a look at the sociological elements affecting the growth of each culture. Taking Italy and the United States into perspective, we are observing two nations with considerably different histories and cultural influences. One the one hand, we have the history of Italy dating back to ancient civilization with the wine industry as a main economical elements for thousands of years and on the other hand we have the history of the United States dating back only a couple hundred years and involving a revolution motivated by independence, religion, and innovation to govern their peoples. Along with this, there are two unique social histories guiding each nation, one sprouting from an Eastern Europe influence with a Catholic tint and the other a more Western European influence with a Protestant tint. The effects of diverse immigration to the United States have set our nation uniquely apart from Italy with a long-standing clear cultural identity.

Taking a look into the history of alcohol and drinking habits in each country helps to illuminate how such diverse cultures have evolved. Looking back, America's wine culture goes back 400 years. After the pilgrims and early pioneers had landed, settlers quickly learned to produce the alcoholic drinks they were accustomed to. Corn was used to make beer and a new local grape, called Vitis labrusca, was used to make American

wine. Unfortunately for most settlers used to drinking wine with meals back in Europe, the grape of the New World didn't produce a very tasteful wine. Wine became reserved for special occasions considering the high expense of ordering foreign wines from back home (Zraly, 2009). Thus, it took many years for winemakers to import the proper grape vine from Europe, learn to cultivate it in areas with the right climate, and then graft it to the labrusca vine to protect from American pests and crop diseases (Zraly, 2009). It wasn't until the late 1800s that wine production would find a solid footing on American soil, leaving room for beer and whiskey production to flourish and take over wine's traditional place in American homes (Zraly, 2009).

Considering the wine industry's troubles, mass incentive to produce wine of quality had largely diminished. Instead, much of winemakers' focus had shifted toward making good, inexpensive but drinkable wines which could be produced on a mass scale (Zraly, 2009). Already, the shift can be seen from a production which aims to make high quality drinks for their taste to mass production methods which forgo quality in taste in an effort to make wine available for every dinner table in America. Production for the sake of finding quality in taste wouldn't be rekindled until the wine renaissance beginning in the late 1960's and early 1970's (Zraly, 2009). Thus, the common European culture which seeks to produce wine for its quality taste to enhance a meal had been long forgotten. Over history, American alcohol culture had largely left the wine-dominated culture of its ancestors and grew, instead, in its new whiskey and beer culture.

Another major impact on America's alcohol culture has been the prohibition movement. Sprouting out of the bubbling convictions held by the founders' protestant faith, temperance societies surfaced in the United States in the early 1800s. Following this movement, the principle of total abstinence or "teetotalism" was introduced around the 1830s (Van Wieren, 1995). Continuing the efforts of these groups, prohibition found its way in and out of the political policies of many states until it reached its climax in the early twentieth century as states gradually began to vote dry and finally the 18th Amendment was ratified in 1919. However, this National Prohibition Act, also known as the Volstead Act, had the reverse effects than intended. Instead of preventing Americans from drinking alcoholic drinks, it merely spurred creative efforts to obtain this now "forbidden fruit." Instead of legally obtaining their beverage of choice, America's drinking culture reigned largely in the underground, criminal world. With the numerous speakeasies, the new production of "near beers", and the latest trend of adding yeast to medicinal wine to spark fermentation, Americans' views towards alcohol largely changed. Without the means of producing many alcohol drinks of high quality, most people resorted to any form of alcoholic beverages, even though they may be of low quality in taste. Drinking for the effect rather than its taste was especially true for wine considering the raw materials used in its production were harder to come by. Fortified wines with high alcohol concentration became America's number one wine (Zraly, 2009). Additionally, preferences for different types of beverages manifested as the prohibition movement fostered more beer and distilled-spirit drinkers than wine drinkers (Zraly, 2009). Overall, the good intentions of the Volstead act inadvertently sparked an

extreme reaction resulting in a drinking culture comprised of the two extreme, opposing views: abstinence or extreme drinking. This all-or-nothing mentality has largely continued to affect America's drinking culture, especially in the Southern Bible Belt where the social pressures of religious groups continue to thrive.

After the 21st Amendment was passed, American alcohol culture saw little adjustment beyond the minimum drinking age controversy. As the United States entered into the 1970's, war with Vietnam spurred the age of majority to change to 18. This allowed those 18 and over responsible for fighting in Vietnam to exercise their adult privileges by voting in democratic elections. After the age of majority was lowered, many states lowered their drinking ages to 18 to match the right to adulthood. Scientists began studying the trends associated with the new minimum drinking ages and found that lower drinking ages led to more incidences of motor vehicle crashes, the leading cause of teen death (American Medical Association [AMA], 2011; Wagenaar & O'Malley, 1990; Wagenaar & Toomey, 2005). Resistance from some states refusing to return the 21 drinking age led the federal government to pass the Uniform Drinking Age Act in 1984. This act reduced federal transportation funds to states that did not increase their minimum drinking age to 21 by October 21, 1986. This led to much research over the effects of the minimum legal drinking age aimed at confirming the inverse relationship between minimum drinking age and traffic crashes (AMA, 2011; Wagenaar & O'Malley, 1990). The debate over minimum drinking age has not diminished since then.

American standards setting 21 as the minimum drinking age, the highest drinking age among western nations, has led to continued controversy over the effects of various drinking ages seen among western nations. As American youth watch their European counterparts privileged to alcohol at much younger ages, dispute over possible positive social effects of lower drinking ages continue to erupt. Most arguments against the 21 drinking age center around the following problems: the 21 drinking age does not match the age of majority, marginalizes parents' role in teaching responsible drinking habits, and breeds disrespect for law and ethical compromises (Seaman, n.d.). Many also note trends backed by recent research published by the World Health Organization observing American youth participating in fewer drinking occasions than their European counterparts but also experiencing more dangerous, intoxicating occasions (Seaman, n.d.). Observers cite the ratio of all drinking occasions to intoxication occasions among southern European nations to be low (roughly one in ten) while this ratio in the United States almost adds up to one in two (Seaman, n.d.).

In contrast, most arguments supporting the 21 drinking age rebuff with the following arguments: that increased drinking ages leads to decreased traffic fatalities, an earlier onset of drinking increases the likelihood of developing alcohol dependence or related problems later in life, and that the developing brains of adolescents are more effected and potentially more harmed by alcohol than the adult brain (Seaman, n.d.). Studies also show the lower levels of alcohol consumption produced by the 21 drinking age persist into the early 20's as the young adults mature, and do not drastically increase after

enfranchisement is achieved (Wagenaar & O'Malley, 1990). Amidst the continued debate, both sides have continued to have good points and the discussion seems more complicated than anticipated. For instance, some wonder if the higher drinking age in America is supported by the less use of public transportation than their European counterparts who must be older to obtain a driver's license and are much less likely to own or need a car for travel (Wagenaar & Toomey, 2005).

Overall, current literature on the American alcohol culture has shown most concern over the large consumption rates among the youth. Most educational programs targeting youth stress prevention of drinking and driving. The typical ideology assumes the unavoidable existence of teen drinking and teen parties but would hope to guard from possible dangerous consequences. Some studies stress that while some alcohol related policies may help curb binge drinking and the related risky behavior on the roads, they do not address the central cause of underage drinking preventing the main reason for drinking (Wechsler, Lee, Nelson, & Kuo, 2002). One of the many studies focused on drinking behaviors among underage college students and the influence of the universities' deterrence policies found that the schools were not including adequate prevention policies informed by current research findings (Wechsler, Kelley, Weitzman, San Giovanni, & Seibring, 2000). Many larger schools tended to not limit the supply side of alcohol. Policies controlling alcohol prevalence at tailgates, prohibiting keg deliveries to dormitories or Greek houses, or even limiting campus advertising for local

bars were largely nonexistent (Wechsler et al., 2000). Schools without these policies also were often perceived as having a higher alcohol problem compared to other universities.

American universities also seem to neglect the current knowledge of the cohesiveness of social dynamics and do not employ widely accepted efforts of community involvement or social norm campaigns to encourage students to live healthy lifestyles. Social norms, globally, and especially locally, help to shape each community and influence the actions of its citizens. Programs tailored to the wants and needs of the local culture serve as helpful preventative measures for risky behavior. However, studies have found that institutional investments that require greater specificity in function along with community involvement or cooperative agreements are relatively rare (Wechsler et al., 2000). While no university would be held accountable for all the actions of its students, they are accountable for providing a healthy environment to help mold and shape those students. Unfortunately, far too few universities actually assume this responsibility. For example, the effectiveness of social norm campaigns designed to alter the students' perception of normative drinking on campus has not been integrated into the media of some campuses (Wechsler et al., 2000). Studies have shown how the problem of binge drinking continues to pervade campus life as underage students drink less often but more heavily than their legal aged peers (Wechsler et al., 2002). In this respect, employing social marketing or normative approaches may be a good idea to limit binge drinking. This would include using marketing techniques which create demand for lifestyles that

do not focus on drinking and disseminate information on low-risk drinking styles to encourage modeling of healthy peer norms.

Studies have shown that using media signals helps shape social norms of Americans, considering that most risky behavior occurs in a social realm most vulnerable to the media's influence. For instance, one program called the Building Xperience program sought to build upon the knowledge of the youth party culture to promote appropriate social norms and healthy coping skills needed to face daily pressures (Diamond, 2009). Based on the premise that youth groups tend to run to their social, party culture to escape the pressures of adolescents and to seek entertainment, their programs seek to use youth entertainment to impact youth in their normal social environment like bars, clubs, and concerts (Diamond, 2009). This strategy stresses the need to reach high risk individuals at their comfort level and to communicate to them through mediums that appeal to them. Their methods include providing more drug-free entertainment, putting on community shows exhibiting art that conveys drug prevention messages, highlighting youths' creative talents, and encouraging empowerment to live a drug-free lifestyle without sacrificing acceptance by their peers. (Diamond, 2009). These types of programs demonstrate the effectiveness of enlisting innovative social marketing techniques such as community media and branding to instill a substance abuse prevention program. Such multilevel programs like these often utilize prominent figures of the pop culture who have remained drug-free to maximize community impact and strengthen peer group, community and city-level norms around non drug use (Diamond, 2009).

Studies of American culture have been conducted by international businesses as they train their employees to be aware of social behaviors which could come across as off-putting to other cultures (Robbins & Coulter, 2009). The studies have identified 9 characteristics distinctive to the American culture:

• Americans are very informal. They tend to treat people alike even when there are great differences in age or social standing.

• Americans are direct. They don't talk around things. To some foreigners, this may appear as abrupt or even rude behavior.

• Americans are competitive. Some foreigners may find Americans assertive or overbearing.

• Americans are achievers. They like to keep score, whether at work or at play. They emphasize accomplishments.

• Americans are independent and individualistic. They place a high value on freedom and believe that individuals can shape and control their own destiny.

• Americans are questioners. They ask a lot of questions, even of someone they have just met. Many seem pointless ("How ya' doin'?") or personal ("What kind of work do you do?").

• Americans dislike silence. They would rather talk about the weather than deal with silence in conversation.

• Americans value punctuality. They keep appointment calendars and live according to schedules and clocks.

• Americans value cleanliness. They often seem obsessed with bathing,

eliminating body odors, and wearing clean clothes. (Robbins & Coulter, 2009)

Geert Hofstede developed a widely referenced framework for assessing cultures that

helps to illuminate some of the distinctive differences between the American and Italian

cultures (Robbins & Coulter, 2009). Hofstede's Five Dimensions of National Culture

consist of the following dimensions: collectivist vs. individualistic, high-power distance

vs. low-power distance, high-uncertainty avoidance vs. low-uncertainty avoidance,

achievement vs. nurturing, and long-term orientation vs. a short-term orientation.

Americans are more individualistic, tending to be a social network of people who look

only after their own or their family interests (Robbins & Coulter, 2009). The Italian

culture draw closer to the collectivist end of the spectrum as their peoples expect the

group such as the multigenerational family and local community to look after and protect

each other. Americans exhibit low-power distance characteristics since their citizens

play down inequalities (like employees who are not afraid to approach nor are in awe of

the boss) (Robbins & Coulter, 2009). Italians tend to be more mid-range in this power

distance spectrum (Robbins & Coulter, 2009). Italians also illustrate the extreme end of

the spectrum in their high-uncertainty avoidance or fear of ambiguity and experiencing

of high levels of anxiety (Robbins & Coulter, 2009). In contrast, Americans are

comfortable with risks and are tolerant of different behaviors and opinions, a low

uncertainty avoidance characteristic (Robbins & Coulter, 2009). As mentioned before,

Americans tend to emphasize achievement, valuing assertiveness, the acquisition of

money and goods, and competition, while Italians tend to be more nurturing, valuing

relationships and letting concern for others prevail (competitive drives are channeled

more often through local sporting events) (Robbins & Coulter, 2009). Lastly, both

Americans and Italians tend to be oriented toward the short-term, in keeping with the

value they hold for tradition and the past (Robbins & Coulter, 2009).

Such global assessment of cultures helps to illuminate the cultural differences that

underlie the drinking habits in each culture. The following discussion of the Italy's

history and customs will help bring into sharper focus Italian culture.

The history of Italy sets it apart from America in its length of time and duration of

culture though faced with many diverse empires. The history of Italy dates back to five

centuries before Christ to the Etruscans in the upper peninsula and the Greeks in the

south (Sforza, 1942). In this era, most social and political life would center around the

city. The land of the Etruscans was mostly comprised of a confederation of politically

separated cities (Sforza, 1942). Even traces of this long past can be seen in the current

Italian culture who, by region, feel closely bonded with the cultural identity of their

nearby city and have tense, competitive feelings towards their neighboring Italian

regions (Costantino & Gambella, 1996). For example, a Roman could never identify

himself with a Venetian just as a Florentine could never comfortably sip his wine with a

Napoleon from Naples. Even the dialects differ considerably from region to region.

Upon touring the country in current years, people can tell that there exists a competitive

tension between North Italy and South Italy (Costantino & Gambella, 1996). One commentator states that "No other nation in the world has shown such need of attaching its traditions, fables, and folk poetry to its cities" (Sforza, 1942). Thus, the history of Italy has mostly developed by regions, each having their own unique character. Each city has evolved from the city before them, building directly on top of the ruins of their ancestors (Costantino & Gambella, 1996). Some buildings in Italy can be observed in layers under the ground showing the evolving eras of each civilization. Throughout this long history of Italy, the "peasant's way of identifying himself with the neighboring city constitutes one of the most permanent elements of the Italian social structure" (Sforza, 1942). This has made Italians to be traditional people who's "national unity has proved immovable throughout centuries of trial" (Sforza, 1942).

Despite the long, diverse history of Italy, the uniformity of the Italian culture has remained remarkably unified. There is one common religion of Roman Catholicism, one common ancient history with various political institutions, one common economy comprised of mostly wine, food, olive oil and tourism, and one common culture surrounded around the family and linked to ancient traditions. Italians also speak the same language but with different dialects across regions developed from ancestral lineages. Only a hint of English is spoken in Italy's tourist areas. Thus, although Italian culture does mold to fit the framework of each era, the culture therein has continued to prosper over and above the evolution of time.

Research similar to this study was performed by Lolli, Serianni, Golder, and Luzzato-Fegiz in 1958 to compare the eating and drinking habits of Italians and Italian Americans in relation to sobriety. This study also highlighted the considerably lower rate of alcoholism in Italy - a nation whose citizens consume on average a larger volume of alcohol than most Americans (Lolli et al., 1958). The study wanted to research nutritional patterns with an emphasis on intake and digestion of all liquids. Additionally, their study was concerned with the psychological and sociocultural factors which may affect nutrition, such as economic and religious differences. Different from this study, their participants were a group of Italians living in Italy and a specific group of Americans who are of Italian origin, called Italian Americans. Having been conducted in 1958, some of their findings are expected to have changed.

The results of the study showed significant elements that illuminate the Italian culture as well as traditional drinking habits as seen in Italy. The study indicates that divorce, even if legal in Italy, is considered an unacceptable option when facing marital difficulties (Lolli et al., 1958). Italians were shown to have a smaller tendency towards obesity than the Italian Americans, probably partially due to the consummation of purely organic foods and the typical use of pedal transportation rather than automotive (Lolli et al., 1958). The dominate religion in Italy is of course Roman Catholicism which presented differences in culture from their Protestant-born Americans. The Italian culture has shown to present very little of the heated attitudes for or against religion as it is commonly seen in other scenes, both Catholic and non-Catholic (Lolli et al., 1958). Most

people participate in the same religious customs as their parents and do not feel a need to explore to another faith (Lolli et al., 1958). The majority of Italian women feel a greater need for religious participation while a considerable percentage of Italian men feel indifferent to such active participation (Lolli et al., 1958).

Italians have a unique close family environment. In the study about drinking habits and nutrition, most participants could relate their initial taste of wine or mother's feeding habits because most participants had intimately connected families where such topics were openly expressed (Lolli et al., 1958). Italy is seen as "a nation whose family life is so vital to everyone" (Sforza, 1942). Family connectedness is held as highly important and sacred to the Italian lifestyle (Costantino & Gambella, 1996). Even friendships are often interwoven into families (Costantino & Gambella, 1996). It is common to see multiple generations living under one roof or in a collection of cottages on a united piece of land (Costantino & Gambella, 1996; Sforza, 1942). As the Italian, Carlo Sforza, expresses it, "the home is loved, in Italy, not for itself, but as a symbol of the continuity of family" (Sforza, 1942). The privilege of family keeps the Italian healthy since he has a stable community to lean on throughout the fluidity of the tourist seasons. This type of family oriented culture participates in its happiest moments around the dinner table, where the social family lifestyle is most illuminated (Costantino & Gambella, 1996). As to their economy, Italians tend to see a wide gap between white collared workers and unskilled workers. While about half of Italians are white collared workers, less than a fourth are seen as skilled or semi-skilled workers and twice as many were seen as

unskilled workers (Lolli et al., 1958). This is very different from the presence of a rather

large middle class in America. As to women, the majority of Italian women are

housewives with a minority of women being white collared workers and virtually no

women being factory workers (Costantino & Gambella, 1996; Lolli et al., 1958). The

unique culture of the Italian work world is their casual pace. Italians will work when

they feel it is necessary and will take time to relax when the work is not necessary.

Leisure time is significant to Italians (Costantino & Gambella, 1996) which is commonly

experienced by bewildered tourists as they see shops close down whenever the owner

wishes rather than stick to a strict schedule. As opposed to the inclinations of Americans,

Italians do not live to work, but work to enjoy life (Costantino & Gambella, 1996).

Italian use of technology varies considerably from the American culture. One study cited

only 40% of Italians possessing a phone and only 1% owning an automobile (Lolli et al.,

1958). Most Italians travels by means of train, metro, bus, or motorcycles instead of cars

(Costantino & Gambella, 1996). To travel to local countries, Italians usually go by train

or airplane. Within cities, individuals usually walk. If coming into a city from a home in

the country, an automobile is usually driven to the city parking lot, and then the Italian

travels by foot, moped, intercity bus or a subway system within the city (Costantino &

Gambella, 1996).

