

Gender role orientations and alcohol use among Moscow and Toronto adults

Karen Van Gundy^{a,*}, Scott Schieman^b, Margaret S. Kelley^c, Cesar J. Rebellon^a

^aUniversity of New Hampshire, Durham, NH, United States

^bUniversity of Toronto, Canada

^cUniversity of Oklahoma, USA

Available online 1 September 2005

Abstract

Using self-report data from representative community samples of Moscow and Toronto adults, we examine the effects of sex, masculinity, and femininity on alcohol use. Consistent with prior research, our results show that men in Moscow and Toronto drink significantly more than women; women in both samples tend more toward conventional femininity than men; and masculinity levels are greater among Toronto men relative to Toronto women. Moscow men and women, however, show comparable masculinity levels. Neither masculinity nor femininity explains the sex gap in alcohol use in either sample. However, sex- and sample-specific effects are identified. In Toronto, femininity is associated with higher alcohol use among women. In Moscow, masculinity is associated with lower use among men and higher use among women. The findings provide preliminary support for our assertion that the characteristics of national contexts, such as drinking norms and “Soviet-style socialism” [Cockerham, Snead, & Dewaal (2002). *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 43, 42–55] interact with traditional gender role orientations to influence alcohol use patterns. We suggest that a movement toward culturally sensitive policies that consider sex-specific social expectations and responses may contribute to improved health outcomes across nations.

© 2005 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Russia; Canada; Sex; Femininity; Masculinity; Alcohol use

Introduction

Despite a narrowing sex gap in alcohol use (Kinney, 2003), men in Russia (Cockerham, Snead, & DeWaal, 2002) and Canada (Advisory Committee on Population Health, 1999) continue to consume more alcohol than their female counterparts. According to a recent Canadian health survey (ACPH, 1999), 43 percent of women drink at least once per month compared to 63 percent of men. Likewise, 42 percent of men compared to 21 percent of women report “binge” drinking, or consuming five or more consecutive drinks at once. In

Russia, the sex disparity in alcohol use may be even greater: as Cockerham et al. (2002, p. 48) observe, “adult males consume 90 percent of the alcohol in Russia, yet comprise 25 percent of the population.” Men’s tendency towards binge drinking, in particular, appears to be an important source of Russia’s health-related troubles (Bobak, Pikhart, Hertzman, Rose, & Marmot, 1999; Chenet, McKee, Leon, Shkolnikov, & Vassin, 1998; Cockerham et al., 2002).

To some extent, sex differences in alcohol use may reflect variations in women’s and men’s physiology or biological predispositions. For instance, equal doses of alcohol yield higher blood alcohol levels for women relative to men (Corrigan, 1985; McCrady, 1988), and intergenerational patterns of alcohol abuse have been

*Corresponding author. Tel.: +1 603 862 1896.

E-mail address: karen.vangundy@unh.edu (K. Van Gundy).

more clearly demonstrated among males (see Zucker, Boyd, & Howard, 1994). However, biogenetic studies tend to overestimate the magnitude of genetic effects (Horwitz, Videon, Schmitz, & Davis, 2003), and socio-cultural influences, like gender role socialization, appear to better predict alcohol consumption patterns (Gomberg, 1982; Robbins, 1989).

While many prior studies have examined the effects of gender role orientations on alcohol use (e.g., Barrett & White, 2002; Horwitz & White, 1987; Huselid & Cooper, 1992; Lengua & Stormshak, 2000), none that we could identify consider their effects in a cross-national context. Because cultural, social, and historical circumstances shape masculinity, femininity (Elder, 1974; Lerner, Sorell & Brackney, 1981), and alcohol use patterns (Cockerham et al., 2002), cross-national analyses may yield new insights about their interrelationships. In particular, sex- and nation-contingent effects of gender role orientations are not well understood. In addition, since most of the relevant work to date focuses on adolescents or young adults (Barrett & White, 2002; Horwitz & White, 1987; Huselid & Cooper, 1992), less is known about the effects of gender role orientations on adult drinking behavior. Adult reactions to life conditions often differ from youth responses (Hoffman & Su, 1998); thus, the effects of gendered attributes also may vary meaningfully by age.

