

**Going out to have fun and get drunk?  
Motivational aspects of young adults'  
drinking on weekends**

**Emmanuel Kuntsche, PhD**

**Addiction Info Switzerland, Research Institute, Lausanne**

# Introduction

## Why weekend drinking?

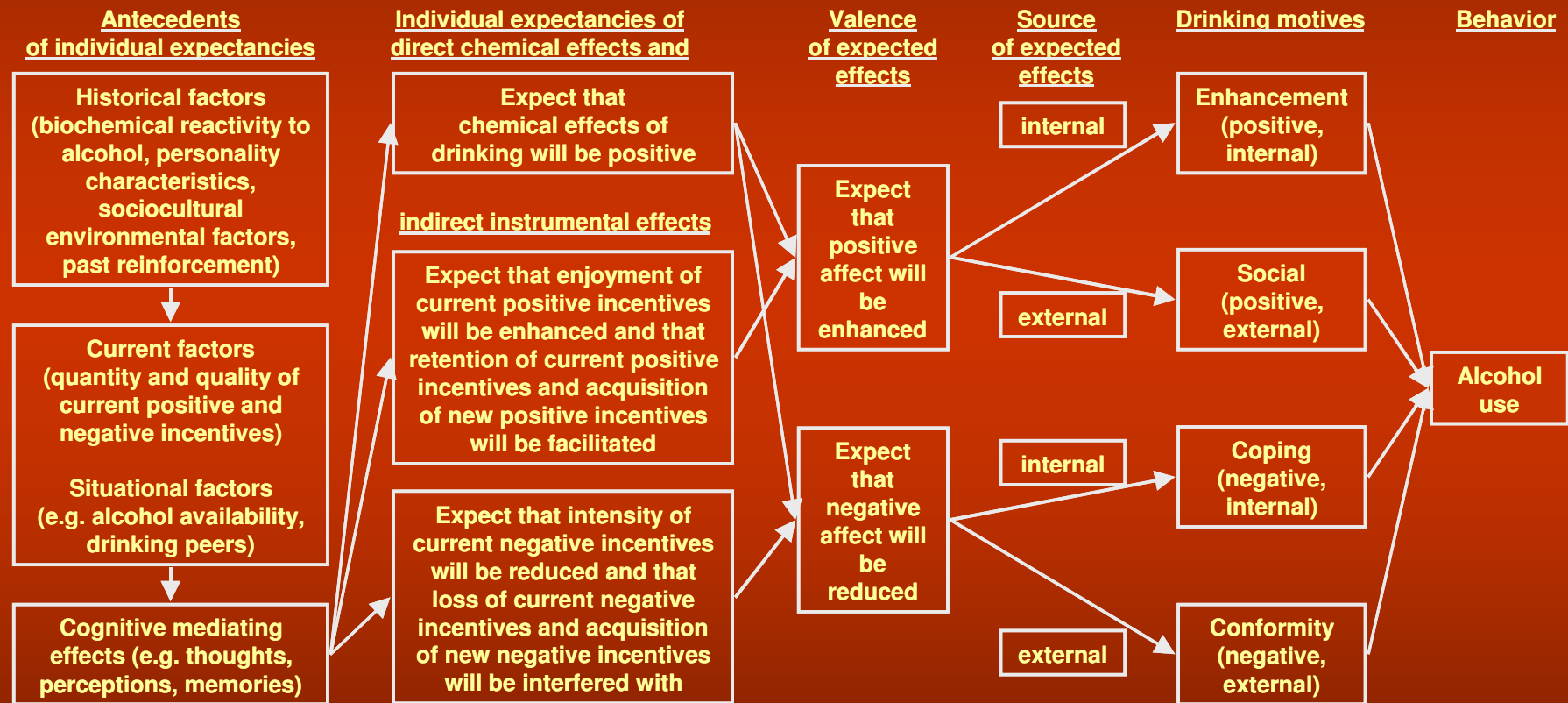
- Young people's heavy late-night drinking on weekends has been linked to particular detrimental consequences, such as accidents, injuries, victimization, and aggression

## Why drinking motives?

- Defined as most proximal factors, the final decision to engage in alcohol use
- Explain up to 50% of the variance alcohol use cross-sectional
- Based on a sound theoretical framework

# Representation of the Motivational Model

Kuntsche et al., 2005, Clinical Psychology Review



# What we know...

Briefly summarizing the evidence of the last two decades:

- Enhancement motives => Heavy episodic drinking
- Coping motives => Additional alc-related problems
- Social/conformity motives => Moderate drinking

However, is this also true...