Eating patterns of Italians are shown to remain predominantly regular. This largely

contrasts to the sporadic eating behaviors of many Americans. The regular eating pattern

of Italians exhibits taking three meals a day at almost the same time daily with little to

no change in the pattern of regular meals (Lolli et al., 1958). Italian lifestyles tend to be slow paced and have no need to break from regular patterns. Leisure times are seen as highly important and are mostly enjoyed in the event of meal time or in the town's central piazza (Costantino & Gambella, 1996). Both men and women exemplify this regular eating pattern mostly because all three meals are eaten in company with the family (including luncheon) or with guests at dinner time (Costantino & Gambella, 1996; Lolli et al., 1958). For lunch, a time between 1 and 4 is traditionally observed as a time for eating and resting with family and will consequentially have most businesses closed so that their workers can go home for the break (Costantino & Gambella, 1996). For younger individuals out of school earlier in the day, an apertivo time similar to the American 'happy-hour' is observed at restaurants and bars serving drinks and providing snack bars.

Evaluation of the drinking habits of Italians have noted their unique view of alcohol being purely used as a meal supplement and have experienced few occurrences of problematic drinking except for among the Italian youth. Exposure to alcohol is so widespread among Italians that they often view it as regular as any other beverage. There are little to no fears or prohibition ideologies attached to drinking alcohol so much that it is usually perceived and used as commonly as bread (Lolli et al., 1958). Most Italians exemplify an indifferent (and sometimes positive) opinion of drinking whether it is linked with children or with adults. Italians are used to having their initial experience of wine at ages as young as four or five (Lolli et al., 1958). This would be when their

parents would provide them with a watered down version of the homemade wine in order to taste the local grape and be minimally affected by its alcohol. Their first drinking experience is often associated as a part of the regular family, social or religious life whereas Italian Americans would view their first experiences as a casual sip-taste experiment (Lolli et al., 1958). Continuous drinking throughout the Italian life are usually for the simple reasons of health, tradition, and because the Italians like to drink (Lolli et al., 1958). Wine is also closely linked with the family environment, leaving the importance of wine drinking mostly associated with married individuals and less linked with singles (Lolli et al., 1958).

For the most part, drinking is often perceived as an additional element to the Italian meal. Studies have pointed out that the combination of wine and the heavy Italian meals help to limit the likelihood of intoxication (Lolli et al., 1958). While Americans may drink during a cocktail hour on an empty stomach and thereby, fall into slight intoxication, most Italian eating habits provide a way to metabolize the amounts of alcohol consumed over the course of the meal (Lolli et al., 1958). This is one factor that may help save Italians from alcoholic tendencies simply because their drinking habits are not prone to intoxication levels that could spark any temptations towards addiction. The only problems associated with Italian drinking are the typical problems associated with adolescent drinking seen across western nations (Beccaria & Prina, 2010). The Italian youth may have a lower level of risk than others but studies have shown how this is changing with two conflictive risk factors: on the one hand, an excessive and

counterproductive alarmism and on the other hand, the dangerous reappraisal and understanding of changes taking place (Beccaria & Prina, 2010). These studies have indicated a need for interdisciplinary research to investigate both the statistical differences in cultural drinking habits and the social mechanisms that regulate people's behaviors; such are the endeavors of the current study (Beccaria & Prina, 2010).

Though it may seem simple to consider cultural differences, the factors underlying cultural differences are wide and intricate. It has been discovered through B. F. Skinner's research of operant conditioning how the human will learn most behaviors through the simple repetition of behaviors accompanied by either positive or negative reinforcement, or punishment (Skinner, 1971). This is easy to see as young children copy the behaviors they see from their parents, older siblings, peers, and even in the media. While there is much debate over whether nature or nurture can be identified as causes of many self-defeating behaviors, it is likely that differences in culture are mostly arising from the different nurturing received in various environments. Social learning theory also discusses this concept of learning both through observation and direct experience (Robbins & Coulter, 2009). Thus, mere participation in different cultural environments is bound to have its own effects on behavior. Perceptions which give individuals meaning to their environment by organizing and interpreting sensory impressions also influence cultural differences (Robbins & Coulter, 2009).

Attribution theory also shows how individuals can judge others differently depending on what meaning they attribute to a given behavior (Martinko, 1995). The theory suggests that individuals attempt to determine whether the behaviors of others are either internally caused, and under their personal control, or externally caused, and forced upon them by the situation. Studies have shown how errors or biases can distort our attributions. For instance, research indicates that we tend to fall under either the fundamental attribution error by underestimating the influence of external factors or overestimating the influence of internal or personal factors (Miller & Lawson, 1989). We also are prone to a self-serving bias when we "attribute our own successes to internal factors such as ability and effort while putting the blame for personal failure on external factors such as luck" or fate (Miller & Lawson, 1989). This literature can reveal not only differences in cultures but also serves to remind us of our own biases as we observe other cultures (Martinko, 1995).

Understanding that the environment of culture plays a major role in shaping both behaviors and perceptions, this study hopes to identify some of the key elements in the Italian and American cultures that result in different drinking behaviors. This study might help to clarify some of the differences between addictive-causing and non-addictive-causing behaviors. This study also hopes to highlight some cultural factors that might contribute to the causation of alcoholism. For instance, it seems likely that the independent, individualistic nature of the American culture could create an environment which discourages people from producing and utilizing a supportive community when

dealing with life's issues. This lack of an intimate community support system can eliminate a vital coping mechanism that alcoholics have to relearn in rehabilitation. Comparatively, the open communication seen within the Italian family opens doors to mutual support and awareness of the various life-stressor plaguing individuals in the family. The traditional Italian meal time as well as the afternoon leisure time spent in the town's piazza allows further community connectedness to relieve the Italian of his stress. With little need to run for alcohol to cope with stress, and large Italian meals preventing the likelihood of intoxication, it seems no wonder that they have no need to fear the possibility of alcoholism.

Research with ethnographic observations has consistently confirmed big cross-cultural differences in dominant patterns of drinking (Room et al., 2003). Within Europe, there is a common consensus of a north-south gradient in drinking patterns. While drinkers in the wine cultures of Southern Europe are frequent drinkers (drinking every day or every other day) who tend to only drink with meals, drinkers in Northern and Eastern European nations are more likely to confine to drinking for weekend relaxation or celebration (Room et al., 2003). While the drinking pattern of the southern nations tend to be associated with decreased problem behaviors and harms, this particular drinking pattern shows to be relatively rare in global terms (Room et al., 2003). Actually, research indicates that drinking patterns of developing nations equal or go beyond the drinking behaviors of Northern Europe in terms of the concentration of sporadic heavy-drinking occasions (Room et al., 2003).

Economic trade amongst nations further illuminates implications of drinking patterns

associated with different types of alcoholic beverages. While Italy has been largely

known as wine country, and the United States as a beer dominated nation, global trade

has diversified alcohol consumption in many countries including these (Walsh, 1997).

While the United States has traditionally been the largest market for both spirits and

beer, imported wine has shown a rapid growth in percentage in recent years which leaves

Japan markets to stand in place for the largest market in spirit in the near future (Walsh,

1997). Overall, it seems that cultural differences in drinking patterns are increasingly

having trouble attributing those differences to type of alcohol beverage considering the

significant diversification of alcohol consumption around the world.

Studies have also shown the relation of alcohol consumption to the drinking habits of the

local culture as well as the influences of the media. Studies show how comprehensive

alcohol policy index ratings and alcohol advertising control are both known to be

inversely related to the prevalence of adolescent alcohol use, heavy drinking, and having

first drink by age 13. However, most of these inverse relationships are mediated by the

drinking behavior of the general population (Paschall, Grube, & Kypri, 2009). This

reveals that even as government policy and media influence the drinking behaviors of

adolescents, the behaviors learned from the people in their environment are likely to

mediate these differences. This shows how alcoholism prevention programs may also

need to investigate community psychology to evaluate the effectiveness of social

intervention methods from an ecology perspective.

Community psychology

Now that we have observed the histories and alcohol cultures of both America and Italy,

we can look forward into what underlying cultural ideals guide each country's drinking

habits. However, before we look into the underlying influences of each culture, we shall

address the reasons behind comparing cultures, histories, and the like. One prominent

study investigates community intervention as a method to prevention of AIDS and HIV.

Their research highlights the importance of considering the community context in

prevention intervention research and methods (Trickett & Pequegnat, 2005). Noticing a

need for change in society, they seek to research and draw upon the conceptualization

for implementation and evaluation of social intervention methods (Trickett & Pequegnat,

2005). Reasons behind this ecology perspective stress that models should encourage

both investigating and participating communities to cut across sociocultural differences

in a collective effort to reach common goals and improve the community. As Trickett

and Pequegnat (2005) so eloquently put it:

> Engaging these communities in intervention efforts has necessitated a
> commitment on the part of interventionists to appreciate culture and confront
> race, class, and other palpable differences between interventionists to deal with
> the ramifications of the often-exploitive history of such communities with
> outsiders manifestly intending to help. Furthermore, it has required the
> development of relationships with community members both to learn about the
> community and to provide opportunities for the community to learn about the
> intervention team. It has encouraged the use of multiple methods to understand
> better the nature of the community context, to amplify the voices of those
> affected by the disease, and to provide information about how the interventions

were perceived and received. And it has provided a worldwide stage for the development of comparative knowledge about what worked, how, and for whom in countries with differing histories, resources, cultural traditions, and experiences with colonization and the colonizing effects of prior research conducted by outsiders.

This perspective localizes research efforts and intervention efforts within specific contexts of sociocultural communities (Trickett & Pequegnat, 2005). The same reasoning is used in the current study. By examining drinking habits within the contexts of the cultural histories and norms, this research focuses on how its investigator can collaborate with the local citizens and organizations of each culture to understand and conceptualize needed interventions for that specific culture's context. In the circumstance of the present study, understanding the problem and underlying causes of the problem is necessary before brainstorming details of community intervention methods. As is the case for any program or business, we must understand our goals and values before we can build a model that abides by those values and reaches those goals. These can help to mold a long range strategy such as was used for AIDs prevention (Trickett & Pequegnat, 2005). Strategies such as these strive for community empowerment by participating in interventions that improve the resources of the community and attain the goal of community-level impact.

Investigating the cultural norms guiding the drinking habits in each community takes an ecology outlook on the social welfare of our nation. To a large extent, our daily actions, perspectives, and value systems have been guided by social norms, family dynamics, and values learned from our interpersonal relationships. Considering this, taking an ecology

perspective that promotes health by directing attention to the community context and cultural influence makes perfect sense. As the study on AIDs intervention suggests, "The impact of health promotion is always contingent, being mediated by social expectations, popular prejudices, and group norms" (Trickett & Pequegnat, 2005). Understanding the local context preludes understanding the influences of culture (the life demands and local interest of those involved).

Ecology allows the investigation to view the interactive mechanisms working in culture. By taking various culture, subculture, and effects of acculturation into consideration, the study may account for the various macro and micro forces influencing the culture of interest (Trickett, 2002). Not only interested in the nature of the communities under review, this study hopes to go beyond just the existing subcultures of different drinking habits and reflect the "lived experience of the individuals in their community context" (Trickett, 2002). In this regard, the ecology view highlights the various experiences of the individuals with the "pressures, opportunities, and constraints which influence the range of behaviors they exhibit, the meanings of those behaviors, and the kinds of choices they see as possible and unthinkable" (Trickett, 2002). The importance of this outlook in view of cultural intervention lies in the ability to illustrate how local culture advocates, pressures and provides, and how the perceptions of high risk behaviors may be integrated into intervention programs (Trickett, 2002). The goal is to affect culture in such a way that is directly related to the way individual's lives and perspectives are affected by that cultural context.

In view of the way in which human actions are embedded in a context of time, space, and culture, this study plans to utilize a contextual philosophy of science to guide the current investigations. Research using this paradigm is surfacing more commonly in the behavioral and social sciences (Trickett & Pequegnat, 2005). As Rosnow and Georgoudi are quoted by the AIDs interventionists Trickett and Pequegnat (2005), they say:

> The idea is that psychological knowledge is made concrete and is framed by relevant factors, relations, and conditions (the setting or context) within which, or among which, human acts unfold. Contextualism underscores the idea that human activity does not develop in a social vacuum, but rather it is rigorously situated within a sociohistorical and cultural context of meanings and relationships. Like a message that makes sense only in terms of the total context in which it occurs, human actions are embedded in a context of time, space, culture, and local tacit rules of conduct… The idea of contextualism implies that to unlock the mysteries of what makes an event meaningful we must consider, via methodological and theoretical pluralism, the wider context that 'allows' or 'invites' the occurrence of that event and renders it socially intelligible.

The purpose of using this paradigm as the guiding philosophy for the current investigation of alcohol cultures is to draw attention away from the exclusive importance of internal validity that only reveals life in the laboratory. The notion of a context-free environment or a purely mechanically stimulated event should be kept in the laboratory where they were conceived, along with triggered smells and emotions, timeless space, and subjective-free contentions. This study, instead, intends to focus on how research can integrate itself into the ongoing lives of those participating in it; what the relationship between the researcher and the population reveals; how the context of the macro and micro cultural influences playing a part in affecting its civilians gives meaning to them (Trickett & Pequegnat, 2005). Conversely, using this paradigm also

reveals the potential contextual constraints on the meaning, generalizability, and sustainability of the research findings. In this way, this stance of contextual philosophy does not pretend to offer definable answers to the world but perhaps some wisdom to guide the parts.

Current research indicates a need for a comprehensive alcohol prevention program. Holder (1997) distinguishes the special need for such programs that have considered the cost-effectiveness of such a multidimensional program. Imagination of such an effective program intervening on multiple levels of culture and contexts sounds all well and good, but we cannot feasibly implement such a design if costs and effectiveness are not accounted for. This study demands researchers to take responsibility, not only by scientifically proving the effectiveness of such programs, but also by accounting for the costs of the program design and implementation (Holder, 1997). Proving this kind of effectiveness could be seen in the circumstances of the United States setting the minimum drinking age at 21 and directly measuring the result of fewer drinking-related car crashes. There has also been an instance in the Scandinavian countries where the monopoly sale of alcohol resulted in higher alcohol prices and lower alcohol availability (Holder, 1997). This current study hopes to find ways that such an integrative culture-targeted prevention program could find realistic ways for both leaders and citizens to have a positive impact on their own communities. Its seems that if we are to address ourselves, we should consider those values unique to our culture, how we are willing to be flexible, and where are we not willing to be flexible.

Care should be taken when addressing the negative aspects of any culture so as to not personally offend the culture. Criticism, whether it be based on good intentions or for an agreeable goal, is not taken easily. Research has discovered some ways in which community-targeted intervention programs are not always immediately successful. For example, studies indicate that those countries in which it is well established that intoxication is an important reason for drinking, studies find that these values tend to be quite persistent (Room et al., 2003). Expecting a culture to change from a pattern of heavy episodic drinking to light, regular drinking is unrealistic (Room et al., 2003). Studies have stressed that anything short of a miracle would unlikely be effective in the short to medium run (Room et al., 2003).

However, such programs have been known to have long-term effectiveness (Room et al., 2003). Therefore, the current study does not concern itself with the consequences of current drinking habits. Rather, this study seeks to understand the underlying causes of the drinking behaviors so that we can better understand how our unique cultural norms affect our everyday lives. Drinking habits and alcohol culture is merely a medium through which distinguished cultural values can be investigated. If readers find some misplaced values learned from their environment, let them address those values themselves and the resulting risky behaviors may be lessened. Some studies have researched the extent to which policies such as taxes, alcohol controls and other measures certainly do affect the frequency of problematic drinking occasions (Room et

al., 2003). In contrast, this study would question the extent to which supporting

alternative perspectives and values would affect current behaviors.

Building Xperience: integrating ecological paradigm into a practical intervention

model

Mentioned before, one particular program implemented in Hartford, Connecticut, called

Xperience, has stood out as an example culture-targeted, multifaceted intervention

program. This research has exemplified the effectiveness of such an ecological approach

to community intervention. This was established through their cohesiveness of research,

theory, context of culture, and program design to offer a practical approach to drug and

alcohol abuse prevention.

The Xperience model aims to alter each of the predictive factors of alcohol or drug abuse

by emphasizing altered drug outcome expectancies. The program recruited prominent

youth that had little to no experience with drugs to perform at an art show and to

exemplify the principles of the Xperience brand. Weekly meetings integrating Xperience

workers with the young artists helped each to share experiences with drugs and shape

their views on drug and alcohol abuse (Diamond, 2009). To alter drug outcome

expectancies, the meetings were used to increase the youths' expectancies of greater risk

of using drugs by asking them to reflect on their own experiences and to question their

positive expectancies regarding the effects and consequences of drug use (Diamond,

2009). The youth were provided education on medical effects of various drugs and

encouraged to arrive at their own understanding of drug use based off experiences and group discussion (Diamond, 2009).

The meetings were also used to increase positive attitudes toward non drug use and increase perception that their friends support their decision to not use drugs. The youth discussed the benefits of nonuse of alcohol and drugs at the meetings (Diamond, 2009). Also, Xperience mentors provided the youth with cognitive-behavioral models for avoiding peer pressure and other kinds of pressure to use drugs (Diamond, 2009). For instance, the youth might need to use these cognitive-behavioral models to counter current pro-drug use messages advocated by marketing in the informal economy.

Taken from here, the young artists serve their peers as advocates, educators, and interventionalists intending to alter social norms through role modeling. This role modeling method for intervention has been proven to be effective (Diamond, 2009). The art shows these youth participate in affect the intervention at the community level in turn. Community level intervention allows them to assess the effectiveness of the program by recruiting and evaluating a matched group for comparison. The community also offers the opportunity to elicit interest in forming an alliance among local organizations willing to adopt the Xperience intervention model and brand logo (Diamond, 2009). The theory behind a contextual approaches necessitates that community be integrated into involvement in creating goals and implementing prevention programs. This level in turn serves to build up city-level intervention by

planting prevention campaigns around the city culminating in a large scale festival or citywide event (Diamond, 2009). Using the visual performing arts and cultural activities that are linked to the local community is essential in fostering pro-social norms, communicating healthy lifestyles, and keeping the youth actively involved and out of trouble. By using media and marketing techniques to advocate a different "party-like" entertainment, messages are sure to reach and impact at a citywide level (Diamond, 2009).