In the present study, we use data from representative community samples of Moscow and Toronto adults to examine the extent to which sex differences in alcohol use are mediated and/or moderated by masculinity and femininity, and we explore whether or not observed patterns are consistent across samples. We acknowledge that our samples and the estimates they yield do not necessarily represent the alcohol use patterns of particular Western or Eastern-block nations. Yet we believe that these large capital cities embody several of the core distinctions between Russia and Canada that make data from those areas interesting to compare.

First, Russian culture exemplifies a tradition of socialist and collectivist politics, whereas Canada embraces a more liberal democratic and individualistic political tradition (Triandis & Suh, 2002). While individualist ideals celebrate self-reliance, independence, and uniqueness (Triandis & Gelfand, 1998), collectivist ideals place greater value on in-group goals, norms, and concerns (Mills & Clark, 1982). Arguably, such tendencies have important implications for well-being. For instance, prevailing Russian customs promote the rapid consumption of alcohol in large quantities, especially among men (Cockerham, 1997; Partanen, 1987; Shkolikov & Nemstov, 1997). Because norm violators are more often penalized in collectivist than in individualist contexts (Triandis & Suh 2002), the potential costs of abstinence, like social ostracism (Fleming, Meyroyan, & Klimova, 1994), may provide a unique motive for

heavier drinking in Russia relative to Canada. Thus, exploring the distinctive ways in which gender role orientations influence patterns of alcohol use in Moscow and Toronto seems a worthy pursuit.

A second and perhaps related distinction concerns health disparities between Russian and Canadian citizens. Although Canadian life expectancy is relatively high (ACPH, 1999), Russian life expectancy has fallen almost ceaselessly for more than a decade—a circumstance that is attributable, in part, to alcohol use trends (Cockerham, 1997; Cockerham et al., 2002). Leading causes of death in Russia, such as circulatory diseases and accidents, have been linked to alcohol use, as have rising rates of alcohol poisoning, cirrhosis of the liver, fetal alcohol syndrome, psychological distress, divorce, and crime (Cockerham et al., 2002; Davis, 1993; Field, 1995; Kinney, 2003; Stack & Bankowski, 1994; Weiss & Lonquist, 1997). Russia's turbulent history regarding alcohol policy (Herlihy, 1990; Korolenko, Minevich, & Segal, 1994), its continuing struggle with alcohol-related problems (Field, 1995; Partanen, 1987, 1993), and recent evidence that per capita consumption of alcohol in Russia is among the highest in the world (Cockerham et al., 2002) signal a pressing need for alcohol user research in Russia. An appreciation of the fundamental cultural roots of global health trends could be enhanced by a consideration of the alcohol-related effects of gender role orientations in Moscow relative to Toronto.

Finally, we believe that comparing these two urban contexts may help clarify the ways in which cosmopolitan notions about masculinity, femininity, and alcohol use vary by nation and influence health patterns. That is, national gender and health-related social constructions may be influenced by distinctive urban drinking cultures. In a sense, our Moscow and Toronto samples allow us to control for urbanicity since both are representative of large metropolitan centers in their respective countries.

In sum, we assert that the present study has the potential to expand prior work on gender, health, and culture. Before turning to our analyses, we consider the following. First, we define gender role orientations. Next, we review the literature on the extent to which masculinity and femininity mediate sex–alcohol use links. We then describe possible sex-contingent effects of gender role orientations on alcohol use and explore the potential moderating effects of nation on the alcohol-related effects of gender role orientations. Finally, we summarize our hypotheses.

Gender role orientations

Institutional and social structural arrangements shape and reinforce gender roles and the personal attributes associated with those roles. Among boys, socialization patterns encourage conduct and personality traits that

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

ISIArticles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات