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**Tertiary Student Drinking Culture, Facebook
and Alcohol Advertising:
Collapsing Boundaries Between Social Life
and Commercialised Consumption**

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Abstract

Student life is often associated with a 'culture of intoxication' in Aotearoa/New Zealand and has been linked to socialising, the development of friendships and negotiating identities. Social interactions between young adults are also increasingly conducted online, particularly through social networking sites (SNSs). Previous research has not investigated alcohol advertising, particularly contemporary forms such as that found upon SNSs, and its potential interactions with tertiary student socialisation and drinking culture. This thesis addresses the dearth of research in this area. It investigated three student friendship groups' constructions of their drinking experiences, Facebook use and alcohol advertising. The 13 participants (10 women and 3 men) engaged in semi structured discussions designed to elicit talk surrounding the identified topics. An internet enabled laptop was employed during talks to allow participants to illustrate material discussed, as well as being the specific focus of those areas of the discussions concerning online content. The discussions were transcribed and analysed using a Foucauldian discourse analytic approach. Four discourses were identified. In the pleasurable consumption discourse, drinking alcohol, Facebook use and alcohol advertising were described as pleasurable fun and exciting. In the individual as savvy agent discourse, participants' constructed themselves as knowledgeable and wary consumers in these areas. A discourse of routine everyday socialisation describes the mundane nature of students' drinking, Facebook use and proliferation of alcohol advertising material for the purposes of socialisation amongst peers. Finally, participants drew on the story imperative discourse that constructed group stories as highly important to create and share. To examine the interaction of these discourses two case studies "Tui beer advertising" and "bars photographing patron's drinking and posting to Facebook" were explored and showed that the identified discourses serve to collapse the boundaries between commercial advertising and student drinking culture, which oftentimes can be demonstrated as synonymous with one another. This is accomplished through the commercial appropriation of student and youth culture, as is illustrated by the mundane, naturalised nature of commercial alcohol companies' activities on Facebook. SNSs such as Facebook exacerbate the problems associated with existing drinking cultures through the biased representations of student and youth culture that they encourage. Findings are discussed in terms of implications for policies around alcohol marketing and targeted alcohol advertising.

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