While all intervention theories and methods may be directed to just one level of society, they naturally cut across multiple levels and intersect to reinforce one-another because of a society's natural inclination to interact with the whole community in proximity (Diamond, 2009). This connects back with the community empowerment paradigm promoted by Trickett and Pequegnat (2005) for a community-context based AIDs intervention model. By providing resources for communities, building relationships between intervention teams and citizens, and encouraging local involvement, the intervention has already taken place and serves to empower society to heal itself. Those who live in the context of the culture are best situated to also promote the needed environment to encourage healthy lifestyles. For example, by spreading awareness of alcoholism and creating dialogue amongst those struggling, those closely involved, and those unaware, the community can begin to take a collective action to help those who struggle. This even allows locals to consider the social effects of their actions, the values that they role-model to their peers, and the positives ways in which they can have an

impact on their neighbors. In this way, the Xperience model serves to enhance the local citizens' skill level to carry out prevention interventions. Through the creation of new community settings which are designed to serve hard to reach populations, their program creates group norms promoting healthy lifestyles for those low profile populations most at risk.

To outline this program's methods, the Xperience program built upon relevant social theory models. These models include theory behavior science, expectancy theory, social norm theory, community supports theory, and marketing strategies such as media, entertainment-education, social marketing, and branding.

Behavioral science research reveals common learned behaviors that enforce drug use among adolescents. These behaviors would include beliefs of greater benefits and fewer problems, greater pro-drug attitudes, high intentions to use and low drug-resistance and self-efficacy (Diamond, 2009). Understanding these behaviors helped interventionalists to discuss these learned behaviors and teach cognitive behavioral methods to help youth identify and point out these false assumptions to their peers.

Expectancy theory, in a similar respect, serves to change drug outcome expectancies by emphasizing the negative effects and consequences of drug use. As is pointed out by Diamond, "these expectations [especially for alcohol] mediate and predict future use and behavior" (2009). For instance, those expecting positive, arousing effects of alcohol

would begin drinking earlier and in heavier quantities compared to those with negative

expectations (Diamond, 2009). However, application of these methods is limited when

addressing drug users who already associate drugs with positive experiences.

Social norms theory utilizes peer influence to help youth organize their social

relationships around non-use. The Xperience program would highlight social influences

as potentially a major risk or a major protective factor in youth and young adult drug

use; it is potentially the most critical factor (Diamond, 2009). Perceived peer "approval"

norms are a better predictor of drinking behavior than perceived peer drug use

(Diamond, 2009). Therefore, a successful intervention program would foster social

norms deterring motivation towards risky behavior.

Using community supports as a protective factor helps strengthen social support and

involvement across diverse social groups. Xperience focuses their intervention on

adolescents who are still defining themselves independently from their families.

Participation in social environments in their community "offers them positive

experiences, opportunities for forming new friendships, and for developing social norms

that help support and sustain their drug-free lifestyle choice" (Diamond, 2009).

Programs strengthening youths' connection to community agencies such as sports teams,

arts programs and the like help the formation and support of pro-social, anti-drug

individual and peer group norms. Agencies able to draw upon the local culture and its

resources within urban communities are best prepared to reduce problem behaviors and reinforce youths' decisions to avoid drugs (Diamond, 2009).

Through the understanding of cognitive social learning theory, utility of social marketing techniques to address problem behavior can be identified. According to cognitive social learning theory, the media can serve to provide scripts for human behavior (Diamond, 2009). Media also pervades many levels of society and has high levels of impact on populations. Media is most effective when the modeled behavior is perceived as attractive, relative to the lifestyle of the audience, and is rewarded (Diamond, 2009). Instead of the media modeling extreme alcohol use as the attractive behavior, why not convert to promoting alcohol as a low key, unobtrusive adult occasion?

Using entertainment-education as a social marketing technique can also serve to have a positive impact on individual behavior. Social marketing applies commercial marketing techniques to analyze, plan, execute and evaluate programs intended to change behaviors. However, social marketing stresses that prevention messages must be consistent with local culture (Diamond, 2009). Hence, entertainment-education serves well to command audiences' attention, reinforce existing behavior, demonstrate new behaviors, and affect audience emotion in a way that relates to the market segment (Diamond, 2009). Marketing techniques such as this result in greater message recall and persuasiveness (Diamond, 2009). Other techniques utilizing participatory social marketing are also widely used due to the effectiveness of audience participation. It can

be seen that community involvement in creation and implementation of marketing

strategies has its firm foundation in marketing used for many businesses.

Behavioral branding also serves as an effective public health strategy. Health marketing

brands help to assist health message recall, serve as symbolic devices used to protect

individuals' self-images, and allow for individuals to communicate the type of person

they aspire to be (Diamond, 2009). This leans on idealized social images giving people

identification within a group of shared values and lifestyles. Research has already proven

the effectiveness of brand equity mediating the relationship between the campaign

exposure and youth smoking (Diamond, 2009).

Combination of these science-based theories with marketing techniques provides

successful means of community intervention. However, community effort and

involvement is imperative if prevention strategies are to both empower and protect the

interests of members of the community. As has been shown by prevention science and

communication research, "mass media communication strategies are most effective

when combined with other preventative strategies, which directly involve community

participation" (Diamond, 2009). This kind of "Community Reinforcement Approach"

has consistently shown to be effective in treating alcohol problems and problems with

other substances (Meyers & Miller, 2001). As Meyers and Miller (2001) put it,

> We only need a nodding experience with the behavior of children or a modicum
> of personal insight to find persuasive evidence that reward can alter behavior
> patterns. So, make stopping drinking tangibly rewarding, and troubled drinkers

may be able to stop drinking - a psychological postulate much in accord with common sense and ordinary life.

Thus, if the current study over the alcohol cultures in America and Italy reveals risky behavior unintentionally reinforced by our culture, why not take action? No one wakes up one day and says, "I want to be an addict!" If we find a lifestyle that leans too heavily on an individualistic cultural value, can we not learn from the positive impact a collectivist culture has had on another country? Changing drinking patterns may not be necessary or appealing. Addressing behaviors that lead to the difference between alcohol abuse and alcohol dependence may be a more realistic and attractive path. However, discussion of these issues must begin and end in the context of the community.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Reason for qualitative research

The choice of qualitative analysis exemplifies a growing trend of departure from the experimental, positivistic thinking that has previously dominated the field (Hermans, Immink, De Jong, & Van Der Lans, 2002; Lock & Strong, 2010). This post-positivism may seem to some to be "a second class science" coming from the viewpoint of the exact sciences, but I contend that it is necessary for the current investigation (Lock & Strong, 2010). The research proposes to look into the culture of two different countries to identify the underlying values of each culture and how they might lead to the different drinking behaviors.

To accomplish this, this research not only needs to look at statistics to view the normal drinking habits of each group but also, it must thoroughly explore the way each population's drinking habits are influenced by their perception of alcohol and its role in their life. As much as this may turn an anthropological study into one investigating the ecology of differing nations and their psychological grounding for such behavior, counting mere quantities of behaviors will not reveal the interrelational self-identities formed by the citizens of each culture (Lock & Strong, 2010). As this research will be considering the multifaceted aspects which produce culture, it is necessary to use

qualitative analysis that allows insight into the holistic condition of the community

within (Trickett & Pequegnat, 2005).

Another aspect guiding this decision is the observation of how the impersonal, simplistic

character of quantitative research does not suffice to give each community the respect

and acknowledgement for its unique character and worth (Hermans et al., 2002; Lock &

Strong, 2010; Trickett & Pequegnat, 2005). I do not pretend to give a determinist

account of mere herds of specimen, but rather I plan to act as a relational being

observing our humanly brothers and sisters (Lock & Strong, 2010). This is not an

attempt to perform research merely for research's sake. My hope is that with this

research, we may learn something of ourselves, and if we find distress in our own lives,

perhaps we may consider the alternative approaches our neighbors have taken.

However, no mere mortal man can objectively decide the proper values for all to take, so

I am looking into this investigation not just as a student of research, but as a member of

my community hoping to improve the quality of our lives for myself and for my

community (Lock & Strong, 2010). Thus our research seeks to replace "the distanced

and neutral stance of the researcher with respect to the people with whom he/she works

[with] the concept of collaboration between the researcher and the researched" (Trickett

& Pequegnat, 2005). Perhaps then, if we, as a community, find attitudes or values that

have led us down possibly destructive paths, we might subject ourselves to a community

intervention that could help straighten our paths. Thus, the methods of this type of

community research will take an emphasis on collaboration of investigator, participants, and readers because this emphasis helps distinguish the distribution and use of power by the people in the community research and intervention process (Trickett & Pequegnat, 2005).

An additional reason to conduct qualitative research surrounds the nature of the content being studied. Studying drinking habits of differing cultures brings us into a perspective of the influence our lifestyles and cultural environments have on our health. This is not to say that our environment only affects our health negatively or that any one culture endorses an environment that perfectly promotes health. However, we are always aware of how the quality of our communities could be improved. For instance, we take pride in our establishments that seek to help the problems that arise in inner city school districts. We also hope to help the sick and the poor in proper ways. So if we were to consider our alcohol culture, could we not seek a way to improve our communities to better serve those struggling with alcoholism?

Addiction therapists have seen the continued struggles of individuals having undergone intervention and rehabilitation just to be thrown back into a life of environmental risk resulting from a community which is unchanged (Trickett & Pequegnat, 2005). Thus, this research rejects the implicit assumption that the individual has the ability to transcend context which is often supported by the verifiable nature of the laboratory setting used in quantitative research (Hermans et al., 2002; Lock & Strong, 2010;

Trickett & Pequegnat, 2005). I contend that individuals are affected by context and so my research methods reflect that of common health intervention methods which "focus on the integration of collaboration, culture, community, and context" (Trickett & Pequegnat, 2005). Considering that our health issues are influenced by and affect all areas of life, these research methods seek to use the qualitative approach to understand the cultural aspects of drinking habits in this holistic way (Trickett & Pequegnat, 2005).

Conditions of qualitative research

Having chosen qualitative research, the methods used in this study may counter the philosophies of quantitative measures previously prominent. Qualitative research is distinguished as inductive and generative research while quantitative research is commonly understood to employ deductive and verificative research (Goetz & LeCompte, 1981). In this section, I hope to illustrate the qualitative philosophy this research plans to implement by discussing the inductive-deductive spectrum, the generative-verificative spectrum, and the constructive and subjective elements distinguishing qualitative measures from quantitative.

By using inductive strategies, I mean to "begin with collecting data, empirical observations or measurements of some kind, and build theoretical categories and propositions from relationships discovered among the data" (Goetz & LeCompte, 1981). This research strategy foregoes the deductive method of first developing a theoretical system, breaking down the concepts and propositions within the theory, and then

matching them to some empirical body of data (Goetz & LeCompte, 1981). This inductive strategy common to qualitative research seeks to gain understanding of the realistic environment and limit the ways in which an investigator might want to imprint their biased views on the experiment and then seek only that evidence which would support the predetermined hypothesis. In this study, I acknowledge a possible hypothesis but hold it rather lightly and primarily focus my research by the formation of research questions. For instance, the initial literature review led me to hypothesize that a community based culture such as Italy's, with multigenerational, family-based communities and a collectivist attitude, would produce a healthier approach to social health than the typical cultural value of independence and individualism reinforced in America. While this may be expected, this hypothesis is lightly held in view that a more full understanding of the dynamic influences in culture and their perceived role in influencing the drinking behaviors of the two nations.

By generative research, I do not mean to use the data to as a means to generalize the understood theory, as is common to the verificative character of quantitative research (Goetz & LeCompte, 1981). Rather, I hope to discover propositions and constructs using the data as my source of evidence (Goetz & LeCompte, 1981). I must reinforce the notion that this study aims to focus on the context of the data collection as another source of information revealing culture. Knowing this, I do not expect the answers of all interviewees to express the values of all individuals in their culture. The various interviewees were specifically chosen to reveal the differing aspects and perspectives

present in each culture. This allows us not just a mainstream viewpoint of the culture, but a more holistic viewpoint of the values present in each population. Because of the different alcohol cultures seen in the United States and Italy, I hope that our interviews will enlighten us as to the underlying cultural values that lead to the resulting actions of each population. Rather than starting with much theory or hypothesis to prove, we merely hope to glance at the collected data to discover some answers to our original dilemma. It's like one kid wanting to learn to ride a bike and watch to see how their older sibling has accomplished the feat. While this research may help readers to discover much about their selves and see ways other cultures have successfully dealt with issues, this research does not pretend to know whether such culture values are clear solutions to our culture's dilemma. The information gathered can merely help us to reflect on our situation and continually dialogue and implement community interventions that are conducive to our society.

Another aspect of this qualitative method is the utilization of constructive investigation. This type of strategy aims to derive "analytic constructs or categories from the stream of behavior; it is a process of abstraction in which units of analysis are developed or discovered" (Goetz & LeCompte, 1981). Again, this is in comparison to the quantitative method of enumeration whereby the units of analysis are first defined and then undergo a systematic counting (Goetz & LeCompte, 1981). This study plans to utilize interviews with open-ended questions in order to gather data. As will be shown in greater detail, the analysis of the interviewees' responses will be processed into categories of commonly

highlighted subjects as to distinguish topics and values uniquely important to each culture. Analyzing data will also view environmental facets of the interview or the domestic qualities of the interviewee that may reveal patterns or relevant biases in the data.

The final dimension discussed by Goetz & LeCompte (1981) is the subjective-objective continuum. As a student of the social sciences, I work to infer cultural and behavior patterns as perceived by the interviewees and so, must utilize strategies to elicit and analyze subjective data. Only then can the categories truly represent the cultural values and world views as presented by the subjects and not by any pre-constructed views of my own. Considering objective data concerning cultural values are hardly possible, qualitative research poses as the best possible method for the current study.

Also a common method in qualitative research, this is to utilize the human instrument as the primary tool for investigation. This research will also use a secondary tool: a set of interview questions composed to guide each interview (See Appendix A). There are many advantages to using the human instrument in qualitative research (Dexter, 1970; Erlandson, et al., 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba (1985) discuss the primary advantages of using the human instrument: the researcher can interact to both collect responses and react to further explanation, can interrelate within the data collecting in order to assess and direct the interview depending on the participant's statements, and can provide a summary so as to provide clarification from the participant

(Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Utilizing the interview method implies that the data collected will depend on the context of the situation, the skill and personality of the interviewer, and the attitudes of the interviewee that create the environment of the situation (Dexter, 1970). Therefore, as Dexter explains, "the investigator must be liberated 'from undue reverence for any particular method […] he must make maximal use of his knowledge of the particular research situation facing him' in order to develop situationally relevant strategies" (Dexter, 1970). The human instrument also allows for the data to be understood in a holistic view, considering context, previous life experiences and patterns, a base of tacit knowledge to gain a growing perspective. As data are continuously collected, the researcher has the ability to build upon previous knowledge, refine hypotheses, develop theory to test, and come out with a comprehensive final presentation and description. Lastly, this type of research allows those contributing to search for knowledge (researcher and participants) to react and develop operations as needed for the context (Trickett & Pequegnat, 2005). Therefore, the human instrument connects the researcher, participants, and the reader together so as to join together diverse perspectives and collectively seek a holistic understanding of our findings.

Procedures

I chose to use the Interviewing process as the secondary tool of investigation. The Interviewing tool allows many positive aspects when conducting such generative research. Specifically, by allowing time to reflect and compose various interview questions, the investigator can discover the bounds and specific purpose of the research.

Knowing that one has many things one already has seen and that one has many more things to further discover, the questions allows the reflector to identify "what one is looking for, hopes to find, is not interested in, would not see how to handle" (Dexter, 1970). And with this in mind, one can allow the utilization of open ended questions to employ the interviewee as a co-investigator who allows their insights and discoveries to add to the generative research questions. This implies that the interviewer "must have the intellectual flexibility or breadth of vision to perceive the undefined or the unexpected" (Dexter, 1970). Therefore, what the interviewer records and remembers is just as significant as what she asks and she must be able to focus attention to the voluntary perspective of the interviewee rather than to ask specific questions (Dexter, 1970).

On this basis, for the present research, I have constructed a set of interview questions that were used to guide the conversations with all participants from both countries (see Appendix C). This helped me to organize an "interview plan which contains a general idea of the major areas of inquiry and the hypotheses which locate the pertinence of data to be obtained in the interview" (Dexter, 1970). The interview itself focuses on the subjective experiences of the persons living in the different cultures. Their responding perspectives allow me to test the validity of my precontrived theory, a hypothesis derived from analysis and social theory, as well as ascertain any unanticipated responses or insights that could broaden my social theory. With the present research questions and methods, there is no fear that the evidence may reveal my insights to be incorrect, but

rather I am looking to find any initiative that could further illuminate the situation at hand.

Taking down notes

The interviewing method used highlighted the importance of using conversation and exploration of the subject as it is seen important to the interviewee. Thus, when conducting the interview, exploring as many topics that fall within the parameter of the research study is important. While I want to limit "bunny trails", I also do not want to hinder any possible unforeseeable insights the participant may offer. Therefore, for exploratory purposes, many relevant questions and sub-topics were generally thrown into the discussion as time permitted and then the verbal and physical cues of the interviewee were allowed to add as much to the data as possible. Therefore, this method requires limiting the number of interviews to only a few. As Dexter highlights, "the underlying reason why this cost may be worth it may be summarized as 'the little flower in the crannied wall' principle- careful and intensive study of a few interviews will, in the present instance, combined, of course with [analysis of governmental record, histories, and other related data], probably illuminate the issues and the subjects more than any effort to conduct and record a large number of interviews" (Dexter, 1970).

The subjects

Thus, the subjects selected for the interview plan were important for the possible discoveries of this research. Five individuals were selected from each country to

represent their culture and their subjective perspectives. Considering these individuals have lived cooperatively within their specific country, they are considered experts of their own culture based off their life experiences and sustained cultural influence.

The types of participants were first selected for the Italian group in this study. Due to limitations in contacting and communicating a research proposal in a foreign country, the participants were primarily selected based off their ability to represent a variety of contexts of the Italian culture, their willingness to participate, their availability to meet in a mutual location for the interview, and their ability to understand and speak English or provide a proper translator. Thus the participants comprised of an array of individuals residing within the local Tuscan area: a middle aged male mayor, a younger, middle-aged male bar manager, a middle-aged female professor, a young (age 18) female that recently graduated high school, and lastly a middle-aged female who was from another country but had lived in Italy for over 10 years. All individuals were native Italians except for the last participant. As can be seen, these participants offer insights from varied occupations, varied ages and genders, and can reveal the perspective from the student social context, the authoritative governmental context, the bar scene context and the foreigner's (who has experience with multiple cultures and their differences) unique perspective context. Each interviewee was assigned a pseudonym to distinguish their Italian (or foreign) origin, gender, and occupational status.

The subjects chosen for the American segment of the study were selected to reflect the contextual views of the Italians interviews. Therefore, to serve as the American counterparts, a male middle-aged mayor, a male middle-aged bar manager, a middle-aged female professor, a young (age 18) female that recently graduated high school, and lastly a middle-aged female who was from another country but had lived in America for over 10 years were selected as the American participants. Conducting interviews with these participants allows the investigator to not only analyze the interviewees' responses as a collecting, diverse whole to represent their culture but also to compare them individually within their various contextual framework with their Italian counterpart. Parallel to the Italian interviewees, each American interviewee was assigned a pseudonym to distinguish their demographic viewpoint.

