

LEISURE, DRINK AND TELL: Discourses on drinks in cafes, bars and taverns

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Introduction:

semantic-logical social networks of paradigmatic drinks

This article aims to undertake an analysis of discourses, ideologies, languages and symbols invested by various social agents on the subject of drinks consumed in leisure time, particularly within public spaces such as cafés, bars and taverns. For this purpose, it will be observed how common citizens construct the social and discursive image of drinks they consume, while they talk about beverages in their everyday language and in leisure moments spent within institutional contexts of everyday drinking. Each institution produces its own language and discourse, which legitimates the power that this institution holds (Foucault, 1971, 2001). And every discourse contains a number of concepts that structure it (Paltrinieri, 2012).

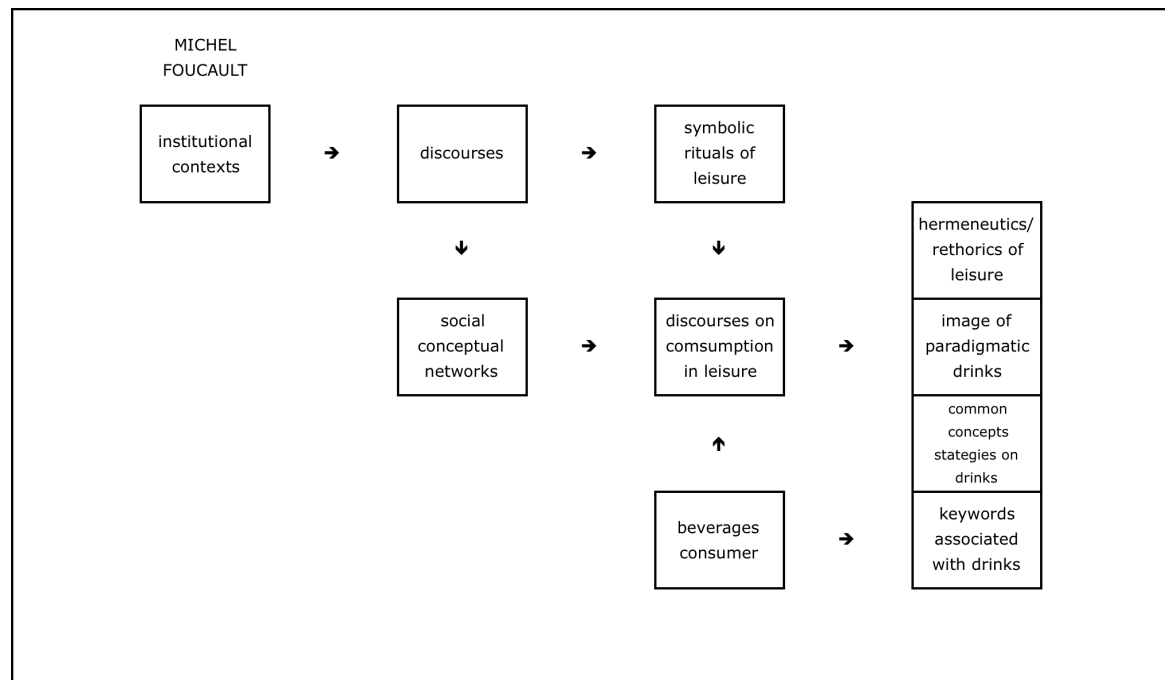


Figure 1 Hypothesis on the discourse of drinking consumption within drinking houses (Theoretical concepts are operationalized by empirical indicators, which are the 4 terms rightmost)

Such an objective is developed from and around a theoretical or main hypothesis that advocates the following: discourses on consumption in leisure use, within drinking houses, social and conceptual networks of meaning, both institutional and inter-individual. These networks are named **semantic-logical social networks**, as, within them, agents undertake semantic and social definitions of their actions' meanings, through social and logical relationships among these shared connotations (cf. Figure 1). One such semantic and logical work is carried out by social actors through apparently banal ideas or **common concepts**, and through **ordinary hypotheses**, articulated by a specific logic of the social or socio-logic. Common concepts are terms which carry on a relative abstraction of reality, seeking to create a framework of interpretation for solving daily problems faced by citizens. They shouldn't be taken as similar to scientific concepts forged by an expert, and may even be opposed to the latter (Andrade, 2002, 2011th, 2011b).

