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Research Paper

Safe, funny and frightening drinking situations from children's viewpoint: Comparing recalled childhood stories about others' drinking in Scandinavia

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ABSTRACT

The article analyzes retrospective childhood stories related to others' drinking (N = 336). The stories have been told in a focus group context in Finland and Sweden. Hence, they are stories about the past that have been constructed in the present. The retrospective childhood stories are analyzed from the perspective of emotions, seen as relational and situational sociocultural constructions, by paying attention to what kind of contact and emotional responses children develop to others' drinking in specific situations. The analysis demonstrates how in an intoxicated-oriented drinking culture the presence of alcohol may signify something outside the bounds of everyday life, in the case of which children develop an ambiguous contact with drinking in which many kinds of positive or negative emotions can emerge, such as love, fun, fear, shame or curiosity. In the Finnish narratives, children's emotional socialization to drinking is regulated by situations of heavy domestic drinking, festive drinking and moderate routine drinking at home. In the Swedish narratives, children's emotional socialization to drinking is governed by festive situations, moderate routine drinking at home and meal drinking. Fear dominates the Finnish participants' recalled childhood stories, whereas fun is the most common emotion in the stories from Sweden. The differences between Finnish and Swedish emotions recalled from childhood in relation to drinking may reflect differences in these culture's drinking practices and/or social interaction norms. The article demonstrates how adults' childhood memories on drinking provide an important 'indirect' source to get knowledge on children's ways of experiencing and responding to others' drinking in various situations.

1 Introduction

In the article, I analyze retrospective childhood stories and emotions related to others' drinking. The stories embody images of our childhood selves but serve also as a way to present ourselves to others. Telling stories about the past is a principal part of social life (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006) and of identity construction (Bamberg, 2012). This implies a constitutive view to narratives (Presser & Sandberg, 2015). Through the narrative discourse of recalling past events, we organize life and establish a sense of who we are (Presser & Sandberg, 2015). When approaching the childhood stories from the constitutive perspective, we do not analyze them as objective representations or subjective interpretations about what has happened. Rather, we approach them as narrative verbalizations that give form to our childhood experiences and selves through relating them to wider storied experiences and identities circulating in the culture (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). In this way, childhood narratives reproduce and hand down culturally shared collective norms, values and emotions (Bamberg, 2012).

The retrospective stories I analyze below have been told in a focus group context in Finland and Sweden and cover childhood experiences to alcohol from the 1960s to the beginning of the 2000s. Hence, they are stories about the past that have been constructed in the present (Bamberg, 2012). The focus group method is a research tool to evoke narratives where the personal and the social are interwoven together. In a focus group situation, participants are expected to tell their personal stories so that the other participants can easily understand how they are meaningful with respect to surrounding sociocultural and historical contexts (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006).

In the analysis of retrospective stories, my starting point is that alcohol is an expressive marker of states of emotions (Lupton, 1996). Especially, in an intoxication driven drinking culture, alcohol functions as a mood setter (Gusfield, 1987) that may raise the spirits of the people around and generate in a child a positive contact and positive emotions towards drinking or it may transform drinkers' behavior into something that is intimidating and produce in a child a negative contact and negative emotions to drinking.

Furthermore, I assume that drinking arouses diverse emotional reactions in children in different cultural contexts, generational

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circumstances, and social surroundings. In the study, Finland and Sweden represent Nordic intoxication-oriented drinking cultures (Hauge & Irgens-Jensen, 1987; Mäkelä, Tigerstedt, & Mustonen, 2012). However, these countries differ in how intoxication has been culturally addressed. Comparative quantitative studies have characterized heavy drinking in Finland as more explosive than that in Sweden (Bruun & Hauge, 1963), contributing to more harm, such as hang-overs and quarrels (Nordström, 1998). Studies also show that in Finland the intoxication-oriented drinking tradition has retained its original form more than in Sweden, where drinking patterns increasingly resemble continental drinking habits and consumption more frequently is modest (Hauge & Irgens-Jensen, 1986,1990; Mäkelä, 1986; Mäkelä, 2011). The Swedish-speaking minority population in Finland also seems to foster less harmful drinking habits than the Finnish-speaking majority (Paljärvi, Suominen, Koskenvuo, Winter, & Kauhanen, 2009). Moreover, in Sweden people self-report less harm from the heavy drinking of family and friends than in Finland (Ramstedt et al., 2015; Synnøve Moan et al., 2015). Therefore, based on these studies, we may expect that storied childhood emotions from Finland give witness to more negative associations and unsafe experiences in the context of drinking than those from Sweden.

We lack studies on how adults' drinking in diverse situations affect children emotionally. There are quantitative studies that deal with how emotional abuse in childhood is later related to alcohol misuse in adolescence or adulthood (e.g. Shin, Lee, Jeon, & Wills, 2015). There is also a growing literature from the "harms to others" in which survey data is used to study the harm that adults' drinking may cause to children. In these studies respondents who live with children have been asked, for example, to report how many times in the last 12 months they have noticed that a child or children were left in an unsafe place, verbally abused, physically hurt or witnessing serious violence because of someone's drinking (Laslett, Ferris, Dietze, & Room, 2012). These studies, which do not include Nordic countries, show that between 4% and 14% of respondents reported that their children have been negatively affected because of others' drinking (Laslett et al., 2017: 200). Then there are studies that examine drinking in the presence of underage children with an assumption that this has adverse effects on children. For instance, a recent Finnish study of a representative sample points out that children have been present in 12% of all the parent's drinking occasions, and in one quarter of these occasions a parent has been intoxicated (Raitasalo, Holmila, & Mäkelä, 2011). The study does not look more closely at what kinds of harm adults' drinking and intoxication may cause to children but it proposes that in Finland the drinking culture is permissive. Drunkenness in the presence of children is considered appropriate so long as someone stays sober and looks after the children (Raitasalo et al., 2011). Generally, we lack studies in which the harm from others' drinking is studied with data based on children's own experiences and responses. Furthermore, the existing studies typically approach drinking as solely a harmful activity to children and do not take into consideration that drinking may also be related to positive aspects in children's life. Jayne and Valentine (2016, 2017) provide an exception in the literature. It shows, among others things, that children may experience adult drinking in a holiday context as amusing occasions of relaxation or as ambivalent events that should be avoided. In particular, we lack research that compares how children emotionally experience diverse drinking situations and whether the emotional responses differ depending on gender and class or cultural and generational background. This article takes on this task by producing knowledge about children's emotional responses to adult drinking in two different cultural and geographical contexts, among men and women from different cohorts and educational backgrounds. It clarifies what kinds of drinking situations produce emotionally safe contacts with alcohol and what kinds of drinking situations create emotionally ambivalent or disturbing contacts with alcohol among children.

The article demonstrates how adults' childhood memories on drinking provide an important 'indirect' source to get knowledge on children's ways of experiencing and responding to others' drinking in various situations.

2 Approach: Emotions as relational and situational sociocultural constructions

In the article, I approach the retrospective childhood stories related to others' drinking from the perspective of emotions. Traditionally, emotions have been approached as autonomous natural forces (Greco & Stenner, 2013). For example, in the 'standard paradigm' in experimental psychology emotions are defined as response systems that are based on biological and psychological factors involving expressive, physiological, behavioral and cognitive dimensions (Cornelius, 1996). In this paradigm, emotions are studied as measurable, predictable and controllable organic systems.

The standard theory of emotions was challenged in the 1970s and 1980s by 'social constructionist' view to emotions (e.g. Harré, 1986). Social constructionists' approaches to emotions stress the situational, interactional and discursive aspects of emotions.

In the article, I approach emotions with a social constructionist orientation. First, I consider emotions as relational sociocultural constructions (Lupton, 1998), conditioned by discourses that reflect the cultural norms and values of a society. Emotions are learned and shaped through a socialization process, which consist of patterned and repeated social interactions (Illouz, Gilon, & Shachk, 2014). Secondly, emotions emerge and get their meaning in relation to concrete situations (Lupton, 1998). They "are shaped by contact with objects [in a situation], rather than being caused by objects" (Ahmed, 2004a: 6). Depending on the nature of the contact, different kinds of emotions are stimulated. From this perspective, emotions are formed in a dynamic relation to people, their behavior, and their activities in a specific situation. By being evoked, fired up or dampened through contacts with objects, emotions embody bodily sensations that reflect cultural norms and values of the geographical spaces of one's history.

Our interviewees' narratives, in which they recall, recount, and reflect on their childhood experiences in relation to others' drinking, articulate expressively what kinds of emotional contact they developed towards alcohol consumption in diverse situations when they were children. For example, the succeeding analysis will show how a narrative that witnesses a family meal with wine drinking that produces an amiable atmosphere between family members exemplifies a story in which drinking generates a positive contact with alcohol and delineates a safe everyday life space in the life of the child. In contrast, a narrative that describes a grandmother's 70th birthday in which the interviewee, as a boy, becomes afraid of the altered behavior of his relatives when they got intoxicated, articulates a fearful contact with others' drinking in a festive situation and outlines an unsafe space in the boy's childhood.

Overall, family encounters, events and rituals provide for children the most important sites for the development of emotional contact with objects, such as drinking (Lupton, 1996). For instance, in meal rituals, children develop emotional contact with civilized table manners. When everything goes well, food, eating and drinking may stand for happy objects and activities that assemble the family around good atmosphere and feelings (Ahmed, 2008). Correspondingly, in festive rituals children cultivate emotional contact to ceremonial situations and modes. The celebratory drinking rituals often aim to maximize the emotional energy of a group (Collins, 2004), but as the analysis later shows, in many cases the festive drinking rituals are problematic to children, who often develop an ambivalent or fearful contact to them. Family, parents and relatives also strongly mediate the evolution of children's contact to the events outside home. For example, how parents emotionally respond to homeless drinkers in the street, powerfully condition what kind of contact children form to them.

Table 1
Finnish and Swedish data.

Finland		
More educated	Age	Number of participants
Women 1 (Students, pedagogy)	18-20	5
Women 2 (Teachers)	25-30	5
Women 3 (Teachers)	30-40	5
Women 4 (Teachers)	50-60	8
Men 5 (Students, pedagogy)	18-20	5
Men 6 (Teachers)	25-30	3
Men 7 (Teachers)	35-40	5
Men 8 (Teachers)	50-60	4
Less educated	Age	Number of participants
Women 9 (Students, practical nursing)	18-20	8
Women 10 (Practical nurses)	25-30	5
Women 11 (Practical nurses)	50	5
Women 12 (Practical nurses)	60	9
Men 13 (Students, construction workers)	18-20	5
Men 14 (Odd-job men)	25-30	3
Men 15 (Construction workers)	35-40	5
Men 16 (Construction workers)	50-60	7
Sweden		
More educated	Age	Number of participants
Women 17 (Students, social science)	18-20	8
Women 18 (Teachers)	25-30	6
Women 19 (Teachers)	30-45	8
Women 20 (Teachers)	50-60	5
Women 21 (Teachers)	50-65	6
Men 22 (Students, social science)	18-20	6
Men 23 (Teachers)	30	5
Men 24 (Teachers)	35-45	4
Men 25 (Teachers)	55-60	4
Less educated	Age	Number of participants
Women 26 (Students, practical nursing)	18-20	7
Women 27 (Practical nurses)	20-25	6
Women 28 (Practical nurses)	35-50	6
Women 29 (Practical nurses)	50-60	5
Women 30 (Practical nurses)	50-65	5
Men 31 (Students, construction work)	18-20	5
Men 32 (Construction workers)	20-30	5
Men 33 (Construction workers)	25-45	5
Men 34 (Construction workers)	45-50	5
Men 35 (Construction workers)	55-65	5

3 Data

The focus group data were collected in Finland from October to December 2007 and in Sweden from 2008 to 2010. The focus group method is a research tool that is well suited for analyzing how the personal and the social are interwoven together in a group situation. In a focus group situation, interviewees need to tell their personal stories so that they can easily be related to wider stories circulating in the culture (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006).

Sixteen focus groups were conducted in Finland and nineteen in Sweden. In Finland 35 men and 52 women participated in the interviews, and 49 men and 62 women participated in Sweden (see Table 1). The data were collected from the metropolitan areas of Helsinki and Stockholm by using identical data collection procedures and by interviewing both highly educated and less educated women and men from four different cohorts, representing the experiences of family members or others' drinking from the 1960s onwards. The high-educated groups consisted of teachers and pedagogical students with an assumption that they represent typical middle-class cultures. The less educated groups consisted of construction workers, practical nurses, and students in those fields by supposing that they stand for working-class cultures.

By collecting the data from two countries, the research setting, first of all, provides a productive frame to analyze how the storied childhood emotions reflect different cultural and geographical circumstances to drinking. As described above, both Finland and Sweden are intoxicated driven drinking cultures but they differ in how intoxication is culturally addressed.

Secondly, as the data includes four generational groups and covers childhood experiences to alcohol from the 1960s to the beginning of the 2000s, it allows us to analyze how the retrospective stories embody continuities and changes in childhood emotions to drinking. Between the 1960s and the 2000s, alcohol consumption tripled in Finland and doubled in Sweden. In particular, women's share of total consumption increased. Nowadays, women account for some 30% of the total consumption in Sweden (Kühlhorn & Björ, 1998) and about 25% in Finland (Mäkelä et al., 2012).

Thirdly, as the data contains both women and men who are less educated and from the working-class, as well as women and men who are higher educated and from the middle-class, it offers a possibility to analyze whether the childhood memories of drinking vary by educational background and gender. Finnish and Swedish epidemiological studies have usually reported continuity in drinking habits and repeatedly concluded that an intoxication-oriented drinking style in Finland and Sweden unites people across generational chasms, class divisions and gender differences (e.g. Kühlhorn & Björ, 1998; Mäkelä et al., 2012). Qualitative studies, in turn, have typically examined and identified differences in drinking styles in terms of age, class and/or gender (e.g. Lalander, 2000). These studies show that among middle-classes and women, drinking styles are more controlled. Furthermore, although female drinking has increased or female inebriation has become more common in Finland and Sweden (Kühlhorn & Björ, 1998; Mäkelä et al., 2012), there is still a strong double standard applied to women's alcohol consumption (Holloway, Jayne, & Valentine, 2009, p. 822). While public (heavy) drinking has traditionally been viewed as an acceptable behavior for men, the public drinking of women has repeatedly aroused public anxiety (MacLean, 2016). The studies show that women's behavior is often judged in media with expectations that they should be good mothers (Roumeliotis & Törrönen, 2014) and polite and attentive in their social relations (Jackson & Tinkler, 2007). Public concern over female drinking and the respective lack of concern over male drinking is puzzling since, according to the studies, men's drinking causes more problems not only in the public sphere but also in domestic regular and festive situations (Graham, Bernards, Wilsnack, & Gmel, 2011, 2018). For example, studies show that in private drinking situations, men are usually the aggressors and women the victims (Holmila et al., 2014).

The interviewees were recruited by contacting trade unions, workplaces and schools to obtain the names of possible key informants who would fit into expected categories of age, gender and education, and who could assemble a group of friends or colleagues for a focus group interview. The interviews were conducted by two researchers either at the research institution or at the places where the interviewees studied or worked. One of the researchers served as a moderator and the other took care of the recording or videotaping. The interviews lasted from 50 min to 2 h. All interviews were transcribed in full (Törrönen, Rolando, & Beccaria, 2017).

In focus group interviews, we asked questions about how interviewees became aware of others' drinking as a child, when they first tried alcohol, how their drinking habits developed and how they currently drink. We also asked our interviewees to interpret pictures in which men and women drink alcohol in different kinds of typical, atypical or provocative drinking situations. With this material, we have done multiple studies (e.g. Törrönen & Roumeliotis, 2014; Törrönen et al., 2017; Törrönen & Rolando, 2018). Here I focus on the first topic in the interviews: recalled childhood stories about others' drinking. Even though the material was collected between 2007 and 2010, it has

Table 2
The repeating narratives (drinking situations) and the emotional contacts the interviewees formed towards them as children in Finland and Sweden.