Conducting the interview

In order to obtain interviewees and select a mutual location to hold each interview, I followed the rules and procedures as set by the Texas A&M University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). This board helps to maintain the confidentiality of the participants and to further protect the rights and health of all human participants. Appendix D and E shows Further Notes for the IRB for the Italian interviews along with the Italian Informed Consent document. Appendix F and G further reveal the Further Notes for the IRB as submitted for the American interviews along with the American Informed Consent document. The additional notes for the American interviews offer an example email used to contact participants.

As is stated in the informed consent documents, interviews were arranged between the interviewer and the interviewee in a mutually agreeable location and were expected to last up to an hour. The interview was initiated by reviewing the informed consent document to express the purpose of study, procedures, and precautions taken by the researcher. When beginning conversation, I, the interviewer, asked the beginning questions to spark response from the interviewee. Interviews were either recorded using a device, taking notes, or both. The "degree of direction was in keeping with 'moderate guidance'" from the interviewer by first running through themes of the question and then asking the respondent to elaborate their viewpoints (Brenner, 1981). The interviewer took the role to guide the conversation by using the questionnaire and frequently responded with supplemental questions to clarify the meaning and intention of the interviewees' responses. This way, by repeating what was being noted, the interviewee had the chance to clarify the meaning of their answer so as to avoid inaccuracy in the note taking.

Additionally, prolonged engagement with each culture and informal observations helped to form ideas and comprehension of each culture studied. Throughout the study a diary was kept to write down observations, ideas, and continuous development of the project. Processing culture and information through this medium allowed me to assess and build upon the base of tacit knowledge through the collection of data. This further helped to generate comprehension and identification of new discoveries as the research developed.

Transformation and analysis of the accounts

This research utilizes the generative analytic techniques as is conducive to the qualitative

research method which seeks to constantly refine the hypotheses rather than verify it as

the quantitative method does. To establish this, the Constant Comparative model as

established by Goetz and LeCompte (1981) was used in line with the general induction

analytic technique used for generative research. This type of method is often used to

develop social theory.

The methods were chosen because of their applicability to the current project and their

ability to implement the qualitative method of "continuous and simultaneous collection

and processing of data" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The Constant Comparative Method

as illustrated by Goetz and LeCompte (1981) is a strategy that,

> …combines inductive category coding with a simultaneous comparison of all social
> incidents observed. As social phenomena are recorded and classified, they also are
> compared across categories. Thus, the discovery of relationships, that is, hypothesis
> generation, begins with the analysis of initial observations, undergoes continuous
> refinement throughout the data collection and analysis process, and continually feeds
> back into the process of category coding. As events are constantly compared to
> previous events, new typological dimensions, as well as new relationships, may be
> discovered.

Thus, data collection began with the initiation of the interview, continued as the

interviewee's thoughts were being transcribed and as the conversation developed, and

concluded with reflection after the interview. The data was translated onto notes with

thick description only attainable in the time after the interview had concluded. Each

interviewee was assigned a pseudonym to distinguish their responses from interviewees

of other national origin and varying demographics. These notes were the primary source for analysis. By grouping various interview responses together, topics unique to each culture were highlighted, topics unique to each gender, age group, occupation, and context were noted, and direct comparison of responses from the Italian and American counterparts were sought to illuminate the cultural/contextual differences. To detract these repetitive topics, the interviews were coded to conceptualize relevant data that revealed patterns within the context and answers from the interviewees. Thus, all the interview data were brought together to search for emerging themes and to seek similarities and differences among them.

Establishing trustworthiness

In taking the qualitative method instead of the conventional quantitative method, explicit justifications are needed to ensuring the use of academically acceptable research procedures. After consulting the current volumes of qualitative research, adequate justifications to establish trustworthy evidence differ slightly from the well known criteria of the natural sciences. Such criteria such as internal validity, external validity, and reliability, are revaluated to fit the inductive, generative methodology and expressed through establishing credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. It is necessary to explicitly convey criteria to establish trustworthiness in order that this research may persuade its audience that "the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

By ascertaining credibility, I mean to convey the compatibility that exists between the realities of the participants and the researcher's interpretation of their realities as they conduct the interview. This is meant as a representation of the conventionalist's concept of internal validity. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), our task is twofold: first, to carry out the interview in such a way as to increase the likelihood that the findings are credible and second, to demonstrate how the multiple realities of the respondents are verified by their constructors so that they are revealed to be credible (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As Brenner (1981) notes, this authenticity of the account is related to the "corroborative support given an account either by artifacts, or by its internal consistency or cross-reference to other sources of information."

This research plans to provide credibility by the agreed upon methods of prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, and peer debriefing (Brenner, 1981; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). While conducting my research, I lived in each culture for an extended period of time to have a prolonged engagement and persistent observation with the cultures in the study so that I could provide a "foundation for credibility by enabling the researcher to learn the culture … [and] build trust and develop a rapport with the respondents" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This further adds "salience to a study that otherwise might appear to be no more than a mindless immersion" and uniquely positions me to "sort out irrelevancies-the things that do not count" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In order to validate and verify information against each other, triangulation was utilized by using different and multiple sources of data such as historical and cultural

theory for each country, government information on each country, comparisons of similar things noted by different participants, and my own acquaintance with the cultures to observe the people's actions in conjuncture with information flow. While I hope to provide an accurate view of the degree to which this analysis mirrors the perceived reality and maybe even possibly an objective reality, it also must be known that some external checks or preconceived theories may well be found to be less authentic than the individual's account and so must not take away from their unique perception of their own culture (Brenner, 1981). Lastly, to be sure of noting the perceived realities of the participants, during the interview I reiterated, using different words, what I interpreted from them so that they could be approved or corrected by the interviewee. This method of statement reality analysis also inclined me to use moderate guidance in interviews so that the bulk of the conversation was lead by the provided open-ended questions and how the perceived significant answers the interviewee saw fit to discuss in response (Brenner, 1981). There was little time for the interviewer to speak other than to clarify, reiterate, and ask the respondent to elaborate.

Transferability, or generalizability, is looked for instead of the conventional external validity and refers to the ability of the findings to apply to a similar study within a similar context yet with different participants. However, we understand internal and external validity to work against each other and note that no true generalizations are really possible; this is part of the wisdom of qualitative research (Erlandson et al., 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Trickett & Pequegnat, 2005). Thus, this study's task is only to

work hypotheses together with a thick description of the context in which they were found to hold; a description thick enough as is necessary to enable someone interested in making a transfer to reach a conclusion about whether transfer can be contemplated as a possibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This is where the human instrument comes in handy since humans can "continually mold to new environments, circumstances, and developments in knowledge" (Trickett & Pequegnat, 2005). To help smooth out the compatibility of the different participants' realities, an ordered agenda was utilized during the interviews to ensure that general themes are covered by the end of the account interview (Brenner, 1981). To convey coherency to the reader, thick description was utilized to share the construction of the human setting under investigation and to increase the probability that shared constructions could be discovered within the reader or other findings of similar studies (Erlandson et al., 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Additionally, to relate how relevant each participant's perspective is to the culture they represent, other sources of culture such as history, cultural experts, and my own persistent observation help ensure their accuracy (Brenner, 1981). For example, if the interviewee were to make an inconsistent remark (which was infrequent), I would try to rephrase it in such a way that links it to their culture which allowed them to realize an misunderstanding had arisen and then elaborate to clarify their statement. It may be expected that some level of inconsistency and diversity should arise when seeking a holistic understanding of topics as diverse as culture and drinking habits.

Dependability represents the conventionalist's reliability and can be restated as the reliability of the research making a dependable audit necessary to show evidence of the shifts of reality and to help display "trackable variance" between the studies. This methods as outlined in this chapter and the researchers account of data in the following chapter hope to make explicit this study's methods and distinguish the investigator's interpretations of events from those of the informants "such that the academic community can scrutinize and evaluate the legitimacy of the findings (Brenner, 1981; Trickett & Pequegnat, 2005). Lincoln and Guba (1985) hold that triangulation and peer debriefings help to establish dependability. While this study's methods of triangulation have already been outlaid by using different and multiple sources of data in conjuncture with the findings, the use of peer debriefings has yet to be explicated. After each interview and throughout the study, a peer debriefing took place between the researcher and other professionals outside the context. The debriefings were many and with varied faculty members within both the Italian study center, Santa Chiara, and the university in America, Texas A&M. Additionally, the materials of study were periodically examined and discussed with many Italians and Americans to discover emerging designs and provide added themes, ideas, and insights off the record. Thus, the debriefings and the accountability of the faculty advisor for my research helped to synthesize, organize, and construct themes. Lincoln and Guba (1985) also explain that dependability and confirmability can be established simultaneously by an adequate audit trail for viewers to examine and decide its accuracy from their point of view as will be further discussed.

Confirmabilty further builds trust in the data gather and analysis as is necessary for qualitative research. Confirmability ties in the dependable audit trail left by the researcher that allows an auditor or reader "to determine if the conclusions, interpretations, and recommendations can be traced to their sources and if they are supported by the inquiry" (Erlandson et al. 1993). The research in review abided by this by labeling and organizing our coding process so that each theme or insight discovered also has a reference back to its interview source. The current analysis process will utilize the "theoretically oriented inferential content analysis" as described by Brenner (1981). This analysis retains a theory oriented method insofar as the accounts may reveal underlying cultural values that result in their effecting alcohol cultures so that the original research questions may be answered. Hopefully, examples will arise from the accounts to illustrate developing theories. Additionally, to further coincide with the audit trail and create confirmability, a reflexive journal was kept to note issues of interest to potentially investigate, articulate insights, and other relevant information (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Having followed the criteria for qualitative research in ensuring credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, the investigator can rest assured that the reader will read and consider these research findings academically acceptable. Before proceeding, however, I must be transparent and consider some limitations and assumptions of this research.

Limitations and assumptions

The following is a list of the key assumptions of this research:

- Each participant will be honest in the interview and will not purposely mislead the interviewer.

- Each subject will have an understanding of what their culture is like, how it correlates to the prominent drinking habits of that community and what might be unique about their own culture.

- A full, one-hour, interview will be available to relay information between the participant and the researcher.

- Any humans committing themselves as the main device for data collection will have acquired, and will continue to hone, the human perspective needed in order to operate as an effective instrument

- Qualitative methodology is the best paradigm to investigate and discover answers to the research questions of this study.

This chapter already discussed the first limitation of qualitative research being that general findings are not possible, yet, with the use of thick description, transferability is possible. Also, providing a known or "correct" answer is not the conducive to this research however, through a collective understanding, the researcher and reviewers may discover possible methods or interventions to help the drinking habits of our culture. While I do not presume to provide the "proper and only effective" methods to help any cultural issues, I do hope that we, as a community, could address these issues through

our collective efforts (Lock & Strong, 2010). This research can be taken by others as observations made in a real world context and only meant for consideration of how it may help their own lives. Lastly, certain ethical differences may exist among the researcher, the participants, the reader, and the two cultures under study and so the purpose of these findings can merely serve to promote the health and welfare of our culture. The literature is vast on how people could address such community issues but it is only as good as its adoption is widely accepted and molded to fit the culture involved. In the end, this research intends to show how each community is best at understanding its own motives and interests and so, are the best to conclude ways of addressing their own consequential problems. Any effort to reduce the harm caused by our own habits is worth trying for the sake of our free pursuit of happiness.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Italian interviewees

On a study abroad trip to Italy, I collected a variety of interviewees from around the small Tuscan town where we lived. With the help of the leading administrator of the study center, Sharon Jones, five interviewees were identified, contacted, and requested to participate in this study. These interviewees represented various demographic viewpoints of the Italian culture in their variance of age, sex, and occupation. The Italian interviewees consisted of an 18 year old female, a female college professor, a foreign-born administrator, a male bar manager, and a male mayor. Four of the five interviewees spoke English and a translator was provided for the non-English speaking participant. I met with each interviewee at some point during the semester at a mutually convenient location for at least an hour of discussion time. The set of interview questions used to guide the discussion remained the same for all Italian interviewees. Authenticity check measures as discussed in the methods chapter were taken to ensure accurate interviewee data. As the study progressed and more time was spent in the Italian culture, the conclusions and ideas discussed by all Italian interviewees came to emerge and illuminate the Italian culture.

The following discussions illustrate the content of each interview and are ordered to reflect the data from the American interviews in the second section of this chapter.

18 year old (female): pseudonym- Caterina

The first interview discussed is with the 18 year old female of whom I will call Caterina. In sequence, this was the fourth interview conducted in Italy. Our interview was located at the dining hall of the study center after dinner one evening and was subject to some disruptions from the noise of other students dining. Additional environmental influences included the young Italian's father being just a few tables down dining with the study center faculty. However, this seemed to have little effect on the interview due to the improbability that Caterina's father could overhear any of her answers, and she did not appear concerned. Moreover, this Italian teenager spoke broken English well enough to not need a translator but poor enough to create delays in wording her responses. This also did not seem to be a major hindrance considering how late in the semester this interview was held with the accumulated fluency of the Italian language gained by the interviewer.

When interviewing Caterina who planned on attending law school, I was given a unique perspective of the alcohol culture in Italy from a teenager's standpoint. She was very aware that most people in Italy drink alcohol; she highlighted that adults primarily have a drink when meeting colleagues to do business or to enjoy with friends. Caterina went on to explain how her generation has experienced drinking. She said that some guys start to drink as early as age 13 or 14 which is earlier than most Italians had done in previous generations. Caterina noted how times were changing because of the different way people her age were treating alcohol. When kids start to drink, they don't immediately

consume it in loads. Considering Italian culture centers around food and wine, they would first experience it at dinner with the family. Nowadays, when young boys go out to the disco-tech, they are introduced to a different way of approaching alcohol. There they see it consumed in larger quantities, and they learn about the possibilities that mix drinks with liquor could offer. Of course, they are by law not allowed to purchase any of the cocktail drinks due to such young ages like 13 or 14. However, Italian culture has been so lenient on laws with alcohol because they couldn't see any societal problems that could result from drinking. 13 year old boys easily go into bars and let their older friends buy the drink for them for this is hardly noticed. The stringency of bars varies from town to town but most don't fear any real problem. Therefore, bars don't enforce laws that cut down on the sales of their establishment. At home, the parents may be doing their children a favor by teaching them appropriate ways to enjoy and to respect the limits of alcohol but the parents may not know what their children were learning at the disco-tech. After this type of binge drinking accumulates at the bars, Italians receive their license at age 18 and let their exploration lead them down dangerous paths. While some Italians might start drinking at age 13, most start closer to 14 or 15. Legally, they are allowed to purchase beer at age 16 so they begin testing the waters a bit younger than that. In Caterina's opinion, girls might start at even earlier ages so as to appear more grownup. This young Italian feels that once you have had plenty of experience, you grow to be more tolerant of alcohol as an adult and you also tend to learn your limits.

When referring to Italian customs involving alcohol, Caterina first appropriately cites drinking wine or some other form of alcoholic beverage before, during, or after weddings. Surprisingly, her next comment referred to a custom normalized to her generation: the typical teenage party scene. A normal social event for the Italian teenager would include going to the disco-tech about twice a month and attending parties much like the typical American house-party around three times a month. It seems that Italian teens also go through the typical party scene that most American teens experience but rather, at a much earlier stage in life. Another interesting distinction about these Italian teenage parties is that they do not ordinarily take place in the home. American teens usually have their parties at homes whether their parents know or not. Aware that uninvited guests may come, Italians rent out a separate place to hold the party so that they don't have to invite strangers into their house. This also solves the issues of parents finding out or the fear that things will get out of hand in your own house. Therefore, drinking in this kind of party scene hasn't become associated with the home. At home, Italian teens still drink their normal amounts of wine with dinner. If they want to entertain themselves with binge drinking, they would choose to go out with their friends to places like a disco-tech, a pub, or a public party.

When asked why the younger Italians want to drink that much alcohol, Caterina initially gave a typical American-teen answer, "It's popular. You are cool if you drink." But then when she thought about it a bit, she realized that most Italians see it on the TV on stations like MTV. She acknowledged that Italians like to get on the internet to learn and

imitate the customs of other countries, especially America. Along with Italian dramas or soap operas, Italians primarily watch American reality TV, music videos, or American movies for entertainment. Upon hearing this, I realized why it wasn't so strange for me, in my own experiences in Italy, to constantly hear or see American artists in a country that primarily doesn't speak the same language. Caterina explained that Italian teenagers don't usually drink just to become drunk, they more desire to look cool by imitating American customs. Getting drunk usually happens because they just don't know their limit.

As an Italian teenager figuring things out for herself, Caterina describes what influences their drinking habits. Of course, their parents and the Italian way of drinking wine with dinner has a huge impact and gives an Italian a unique connection to their own culture. As for government or public schools influencing your consumptions, Italians see little to none of this. For the most part, Italian teens choose for themselves how they are going to treat alcohol. They learn for themselves what their personal limits are and why it is a problem to go overboard with drinks. They see the effects of mafias and gangs who drink too much to the point of harassing and vandalizing their cities. Over time, as they receive advice from their parents to acknowledge how drinking affects them physically and socially so that they can learn to protect themselves, they gain insight themselves on how they want to treat alcohol in their own lives. When they are as young as 13 or 16, they just want to try everything. As they reach older ages and develop self control, the

Italian teen begins to understand the alcohol problem and how it can destroy their life so they begin to protect their self from those bad habits.

When discussing the possibilities of alcoholism in Italy, this intelligent young lady was familiar with addressing these issues. Caterina talked about the negative habits created when Italians use alcohol to fix their problems. She gave the example explaining how the economic decline is made worse when unemployed Italians continue to drink their problems away. Caterina explains what all Italians can do to help alcohol dependency is to send their suffering family member to alcohol treatment centers and encourage utilizing the help of associations such as AA to support their sobriety. Since Italians normally have large, close-knit families, the help of relatives is the main resource for aiding alcohol dependence. She admits that Italians would like to do more to help these areas of their society but don't have the initiative of agencies to help.

College professor (female): pseudonym- Professore Bianchi

The second interview discussed is with the female college professor of whom I will call Professore Bianchi. This interviewee was middle-aged and came from her home in the neighboring town to teach Italian to the American students. This was the first interview conducted in Italy and so was subject to some trial and error of acclimating to the interviewing process. This interview was held in a quiet study room of the study center which had a connecting hallway with few, brief disruptions due to students and faculty

passing through the hall. The professor spoke perfect English and so, provided an easy means of communication for the first Italian interview conducted.

This professor began our discussion by explaining that she tends to not drink as much as others in her culture. This may bias some of her views but also tends to offer us a better third party perspective since she has the ability to identify distinctive cultural habits in her surrounding Italian environment. Professore Bianchi then began by explaining that a lot of Italians drink alcohol, but what alcoholic beverage they choose to drink depends on their age. The younger generations of Italians drink more than the older generation. The adults usually choose to drink high quality wine during the main meals of the day which includes lunch and dinner. The younger people usually drink a lot of alcohol when they go out with friends at disco techs.

When asked about the possible increase in drinking beer as their alcoholic beverage, Professore Bianchi responded "Yes, people drink more beer than in the past. It is probably the younger generations that drink more beer." She seemed to imply that it was because of the younger generation that beer became more popular. Professore Bianchi also agreed that it was the younger generations that might binge drink.

Professore Bianchi moved on to when she started to taste alcoholic drinks around age 18 or younger. She grew up always seeing her parents drink wine so she thought she would try it every once in a while. Professore Bianchi started drinking a watered down version

of wine with her parents at dinner time, along with her coffee. She just saw it as part of the meal; it was just one of the beverages that went with dinner. She didn't just go out to drink socially at this point of her life. Professore Bianchi started drinking socially only when she started going out dancing with her friends and she would get either a cocktail or a soft drink to last her for the night. She says that she and all her friends treated alcoholic drinks the same way, just as another drink to enjoy. She also says that women drank less than men and that could be one reason her group of friends drank so little alcohol. On the other hand, Professore Bianchi also felt like she only got cocktails because the ticket to the disco tech usually included one drink. Otherwise, she may not have even felt a need for a drink.

At her current age though, Professore Bianchi feels like she continues to drink very little. On average, she drinks less than a glass of wine a day. This still could be more than an average American drinker but from the Italian perspective, this constitutes very little drinking. Professore Bianchi feels as though she may not drink as much as most people in her generation. She admits to know some, but not many, Italians her age that get drunk. Professore Bianchi thinks that some adults like the feeling of intoxication. She would say that in general though, older Italians only drink wine with meals, at festivals, and at tastings.

Professore Bianchi lifestyle as a drinking Italian is a bit different than average simply because some of her friends are allergic to alcohol. She supposes that out of a group of

five or six of her friends eating dinner together, they may not even finish a bottle of wine. Professore Bianchi feels that people must be careful when drinking alcohol, even if it is just wine. Overall, she feels that a good glass of wine can be healthy but not if you drink too much. Professore Bianchi considers that the way younger Italians drink too much has negatively affects society. She supposes that she drinks a beer when she eats pizza but it is only because it tastes good with pizza.

Another common custom that Professore Bianchi participates in is drinking a shot of lemoncello after lunch or dinner. This brought up an interesting comment about lemoncello. Italians will drink this bitter sweet alcoholic beverage that is much like lemon liquor in a shot glass but will only sip the drink and make it last at least an hour. Many of the American students I studied abroad with drank this kind of shot very quickly (like any normal young American would take a shot). Some of the Americans even chugged the beverage out of the bottle since it tasted so good. Very few Americans actually followed the Italian custom to sip and enjoy the desert drink. This may be one extreme example to show us the difference between Italian and American customs.

This professor feels that wine and vinsanto (a dry and sweet white wine; the word means "holy wine") are good alcoholic beverages for Italians to drink because it is a part of the older traditional culture and doesn't impact society negatively. These kinds of drinks are respected in the culture. They are integrated into the Italian society in many ways, even as a part of their economy. They are seen as something special to keep in the house and

to be able to offer to guests. This could be similar to offering any kind of fine wine is a special thing to keep on hand for important guests in an American household. As Professore Bianchi stressed, what is important to keep in mind about the Italian culture is that they don't just drink. Their first reason for community is the food. Anything after that is just to accompany the food to make it an even more special treat. Whether that extra beverage is to be tea or wine or lemoncello, it is picked to match the meal.

Foreign-born administrator (female): pseudonym- Mrs. Lee

The third interview discussed is with the female foreign-born administrator of whom I will call Mrs. Lee. She is one of the head administrators of the study center where American students would stay and was not involved in this study beyond participation in the interview. In sequence, this was the second interview conducted in Italy. The interview was conducted in her office and so was subject to no disruptions. Additionally, this administrator was originally from the United States and so, spoke perfect English in the interview. She moved to Italy after college and so, has grown accustomed to the Italian culture in her middle age. Furthermore, Mrs. Lee offered much insight into the differences and links between the Italian and American cultures.

According to this administrator, the traditional role of alcohol is to accompany the meal but not traditionally to have mixed drinks like in the United States. An example of this is the "aperitivo" which is the drink Italians would have before a meal as the stimulant for appetite similar to the use of appetizers in restaurants of the United States. There is also

another type of drink that Italians have after festivals and celebrations that is called the "digestivo." Examples of this kind of drink would include grappa or sometimes a "conioc" (meaning "correct-coffee") which is coffee and grappa. This drink usually is made of herbs to help digest the meal almost in a medicinal way. Knowing the traditionally huge Italian meals, any type of help in the digestive track seems like a good idea!

As for the metamorphosis of the alcohol culture, Mrs. Lee has seen a shift even in the last ten years with kids drinking much more alcohol by indulging in binge drinking. In her personal experience working to merge American students within the Italian culture, she has become aware of the negative influences the presence of American students living in Florence has had over the years. Mrs. Lee remembers significant dangerous events happening in the past due to the newfound prevalence of alcohol and drugs that have become a major concern of the adult Italian leaders. They fear that the means to access so much alcohol and drugs has severely increased. To combine that with the obvious notion that the social structure is morphing to include more acceptance of this kind of behavior among the younger generations only adds to the fear of losing the traditionally safe culture. Italian teenagers are especially influenced by the media, much of which has its roots in the American media. Now it's easy to understand teens and even adults being influenced by the media and advertising but it comes out a bit exaggerated in the Italian culture. After just stepping foot into the Italian culture and all through exploring the various Italian towns, it became quickly obvious to me how much

the Americans were looked up to, keenly watched and practically pursued by the Italians. Whether young or old, the Italians seemed to hold us Americans up as if we were celebrities to them. And then to imagine how the younger Italian generations must look up to us is astounding. The amount of American music and movies that were popular to Italians even when they didn't understand the English language was surprising considering our culture was so different from the traditional Italian culture. It seemed that in every way, the young Italians would look up to Americans and try to repeat whatever they do whether they see it in real life or in the media. To make matters worse, I must regrettably admit that our American study abroad students do not hold themselves as responsible as they should being in their influential position.

Another dynamic to the ever changing culture is the differences between the large Italian city and the typically little Italian towns. The Italians living in rural areas tend to be simple people where whole families live together and there is an expectation for the kids to stay with the traditional family. Unlike the American culture, Italian parents don't really train their children to live independently as much as they prepare their children to live at home and to fit into the culture. Nowadays, as we see more influences of the American culture, we have seen some more diversity. Some kids are leaving home because of a poor economy to find a job. Some households consist of single parents that lean on the help of extended relatives. However, while we see that some social dynamics are changing, there still remains a strong sense of community and protection of traditional values in the Italian culture. When it comes to alcohol, most families allow

their children to try their wine with them, giving wine mixed with water to the little ones. As they see their children mimicking the media (especially in the form of reality shows), they fear that the children may seek to have this image of drinking even though it may damage their lifestyle. Mrs. Lee admits that when they first suggested introducing the American study center in their tiny town, the local parents responded with fear for their children. While not all incidences have been perfect, these Italian parents have been pleasantly surprised to find that their children now want to continue in their education like the American students. The local Italian religious groups also take a strong stand against the creeping alcoholism because of the spurt of rebellion that comes along with it. Even stronger than this fear of creeping alcoholism is the problem of drug addiction. There could always be a couple of town drunks that don't do much harm but more problems arise from the addictive smoking habits of Italians and Europeans. Luckily Americans have reduced this issue because of their fear of getting cancer. However, Italians do not tend to have such an exaggerated response to scientific discovery, such as cancer, like the Americans.

Bar manager (male): pseudonym- Giulio Mancini

The fourth interview discussed is with a male who managed a local bar in the Tuscan town. I will call him Guilio Mancini. This was the fifth and last interview conducted in Italy. The interview was held in the bar he manages during a time with no customers and very few interruptions by employees. The bar manager was a young adult (probably mid-thirties) who spoke perfect English and had many experiences observing the

different drinking habits of the local Italians and American college students that came to his bar.

Interviewing the owner and manager of one of the main bars in town revealed much more about the partying scene among Italian teens and how it has progressively introduced more struggles in the Italians culture. This young professional Italian gets to observe Italian teens drinking daily. Moved by the troubles introduced by such binging habits, Giulio is motivated to take measures within his own establishment to draw away from this kind of behavior. He notes that he mostly sees the young ages between 15 and 20 as the age group that struggles the most with alcohol. When questioned about these ages, Giulio explains that their motive behind the drinking is to get drunk.

As to why, Giulio sees various reasons for the binge drinking. Some adolescents really do just seem to be imitating their peers to relate to their generation. However, interacting with these customers daily, he sees many of them running from the societal pressures they constantly face. Giulio sees the unhappiness they have with their society and isn't surprised. After all, the society has problems. Even the adults are affected by these daily stressors. But when children take on the problems of their parents without fully understanding how to healthily deal with this stress, they run for relief from any source, even alcohol. Self-medicating their life troubles with intoxication is both immediately dangerous and antagonistic towards these adolescents' growth. Learning to seek relief from stress by running away from reality or only putting off the pressures till the next

sober moments never allows them to grow in understanding the healthy ways to address normal struggles throughout their lives. Actually, this kind of self-defeating behavior only propels them into further issues and creates the bad habit of using alcohol to self-medicate in the future. This is true for any culture and as Giulio sees the issues in his own country, he insists that "If we don't do something, it could be a big problem."

On the other hand, Giulio also sees how most Italian adults know how to drink in a healthy, respectful manner. He says that they understand that "If you drink, you don't [drink] about life's problems. That's just being lazy." The youth only focus on the problems they face at school and with their families. In this time of their lives when they begin transcending from childhood to adulthood, they see the problems of their parents and perceive them as the problems of their own future. Before being fully ready and mature to understand such foresight, they are impacted by the possible struggles they might face in their own lives. They see the world changing and instead of seeking advice or being ready to receive instruction offered by adults, they try to deal with life their own way.

Looking from a teenager's perspective, it can make sense to deal with life by hanging out with their friends, rebelling against society, drinking to get drunk, and forgetting their problems. Using this mindset to live in the moment and seeking immediate gratification rather than seeking lasting resolutions is the route most commonly taken by adolescents. Little do they know how facing problems immediately, rather than putting

them off till the next sober moment, can help in finding long lasting resolutions and advocates a healthy life style. In addition to using such poor coping skills as medicating with alcohol, alcohol is a depressant, leaving the intoxicated teen in a more miserable state than before. Nonetheless, adolescents often lack the maturity to realize the reality of their bad habits and rectify their behavior. After thinking these things through, Giulio could only hope that "Italy does not become like America".

When talking about the ways in which this Italian would encourage drinking, the conversation takes on another tone. This manager explained that he does drink to have fun with friends but his attitude about alcohol is much different. Giulio explains how he would want to drink for the purpose of enjoying something of high quality, not consuming something in high quantities. Giulio would rather drink a good glass of wine or an excellent drink of choice than drink many substandard drinks, even if it meant that he had to pay more money for something of distinction. That would be fine because it would encourage him to savor it even more.

This bar manager integrates this philosophy into his own business. He believes in the importance of teaching people how to take their drinks and enjoy them for their quality and not their quantity. Giulio encourages this in his own bar by providing drinks in smaller cups so that it becomes too costly to get drunk. As an Italian bar manager, he actually does not want to see his customers drunk (which is a complete surprise to an American like me). Giulio believes that if we could teach Italians how to drink for

quality and not quantity, then drinks could have a positive impact on our lives. He considers everything you drink, if you drink it for its high quality, is a positive influence for you. This admirable conviction has definitely set this bar manager apart from a lot of the popular alcohol culture. Even within his own small town, Giulio has had to compete with the other local bar owner who tends to take advantage of the American students by offering them cheap wine at low costs making him richer and the students sicker. Despite watching this take place, Giulio is determined to encourage the local American students to experience the real Italian culture and not waste their time and money on intoxicated evenings at the bar. With the influence of this manager, the local mayor, the supportive professors, intelligent young Italians and discipline by Italian parents at home, Italy can begin to redirect the current influence the alcohol culture is having on its upcoming generations.

Mayor (male): pseudonym- Podesta Giordano

The fifth and final Italian interview discussed is with the mayor of the small Tuscan town. I will refer to him as Podesta (meaning "mayor") Giordano. In sequence, this was the third interview held in Italy. The interview was held in the mayor's public office and so, had no interruptions. This middle-aged man spoke little English and therefore, had a translator to help during the interview. This delayed some question and response time but also allowed for articulation of both the mayor and the translator to distinguish the appropriate English terms to convey his views.

During the interview with Podesta Giordano, more of the concerns of the current leaders

in Italy were brought to light. He started off our conversation by giving me some

background into the history of Italy's wine culture. This culture's relation to wine has

existed through old, ancient traditions. The nickname of "Wine Land" was even given to

Italy by the Greeks. Having and cherishing wine as part of their land, their agriculture,

their economy, their home-style food, and their social lives is nothing new. Italy, being

historically a competitive regional land, has even seen each region developed its own

wine culture. Northern Italians drink more of the super-alcoholic grappa while southern

Italians prefer the sweet wine. Many regions such as Tuscana, Veneto, Piemonte, and

Sicily produce their own unique types of wine. This is very much related to the each

region's identity and camaraderie. Each region has only recently had to take serious

steps to approach the alcohol culture from a preventative governmental standpoint rather

than merely using government action to maintain civility within the current culture. The

Italian government used to only need to force rules related to alcohol to keep civilians

honest and protected from the normal crimes but now they are seeing an actual alcohol

problem evolving and are starting to take additional preventative measures.

Podesta Giordano revealed some laws and regulations implemented within his small

town in order to subdue this drinking problem. One of these laws establishes that bars

are not to serve alcohol to people under 16. This may seem like a weak law compared to

the minimum drinking age of 21 in America but it is just illuminates how different these

cultures can be. Italy has had laws like these placed but there has not been much need to

enforce them until now. Traditionally, Italians are used to starting their kids off with drinking diluted wine at a very young age. In the past, there hasn't been much of a stigma in reference to alcohol; wine was always merely seen as one of the main beverages to accompany the meal. Wine or beer with a delicious Italian meal was a significant daily routine that enhanced their family-style community. To limit any rights when it comes to enjoying a meal would seem out of the ordinary to Italians. At the most, there has been a law forbidding the selling of liquor (usually excluding wine and beer) to Italians under the age of 18 that was mildly enforced because there was hardly an issue. To severely cut down on those bars selling to teens under the age of 16 is implementing a much more strict policy.

Types of popular alcoholic drinks have also changed. The local bars in Italy also used to mainly serve wine or beer. To primarily serve super-alcoholic beverages like cocktails to teenagers is an extreme alteration in their culture.

Podesta Giordano sees the impact this has had on the younger generations. Realistically, adolescents will begin to consume more alcohol because they see everyone else doing it. He thinks that most start to drink around 14. However, having teens take their first open public drink with no repercussions at age 14 is bound to cause more problems over time. As we have seen firsthand in America how these problems have come about, it is not surprising that Italians want to guard their community from such problems. Adolescents already live in a vulnerable enough position, due to typical adolescent pressures, without

the additional consequences of abusing alcohol. While growing to understand their bodies, their unique place in life, and their distinctive personalities and values, experimenting with such heavy amounts of alcohol can be dangerous. Whether a teen begins to drink because others do, for fun, or possibly because of other underlying issues, an adolescent is not in a mature, mindful state to exert proper discernment on their own.

They are also having issues with this kind of drinking mixed with driving on the winding roads of Italy. This is even a significant problem in this mayor's small medieval Tuscan town where most individuals walk to and from the bars. The limit for the legal blood alcohol concentration in Italy is 0.05 in comparison to the 0.08 limit for Americans. The importance of establishing the impropriety of drinking and driving in Italy is seen in these strict laws that take away licenses for six months if the driver's BAC is above 0.05 and then raised to a year if the driver's BAC raises above 0.08.

Included with these strict driving laws are some regular violation laws that illuminate normal civic issues related to public intoxication. In most small, medieval towns throughout Italy, a strong sense of community is established and highly valued by the citizens living in such close quarters within high, fortified walls. Having a few town drunks is nuisance enough to interrupt this serene culture. Then to add the interruptions from the unsupervised drinking youth takes these issues much too far for most Italian households. As expected, strict laws exist that prohibits loud noise-making if

intoxicated. Similarly, after experiencing eastern European immigrants that drink more than Italians and then become violent has prepared Italian leaders to establish laws that protect against violence and other possible accidents in scenarios involving binge drinking. Taking measures such as these to protect against the consequences of public intoxication and to encourage adolescents to search for alternative ways not involving alcohol for entertainment are just some of the measures currently being taken by most Italian towns.

Italian conclusions

In review of all the Italian data, Table 1 reveals the evolving themes and which interviewees cited each idea.

Table 1: Emergent Themes from Italian Interviews

Themes	18 Year Old (Caterina)	College Prof (Professore Bianchi)	Foreign Admin* (Mrs. Lee)	Bar Manager (Giulio Mancini)	Mayor (Podesta Giordano)
Media Influences	√		√	√	√
Initial Onset of Drinking	√	√	√	√	√
Reasons for Drinking	√	√	√	√	√
Social Acceptability	√	√	√	√	√
Cultural Connectedness	√		√	√	

Table 1: Continued

Themes	18 Year Old (Caterina)	College Prof (Professore Bianchi)	Foreign Admin* (Mrs. Lee)	Bar Manager (Giulio Mancini)	Mayor (Podesta Giordano)
Social Norm Trends	√	√	√	√	√
Country-SpecificTheme	√	√	√	√	√

*A unique comment pertaining to a multicultural view.

The themes displayed in the chart above are described below as is understood by the Italian interviews. Some unique comments found in individual interviews are also added for a full view of variance on themes:

- Media Influences: *The media has affected the young Italians.* The media has been observed to affect the behaviors and drinking norms of individuals. This is especially true for the youth in the Italy.

- Initial Onset of Drinking: *Kids start drinking younger and stop drinking heavily younger.* Caterina and Professore Bianchi both cited that there is some social drinking associated with going out for the youth. Both the Giulio Mancini and Podesta Giordano added other reasons the youth begin to drink including: for fun, for self-medication of underlying problems, and because it is a social norm. Lastly, Professore Bianchi, Mrs. Lee, and Podesta Giordano all did not specifically cite what age heavy drinking ended.

- Reasons for Drinking: *People mostly drink often, with meals and for taste.* This category distinguishes reasons for drinking throughout life in Italy from reasons the youth begin to drink. Only Caterina suggested that Italians drink for social and business reasons, but she did not indicate that these were the primary reasons for drinking. The Giulio Mancini acknowledged that Italians can drink for fun, but the fun is rooted in tasting something of high quality and not being intoxicated.

- Social Acceptability: Socially accepted and cultural norm to drink early and often. Intoxication is not socially acceptable. The Mrs. Lee specifically noted that Italians usually only find a couple of "town drunks" in their community.

- Cultural Connectedness: Some interviewees' answers displayed the *Collectivistic* nature commonly seen in the Italian culture. This refers to the high amounts of connectedness to the community existing in their culture. Italians not only have all generations of their family living together, they also tend to rely on each other within the community to approach various issues. This does not mean that no decisions are made by individuals, but they do focus on fitting into the Italian culture rather than focusing on how to live and discover life on their own. For example, while Caterina points out that one does learn for oneself how one wants to drink, she means to indicate that public institutions like school and government do not interfere much with issue like this. However, Caterina also spoke about learning (how one wants to drink) for oneself in lieu of one's parents' influence to help protect from gaining bad habits. People with a family were perceived as becoming well adjusted and protected from alcoholism.

- Social Norm Trends: *Italian drinking norms are getting worse*. Many of the Italian interviewees distinguished a traditional Italian way of living and drinking from some of the developing social norms coming with the younger generation. For instance, the tradition of all generations in a family living together is slowly disintegrating as the poor economy is forcing people to move out on their own and get a higher paying job. In relation to drinking habits, they are seeing more drinking of beer and mix drinks at the bars and youth parties than before. Podesta Giordano discussed how the government is responding with strict enforcement of laws. He thinks the laws concerning drinking and driving as the most strict.

- Country-Specific Theme: A common theme that distinguished Italian interviewees from their American counterparts pertains how *alcohol is mostly seen as a positive thing in Italy*. This was consistent throughout Italian interviews. As Podesta Giordano discussed, the only concerning aspect of alcohol was the negative way the youth sometimes consumes it.

- Foreign Admin*: An additional idea stressed by the administrator from the United States, Mrs. Lee, was her view that *"Italians do not respond to scientific discovery like Americans do"*. As much as this was secluded to one interview, there seems to be some importance of adding this comment since it concerns a multicultural perspective only available by someone who has lived and fully experienced both the Italian and American cultures. This shows how Americans have limited smoking issues, unlike Europe.

American interviewees

Once in America, a parallel analysis was performed with five American interviewees. These interviewees comprised of individuals located near the home town of Texas A&M University and so represents views that may be biased towards the "southern bible belt" region of the United States. Each of these five interviewees reflects the demographic and occupational distinctions of their Italian counterparts with an 18 year-old female, a female college professor, a foreign-born administrator, a male bar manager, and a male mayor participating as American interviewees. These interviewees were not connected to the study beyond participation in the interview. I met with each interviewee at some mutually convenient location for at least an hour of discussion time. The same set of interview questions used for the Italian interviews was used to guide the discussion of American interviews. Authenticity check measures as discussed in the methods chapter were taken to ensure accurate interviewee data. As before, the conclusions and ideas discussed by American interviewees came to emerge into themes which illuminate the American culture.

The following summaries convey the content of each interview and are ordered to reflect the data from the Italian interviews in the first section of this chapter.

18 year old (female): pseudonym- Chelsea

As before, the first American interview discussed is with the 18-year old female whom I will call Chelsea. This student came from another area of Texas to attend the university

located in the town. In sequence, this was the fifth interview conducted in America. Our interview was located at a local coffee shop and was subject to almost no disruptions due to the shop being filled with students occupied with homework. Possible influences of environment would sprout from any concerns the interviewee had that her peers may be listening to her responses. However, she displayed no apparent concern over this matter throughout the interview.

Chelsea began her interview explaining that her high school experience may be considered unique from most Americans. She grew up going to a private Christian school with very few people in her graduating class. Chelsea didn't experience the high school clique scene since there were so few students. All her peers hung out together in one group. If there was a party, it would always consist of the same people. So, when Chelsea went to high school parties, she would come in knowing who drank and who did not and no one wasted their time trying to change each other's minds. This does seem to be a different experience than most Americans that went to larger high schools who had their unique group of friends and experienced the peer pressure to try out new things including drugs and alcohol. However, Chelsea did offer us a view into the environment of a semi-sheltered girl who also had plenty of encounters with those who did choose to drink.

While Chelsea chose to abstain from drinking due to personal convictions and wanting to obey the law, she knew well some of those who partook in teen drinking. She felt that

those who did drink did so to have fun. If they were the ones who did not drink, then it was probably due to personal convictions. For example, Chelsea felt that it is okay to drink if you are 21 but it's not okay to get drunk. She thought that those who considered drinking to lead to fun probably got the idea from the media. She considered the media to have had a major impact on making drinking a social norm. Other reasons people drink may involve drinking for stress relief, meeting people for business reasons, or even just meeting people for pleasure.

Overall, Chelsea considered her position on drinking to be of her own personal convictions and does not hold them against others. In America, there generally exists an unsaid rule to "live and let live." Chelsea wouldn't consider breaking this rule unless a friend was to put themselves under extremely harmful conditions. However, most would even hesitate at this because Americans are afraid of interfering and offending each other. This is very different from the Italian culture who considers it being a part of the community to voice opinions and care about how each other are living their lives. They consider the actions of others to affect the community around them and should be held accountable to a certain extent.

As to drinking habits in America, Chelsea could only tell us what she has observed since she does not drink. She considers some beverages to be drunk for taste, and some for its physical effects. The type beverage, whether it is beer, wine, or liquor, would affect these habits. Chelsea has seen some people start drinking around 16 usually due to peer

pressure but noticed that drinking becomes more common as people get older. She thought that some people may drink just to be considered as someone who drinks. There is a large stigma associated with drinking. This mostly comes from parents teaching their kids to not do it and making it a big deal. This spurs rebellion in some people who drink in secret and leads to some to have a big celebration when they can legally drink in public when they turn 21. She explained that the more parents guard against it, the more their kids seem to want to drink. Chelsea also had some friends whose parents taught them how drinking could be okay and therefore, didn't care much about it when they went to parties. Overall, it seemed that their parents offered them a balanced, relaxed view of drinking.

While Chelsea offered a relatively relaxed view of alcohol, she did feel it was important to guard people from the dangers. She explained how her grandfather had been an alcoholic and how this had caused her mother to fear that her brother may also become an alcoholic. In view of this, Chelsea wants to be cautious when approaching alcohol. She couldn't offer any real positive aspects to drinking, only neutral and negative ones. She considered how alcohol can be used for social occasions or for celebrations to be neutral aspects of drinking. The negative aspects of drinking were obvious to her. When taken to extremes, alcohol could ruin your life and ruin your relationships. Chelsea thinks that Americans should be careful of the consequences and poor choices made under the influence.

College professor (female): pseudonym- Professor Jones

The second interview discussed is with the female college professor of whom I will call

Professor Jones. This interviewee was middle-aged and lived in the town to teach

Educational Psychology to the students. In sequence, this was the third interview

conducted in America. This interview was held in her office and so was subject to

almost no disruptions. The interview did have to be split into two halves due to a

schedule conflict that produced a 30 minute intermission before the interview could be

completed. This could have influenced answers in the second half of the interview due to

the interviewee having additional time to reflect on the subject matter before completing

the set of interview questions.

The interview with this particular college professor was on the whole insightful due to

her professional expertise in educational psychology and her Italian family background.

While born and raised in America, Professor Jones was able to highlight some cultural

differences that were not well known to the other American participants due to her

Italian family background. Having not planned her profession and background to fit the

study, it was a fortunate surprise to discover how Professor Jones could offer depth to

the research.

To start off with the American alcohol culture, Professor Jones considers how people

drank when she was young. Most of her peers started drinking around 16 or 18. She

regards drinking to surround the social environment. There is a lot of drinking associated

with college and for kids because "it is a rite of passage because it's cool." It is also considered a sign of adulthood. Drinking can be thought of as a social norm but the social patterns change over time. As people get older and past college, they get intoxicated less often and use drinking more as a means of networking.

Professor Jones listed other environmental elements affecting drinking habits such as government, media, and religious influences. The focus of most governmental laws is to limit driving under the influence. Governmental campaigns have even made the concept of a designated driver to be socially acceptable. Other advertisements and various messages found in the media have also had a huge impact on the alcohol culture of America. This has impacted America in both good and bad ways. Advertisements promoting drinking responsibly have helped encourage such behavior whereas some religious restrictions have mostly produced more rebellion. With the restrictions put on adolescents by religious institutions, the youth tend to want to test their limits against these restrictions. They mean to both experiment and develop independence when they drink whether that means binge drinking or just underage drinking in general.

Professor Jones stresses that not all drinkers aim to become intoxicated. Some people just aim to feel "mellowed out" and not necessarily drunk. Drunkenness may be the result of not knowing their limits but was never the original intention. Some people cannot socialize without alcohol. Drinking helps them to feel more confident and outgoing so they use it to help their social efforts. Eating is also used for socialization

and so, alcohol is sometimes added to supplement the food. She does admit, though, that some people just cannot help but get drunk.

The biggest difference Professor Jones sees between the American and Italian culture is the reasons for drinking alcohol. Most often, Italians tend to drink in order to link the taste with food or to mellow out. They do not desire to become intoxicated. In comparison, American most commonly drink to inhibit social fears and to relax after stress. When asked how this might affect the tendency towards alcoholism, she explained that the difference with alcoholics is how often they drink and on what kind of occasions. Alcohol without food changes the context.

Professor Jones went on to explain the American culture effects on alcoholism. We discussed how alcoholism can arise when people want to be in complete control of their life or when people think they have to be perfect. When they realize they don't have control and are not perfect, they try to use alcohol as their only coping mechanism. She considers that our culture stands out with regards to high alcoholism rates partly because of the prevalence of binge drinking and partly because of its extreme sign of becoming an adult. Our culture has a need for immediate gratification and so many also want an immediate relief of stress. While alcohol may be one way to relax after stress, it can be a dangerous coping mechanism if the drinker uses it as their only coping mechanism. The American culture is more prone to stress because Americans feel pressured to be

somebody, to succeed. They are not encouraged to fit in as part of a family, but to stand out as an independent individual.

Professor Jones view is that alcoholism tends to run in dysfunctional families where dysfunction has become the norm. While she does agree that the collectivist culture of Italy would help the alcoholism issue more than the individualistic culture of America, Professor Jones would also advocate self-empowerment programs which would go against a collectivist culture where the family makes decisions for an individual. Self-empowerment would help individuals to rise out of dysfunctional families and break the norm of their home environment. While this might be the case, this professor also considers the added social support provided by Alcoholics Anonymous to also help the recovering alcoholic. This would line up with the social support seen in a collectivist culture. Professor Jones was not able to list any real positive aspects of alcohol, only neutral and negative aspects exist in her view. Overall, the problem of alcoholism seems varied and complicated but she would advocate that Americans could learn to develop better coping skills and decision-making skills to guard against alcoholism.

Foreign-born administrator (female): pseudonym- Mrs. Kozlov

The third interview discussed is with the female foreign-born administrator whom I will call Mrs. Kozlov. This was the first interview conducted in America and so was subject to some trial and error of acclimating to the interviewing process. However, this had little effect considering all five Italian interviews had already successfully been

conducted. The interview was conducted in a departmental fair where she had to be physically present but could sit to the empty side of the room and engage in the interview. Due to this interview environment, there were some disruptions due to the loud activity in the room, occasional students passing by the table, and a student worker who had to interrupt our interview for an emergency. Due to our interview being cut short, we had less time for discussion than in other interviews. Additionally, Mrs. Kozlov was originally from Russia and so, offered a multicultural perspective to the interview. She has lived in America for the past 20 years and so, has grown accustomed to the American culture in her middle age. Furthermore, her occupation as an administrator in an international service office gave her additional experience providing a multicultural view. This interviewee specifically had experience with the Italian culture as she has helped American students transition into that country for school.

Mrs. Kozlov offered a unique perspective of the American alcohol culture from her viewpoint as a Russian. She explains the commonly known viewpoint that Russia has had its fair share of drinking problems. Mrs. Kozlov explained how there has been a long tradition in Russia to drink which has been very difficult for any generation to break. There is a lot of public pressure in Russia to drink. They think that if you are truly Russian, then you can be expected to drink vodka. This drinking tradition that encourages intoxication has had many problems on the youth and the lifespan of many Russians. So, when initially comparing American alcohol culture to Russian, Mrs. Kozlov does not consider Americans to be heavy drinkers.

In considering American drinking habits, Mrs. Kozlov first explains her experience of college drinking since she works with study abroad students at a university. She notices that Americans like to drink to feel good, to become more talkative and social. This is especially important for the younger crowd. Mrs. Kozlov does think that many of them intend to get intoxicated too often because they would fear being embarrassed the next day for their behavior. She also sees many people hesitant to get intoxicated to prevent from getting sick. However, it seems to her that any hesitation diminishes when students study abroad. She has had many experiences with students partaking in excessive binge drinking when studying abroad. Since they have left their home country and its social rules, they feel less inclined to behave as they would at home and rather, desire to use the opportunity for extreme experimentation.

Mrs. Kozlov next described her experience with the double standard of drinking she has experienced in America. While underage drinking is supposedly not socially acceptable, so many people partake in it. Many students drink before they turn 21 and just keep it quiet. Then at their 21st birthday, they drink excessively to celebrate as if they just started drinking. Overall, the drinking age seems strict here but then is hardly followed realistically.

This double standard highlights some of the biggest differences between Europe and America in her opinion. In Europe, it is expected for people to drink and so they do not bother to hinder drinking, but rather let people learn how they prefer to drink on their

own. Some places, like Russia, even allow drinking in universities and at work. In comparison, America strictly prohibits drinking for the normal ages when youth want to experiment with drinking. This administrator has seen how these strict standards have created a "forbidden fruit" scenario. The more these things are restricted, the more the youth wants to rebel and partake in it behind the scenes. Mrs. Kozlov feels that this prohibitive type of environment is unwise considering the obvious ways that prohibition opens doors to illegal activity. She suggests that instead of implementing institutional restrictions to teach the youth, parents should take more responsibility to teach their kids how to drink properly.

Next, Mrs. Kozlov highlights additional factors that influence drinking habits. She stresses how often she has seen different elements of media affect both adolescents and adults drinking behavior. She has seen these effects to be more negative rather than positive but thinks that media could help to influence healthy behavior more often. Mrs. Kozlov also notices the effects of age on drinking habits. She would say that most people's heavy drinking habits slow down in their 50s or when they get married. Adults seem to also drink more with meals rather than just for a social occasion as they did when they were young. Additionally, she stressed the huge differences in the American and Italian culture. Mrs. Kozlov highlighted the impact of the individualistic nature of Americans on their need to use alcohol as an inappropriate coping mechanism and can get stuck in alcoholism before anyone notices. This would hardly happen in Italy due to their collectivist culture, unless someone was homeless or without any family. Noticing

these differences, she feels that parents, schools, communities, and the media are major factors that could help influence healthy drinking behaviors.

Bar manager (male): pseudonym- Joey Snider

The fourth interview discussed is with a male who owned and managed a local bar in the local town. I will refer to him as Joey Snider. This was the second American interview conducted. The interview was held outside a local bar strip and was subject to a few disruptions from people passing by, some of whom are acquainted with the interviewee. The bar manager was a young adult in his mid-thirties who had many experiences both observing the different drinking habits of the American college students and remembering his own college experience being a younger man.

Joey offered a lot of experience and knowledge of college drinking behaviors since his bar is located directly across the street from a university. He explained the heavy drinking behaviors of the college youth thoroughly. Joey considered younger people to "party hard" when they drink and would only stop doing this to attend to school work or to their professional career. Whether they stopped heavy drinking earlier or later depended on when they initially started drinking. If they started drinking earlier, they would have to quit the last couple years of college. If they started drinking at 21, then they would have to slow down in their upper 20s for their job. He usually witnesses students wanting to go out to get a "buzz" feeling from the alcohol or to get fully "shwasted" (a college term meaning to be completely intoxicated). Joey thinks that most

don't want to have too much to the point of getting sick or hung over but rather, this just occurs because some don't know their limit and end up having too much. Overall, drinking is taken to be more of a philosophy or religion in college and this reverence for drinking doesn't slow down to just the weekends till after college due to the demand of real careers.

Joey also considers living in the Southern Bible Belt region to affect drinking habits of the south. Here, it is not considered socially acceptable to drink and so, tend to have a stigma and is taken to be a big deal. With this stigma produced over drinking, bars, bartenders and the like, the youth tend to rebel and engage in binge drinking more often. He noticed that many of his friends that had grown up in conservative households either drink to extremes as soon as they enter college or as soon as they turn 21. Also, Joey's friends who grew up in more liberal homes where drinking was considered a normal part of life and were allowed to drink with family usually don't go out to party because they don't have a stigma about it. Since drinking was normal in their home, going out to a party to drink doesn't seem like a big deal or a very fun, unique experience. After all, it's just drinking a beverage that happens to have alcohol in it, right?

The reasons for drinking are varied in Joey's experience. Some people drink purely for social reasons, some for business reasons, and a few for taste. He has not experienced college students who like to drink for taste. Generally, Joey considered college students to be "budget drinkers" meaning that they are poor students that will buy the cheapest

alcoholic drink that they can tolerate and then use that to get drunk. They are not hesitant to sacrifice taste for the sake of obtaining an alcoholic drink unlike their European counterparts. He also notices that the age to start drinking is getting younger in America (around 14) regardless of the minimum age restrictions.

Joey also noticed some cultural differences that hinted towards the individualistic nature of America other participants had cited. He talked about how America seems to stimulate a more private society. For example, many people have their own drinking circles or perhaps non-drinking circles. Rather than Americans being interconnected to their diverse community, they tend to stick with those who have similar values. This could also relate to the individualistic nature of Americans as they tend to keep to themselves, cope with their stressful life on their own, and would find outsider interference to be insulting to their independent self. Joey noted how Americans tend to not lean on their family and seek independence even more than they did in the 1930s and 40s. In his experience with friends struggling with alcoholism, he saw they tended to hide their problems. No one would feel comfortable enough to question them until it was too late and they were stuck in their addiction. He considers that most people with problems would tend to not listen to friends anyhow, even if they had the courage to reprove their drinking friend. Joey noticed this happening to people particularly when they were still growing into adulthood and developing coping skills to overcome the stresses of college life. They would be a normal college student juggling multiple things, trying to be successful, and then running to stress relievers like alcohol to cope.

Particularly those who were not taught how to limit alcohol since their parents didn't drink would then become the ones prone to alcoholic tendencies.

Following this discussion, Joey ended our interview expressing his overarching negative and positive views of alcohol. He said that alcohol could be negative in that it can lead to alcoholism at young ages due to high levels of stress in our society and due to few coping skills, and the obvious notion that the consequences of drinking too much will affect your life. Joey gave the extreme example of those who have unfortunately chosen to drink and drive and have ended up killing another individual. He then sites the positive aspects of alcohol. Joey regards the stress relief offered to be positive but also admits that this could lead to bad effects. He considers the advocacy to social networking and having fun with friends to be positive aspects of alcohol. Lastly, he sites alcohol as an advocate for sleeping to be positive. Yet again, he would also consider this tendency negative since it could lead to alcoholism.

Mayor (male): pseudonym- Mayor Wilson

The fifth and final American interview discussed is with the mayor of the small southern town. I will refer to him as Mayor Wilson. In sequence, this was the fourth interview conducted in America. The interview was held in the mayor's public office and so, had no interruptions. In reflection of the Italian mayor interviewed, this man was also a middle-aged man.

Mayor Wilson pointed out many of the same topics covered by the various American interviewees. He began with describing the development of drinking experiences with Americans over their lifetime. Many Americans start drinking or associating with drinking peers during their transition from pre-teen to teenage years. Heavy drinking habits usually slow down once out of college and even more so when getting married and again when having children. Most people in America drink for social reasons or because of peer pressure for the youth who listen to and care about the judgment of their peers. While Mayor Wilson observes that there exists an overarching "forbidden fruit" effect that stimulates rebellion from underage drinkers, he sees that some drinking is perceived as both physically healthy and socially accepted at events, functions, and restaurants especially for those of-age drinkers. He considers mostly those who have been raised in families with no alcohol present to be prone to abusing it later in life.

Also, while Mayor Wilson certainly considers drinking to be accepted in Europe, he does see it becoming more accepted in America. He thinks that religious advocates of prohibition have seen the rebellious reactions to such strong stances, and so have tried to lessen the stigma. This is especially true for the category of wine since is can be seen as a ceremonial drink. Mayor Wilson considers eliminating the stigma associated with alcohol to be a step forward for America. He explained that Europe probably has healthier drinking habits because it is socially acceptable and so, not provoked to become a rebellion issue.

Mayor Wilson also sites other aspects unique to the American culture that has led to problems beyond alcohol abuse and instead, tending towards alcoholism. He cites characteristics commonly linked to the individualistic nature of American culture noticed by other interviewees. When coming to life issues, Americans tend to want to figure out things for themselves and not have interference or even advice from others. "Everyone has to decide for themselves." This is both similar to and different from the Italian culture where each individual does end up deciding for themselves how they prefer do drink without much government and religious interference or stigma. However, Italians also support the utilization of family support and community interconnectedness to cope with stress, to prevent from developing bad habits, and to learn how to properly enjoy alcoholic drinks for their quality of taste. In comparison, Mayor Wilson further highlights the different culture in America where there exists a major family disconnect that is accepted by people. Here, broken families are common and not helpful to those who are struggling.

Mayor Wilson further explains the stressful environment existing in America that hinders many from happy, healthy lifestyles. He illustrates to me how Americas fast pace environment that makes it harder to spend time with family by example of his own family. Having both a regular job and being a mayor, his own life has been hectic. Additionally, Mayor Wilson's wife has a job and all of their kids are actively involved in their schools. Americans feel pressured to be successful so they tend to continue in their

fast paced, stressful lifestyle. This typical American family lifestyle limits quality time spent with family and the limited possibility of living interconnected lives.

Overall, the mayor concluded with the positive and negative aspects that alcohol has to offer our society. He states that the way in which alcohol is taxed and stimulates the economy can be positive for America as it generates a revenue source. Mayor Wilson acknowledges that alcohol can be healthy if drunken moderately. He suggests that alcohol might be better accommodated for societies that have to do less transportation by car considering the rates of drunk driving in America. Mayor Wilson explained that the alcohol itself isn't bad; rather it is the way in which alcohol is treated that can lead to negative consequences. These negative consequences would include binge drinking, alcohol-related accidents, and addiction.

American conclusions

In review of all the American data, Table 2 reveals the evolving themes and which interviewees cited each idea.

Table 2 Emergent Themes from American Interviews

Themes	18 Year Old (Chelsea)	College Prof (Professor Jones)	Foreign Admin (Mrs. Kozlov)	Bar Manager (Joey Snider)	Mayor (Mayor Wilson)
Media Influences	√	√	√		

Table 2 Continued

Themes	18 Year Old (Chelsea)	College Prof (Professor Jones)	Foreign Admin (Mrs. Kozlov)	Bar Manager (Joey Snider)	Mayor (Mayor Wilson)
Initial Onset of Drinking	√	√	√	√	√
Reasons for Drinking	√	√	√	√	√
Social Acceptability	√	√	√	√	√
Cultural Connectedness	√	√	√	√	√
Social Norm Trends	√	√	√	√	√
Country-Specific Theme	√	√		√	√

The themes displayed in the chart above are described below as is understood by the Italian interviews. Some unique comments found in individual interviews are also added for a full view of variance on themes:

- Media Influences: *The media affects social drinking norms*. The media has seen to have a large influence on behavior in America, either by demonstrating the bounds of socially accepted behavior or by illustrating a behavior with positive aspects like healthiness or attractiveness. Both Professor Jones and Mrs. Kozlov both agree that the media could use its influence to promote healthy behavior and responsible drinking habits.

- Initial Onset of Drinking: There is a common consensus that *Americans start in mid-teens but keep party-culture secret and then celebrate when becoming 21. The bulk of drinking happens in early adulthood*. Young adulthood would be comprised

of college-aged individuals and young professionals. Mrs. Kozlov holds that American don't drink to heavily from a Russian perspective. She also highlights the double standard of the high minimum drinking age due to the thriving "secret" party culture for minors who additionally have an extreme drinking party when they become a legal-aged drinker. The participants gave various reasons to stop drinking. Joey Snider held that drinking habits slow down to attend to school or to work while both the foreign-born professor and the mayor suggest that drinking significantly slows down when getting married. Chelsea did not mention when drinking usually slows down due to her young age and inexperience.

- Reasons for Drinking: It was perceived that *most people drink for social reasons and business reasons.* Both Mrs. Kozlov and Mayor Wilson did not mention that people drink for business reasons while other interviewees did. The participants added many descriptive reasons for drinking such as the desire to "mellow out", to relax after stress, to feeling the physical effects of intoxication, to network, and because it's a sign of adulthood and therefore seen as "cool" by adolescents. Both Professor Jones and Mrs. Kozlov mentioned how people will drink to overcome social fears and can sometimes accompany a social meal.

- Social Acceptability: Overall, all participants considered that *drinking is not socially acceptable, that there exists a stigma or forbidden fruit mentality which may have bigger significance in the environment of the Southern Bible Belt.* Only Professor Jones did not mention the "forbidden fruit" mentality discussed by other interviewees. Conversely, Mrs. Kozlov stressed this mentality when describing the

push for prohibition and how she has seen the prohibition movement open doors to illegal activity. Both Chelsea's and Professor Jones' interviews highlighted the irony in drinking not being socially acceptable and yet, also a social norm. Although they both described drinking as a common behavior, neither of them could list any positive aspects to alcohol; only neutral and negative aspects existed in their view. Mayor Wilson explained that drinking was only socially acceptable if it did not pertain to minors or to intoxicated adults.

- Cultural Connectedness: The *Individualistic* nature of the culture hinders many from seeking help before alcoholic tendencies take hold (covers family and not telling others what to do). Chelsea, Joey Snider, and Mayor Wilson do best in describing this cultural characteristic saying that Americans abide by the "live and let live" rule and stress that everyone has to figure out drinking habits (along with other life decisions) on their own. Having this fear of offending others with advice and living in such a private society can sometimes hinder people from vocalizing concern for their friends even in sight of dangerous decisions. Both Professor Jones and Mayor Wilson stress that there is a major family disconnect that is accepted in America that has been partially influenced by the individualistic culture. Chelsea, Joey Snider, and Mayor Wilson all perceived that those they had known who had grown up in households where they could drink with their family would tend not to drink to extremes later in life due to the lack of stigma associated with drinking. This could suggest that both lack of stigma and interconnectedness experienced in these families may have provided the social support that help individuals develop a healthy

view of alcohol. Professor Jones adds that the social support of Alcoholics Anonymous has been a major reason for its success with American alcoholics. However, Professor Jones argued that the self-empowerment expressed in the program also plays a key factor in helping individuals overcome their alcoholism. She contends that this would go against the values of a collectivist culture like Italy.

- Social Norm Trends: *Social norms of peers play a significant role in guiding drinking trends*. This is illustrated by the peer pressure that causes the onset of drinking for some adolescents. Mayor Wilson suggests that the social norms of peers play mostly play a significant role for the youth who listen to the various views of their peers rather than adults who have for the most part shaped their self-identity and no longer highly rely upon the acceptance of peers. Mrs. Kozlov suggests that social norms influence most individuals and so, suggests that parents, schools, and communities could take the initiative to influence good behaviors.

- Country-Specific Theme: A common theme that distinguished American interviewees from their Italian counterparts pertains to how *America has a stressful, fast pace culture and with it a need for immediate gratification or immediate stress relief*. This was discussed with four of the five participants and was only absent in the interview with Mrs. Kozlov. Both Professor Jones and Joey Snider observed the lack of coping skills developed by Americans. They notice the need for immediate gratification has limited many people's ability to develop coping skills that would stress a gradual release of stress. Americans face many pressures to be successful and feel the urgent need for stress relief to accompany their fast pace lifestyle. This

also influences the existence of broken and dysfunctional families mentioned by both Professor Jones and Mayor Wilson. These families usually have fallen apart due to letting their packed schedules interfere with interpersonal relationships. Consequently, later generations in such families tend to continue in their dysfunctional lifestyle and are likely to not develop coping skills because of becoming accustomed to their family environment.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

Answering the original questions

In review of this data, the following research questions that instigated this investigation will also guide our conclusions:

1. What are some differences in culture that could account for the current situation in each nation?

2. With respect to alcohol, what is the status of healthiness in lifestyles as seen in America as opposed to Italy?

Question 1: What are some differences in culture that could account for the current situation in each nation?

Seven themes emerge from analysis of the unitized data. These themes help to answer the first question guiding the discussion of results. Table 3 below shows the theme names and the number of interviewees who supported each theme in each country:

Table 3 Quantity of Interviewees from Italy and the United States Citing Each Theme

Themes	Italy	US
Media Influences	4	3
Initial Onset of Drinking	5	5
Reasons for Drinking	5	5
Social Acceptability	5	5

Table 3 Continued

Themes	Italy	US
Cultural Connectedness	3	5
Social Norm Trends	5	5
Country-Specific Theme	5	4

Legend: Number of interviewees out of five American interviewees and five Italian interviewees

A total of seven themes were discovered. The first six themes listed were found to have significant roles in the alcohol culture of both countries. The first theme discussing media influences had similar affects on both the Italian and American culture according to interviewees. The next five themes were discussed by both Italians and Americans but were found to exemplify different trends in each country. While six common themes emerged from each country, one unique theme per country was also discovered. This shows that both the American and Italian cultures have some exclusive factors influencing their alcohol culture that were not found to be significantly encroaching in both countries. Table 4 below shows the general comments made about each theme as specified to each country's set of interviewees.

Table 4 Comparison of Comments Made by Italians vs. Americans According to Theme

ITALY	AMERICA
The media has affected the young Italians	Media affects social drinking norms
Kids start drinking younger and stop drinking heavily younger	Start in mid-teens but keep party-culture secret and then celebrate when turning 21. Bulk of drinking happens in early adulthood
People mostly drink often, with meals and for taste	Most people drink for social reasons and business reasons

Table 4 Continued

ITALY	AMERICA
Socially accepted and cultural norm to drink early and often. Intoxication is not socially acceptable	Not socially acceptable, stigma, forbidden fruit, may have bigger significance because of Southern Bible Belt
Collectivistic	Individualistic
Drinking norms are getting worse	Social norms of peers guide drinking trends
Alcohol is mostly seen as a positive thing	America has a stressful, fast pace culture and with it a need for immediate gratification or immediate stress relief

Legend: Blue: Same Theme & Same Comment; Black: Same Theme & Country-Specific Comments; Red: Country-Specific Theme & Comment

Comparison of emergent themes

Media influences

The media's influences showed to play a significant role in both cultures. Participants from both countries noted that the media has been observed to affect the behaviors and drinking norms of individuals. As the American interviewees suggested, this is often due to the media demonstrating what is considered socially acceptable behavior or suggesting positive effects of certain behaviors. Two American participants agree that the media could be used to influence healthy behavior and responsible drinking habits.

Initial onset of drinking

The stage of initial onset of drinking differed across the two countries. While Americans tend to begin drinking somewhere between 15 and 18, Italian youth tended to begin drinking within family settings at much younger ages such as 11 and 12. While this young age can be concerning, the context of drinking was usually associated with have a

glass of wine or watered down wine with a meal at home. Going out to the disco techs (a European club) with friends would usually occur later in life. The Italians consider this early age of experimentation to be normal and often see the heavy drinking associated with the youth taper down in the mid to late teens (as early as 17) whereas Americans experience heavy drinking into their mid to late 20s. Italians tend to continue drinking small amounts of alcohol on a daily basis while Americans begin to have fewer episodes of heavy drinking or cease to binge drink to attend to school, work, or the marriage life.

The drinking scene for beginners varies for both countries. The Italians begin to drink for reasons such as social drinking when going out with friends, for fun, for underlying problems, and because it's a social norm and apart of their culture. The Americans tended to drink for experimentation, for fun, and as an act of rebellion. Much of early drinking for American is done in secret and then as a huge celebration when they become the legal drinking age. Italians tended to drink early and in public. While they could only buy beer and wine at age 16 and were restricted from purchasing mix drinks until they were 18, Italians usually had older friends buy drinks for them since it was socially acceptable albeit technically illegal.

Reasons for drinking

The motivation for drinking in adulthood largely differs between Italy and America and illustrates some of their general cultural differences. Italians tend to drink often as a part of their meals. This can be a social occasion or not but the main reason is to link the taste

of the drink with the food. With the Italian culture surrounding their natural food and customs, drinking is very much seen as a special element to add quality to life. This is not totally uncommon in America but this is not the typical motivations for Americans to drink. Americans drink for various reasons such as overcoming social fears at public events, to relax after stress, to network for business, and sometimes to feel the physical effects. Americans will drink with their friends both for additional fun and to overcome social fears. While the Italians also claim to drink for fun, their type of fun is more rooted in tasting something of high quality and not being intoxicated.

Social acceptability

There exists considerable more variety in the distinctions of social acceptability in the American culture than there are in the Italian culture. This variance may be due to the American culture having multiple ethnicities from various historical backgrounds when the Italian culture only consists of citizens from one traditional background. Additionally, variability in American culture accounts for communities across a large nation while singularity in Italian culture accounts for communities across a landmass that is slightly smaller than New Mexico in square miles.

While drinking is commonly seen in both countries, it is considered as socially acceptable in Italy and not socially acceptable in America. Italians accept an early onset of drinking and to continue drinking often throughout life. Their only stipulation is that intoxication is not socially acceptable among any age group. In America, there exists a

stigma against drinking from the beginning which commonly spurs rebellion in the youth who become motivated to obtain the "forbidden fruit." Prohibition ideology persists into adulthood where only seldom to occasional drinking is accepted and positive views of drinking are considered inappropriate. Intoxication is both seen as socially unacceptable among all ages and desirable among adolescents and young adults. While drinking among minors is generally allowed in Italy, underage drinking in America is viewed as highly negative.

Overall, both countries experience some problematic drinking. Both Italians and American show concern for adolescent drinking but Italians tend to express this to a lesser degree. Italians commonly have problems with a couple of well known town drunks that cause audible disturbances at night while American experience a large prevalence of alcohol problems ranging from alcohol abuse to alcoholism in various age groups. While the alcohol problem in America is well known, individuals with alcohol issues usually fly under the radar.

Cultural connectedness

Overall, there seems to exist a high level of connectedness in the Italian culture and a low level of connectedness in the American culture. This has often dubbed Italy with a collectivist character and America with an individualistic character. This has many implications for drinking norms and the precedence of alcoholism.

The collectivistic character of Italy directly contrasts the individualistic character of America. Italians typically will have all generations of a family living together, if not in the same household, then in close proximity while Americans will send their children off to become independent in their adulthood. This suggests that instead of teaching their children to become independent as Americans do, Italian parents typically teach their children just to fit into the local culture. This could possibly have some influence in the large diversity of America customs and culture and the limited diversity in Italian customs. While Italians do learn how they prefer to drink on their own, they are guided by parents to prevent from gaining unhealthy habits. American families will vary in how involved parents are in their children's' lives. Italians feel they have freedom in how they utilize alcohol due to the lack of interference by institutions such as government and school. This contrasts largely with American who feels either persecuted by the law or else, severely judged by religious groups for their drinking decisions.

This cultural connectedness also reveals aspects of the family dynamics in each culture. Italians rely upon each other in their family and community to approach various issues. Therefore, people with families are perceived as becoming well adjusted and protected from alcoholism. On the other hand, Americans abide by the "live and let live" mentality which can hinder many from confronting friends or family members with self-defeating habits. This not only has led to a private society in America where problems can go hidden for a long time, it also influenced a major family disconnect that is accepted in the culture.

As to whether this cultural connectedness hinders alcoholic tendencies, it's controversial. Most would claim that family and community connectedness helps to prevent alcoholism since the environment would bring underlying issues to light. Gaining this social support has been claimed to be part of the success Alcoholics Anonymous offers American alcoholics. However, self-empowerment is also seen as an advocate for alcoholics as they face their addiction. Whether or not this self-empowerment would go against a collectivist culture such as the Asian culture seems correct but whether or not self-empowerment would go against the bombastic Italian culture seems questionable. The closest observations of collectivist influences on drinking habits in America were seen in families that let their children drink alcohol in their presence at younger ages. Parents in these families tended to guide their children's drinking habits while also breaking associated stigmas. Other Americans have observed individuals from these families to not engage in extreme drinking habits. While this might help prevent alcohol abuse, it does not eliminate the possibility of developing alcoholism when escaping from later life struggles.

Social norm trends

The social norm trends varied across the two countries. Both countries notice the ways in which the social influence of others affects culture but this has different implications for each culture. The American culture mostly continues to watch social norms of peers to guide drinking trends and so, encourage parents, schools, and communities to take initiative to model good behaviors. However, the Italians are beginning to see how the

social norms of other cultures are changing their traditional Italian style. For the most part, they view the drinking norms in Italy to be getting worse with each new generation. Drinking different types of beverages such as beer and mix drinks at bars or social parties are starting to invade on the Wine Country. They also see breakdown in families as the younger adults have to leave in order to survive in the poor economic conditions. Fear of developing disconnected families and loss of cultural identity have concerned many Italians and even caused government reaction. Maintaining a strong cultural identity in a global environment and international economy is becoming more difficult over time.

Country-specific theme

A common thread found only in the Italian interviews was their perception that alcohol is mostly seen as a positive thing. The only concern voiced about Italian drinking pertained to heavy drinking experienced as the youth experiment with alcohol. Whether this positive view is due mostly to lack of stigma, to social acceptability, to cultural and economic connections to wine and food, or to appropriate drinking habits is uncertain.

The common cultural distinction made from the American viewpoint highlighted the stressful, fast-paced culture spurring the achievement-oriented society forward. Along with this race to achievement come high amounts of stress and little time to cope. Thus, individuals tend to seek immediate stress relief and therefore develop inadequate and possibly harmful coping skills such as alcohol dependency. Such a fast-paced society

additionally disconnects family units as each individual strives for success. Accordingly, this continues to create broken family lifestyles, hinder the development of coping mechanisms, and further disconnect an already individualistic society.

Question 2: With respect to alcohol, what is the status of healthiness in lifestyle as seen in America as opposed to Italy?

The healthiness status is hard to clearly identify due to the relevance of subjective judgment in this matter, but some of our conclusions can help illuminate the matter. Institutionally, the governments and schools in Italy tend to not interfere much as individuals decide how they prefer to drink. This differs from American drinkers who feel persecuted by law or judged by religious groups in their drinking decisions. Governmental restrictions on drinking age may encourage rebellion from the youth as well as prolong the phase of heavy drinking. In Italy, where governmental interference is minimal, this phase is only associated with beginning to mid teens. Media has influenced the lifestyles of both Italians and Americans. Both societies see media as a means to positively reinforce healthy behavior.

The traditional Italian culture tends to remain stable but fears future change as the global environment begins to influence its citizens with other cultural norms. Already facing this, Americans continue to incorporate cultural variety into their society as well as develop a distinct but diverse American culture to reflect its melting pot of a nation.

Socially, Italians contain a connectedness to family and community that helps them to guard from unhealthy habits and address social issues. Americans largely contrast this with highly negative views associated with outsider interference. Fear of being intrusive or offensive will often lead American hesitant in helping friends or family members with self-defeating behaviors. The lack of connectedness among Americans along with the fast-paced culture helps to spur the prevalence of dysfunctional families and to hinder the development of effective coping skills.

Perceptions of alcohol vary between countries. American society tends to hold extreme views of alcohol that may see only negative aspects of alcohol which could otherwise be neutral. These black and white views usually encourage teetotal-type behavior or else secretive drinking behavior. Italian culture contrasts with neutral to balanced views of alcohol. Most individuals perceive positive aspects associated with alcohol while also understanding negative aspects that could arise from improper use. Other than this, many Italians have a very neutral stance towards alcohol, having given the subject very little consideration.

Significance of conclusions

The conclusions from this research are significant because they help us evaluate ourselves from an outside perspective. This allows us to see where the unique characteristics that set apart our culture and help it to thrive can also lead to extreme levels and so, where our culture could maintain better balance. Elements such as

reducing the social stigma against alcohol and having healthy, balanced views of alcohol may help to reduce many social battles amongst teens and adults.

Furthermore, taking active roles as parents, families, schools, and communities to teach adolescents proper use of alcohol and how to develop healthy coping mechanisms may help prevent alcoholic tendencies. With this in view, Americans could consider having institutions such as government and schools allow parents to take a stronger role in deciding alcohol limitations for their children. To balance apparent individualistic tendencies, promotion of more community involvement and family connectedness to maintain social support for individuals seems suitable for the American culture.

Results from this study also seem to show that staying connected with others is a major factor to prevent unhealthy habits such as alcoholism. Additionally, this investigation seems to suggest that social support, such as that which is seen in interconnected communities, is key to maintaining health and happiness under the normal stresses of life.

This investigation also suggests that media could be used to encourage people to balance their inherent cultural values with some healthy daily practices. For instance, while Americans may continue to strive for success and independence, perhaps we could encourage our communities to take a slower pace and take care of our stress levels when needed.

Lastly, we come into view of our face-paced culture that seeks success and with it, high amounts of stress. While success and achievement is certainly important to the American, this investigation would remind the American to remain healthy and live lives of high quality, not just high quantity.

This study's examination of the Italian culture is just the beginning to initiate discussion amongst individuals and communities about the proper steps to take towards healthier lifestyles. Conclusions such as these could be used by programs promoting healthy lifestyles. However, more specified studies could also help bring these insights into a clearer view.

Implications for future research

In light of this study, future research could help to investigate specific details of the emergent themes already discussed.

With the alcohol culture in America coming into light, future research might further investigate how particular environment affect the recovery of post-rehab alcoholics. Are there any programs that could connect communities to encourage a recovery and prevention friendly environment? Also, the subject of social stigma, how it develops, what can be done to break it, and how exactly does it influence our behaviors might be to light for Americans who battle stigmas on a number of topics.

Considering the emergent theme of family and community connectedness in this study, future research could investigate the relationship between connectedness with others to other things such as:

- the prevalence of alcoholism

- the development and sustainment of effective coping skills

- levels of stress

The indications of this study also signify a need to investigate the impact of a fast-paced culture or lifestyle has on the individual. Future research in this area could examine the relationship of a fast-paced lifestyle to subjects like:

- connectedness with others

- prevalence of dysfunctional families

- stress levels

- effective coping mechanisms

Research such as this could answer the question most working Americans have wondered, "How fast-paced can my lifestyle be before the harm of stress levels outweigh the gains from success?" and "What would signify the limit of someone's busyness: the point at which it would be self-defeating to try to cope with additional stress?" Of course, this would be influenced by dynamics such as personality, environment, demographics, etc, and should therefore be fully investigated from a holistic approach.

Overall, we could investigate these dynamics to further understand our culture and what type of environments are advocates of healthy lifestyles.

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APPENDIX A

People aged 11 and over with at least one risk behavior (non-moderate daily consumption or binge drinking) were 8,454.000 (15.8%), comprising 6, 434.000 males (25%) and 2,020,000 females (7.3%). Non-moderate consumption concerns 14.8% of males and 3.8% of females. Binge drinking concerns 12.4% of males and 3.1% of females (Istat, 2010, p. 2).

From this, we can use the percentages to find the number of people in this population sample, and even more specifically, the number of males and number of females in the population sample. (8,454 people at risk/.158 percentage of people at risk=) 53, 506 total population: roughly 6,434/.25=25,736 were males, 2,020/.073=27,671 were females. (25,736+27,671=53,407)

The worst of these are young people aged 18-24. Their rates of binge drinking are 21.6% of males and 7.9% of females (Istat, 2010, p. 2).

To find number of men: 0.216*25,736=5,559 males

To find number of females: 0.079*27,671=2,186 females

To find number of males and females (all people aged 18-24 participating in binge drinking)= 5,559+2,671=8,230

To find percentage out of total population: 8,230/53,506=0.1538 and 8,230/53,407=0.1541.

In conclusion:

Those aged 18-24 participate in the most binge drinking. Of these individuals, 15.4%

participate in binge drinking.

APPENDIX B

Italian Data:

Of citizens aged 11 and over, binge drinking concerned 12.4% of males and 3.1% of

females (Istat, 2010, p. 2). Using total number of men and women in population sample

derived in Appendix A, we calculate:

To find the number of males: 0.124*25,736=3,191.264

To find the number of females: 0.031*27,671=857.801

To find number of all individuals binge drinking (both genders):

3,191.264+857.801=4,049.065

To find percent of individuals binge drinking out of population sample:

4,049.065/53,506=0.0757 or 4,049.065/53,407=0.0758

In conclusion, 7.58% of Italian individuals over age 11 partake in binge drinking.

APPENDIX C

Interview questions
1. What are the current views/beliefs on alcohol and its role in the American Culture?
   A. Do most people drink alcohol? How often? How much at a time?
   B. What type of alcoholic beverage do most Americans drink?
   C. There has been recent speculation that beer drinking and binge drinking has been more prominent recently among the young adults in America. Describe why this might be the case or why you would disagree with this statement. If this is indeed such the case, when would you say this trend occurred?
   D. How early do most people start drinking alcoholic beverages?
   E. Does intoxication happen often? Why or why not?
2. What are some of the customs practice by Americans that involve alcohol?
   A. What are the ones done most often/by the most people?
   B. Would you classify those as yearly, monthly, weekly, or daily customs?
      i. If the frequency varies, what causes it to vary?
      ii. What would you say best describes how often people partake in each custom?
   C. Tell me about religious customs as well as social customs.
   D. Which customs seem to have adverse effects on society? Why?
   E. What are some governmental laws that involve alcohol?
3. Tell me about how common alcoholism is in the American Culture.
   A. Compare the problem of alcoholism in America to the problem as seen in other cultures. (Is it a big problem? For what group of Americans?)
   B. Why do you think that some Americans become alcoholic dependent?
   C. Tell me about some social measures that Americans take to prevent or advocate recovery for those who become alcoholics.
   D. Tell me about some institutions (ex: hospitals) or government measures that are used to help alcohol dependency.
4. Tell me about the positive impacts alcohol has had on the American society.
   A. How often does this happen?
5. Tell me about any negative impacts alcohol has had on the American society.
   A. How often does this happen?

APPENDIX D

Further notes for IRB on procedures to be taken in Italian interviews
- I plan to send an email of acknowledgement to the institution that I plan to visit to interview their employees. I will keep these emails as documentation that I have their permission to come interview any of their employees.
- I may contact other institutions. This will especially become clear as the research begins and I discover what professionals would have the most knowledge about the alcoholic culture in Italy and its effects on Italian society.
- No names or contact information will be used in my documents concerning this research or its results. All interviewees will be coded.
- If a tape recorder is allowed by the interviewee then no names will be addressed during the interview.
- My criteria for interviewees are that they be an adult Italian that can speak some English.

APPENDIX E

Informed consent for Italian interviews

<u>Title of Research</u>: Alcohol Usage in the Italian Culture

<u>Investigator</u>: Cindy M. Williams

Before you agree to participate in this study, it is important that you read the following explanation of the study. This document describes the purpose, procedures, benefits, risk, discomforts, and precautions of the program. Alternate procedures are also explained as well as your right to withdraw from the study at any time.

<u>Purpose</u>:

This interview is conducted to acquire information from Italian professionals that provide qualitative data about the prevalence of alcohol within the Italian community and what roles alcohol plays within the Italian culture. Specifically, this research serves to identify what aspects of alcohol use in the Italian culture might affect the prevalence of alcoholism among Italians. Cindy Williams, a Texas A&M University undergraduate, is conducting this study to help identify the various aspects of alcohol addiction and this information could be incorporated into alcohol rehabilitation facility procedures. The interview should not last more than an hour and will be held in a setting mutually agreeable to the participant and the researcher.

<u>Procedures</u>:

First I will ask your permission to use a recording device to record our interview for the sake of having an accurate record of our interview. If you choose to allow the recording device then no names identifying you or your company will be used for the sake of privacy. If you choose to decline the recording device, then I will just be taking notes throughout our interview

This interview should not last more than an hour. Throughout the interview, I will ask a few broad questions for you to respond to. I will help guide the interview through each topic with supplemental questions. I will ask that you respond to each question as you see fit, using your knowledge and experience to explain what you think reflects Italian culture most accurately.

<u>Alternative Treatments</u>:

Because this study does not include treatments or procedures, there are no known alternative treatments to participating in this study.

<u>Right to Withdraw</u>:

You may skip any question or subject you wish not to address without penalty or loss of benefits. Participation in this study is voluntary. If at any time during the interview you wish to withdraw from the study, you can let me know and I will suspend the interview. There is no penalty or loss of benefits for withdrawing from the interview.

Precautions:

All material referencing individuals interviewed or their contact information will be coded and kept private throughout the study. Only the researcher and Texas A&M University IRB will have access to the data and information. There will be no identifying names on the tapes and participants names will not be available to anybody. If recording is allowed, all record tapes will be destroyed at the end of the study. Research results will be published in the form of an undergraduate research paper and included in an undergraduate senior thesis

Risks/Benefits:

There are no risks or discomforts anticipated from your participation in the study. Possible risks or discomforts may include undesired emotional feelings when asked questions during the interview.
This study is designed to provide an accurate description of the social and medical effects of alcohol in the Italian culture. Understanding this will benefit Italians by helping them identify healthy customs involving alcohol and address any unhealthy alcoholic habits identified. This research will also help psychologists and rehabilitation counselors to understand the various approaches to alcohol and their associated risks and benefits. The study hopefully will illuminate healthy ways to approach alcohol so that these customs can be taught to and adopted by those who struggle with alcohol abuse.

New Findings:

Any significant new findings that develop during the study, which may affect the participant's willingness to participate in the study, will be provided by Cindy Williams.

Cost/Payment for Participation:

There will be no cost for participation in the study. Also, participants will not be paid to participate in this study.

Payment for Research Related Injuries:

Texas A&M University has made no provision for monetary compensation in relation to injuries obtained during research. It is the responsibility of the participants to cover the cost of health care services.

Questions:

For any questions regarding the research, research participant's rights, or in the case of a research related injury, participants may contact Edward Funkhouser at 979-845-6774. Questions regarding rights as a person in this research project should be directed to (IRB Chairman), Texas A&M University Institutional Review Board Chairman, at 979-XXX-XXXX.

<u>Consent</u>:
Signing below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form and agree to participate in this study.

_____ _____

Signature of Subject Date

_____

Subject's Name (Printed)

_____ _____

Signature of Researcher Date

APPENDIX F

Further notes for IRB on procedures to be taken in American interviews

- I plan to send an email of acknowledgement to the institution that I plan to visit to interview their employees. I will keep these emails as documentation that I have their permission to come interview any of their employees.
- I may contact other institutions on the basis that some institutions may decline to participate.
- No names or contact information will be used in my documents concerning this research or its results. All interviewees will be coded.
- If a tape recorder is allowed by the interviewee then no names will be addressed during the interview.
- Interviews will be held at a public location mutually agreeable to Investigator and Participant. (i.e. coffee shop, office, library, place of employment)
- My criteria for interviewees are that they be directly correlated with those interviewees previously seen in Italian research. Considering this is a study on American Alcohol Culture, I also mandate that they be an adult American. More specifically two males: a mayor (recently or current), a bar owner/manager; and three females: an 18 year old, a collegiate professor, and a collegiate administrator (possibly from a foreign culture).
- Additionally, all interviewees must reside in or near College Station, TX for purposes of attainability. This research understands that data collected will be biased according to specific community investigated.
- Other than being an Investigator, I will not have any other relationship or affiliation with any of the participants.
- This research is not funded nor receiving any grants.

An sample email to potential participants would include:

Dear Research Participant,

My name is Cindy Williams and I am a Texas A&M undergraduate conducting research for my senior thesis. I had conducted research while studying in Italy last spring and I am hoping to conduct a correlating study among the local community residing near Texas A&M University.

What I ask of you is to help me in my research by allowing me to take an hour of your time to interview you as an American representative and ask you a few questions pertaining to the American culture as you understand it. By conducting these studies, I hope to seek understanding in evaluating cultural differences and identify healthy customs to that each may adopt in order grow as a communities learning from one another. I also assure you that specific steps are being conducted to protect your privacy by assuring anonymity of our participants and their responses to interview questions.

My schedule is flexible as is my preference for the public location where we choose to have our meeting. If you are interested, please let me know of an open time in your week for us to meet and, if possible, a location preference.
Thank you for your time.
Cindy Williams

APPENDIX G

Informed Consent for American interviews
Title of Research: Alcohol Usage in the American Culture
Investigator: Cindy M. Williams
Undergraduate in University Studies Department
Email: cindymw@tamu.edu   Phone: 210-844-4764

Before you agree to participate in this study, it is important that you read the following explanation of the study. This document describes the purpose, procedures, benefits, risk, discomforts, and precautions of the program. Alternate procedures are also explained as well as your right to withdraw from the study at any time.

Purpose:
This interview is conducted to acquire information from Americans adults that provide qualitative data about the prevalence of alcohol within the American community and what roles alcohol plays within the American culture. Specifically, this research serves to identify what aspects of alcohol use in the American culture might affect the prevalence of alcoholism among Americans. Cindy Williams, a Texas A&M University undergraduate, is conducting this study with committee approval as part of a senior thesis to help identify the various aspects of alcohol addiction and how they compare to other cultures. This information could illuminate the fundamental philosophies behind addiction that are incorporated into alcohol rehabilitation facility procedures. The interview should not last more than an hour and will be held in a setting mutually agreeable to the participant and the researcher.

Procedures:
First it is requested for the participant's permission to use a recording device to record the interview for the sake of having an accurate record of the interview. If the participant chooses to allow the recording device then no names identifying the participant or their company will be used for the sake of privacy. If the participant chooses to decline the recording device, then the interviewer will just be taking notes throughout the interview
This interview should not last more than an hour. Throughout the interview, the interviewer will ask a few broad questions for the participant to respond to. The interviewer will help guide the interview through each topic with supplemental questions. It is asked that the participant respond to each question as the participant sees fit, using their knowledge and experience to explain what they think reflects American culture most accurately.

Alternative Treatments:

Because this study does not include treatments or procedures, there are no known alternative treatments to participating in this study.

Right to Withdraw:

The participant may skip any question or subject they wish not to address without penalty or loss of benefits. Participation in this study is voluntary. If at any time during the interview the participant wishes to withdraw from the study, they can inform the interviewer and the interview will be suspended. There is no penalty or loss of benefits for withdrawing from the interview.

Precautions:

All material referencing individuals interviewed or their contact information will be coded and kept private throughout the study. Only the researcher and Texas A&M University IRB will have access to the data and information. There will be no identifying names on the tapes and participants' names will not be available to anybody. If recording is allowed, all record tapes will be destroyed at the end of the study. Research results will be published in the form of an undergraduate research paper and included in an undergraduate senior thesis

Risks/Benefits:

There are no risks or discomforts anticipated from participation in the study. Possible risks or discomforts may include undesired emotional feelings when asked questions during the interview.

This study is designed to provide an accurate description of the social and medical effects of alcohol in the American culture. Understanding this will benefit Americans by helping them identify healthy customs involving alcohol and address any unhealthy alcoholic habits identified. Comparison to directly correlated research performed in Italy will also help to understand underlying culture differences. This research will also help psychologists and rehabilitation counselors to understand the various approaches to alcohol and their associated risks and benefits. The study hopefully will illuminate healthy ways to approach alcohol so that these customs can be taught to and adopted by those who struggle with alcohol abuse.

New Findings:

Any significant new findings that develop during the study, which may affect the participant's willingness to participate in the study, will be provided by Cindy Williams.

Cost/Payment for Participation:

There will be no cost for participation in the study. Also, participants will not be paid to participate in this study.

Payment for Research Related Injuries:

Texas A&M University has made no provision for monetary compensation in relation to injuries obtained during research. It is the responsibility of the participants to cover the cost of health care services.

Questions:

For any questions regarding the research, research participant's rights, or in the case of a research related injury, participants may contact Edward Funkhouser at 979-845-6774. Questions regarding rights as a person in this research project should be directed to (IRB Chairman), Texas A&M University Institutional Review Board Chairman, at 979-XXX-XXXX.

Participant's initials:_____

Consent:

Signing below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form and agree to participate in this study.

_____ _____
Signature of Subject Date

_____
Subject's Name (Printed)

_____ _____
Signature of Researcher Date

CONTACT INFORMATION

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