Within this perspective, and in order to proceed to corroboration or disconfirmation of this hypothesis, it is necessary to redefine it in terms less abstract. That is what the following hypothesis suggests, arguing that: discursive and symbolic images of paradigmatic drinks (wine, beer, coffee, milk, water, Coca Cola, spirits, etc.), are produced and reproduced dialy in a distinctive and singular mode for each of these beverages, through **common concepts networks** and respective relations on the part of drinkers, frequently within leisure times.

Such a working hypothesis will be tested through an emerging methodology, named **reticular interdimensional hermeneutics**. This procedure uses a strategy of sociological writing and argumentation, in two major steps, which will be applied here to the study of public drinking paradigmatic beverages: (a) reading and critical interpretation of sources; (b) definition of semantic-logical social networks, through various dimensions of social.

In fact, when talking about drink and beverages, consumers construct, reconstruct and deconstruct, within social dimensions (macro, mediator and micro social levels;, economic, political and discursive spheres), the following figures of social meaning inherent to their practices: (a) meanings of social networks structures lived and actualized by actors, as the experience of daily work relationships; (b) connotations involving institutional contexts networks, e.g. norms or social and symbolic rituals associated with the spaces of family, work or leisure, (c) the legitimizing or deviant image of social agents about themselves, forged in everyday life within pre-digital and digital social networks. This social image evolves, in the case of drinking within leisure, since the virtuous teetotaler, passing through the prestigious drinker, until the happy or inconvenient drunk, and the alchoolic perceived in a state of physical and moral degradation; (d) or the significance of daily language itself that refers to the practice of libation, that the jargon of drinking houses is one of the most curious illustrations.

Empirically, such a meaning production but also dilution, is detected from concrete and observable traits of quotidian life. For example, the social indicators defined through the words associated with drinks, preferred, spoken and exchanged by social actors-authors, who thus define themselves somehow as readers and writers of ordinary reality. These everyday text's marks or letters (diary) of their daily lives, concerning their past and future, enclose a specific genealogy, in that:

(a) common words/concepts reiterate, on the one hand, some socio-symbolic rituals from Greek, Roman and medieval traditions, which are inherent to the Dionysian culture of drinking (Andrade, 1979, 1985, 1987, 1988, 1992; Maffesoli, 1982). This problematics was proposed and defended as PhD thesis at École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris, by the author of this article, and orientated by Marc Ferro: [s.n.], 1981;

(b) secondly, such ordinary words/concepts rewrite behaviours that are characteristic of a style of drinking more restrained, associated with modernity (Andrade, 1984, 1991);

(c) finally, these common terms which comment on the practice of drinking, may transmit a wide diversity of worldviews, or participation within distinctive lifestyles, or the sensibility and aesthetics of everyday life, which constitute some of the characteristics or values inherent to late modernity and postmodernity (Andrade, 2002, 2003, 2011c).

The precedent working hypothesis, among other conjectures, was confronted with empirical data that is presented below, concerning Portuguese society, within the framework of a research project completed at the beginning of the first decade of this century. In this project, as for the *contextual units for analysis*, a survey was undertaken in 51 pubs in Lisbon and Coimbra: a tavern, a cafe and a bar on each parish, in order to allow comparison with one another, and according to the social traits of these social, geographic and administrative boundaries that frame public drinking places. Specifically, 36 in Lisbon (13 parishes) and 12 in Coimbra (4 districts). Regarding the *individual units for analysis*, the questionnaire was submitted to a sample of 408 respondents, owners and users of these public spaces, 312 in Lisbon and 96 in Coimbra (24 per parish, 8 per drinking house).

The subsequent analysis and interpretation expose not one but several **social meaning networks**, including meanings that can never be considered permanent, in that the ideas expressed emerge and dilute incessantly through the significant's permutation game. Social life of beverages consumers unfolds then, for example, in **dichotomous subnets** (as these consumers use sets of two opposed words, enunciated about drinks), or **trichotomous subnets** (3 words articulated in triangulation i.e. three relationships among 3 terms), etc. In these different socio-discursive

networks and subnets, multiple senses circulating within drinking practices, often occur through *slips, rearrangements, differentiations and delays of meaning* inside conversations often occurred under the influence of alcohol.