1. over time (few longitudinal studies, mixed evidence)?
2. in-the-event drinking measures (EMA to reduce recall bias)?
3. for late-night weekend drinking  
(vs. usual / weekday drinking)?
4. when usual drinking habits are taken into account?

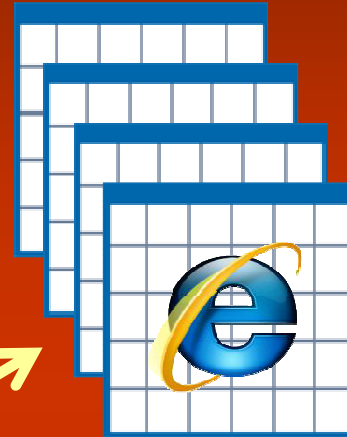
# The present study

- Drinking motives and consumption habits assessed at baseline (Internet questionnaire)
- 2 weeks later: start of diary study measuring alcohol use “in the event / given situation”
- Realized by text messaging (SMS) and continued over 8 subsequent weekend days (Friday and Saturday nights)

# Online Operating System



Researchers



Registration and Baseline  
Questionnaire on the Internet



Weekend Diary  
realized by SMS



**RECRUITMENT**

**Face-to-face contact**

**E-Mail**

**Internet advertisements**

**INTERNET SURVEY**

Description of the survey, instructions on how to answer  
Validation code sent to participants' cell phones  
Personal access to the web-based questionnaire:  
Questions on demographics, usual quantity, etc.

**SMS SURVEY**

**Friday, 9 pm**

**Reminder, instruction**

**Saturday, 1 pm**

**No. of standard drinks, alc-related consequences in the last 24 hours**

**Saturday, 9 pm**

**Sunday, 1 pm**

**No. of standard drinks, alc-related consequences in the last 24 hours**

**Continued over 4 weekends**

**QUALITATIVE TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS**

**Participation motivation and problems**

# Results

	Drinking habits only model	Drinking habits and drinking motive model
Intercept	0.35 (.56, 0.6)	1.41* (.65, 2.2)
Weekend day	0.74* (.34, 2.2)	0.74* (.34, 2.2)
Gender	-0.02 (.53, -0.4)	-0.49 (.55, -0.9)
Age	0.10 (.10, 1.0)	0.13 (.10, 1.3)
Usual quantity	0.81*** (.21, 3.9)	0.51* (.22, 2.3)
Enhancement motives		1.44*** (.35, 4.3)
Social motives		-0.28 (.35, -0.8)
Coping motives		-0.32 (.61, -0.5)
Conformity motives		0.06 (.38, 0.2)
Explained variance		
Intra-individual level	2.4%	2.4%
Inter-individual level	61.5%	78.1%



# Discussion

- Over and above how much a person normally drinks, those who are motivated by enhancement (i.e. drinking to have fun and to get high) consume significantly more alcohol on both Friday and Saturday nights
- No effects for social, conformity or coping motives
- Limitation: Small non-random sample, selection bias, generalizability to other populations
- Brand new project to investigate “Pre-Drinking”, “Pre-Partying” and to model drinking trajectories across the evening

# Conclusions

- Young people heavy drinking on weekends because of: excitement seeking, having fun, getting high
- Young adult drinking culture characterized by heavy episodic weekend drinking (Heeb et al., 2008)
- Room and Livingston (2009, p. 10): “Getting drunk on a young person’s weekend night out in many societies is often not accidental; it is often intended”
- Grounds behind this fun and excitement seeking: Compensation for everyday (work or study) responsibilities, demands and duties, the switch off from everyday realities

# Prevention Consideration

- Particularly worrisome due to particular detrimental consequences such as accidents, injuries, victimization etc.
- What can we do when people actively seek drunkenness and associated risks? (Room & Livingston, 2009)
- Recent calls for event-specific prevention strategies, e.g. in peak times (Kypri and Lee, 2009; Neighbors et al., 2007)
- Harm reduction policy measures such as shorter opening hours, banning sale promotions, server training, making non- or low-alcohol beverages available, and drunk-driving counter-measures

**Thank you!**

Kuntsche, E. & Cooper, M. L. (in press). Drinking to have fun and to get drunk: Motives of weekend drinking. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*.