	Children's emotional contact towards drinking situations												
	Neutral		Love		Fun		Fear		Shame		Curiosity		Total
Repeating narratives/drinking situations	Fin	Swe	Fin	Swe	Fin	Swe	Fin	Swe	Fin	Swe	Fin	Swe	
Private sphere													
Meal drinking			12	28									40
Moderate routine drinking at home	32	29				1						2	64
Heavy, problematic domestic drinking	1				4	1	35	9	4	4	3	1	62
Drinking in festive situations	1	1			19	41	11	12		2	6	6	99
Public sphere													
Neighbors' drinking							12	3			5	5	25
Habitual drinking							15	5			18	8	46
Total	34	30	12	28	23	43	73	29	4	6	32	22	336

not lost its topicality since our focus here is in the analysis of childhood memories that are located in the past, covering many decades of emotional responses to family members' and others' drinking.

The question concerning emotional responses to family members or others' drinking was posed in the following way: "How did you become aware of other people's alcohol use? Could you describe that situation? What happened? What kinds of people were present? What were your feelings?". The question was not considered intimidating. Rather, my impression is that the interviewees were eager to recount even quite negative experiences from their childhood. It looked like they had obtained dynamic distance to their past and were keen to share their early childhood experiences on alcohol with other participants and the researchers.

In total, the focus group participants (N = 198) told 336 retrospective childhood stories related to others' drinking (see Table 2 below). After the stories were transcribed, I coded them by paying attention to what kinds of drinking situations they recurrently refer. In detecting and mapping the diverse drinking situations the retrospective childhood stories described, I looked at in which kinds of situations drinking occurs in them, who are the main characters, what is the function of drinking in the situation and how it changes the behavior of the main characters. Through the coding process I identified six repeating narratives and drinking situations in relation to which children's contact and emotional responses to others' drinking were evoked: meal drinking (N = 40), moderate routine drinking at home (N = 64), heavy domestic drinking (N = 62), drinking in festive situations (N = 99), neighbors' drinking (N = 25) and public habitual drinkers (N = 46). (See Table 2).

4 Analysis

In the following analysis, I draw on the concepts of 'emotion' and 'contact' as explained above. The contacts constitute the basis for the emotional responses to drinking (see Ahmed, 2004a). By analyzing the contacts and the ways they stimulate the children, we can recognize how children in their own space and world felt about family members' or others' drinking in various situations and what kinds of emotions they developed in relation to them. In the analysis, I pay attention to how the events of the situation affect the children; do they feel included in the social situation or separated from it through positive or negative associations; do they experience the situation as safe, beneficial and pleasurable or unsafe, harmful and disagreeable.

Furthermore, since the narratives embody two different time-space zones of the there-and-then time-space zone of the past and the here-and-now time-space zone of the focus group interaction (Bamberg, 2012), I explore how the interviewees clarify, explain or specify the character of the past drinking event to other focus group participants. The clarifying remarks reveal broader social and cultural meanings attached to drinking situations and their elements such as drinkers, drinking behavior, drinking-related activities and places of drinking (Ahmed, 2004b). They also connote in what kinds of emotional landscapes drinking is embedded in the society that the interviewees live. The interviewees may, for example, describe witnessing their father's beer drinking in connection with a weekly sauna event and then add a comment that there was nothing negative in it. This kind of framing of drinking events in relation to a negative image hints that in the society and culture in which the focus group participants live, drinking is an ambivalent issue: even positive drinking events can have negative connotations. Since it is not uncommon that drinking produces harmful consequences, the participants feel a need to specify to their audience that in this specific case, drinking was not a menace to the orderliness of everyday life.

In the analysis, I first describe the six repeating narratives by mapping what kind of emotional contacts the focus groups participants form with them as children. Then I compare the most typical repeating narratives and emotional responses to others' drinking among the Finnish and Swedish focus group participants. Lastly, I summarize the results and discuss their implications.

5 Results: repeating narratives and their emotional landscapes

5.1 Domestic space

Excerpt 1 shows an example of the first repeating narrative from the data, in which the focus is on eating and wine drinking in a domestic sphere containing family members, relatives or guests:

Excerpt 1. Meal drinking

Outi (pseudonym): On Saturday evenings we always gathered together (…) and mother prepared a better meal and the parents drank wine (…) it actually felt pretty safe, I knew that my parents use only a bottle of wine, that it rather was a controlled situation, nice sociability with good food in which children could also take part, sit around the table and eat elegantly (F, W2, more educated women, 25–30).

In Excerpt 1 Outi describes her emotional contact with drinking activity as "pretty safe" since her parents drank wine in a controlled way. As a child she associated these situations with positive feelings of enjoyable sociability with others.

Excerpt 2 includes examples of children witnessing routine everyday-life drinking at home. They exemplify the second repeating narrative in the data.

Excerpt 2. Moderate routine drinking at home

Olli: I do not have any strong negative experiences (…) sometimes father opened a beer after work and watched football on TV, this kind of traditional (observation) (F, M5, more educated men, 18–20).

Marja: I remember my father drank a little bit of pilsner while

having a sauna, my mother never had any alcohol (S, W20, more educated women, 50–60).

In the examples of Excerpt 2, children's contact with drinking remains neutral. They connect drinking to adults, in these cases, men's individual rituals and habits, which do not change the behavior of the drinker and thereby do not move the child towards positive or negative emotions. On these situations drinking produces a contact that children experience as safe. Drinking does not separate parents and adults into different spaces, and neither does it distort the habitual atmosphere at home.

In the following Excerpt 3 we see an example in which children witness heavy problem drinking at their own or friend's home, exemplifying the third repeating narrative in the data.

Excerpt 3. Heavy/problematic domestic drinking

Saku: my father was not an alcoholic. He drank seldom but when he drank he became very aggressive. He had long good periods but when the time of drinking came I needed to lurk and was even afraid for a couple of days that nothing bad would happen (F, M16, less educated men, 50–60).

The example of Excerpt 3 shows how heavy problem drinking usually transforms the drinkers in the eyes of children into fearsome actors. Often the case is that it changes the identities of the parents, makes them strange and unpredictable. In this case, children's contact with drinking is constituted as anxiety-ridden, frightening or terrifying and the domestic space is transformed into an unsafe space where the child experiences a violent atmosphere and s/he is forced to hide from her or his parents.

The fourth repeating narrative in the data tells about parents or relatives' drinking in celebrations and festive situations. Children may respond to these situations as something that bring happiness and joyfulness to their life or that makes them experience negative feelings. Excerpt 4 includes examples of how children's contact with celebrations and festive situations developed in a safe way with positive emotions.

Excerpt 4. Drinking in festive situations

Ulf: When there were big family celebrations (…) like grandfather had a 60th or 50th birthday. In these parties I remember seeing intoxicated men who were a little bit funny, but I did not experience it as unpleasant (S, W35, less educated men, 55–65).

Emmi: In my neighborhood, adults used a lot of alcohol at parties. They were nice events for children, since all the children from the neighborhood could play together. I do not connect any negative feelings with them (F, W1, more educated women, 18–20).

In Excerpt 4, the interviewees comment that in their childhood their emotional responses to festive drinking were associated with having fun. By specifying that festive situations were not related to negative feelings, they communicate being aware that children may also experience drinking in festive situations as unpleasant or painful. In Excerpt 5 we see examples of these.

Excerpt 5. Drinking in festive situations

Göran: (…) when we had a family celebration with relatives (…) there was beer, schnapps, and a drinks table; and later coffee, cognac for men, and liqueur for women (…) When father drank a little bit too much, I remember being embarrassed. He tried to be funny but I felt that he was ridiculous. When we left I felt a little bit of shame (S, W25, more educated men, 55–60).

Lauri: (…) I remember that I was afraid of my uncle every Midsummer. He always drank himself stupid and was somewhat aggressive. I remember hiding from him (…) and wondering why he is raging (F, W14, less educated men, 25–30).

In the quotations of Excerpt 5, Göran's narrative exemplifies children's embarrassment and shame in relation to parents' intoxication. Göran identifies with his father and feels that when his father became too intoxicated, he started to behave in an awkward way, and he felt shame over it. Lauri's narrative, in turn, demonstrates children's fear in relation to significant others' intoxication. Since his uncle repeatedly got too drunk at Midsummer parties, with a consequence of becoming aggressive, in these situations Lauri learns to avoid him.

5.2 Public space

The fifth repeating narrative in the data describes what kinds of emotional responses neighbors' drinking may produce among children. Often neighbors' drinking becomes a visible, identifiable issue when it makes the everyday life situation into something threatening to children, which is exemplified by Excerpt 6.

Excerpt 6.Neighbors' drinking

Titti: In our neighboring house lived children who had an uncle who stopped by their house frequently under the influence of alcohol. We were really afraid of him. When I was playing with my sister with our friends, he might suddenly come to play with us by holding handcuffs, running after us, laughing and threatening that when he would catch us he would handcuff us and lose the key. I was terrified. I did not see it at all as play, a funny thing, as he supposed we would (F, W1, more educated women, 18–20).

Titti's narrative concretizes how drunken people often lose their sensitivity to how other people feel about their behavior in a situation. They may think that when they play with children, they intensify children's pleasure and excitement with comical tricks. The case is often the opposite: the playful behavior that was meant to be funny moves children to experience fearful emotions.

The final repeating narrative in the data deals with children's emotional responses to homeless habitual drinkers. In their childhood, the interviewees have either been afraid of them or considered them as part of us.

Excerpt 7. Habitual drinkers

Eeva: (…) when I was a child I was afraid of homeless drunkards who were total strangers to us (F, W3, more educated women, 30–40)

Olli: As a child I experienced homeless drunkards as frightening, my parents were warning about them (F, W5, more educated men, 18–20).

Ida: We had a homeless drunkard in our playground but since I got to know him I was not afraid of him (S, W19, more educated women, 30–45).

Tuula: (…) I spend my childhood in a village shop in the 1940s; there I met all kinds of people and I also got accustomed to homeless drunkards (…) in the countryside we were not afraid of them (…) our relation to them was quite natural (…) (F, W4, more educated women, 50–60).

The quotations of Excerpt 7 show how children's emotional responses to homeless habitual drinkers vary depending on what kind of environment they live and what kinds of experiences they have of them. In this respect their storied emotions reflect the difference between village-type communities were people know each other and city-like social environments where most of the people are strangers to each other (Tönnies, 1988). Since in rural villages the homeless habitual drinkers are often included among us, children's contacts with them develop such that they experience them as harmless and safe. In city environments, in turn, children's contacts with homeless habitual drinkers remain usually distant and they tend to experience them as frightening.

6 Results: the most typical repeating narratives and emotional responses in Finland and Sweden

6.1 Finland

In the Finnish data, the most typical repeating narratives of storied childhood emotions around drinking among the interviewees were heavy problematic domestic drinking, drinking in festive situations, homeless habitual drinking, and moderate routine drinking at home (see Table 2). In terms of emotional responses, fear is the most dominating emotion in relation to drinking. As such, in the Finnish childhood stories, drinking situations often invoke children towards unwanted emotional experiences; drinking situations are frequently transformed into spaces where children's bodily and social spaces become distorted and children experience fear.

The storied childhood emotions regarding drinking show that fear is associated with an intoxication that changes the behavior of the drinker. In the context of heavy problematic domestic drinking, the interviewees' narratives of fear are mostly related to the father's drinking. When drinking renders the father unpredictable (e.g. W3: Ellu; M15: Harri, Sami), aggressive (e.g. W10: Saija; M14: Lauri) or violent (e.g. W9: Noora; M16: Pasi), he appears to the child as an alien. An unpredictable father may even disappear from home and leave the children alone (Suvi: W10). The drunken father is a different person than the sober father. In the presence of an aggressive drunken father everyone needs to be on the alert and the mother often gets beaten up (W4: Mervi).

In the context of festive drinking, the fear is related to events in which individuals (a relative, a parent's friend, etc.) or a group of people (men) become too intoxicated and start to quarrel. It may be a Midsummer party where an uncle drinks too much (e.g. M6: Janne; M14: Lauri) or some other festive situation where friends' parents start to mumble (W1: Ulla) or some of the parent's buddies drift into a fight when their level of intoxication increases (M16: Saku). For a child, this is not as fearful a situation as the father's intoxication at home, since the situation is more confined, lasting only a few hours and the quarreling parties do not intrude so strongly into a child's domestic space.

In the contexts of neighbors' drinking, the Finnish interviewees' storied emotions of fear are related to multiple situations, places and activities. In one of the narratives, the nearby house becomes stigmatized as a house of drunken people, which children fear and want to avoid (W1: Mari), while in some of the narratives, the neighbors shout obscenities at children while drunk (W10: Maija, Linda); in one narrative, the child is afraid of situations in which his father is asked to intervene to solve alcoholic neighbors' fighting (W4: Elina), while in another narrative a child is anxious about a neighbor who is known to drive a car under the influence of alcohol (W3: Marjo). Titti's narrative in Excerpt 6 above exemplifies a case in which children fear drunken people meddling in their games.

Homeless drinkers also produce fear among children. The Finnish interviewees' storied childhood emotions of fear are related to the shock of seeing people in a desperate situation, such as living in the street (W3: Minna), under the bridge (M8: Lauri) or in a garbage can (M8: Eki); or children fear homeless drinkers because parents are warning them to avoid them and be fearful of them (e.g. M5: Olli; W2: Elina).

After fear the next two most common emotional responses to drinking in the Finnish data are children's neutral observation of adults' behavior and being curious about their drinking activities (see Table 2). In the neutral emotional responses to drinking, drinking emerges for the child as a normal routinized activity at home that does not change the behavior of parents or the habitual flow of everyday life events. In these cases parents are drinking moderately, drinking is integrated into other activities and appears as an individual habit. Then the father may drink a beer while watching TV (M5: Olli), the parents may share a beer after sauna (W1: Pauliina) or the grandmother may take a little bit of cognac for medicinal purposes every evening (W4: Irmeli).

When a situation emerges for children as something new, aberrant or exotic, but not as something that shakes their feelings of safety, they seem to respond to drinking with curiosity. In the context of a festive situation or neighbor's drinking, the child may, for example, be curious about what kind of liquid the adults are drinking (M5: Mika) or pouring into their coffee (W4: Pirkko). Homeless habitual drinkers may also arouse an emotional response of curiosity among children, especially in the village environment, where children can develop a positive contact with them (e.g. M16: Saku) or sometimes also in a city setting, when there is a safe distance between them (e.g. M5: Joakim).

The least repeating storied childhood emotions on drinking in the Finnish data are fun, love and shame. When adult's intoxication remains cheerful and does not make their behavior unpredictable or aggressive, children have space to develop their own fun time, by playing their own games (e.g. W1: Emmi; W4: Anja; M14: Frankki). Love is a by-product of weekend dinner rituals at home, which adults and children share together, by eating well and where adults drink wine and children soft drinks (e.g. W1: Mari; W2: Outi; M6: Antti). Shame, in turn, arises from situations where the father drinks too much, with the consequence that the child is forced to take responsibility for bringing him safely back home (e.g. W9: Noora).

6.2 Sweden

In the Swedish data, the most typical repeating narratives of storied childhood emotions around drinking among the interviewees are drinking in festive situations and moderate routine drinking at home (see Table 2). In terms of emotional responses, fun is the most predominant emotion in relation to drinking. In the Swedish data, adult drinking situations do not create for children as strongly fearful experiences as in the Finnish data. In the Swedish data, adults' intoxication appears less unpredictable, aggressive or violent towards children than in the Finnish data. Among the Swedish interviewees, the childhood contact with drinking is often constituted in a positive way, by feelings of fun, love and safety.

The Swedish storied childhood emotions regarding others' drinking in festive situations are frequently related to pleasurable and successful intensifications of social relations. When drinking remains in the sphere of sociability and adults do not lose their everyday life identities, their behavior may appear to children as funny (W30: Daga; M35: Ulf), happy (W28: Sigrun; M33: Bo) or pleasantly ceremonial (W20: Lena; M25: Mats, W30: Olga). Children may then have fun. Children's positive feelings and contact towards festive drinking may be strengthened by special treatment: during celebrations, children may get potato chips (W27: Åsa), soft drinks (W27: Sara) and candy (M33: Lennart, David).

Even though fun is the most prominent childhood emotion in relation to drinking among the Swedish interviewees, fear also lurks in the picture (see Table 2). With respect to fear, the Swedish interviewees have similar kinds of experiences regarding others' drinking to those experienced by interviewees in Finland, even though less conspicuously. In the domestic sphere at home, as in Finland, it is usually the father's aggressive or violent intoxication (e.g. W28: Åsa, Unni) that produces a fearful contact with drinking. In festive drinking situations, the frightening contact is formed by a group of men, including usually the father, relatives and/or friends who become too intoxicated and start to fight (M25: Kent; W28: Åsa) or become mean (M22: Kalle; W18: Karin).

Neighbors' drinking and homeless drinking is not as glaring a phenomenon in Sweden as it is in Finland, but these narratives are also present in the Swedish data. They are associated with emotions of fear or curiosity among children. Some of the interviewees have witnessed in their childhood horrifying or terrifying behavior by their neighbors. For example, one interviewee as a child witnessed an intoxicated neighbor running after his wife with an axe in his hand. She tells of being relieved to discover that alcohol did not produce such effects in her father (W30: Olga). Another had feared drunken intimidating

neighbors who used to come to their house with the purpose of selling apples (M35: Per).

In the Swedish data, the feelings of safety and love are present as often as fear (see Table 2). As in Finland, the safe but neutral contact with drinking is related to moderate routine drinking at home. In contrast to Finland, routine drinking by family members is not so strongly associated with the fathers or grandfathers' drinking: The Swedish interviewees witness more the mother's or grandmothers' moderate beer, schnapps, liqueur, port wine or wine drinking at home, which does not disturb children's emotional security (e.g. W18: Eva; W20: Karin; M22: Tobias; M23: Kjell; W27: Sabiha; W28: Anneli).

Meal drinking, where love is communicated by sharing an eating ritual together with adults, is a much more common childhood contact with alcohol in Sweden than in Finland (see Table 2). The oldest generation remembers that wine was not a common meal drink in their childhood (M25: Börje). Fathers and male relatives usually had beer or schnapps (M25: Göran) while mothers and female relatives had liqueur, port wine or strong wine made of berries (W20: Mia, Karin, Gunilla). Among younger generations, the picture changes: children observe adults either having beer or wine with their meals (e.g. W18: Eva, Kristina; W19: Lovisa; M23: Kjell; M33: Bo). The childhood stories from younger generations also describe how beer and wine drinking with meals have become more ordinary events. They not only occur during the weekend with an extended family, but also during the week with the nuclear family (e.g. W17: Stina; M22: Henrik, Petter, Tobias; M33: Henrik).

The least repeating storied childhood emotions regarding others' drinking in the Swedish data are curiosity and shame. As in Finland, in the context of festive drinking or neighbor's drinking, the child may wonder what kind of liquid adults are drinking (W18: Eva) or why the adults are raising their voices (M23: Bosse) or starting to sing songs (M23: Kjell) as the evening proceeds.

Among the Swedish interviewees' childhood experiences regarding alcohol, shame is related to the father's embarrassing behavior after too many drinks at home or in festive situations. For example, two interviewees remember that their fathers always started to play guitar and sing when they achieved a certain degree of intoxication. Since the children thought that these performances were not so skillful, they felt shame over their fathers' behavior (M23: Bosse; M25: Kent). One interviewee, in turn, recollects that when his father had too many drinks he always tried to impress other people in a way that felt ridiculous and embarrassing to the child (see Excerpt 5 above: Göran).

7 Discussion

The analysis above shows that children's emotional contacts to drinking are spatially constituted and vary depending on the character of the drinking situation and its drinking practices (Bartos, 2013). Meal drinking is constituted in our data as an unproblematic repeating narrative. In Finnish and Swedish participants' childhood memories, family members' moderate alcohol consumption at mealtimes produces a safe contact with alcohol and can include also the emotion of love. Accordingly, moderate routing drinking at home emerges to the child as a safe contact with drinking, signifying a neutral, predictable habit of an adult.

Festive drinking rituals, in turn, generate ambivalent contacts to drinking in this data; drinking becomes a transformative agency in this context. It signifies something outside the bounds of everyday life, changes the ordinary course of events and drinkers' behavior, and functions as a powerful mood setter to the development of diverse emotions (Gusfield, 1987). In the narratives concerning festive drinking rituals, children experience fun, fear, shame, or curiosity.

In the narratives from Finland, children's emotional socialization to drinking is dominated by situations of heavy domestic drinking, festive drinking and moderate routine drinking at home. In the narratives from Sweden, again, children's emotional socialization to drinking is governed by festive situations, moderate routine drinking at home, and meal drinking. Therefore, in concert with previous studies (e.g. Hauge & Irgens-Jensen, 1990), moderate alcohol consumption situations in the Swedish data have a stronger cultural position in the process of emotional socialization to drinking than in the Finnish data.

Moreover, as in previous studies that show how people self-report less harm from the heavy drinking of family and friends in Sweden than in Finland (Ramstedt et al., 2015), our Swedish interviewees' childhood stories of festive drinking situations appear less harmful to children than those of Finnish interviewees. The Finnish participants' recalled childhood stories build a picture of a drinking culture that is surrounded by fear. When the Finnish interviewees tell even about safe drinking situations that were neutral or produced emotions of love or fun for them as a child, they typically felt a need to specify that the situation was not fearful. The Swedish participants' recalled childhood stories, in turn, build a picture of a drinking culture where drinking often intensifies the emotions of fun and love among adults and children. At the same time, fear is not absent from the picture. Interviewees in Sweden often specify, though not as frequently as in Finland, that in this specific situation drinking did not produce any negative consequences. In this sense, drinking is also an ambivalent activity in Sweden.

Why the childhood memories from Finland are more dominated by fear and the childhood memories from Sweden more by fun can be interpreted in many ways. One possible interpretation is that the dominance of fear in the childhood memories from Finland can be explained by the more explosive character intoxication has had in Finnish drinking culture from the 1960s to the beginning of 2000s (Hauge & Irgens-Jensen, 1986; Nordström, 1998; Mäkelä, 2011), during which our interviewees as children first experienced others' drinking. Accordingly, our results suggest that in comparison to Finland, Swedish heavy drinking practices have been more protective of children's emotional safety.

It is remarkable that our findings do not suggest any remarkable country-related generational differences in how children's emotional contact to drinking first developed. Older and younger participants share similar kinds of childhood experiences with alcohol and their narratives propose that in Finland and Sweden children have developed similar emotional contacts to drinking across decades. This further suggests that the cultural position of alcohol has remained quite stable in Finnish and Swedish drinking cultures and drinking situations.

In our data, Swedish drinking culture appear more homogenous in terms of children's emotional socialization to alcohol than the Finnish drinking culture. The interviewees' childhood emotions from Sweden in relation to different drinking situations resemble each other regardless of gender, education and cohort. By contrast, in the Finnish data we see differences. The less educated male and female participants tell more stories than the more educated ones about fathers who had rendered their everyday life at home frightening. Another background difference is that female interviewees have experienced the public space of their childhood as more frightening than male participants: The stories witnessing fear from neighbors' drinking are solely told by women. Furthermore, the participants from the oldest generation carry more positive childhood memories about homeless habitual drinkers than the interviewees from the younger generations. This reflects the difference between the countryside and city environment, as well as the urbanization of Finnish society: in contrast to many older participants whose childhood contacts to drinking were developed in the countryside, most of the younger participants' childhood contacts to drinking were constituted in urban settings. In other respects, the Finnish interviewees' emotional contacts to different drinking situations resemble each other regardless of gender, education and cohort, as among the Swedish participants.

It is interesting that all the focus group participants from Finland and Sweden relate problem drinking in their childhood stories to male drinkers. Thus, the emotional contacts in childhood to others' drinking

build a picture of gendered drinking practices. In the childhood memories, it is the drinking behavior of fathers or male relatives that typically causes emotional insecurity among children, threatening their bodily and social relations and making them fearful. In the Swedish data, fathers' and male relatives' drinking does not appear to be as transgressive, quarrelsome and violent as it does in the Finnish data. Therefore, it is less threatening to children's safe bodily and social spaces. None of the interviewees tell childhood stories where the drinking of mothers or female relatives threatened their feelings of safety in everyday life and festive situations. Since in Finland and Sweden women's alcohol consumption has increased, we might have expected that the participants would have experienced some problematic drinking of mothers or female relatives when they were children. But this is not the case in the data. As women's and especially mother's drinking has been strongly stigmatized (Holloway et al., 2009; MacLean, 2016), it may be that the participants did not want to share their experiences about that with others in a focus group situation. On the other hand, as women's heavy drinking is not usually associated with violence towards partners and others, as in the case of men's heavy drinking (Holmila et al., 2014; Graham et al., 2018), it may be that female intoxication at home and in festive situations remains less noticeable and memorable, and therefore our interviewees do not recall any stories about it.

One possible limitation of the study is related to the differences in social interaction norms between Finland and Sweden. As Swedish culture is characterized by an orientation toward consensus and conformity and by the avoidance of emotions that imply conflicts and troubles (Barker, 2016; Lönnqvist, Konstabel, Lönnqvist, & Verkasalo, 2014), this may not only affect the character of intoxication and drinking practices, but also influence how Swedish participants orientate themselves toward other participants in a group interview situation and what they feel it is appropriate to tell to them. These conditions may have encouraged our Swedish interviewees to re-constitute their childhood memories more from the perspective of 'happy recollections'. Correspondingly, as Finnish social norms value direct emotional communication about negative feelings including hardships and problems in life (Aslama & Pantti, 2007; Poutiainen, 2007), Finnish interviewees may have recalled their childhood memories more with the expectation that a problem-oriented drama makes a good story.

To conclude, adults' childhood memories on drinking provide an important "indirect" source to get knowledge of what kinds of drinking situations are safe or unsafe for children. The study illustrates how in an intoxicated driven drinking culture where alcohol consumption changes the behavior of drinkers, people have vivid childhood memories on adults' drinking in diverse situations. The study also suggests that it is an essential task for further research to pay attention how diverse drinking habits, situations and practices in different geographical and sociocultural circumstances shape children's emotional contacts to drinking and affect their emotional health. Drinking in the presence of children is not as such a harmful activity for children. Rather, whether drinking causes harm to children or not, depends on the nature of the emotional contact and emotional responses they develop in relation to it. Therefore, how children's emotions are formed in dynamic relation to drinkers, their behavior and their activities in various situations, matters most. Along with producing knowledge on children's emotional relations to alcohol via adults, we also need research in which children themselves are interviewed and observed to assess how they emotionally experience others' drinking and deal with it. Here, too, our main task is to examine what kinds of emotional contacts and emotional responses likely emerge among children in relation to various drinking practices and spaces.

Conflict of interest

None.

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