So what is the sociological status of these everyday and common meanings, often expressed through banal words and phrases by agents of public places and within leisure rhythms, in order to legitimize and circumscribe the activities undertaken by them in these spaces? Such terms used in 'ordinary language' by 'members of a social context', were widely analyzed by Harold Garfinkel (1991). In Alfred Schutz arguments (1967), these words from ordinary language are named *first class concepts*, i.e., those who are driven by social actors in everyday life *lebenswelt* or life worlds, defined by Edmund Husserl (2001), in this case the everyday world whose leisure life occurs inside drinking houses. First class concepts differ from second class concepts, these last ones being developed by experts, such as a scientist.

We sought to obtain these ordinary concepts empirically, among other techniques using a questionnaire through which respondents provided three common words raised through the presence of 7 of the most important beverages names, advanced by the interviewer: wine, beer, coffee, liqueurs, milk, water and Coca Cola. In this paper, we develop only the survey results regarding the wine.

Ideology and discourses on wine

Wine is simultaneously a product of history, a commodity and a cultural icon. Regarding the past, its production date back to 5000 BC, and gradually extended to great part of the world in the last centuries. As a commodity, it sustained the economy of various countries, motivating the construction of crucial trade routes, thereby contributing to the globalization of our societies. As icon, it served as a pedestal to Dionysian festivals since ancient times, becoming the symbol of a hedonistic way of life and an eloquent source of inspiration for literature and visual arts. According to the discourses that talked about the wine, the results of its ingestion can sometimes produce beneficial effects, such as a food product against starving, or disastrous 'defects', as in excess of alcoholism and violence. Certain rituals sought, very early, to exorcise this aggressiveness through soothing playful practices.

For example, in ancient Greece, the institution of the banquet was analyzed by Plato (2001). The philosopher reports that the wine was tasted as a challenge to test how far the reason stood before collapsing and temporarily gave way to drunkenness. When serving wine, ancient Greeks threw a few drops on the ground, in honor of the Gods. Today, this gesture, or the release of the rest of a drunken liquid on the counter, still occurs in some taverns. Recent authors reproduce this philosophical posture that questions drink as a vehicle for self-knowledge (Scruton, 2010).

In short, wine and other beverages, if they were taken as subjects of history, also proved to be objects of history and of stories, acting within the world's economy, politics and culture (Samuelson, 1880, Barr, 1999; Charters, 2006). In addition, in a more anthropological perspective, wine emerges simultaneously as a cultural and 'cultural' beverage. For Portugal, the wine appears closely linked not only to the tavern, but also to the café and the bar. Culture in general and popular culture in particular, engendered countless tales, *fait-divers*, proverbs and riddles, where many social institutions are related to public drinking houses.

To prove this institutional linkage to drink, we may taste the following anecdote, related to *family and sexuality*: a man enters in a tavern, drinks a glass of wine and looks at the shirt pocket. He asks for a 'mixture' (white wine and carbonated drink) and observes the same pocket. The third time, the innkeeper, curious, asks: "Every time you drink, you look at your pocket. Why?" And the drinker responds: "I have a picture of my wife in my pocket and when she will look nicer, I will come back home."

On the other hand, wine has always been connected to the cult of masculinity, as noted in this joke: a group of strong men reaches a tavern, where a thin customer sits on a bench, and one of them says aloud: - A glass of wine quickly, or else... And the innkeeper rushes to serve them for free, on the house. When they leave, the little man goes to the counter and, with threatening tone and screaming, says: - A glass of wine quickly, or else... The innkeeper, angry, answers: - Or else what? And the small guy replies softly: - Or else, I will be glad to have a glass of water...

Briefly, and in general, wine, having been taken ideologically as the national drink during Portuguese Salazar authoritarian regime, also embodies symbolically, Portuguese drunkenness, more than any other drink. Numerous sayings attest to its central presence in Portuguese popular culture: 'Water is for fish and wine for men'; 'Strange mystery: when you do not have Money to bread, you have it for wine'; 'If the sea was wine, everyone would be a sailor' ; 'If wine hampers business, leave the business'; 'The wine kills slowly, but the drunk is not in a hurry to die.'

