

Call for papers - International conference

Drinking, power and illegalisms. Alcohol(ism) in controversy Lausanne, 6-7 June 2024

From the nineteenth century onwards, the various medical specialities took an interest in the problem of alcohol(ism), allying themselves with or confronting other authorities, primarily the law and justice system. However, the wide range of realities that the discourse of authority has since tended to cover remains largely unexplored. The aim of this conference is to examine the ways in which the various medical specialities, particularly psychiatry and alienism, play a part in the differential management of illegalisms related to alcohol consumption. This concept, coined by Michel Foucault (1975) and reworked by various authors (Lascoumes 1996; Fischer and Spire 2009), invites us to deconstruct supposedly neutral and universal legal categories. Transgressions are attributed to individual determinants and are subject to differential social treatment, revealing specific modes of domination that this conference aims to decipher.

How do structural inequalities and gendered and racist views permeate medical nosologies and analytical tools? Taking into account the heterogeneity of the medical field and the moments of controversy, what alternative visions of alcohol use and alcoholism mark the history of medicine and psychiatry? The perspective we propose invites us to consider the perpetrators of illegalisms as actors in their own right. Confronted with the repressive apparatus and/or specialised care, the people concerned deploy strategies, negotiate or struggle. The social sciences and humanities have therefore turned their attention to drinking biographies (Hailwood and Toner 2015; Hogg 2019). These narratives and counter-narratives offer perspectives on social reactions to 'undisciplined' drinking. Based on writings from the private sphere, the management of illegalisms is captured 'from below'.

This meeting is part of the recent impetus given to drinking studies by the creation of interdisciplinary research laboratories, such as the Drinking Studies Network, which has been active since 2010, by conferences (Strasbourg, 2023; Oxford, 2017) and by comparative publishing projects (Ernst and Müller 2022; Dias-Lewandowska et al., 2022). Through the prism of gender perspectives (Eriksen 1999; Tlusty 2014; McCallum 2013) and intersectional approaches (Murdock 1998; Langhamer 2003; Déroff and Fillaut 2015), numerous works investigate from a renewed angle the conflictual dynamics generated by the social uses of alcohol. In the same vein, entire chapters of social and political history are being revisited: campaigns aimed at women's alcohol consumption at the height of Italian fascism (Ferris 2021), the punitive treatment of alcoholics through forced labour in the USSR (Werkmeister C. 2017) and administrative internment in Switzerland in the twentieth century (Maugué 2019; Bühler R. et al. 2019), sometimes carried out in agricultural penal colonies (Moreau and Ferreira 2020).

There are four main objectives to guide the communications proposals.

The first aim of this conference is to look at the creation and deconstruction of norms, based on moments of controversy where science, politics and morality intermingle. Medical and psychiatric theories and interpretations of alcohol use serve to legitimise relationships of domination and social hierarchies that need to be situated in the light of specific historical moments. A case in point is the disqualification of the revolutionary actions of the Communards, which doctors attribute to pathological drunkenness (Léonard 2022). For their part, the observations of the psychiatrists of the Algiers School regarding the use of alcohol among colonised peoples (infantilism, mimicry, inability to control oneself) helped to justify the civilising mission of French colonial power (Studer 2022; 2020). Following on from this work, what place does alcoholism occupy in the critical postures of institutional psychiatry, for example? How are alcohol-related illegalisms discussed by the medical profession in relation to immigration? What have been the contributions of women, including health professionals, to the problematisation of alcohol(ism) and to action on the ground, given that their commitment is overshadowed by male authority figures (Afanasyeva and Bonvin 2023; Afanasyeva 2020; Bonvin 2020)?

Secondly, gender illegalisms will be examined through the prism of masculinities and femininities. In what ways do age, marital status and professional identity interact and produce effects in the medical

identification of alcoholism in men and women? Recent research reveals the diversity of male identities, realities and emotions (Moss 2015; Gausson and Paliere 2012). This diversity has long been buried under the archetypal figure of the 'working-class drinker' (Tanner 1986). The relationship between violence, alcoholism and norms of virility is rethought from the perspective of male professionals (Cochard 2014), the psychiatric archive (Le Bras 2023) and the military (Calado 2021). How do doctors and psychiatrists problematise and differentiate masculine drinking cultures? The same applies to women, whose drinking practices are increasingly documented (Gutzke 2013; Oonagh 2017). Various studies highlight the medical misogyny of alarmist writings on female alcoholism (Salle 2015; McClellan 2017; Moss 2008). In addition, the repressive measures that have affected 'female drinkers' (internment, incarceration) are now being investigated from the angle of sexual illegalisms (Wallis 2019) or intra-family violence (Reidy 2014). But what heterogeneous female realities can be documented by sources including the medico-psychiatric archive?

Thirdly, this colloquium will look at the attitudes of doctors and psychiatrists towards alcohol-related illegalisms within the dominant classes. Compared with the over-visibility of popular drunkenness, alcoholic excesses in bourgeois circles are shrouded in great discretion. This is ensured in particular by the existence of private clinics, the history of which remains largely untold (Dal Zilio 2021). Illegal practices at the top of the social hierarchy can also be examined from the angle of reverse domination. For example, there are cases of well-born people banished by their families and interned far away in socially hybrid places. The judicial sphere provides an additional field of observation for understanding arrangements with the law and discerning the role played by medical expertise in cases where alcoholism poses a threat to family assets. How do issues of gender, age and marital status come into play in these cases (for example, the case of widows and widowers 'caught drinking' from a high social status)?

Fourthly, the aim of the conference is to analyse the differential management of illegalisms through care practices, which are rarely considered by the historiography of medicine and psychiatry (Majerus 2015). Admittedly, various forms of support are marked by statutory asymmetry and 'close domination'. But historicising the care given to 'alcoholics' also makes it possible to make visible other characters, other links and other spaces (urban policlinics and dispensaries, village communities), without reducing care to a supposedly feminine skill. Paradoxically, therefore, alcoholism and the range of its diagnostic variants ('pathological drunkenness', delirium tremens, Korsakoff's syndrome, etc.) remain little studied on the basis of ordinary clinical practice, the identity profiles of sufferers, and the involvement of families (Prestwich 1994; Laé 2004). Much remains to be documented about the relational economy of medical and nursing care for 'alcoholics'. What's more, the day-to-day life of institutions is an ideal vantage point from which to observe clandestine practices and their conflictual and unequal management (Goffman 1968; Rossigneux-Méheust 2013). How is the administration of drink within institutions subject to distinctive and discriminatory logics based on age, class, gender and race ?

Terms of contribution

Proposals must be submitted by **20 December 2023**. They should include a title, a summary of no more than 500 words and a brief biographical note, in French or English.

Contact address: Cristina.Ferreira@hesav.ch

Organising committee

Cristina Ferreira, HESAV, School of Health Sciences and Damoclès

Marco Cicchini, Damoclès, University of Geneva

Mikhaël Moreau, Institute of Humanities in Medicine and Damoclès

Scientific Committee

Victoria Afanasyeva, Centre for 19th-century history, University of Paris-I-Panthéon-Sorbonne

Francesca Arena, Institute of Ethics History Humanities, University of Geneva

Emmanuelle Bernheim, Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa

Samuel Dal Zilio, Centre for Contemporary and Digital History (C2DH), University of Luxembourg

Aude Fauvel, Institute of Humanities in Medicine, CHUV, University of Lausanne
Anatole Le Bras, Sciences Po History Centre, Paris
Ludovic Mangué, Damoclès, University of Geneva
Marianna Scarfone, Laboratory SAGE (UMR 7363), University of Strasbourg
Nina Studer, Independent historian