Wine and restoration of the body

Let us now see in detail what are the most common terms associated with wine, in the context of the empirical research above referred, framed by **interdimensional reticular hermeneutics**. From the analysis of Table 1, we may note the following:

Table 1: Common words associated with wine

Keyword	Freq	Keyword	Freq	Keyword	Freq	Keyword	Freq
meal	38	grape	30	red	27	dinner	15
good	13	food	12	like	10	grapes	10
alcohol	9	joy	7	white	7	drunk	6
binge	6	cup	6	Bacchus	5	nice	4
village	4	lunch	4	good	4	party	4
bad	4	not	4	port	4	green	4
alcoholic	3	color	3	makes	3	evil	3
hot	3	meals	3	hangover	3	tavern	3
tradition	3	vine	3	vineyard	3	acidity	2
feed	2	food	2	friends	2	aromatic	2
drink	2	well	2	eat	2	baked	2
disgrace	2	disposal	2	bond	2	like	2
horrible	2	taste	2	Portuguese	2	pleasure	2
flavor	2	blood	2	health	2	red	2
wine	2	acompaniment	1	follow	1	cellar	1
love	1	sleep	1	brandy	1	alcoholic	1
alcoholism	1	Alentejo	1	feeds	1	birthday	1
enjoy	1	appreciable	1	aroma	1	based	1
sour	1	cod	1	Bairrada	1	drunk	1
drink	1	Borba	1	Bordeaux	1	joke	1
heat	1	couple	1	strain	1	cherry	1
beer	1	full	1	cirrhosis	1	coma	1
complement	1	fellowship	1	consumption	1	acquaintanceship	1
familiarity	1	Christ	1	culture	1	give	1
delicious	1	god	1	entertaining	1	sweet	1
Douro	1	drunkenness	1	special	1	spur	1
be	1	excesses	1	doom	1	feijoadada	1
parties	1	strong	1	fresh	1	Garcia	1
bottle	1	John	1	blondes	1	Madeira	1
custard	1	moderation	1	hill	1	birth	1
North	1	payment	1	father	1	pelt	1
loses	1	people	1	kite	1	saucer	1
shit	1	Portugal	1	Portuguese	1	dish	1
harmful	1	purity	1	quality	1	cheese	1
refinement	1	laugh	1	romantic	1	Santana	1
headquarters	1	chop-house	1	Torres Vedras	1	work	1
troop	1	Vasco Santana	1	old	1	vintage	1
Viriatos	1	voluptuous	1	vomiting	1	vulgar	1

certain beverage brands, which refer to institutional and organizational contexts outside the questions' text in the questionnaire.

However, this article's preliminary content analysis is limited to words spoken by the actors and through their co-text, i.e., the collective text of the respondents to the questionnaire. Although such a co-text includes references to the surrounding society, the preceding reflexion, which comments this co-text, must be supplemented by a discourse analysis. The latter considers: (a) the practices of social agents understood (b) in terms of social structures embodied in them, and (c) articulated to their social contexts of enunciation and communication, i.e., the institutional and public contexts belonging to the society mediating level, that frame these actors.

Let us cross then, on one side, the top 50 keywords related to wine and expressed by respondents, with, on the other side, the relativization variable which represents the major socio-institutional contexts of our study, that is, the three types of drinking houses, the tavern, the café and the bar (cf. Figure 1). We will obtain a first **social network of the beverages meaning**, in this case the set of meanings relating to wine. Within this network of social connotations, it is noteworthy that the drinking houses form a **sub-network of institutional contexts**, represented by capital letters and larger squares. Note also the **trichotomy** (that is, the set of three relationships, e.g. oppositions) that emerge in the articulation among the three general types of wine: a virtual triangle is discernible if we connect, in the image, the 'red' ('tinto') wine, associated with the tavern, the 'white' ('branco') wine, near the café, and 'Port' ('Porto') wine, that neighbors the bar.

Meanwhile, Table 2 contains the first 50 common concepts concerning the relationship between keywords and the socio-institutional contexts. This table shows, in a quantitative way, the relationships among the most frequent keywords expressed in the survey answers, respectively: (a) in terms of its absolute frequency in the first 4 numeric columns; (b) and, in the last three numeric columns, as for their percentage in relation to the absolute total of each column. In other words, these values are calculated through the coefficient of differentiation, in each drinking house, relatively to common concepts expressed by the agents of the other two types of drinking houses.

If we now observe, in detail, the 3 first columns, we note the following: meal and terms semantically closest ('dinner', 'food', 'lunch', etc.) stick closely to the café and the bar, where they are frequently mentioned, while in the tavern the wine (in the form of 'grape', with 12 occurrences and 'red', 15) appears to be more associated with a drink which is taken mainly alone or replace the meal. Terms such as 'good' and 'joy' are more pronounced for tavern users. Another word with a near meaning, 'taste', occurs preferentially in cafes and bars. The word 'drunk' is frequent in taverns and bars. The negative valences of wine, in general, are more strongly expressed by cafes and bars customers, rather than the 'regulars' from taverns.

Finally, Table 3, within a qualitative optics, gathers the most characteristic expressions associated to wine in each type of drinking house. These phrases testify the meaning almost literary and rhetorical subjacent to our most common everyday expressions, linked to their closer symbolic and institutional contexts, the drinking houses.

Briefly, these and other popular enunciations testify to the strength of a **common social rhetoric**. In fact, note the metaphor 'blood of Christ', or the synecdoche manifested in the consideration of part of the agent (Vasco Santana), or the fragment, taken by the whole (the practice of drinking in general). Or the moral aphorisms 'hurts', 'we loose friends, injurious to health' and 'alcoholic people', and also the precepts of popular health 'accompanies feeding', 'good food', 'good mood', 'good dish', 'connects well'.

Table 2 Common concepts regarding wine,
related to drinking houses

Keywords	TAVERN (Freq.)	CAFÉ (Freq.)	BAR (Freq.)	TOTAL	TAV. (%)	CAFÉ (%)	BAR (%)
meal	9	16	12	37	6.7	11.8	8.3
grape	12	10	8	30	8.9	7.4	5.6
red	15	7	5	27	11.1	5.1	6
dinner	3	5	7	15	2.2	3.7	4.9
good	9	1	3	13	6.7	0.7	2.1
food	2	2	8	12	1.5	1.5	5.6
like	1	5	4	10	0.7	3.7	2.8
grapes	4	1	5	10	3.0	0.7	6
alcohol	1	3	5	9	0.7	2.2	6
joy	4	2	1	7	3.0	1.5	0.7
white	2	3	2	7	1.5	2.2	1.4
drunk	2	1	3	6	1.5	0.7	2.1
binge	0	3	3	6	0.0	2.2	2.1
cup	3	2	1	6	2.2	1.5	0.7
Bacchus	0	2	3	5	0.0	1.5	2.1
nice	2	0	2	4	1.5	0.0	1.4
village	0	0	4	4	0.0	0.0	2.8
lunch	0	1	3	4	0.0	0.7	2.1
good	2	0	2	4	1.5	0.0	1.4
party	0	3	1	4	0.0	2.2	0.7
bad	0	2	2	4	0.0	1.5	1.4
not	1	2	1	4	0.7	1.5	0.7
port	1	1	2	4	0.7	0.7	1.4
green	0	1	3	4	0.0	0.7	2.1
alcoholic	1	2	0	3	0.7	1.5	0.0
color	0	1	2	3	0.0	0.7	1.4
makes	2	1	0	3	1.5	0.7	0.0
evil	2	1	0	3	1.5	0.7	0.0
hot	0	1	2	3	0.0	0.7	1.4
meals	1	2	0	3	0.7	1.5	0.0
hangover	0	2	1	3	0.0	1.5	0.7
tavern	1	0	2	3	0.7	0.0	1.4
tradition	1	1	1	3	0.7	0.7	0.7
vine	1	2	0	3	0.7	1.5	0.0
vineyard	0	2	1	3	0.0	1.5	0.7
acidity	1	1	0	2	0.7	0.7	0.0
feed	1	0	1	2	0.7	0.0	0.7
food	1	0	1	2	0.7	0.0	0.7
friends	2	0	0	2	1.5	0.0	0.0
aromatic	0	1	1	2	0.0	0.7	0.7
drink	1	1	0	2	0.7	0.7	0.0
well	0	0	2	2	0.0	0.0	1.4
eat	0	1	1	2	0.0	0.7	0.7
baked	0	1	1	2	0.0	0.7	0.7
disgrace	0	1	1	2	0.0	0.7	0.7
disposal	1	0	1	2	0.7	0.0	0.7
bond	1	1	0	2	0.7	0.7	0.0
like	2	0	0	2	1.5	0.0	0.0
horrible	1	0	1	2	0.7	0.0	0.7
taste	2	0	0	2	1.5	0.0	0.0

Conclusion

What is course of discourses about drinking?

Let us finish the evaluation of our working hypothesis that sought to associate the discourse of consumption to the differences and specificities strategies perpetrated by actors, through the concrete and dialy terms they associated with drinks. By consulting and synthesize the empirical data regarding keywords and concepts expressed as for the paradigmatic drinks, we realize that wine is associated with meals - albeit in taverns is this more currently understood as a drink that is taken alone - and is linked to drunkenness, or to trademarks of specific beverages.

It is not possible to present here the details of the study on multiple practices occurring in the establishments of public drinking at Lisbon and Coimbra. However, here is a summary of discourses expressed in the case of major beverages besides wine, linked to leisure times and

spaces, and to some social structures embedded in the agents, such as age, sex, status in employment, familiar insertion or religious affiliation.

Table 3

OUTSTANDING EXPRESSIONS ON WINE,
BY TYPE OF DRINKING HOUSE

TAVERN

You loose friends. Injurious to health.
Blood of Christ.
Accompanies feeding.
Vasco Santana.
It does not hurt.
Good strain.
Special wine.
It's bad.
Good food.
Good disposition.

COFFEE HOUSE

João Pires.
Torres Vedras.
Monte Velho.
Portuguese stew.
Good dish.
I do not like.
Bad taste.
Eat.
Strong.

BAR

Stays well.
Casal Garcia.
Welfare.
Alcoholic people.
God Bacchus.
Wine Esporão
Good custard.
Portuguese stew
Good food
Entertaining

Beer does not connect strongly to the reconstitution of the body, as wine does, but with links, with greater intensity, to leisure and celebration times, according to discursive utterances produced mainly by regulars of drinking in weekends' leisure moments.

Coffee has meanings related to stimulus for various activities, a connotation preferred by owners and workers, but also meanings relating to the exotic, in the opinion of the first. Students and unemployed people also highlight its role as stimulant, after the hangover, and retired persons indicate coffee's digestive role.

Water gets meanings correlated with thirst and the transmission of life, the first direction being favored by singles and the second by agents more integrated into the family institution, such as married and widowed. The separated and divorced are placed at intermediate positions.

Milk shows contradictory opinions, regarding both consumption practices and the discursive level. Indeed, on the one hand, this drink is semantically approached to the renewal of life, to primary socialization and its contexts (the house), and to respective agents (the mother). However, on the negative side, milk is often connoted with health problems caused by its deficient conservation. The first meaning is reiterated by women, and the second is underlined by men.

Coca Cola registers a collage to American values, a coincidence with the essence of evil and the excellence of the drink. Young people identify with it, adults highlight its harmful influence, and elders confess that they didn't taste it. Thus, Coca Cola may be included in a sort of '**dichotomous consumption**' (i.e. within a dichotomy of contraries), and a '**trichotomous**

consumption' (that is, within an articulation of three different connotations, in this case according to the drinkers' age).

Liquors suggest distinction, more or less celebrated by Catholics and members of other religions or beliefs, but this drink also raises a frontal refusal on the part of atheists and agnostics.

In short, discursive connotations associated to different paradigmatic drinks, are reread and rewritten dialy by actors, inside differential strategies of meaning inherent to semantic-logical social networks.

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Abstract

This text questions how ordinary people builds the social and discursive image of beverages they consume daily, while they talk about these drinks in their everyday language and in leisure moments spent in public drinking contexts, particularly in collective spaces as cafés, bars and taverns. The symbolic and discursive images of paradigmatic drinks (wine, beer, water, milk, etc.) are produced and reproduced through strategies that use common concepts and their relationships, enunciated by drinkers, especially within leisure times. This conjecture is tested through an emerging methodology, named reticular interdimensional hermeneutics. This procedure uses a strategy of writing and sociological argumentation in two major steps, which will be applied here to the study of public drinking paradigmatic beverages: (a) reading and critical interpretation of the sources, (b) definition of semantic-logical social networks through various social dimensions.

Keywords

discourse on leisure, public drinking, common concepts, semantic-logical social networks, reticular interdimensional hermeneutics.