

“A Dry January in the country of Bordeaux and Champagne?”

The Issue of All-groups/Abstinence Anti-Alcohol Public Health Campaigns in France

Introduction

In France, alcohol consumption is widespread and has an important social character. Around 85% of the adult population drinks alcohol¹, and its consumption is considered an integral part of the “French way of life”.

However, this consumption leads to high and well-documented social costs²: various estimations made by research institutes indicate that each year, 49,000 deaths are directly attributed to alcohol consumption, and from an economic perspective, the cost of alcohol consumption is estimated at 118 billion euros/year (5% of French’s GDP).

This paper focuses on an attempt by a non-governmental actor, a network of organizations from the third sector, to shape a public policy on this problem.

The “alcohol consumption” public problem has been on the Agenda Setting for a long time³, with a particular focus on the problem of public drunkenness. Today's French policies against alcohol consumption take various forms that can be categorized into different categories⁴:

- Economic penalties (e.g: creation of special taxes on alcohol sales⁵)
- The use of formal regulation to control behavior (e.g: ban on “open bars”⁶)
- Legal penalties (e.g: fine for selling alcohol at gas stations at night⁷)
- Funding organizations to influence public behavior (e.g: creation of a Council of Prevention and Moderation⁸)
- Public education (Public Health Campaigns run by “Santé Publique France”, the French Health Agency)

¹ Raphaël Andler, et al. "La consommation d'alcool des adultes en France en 2021, évolutions récentes et tendances de long terme." [Adult alcohol consumption in France in 2021, recent developments and long-term trends.] Bull Épidémiol Hebd 2 (2024): 22-31.

² Pierre Kopp. "Le coût social des drogues: estimation en France en 2019." [The social cost of drugs: estimates for France in 2019] Notes OFDT (2023).

³ Mathieu Lecoutre. *Ivresse et ivrognerie: Dans la France moderne. [Drunkenness: In Modern France]* (Presses universitaires François-Rabelais, 2022).

⁴ Paul Cairney. *Understanding public policy: theories and issues*. Vol. 2. (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019), 22-45.

⁵ Ordonnance n°60-907 du 30 août 1960 GIM. "Journal Officiel de la République Française", 1960.

⁶ Ordonnance n° 2009-879 du 21 juillet 2009 portant réforme de l'hôpital et relative aux patients, à la santé et aux territoires (Ordonnance No. 2009-879 of July 21, 2009 on Hospital Reform Relating to Patients, Health, and Territories). "Journal Officiel de la République Française," 2009.

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Décret n°2006-159 du 14 février 2006 portant création du Conseil de modération et de prévention. "Journal Officiel de la République Française," 2006.

These public health campaigns align with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3, “*Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages*”, as well as its target 3.5, which focuses on “*Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol*”.

However, these are not considered effective enough by some stakeholders.

The trigger point underlined by some stakeholders about these public campaigns is that they are never aimed at the entire population, but specifically at specific groups (young people, pregnant women, etc.), and they do not target alcohol consumption in general, but specific drinking behaviors (binge drinking, drinking and driving, etc.). Yet there is scientific consensus that alcohol is harmful to the whole population^{9,10}, and not only with high doses consumption^{11,12}.

Thus, there is a demand from certain stakeholders for public authorities to implement a prevention campaign aimed at the entire population and promoting temporary abstinence.

Stage of the policy process and “anti-alcohol” social sector involvement

Let’s delve into the policy process¹³ of these public campaigns, which we will call “all-groups/abstinence” anti-alcohol campaigns. This terminology will set apart these specific campaigns, which have yet to be implemented, from existing and previous campaigns that target specific groups or promote moderation.

The latter have stalled at the “policy decision-making” stage.

First, regarding the agenda-setting stage, the French public authorities recognize that actions have been needed for decades. We can underline a growing political awareness regarding alcohol-related issues since the 1960’s. Secondly, the policy development of these campaigns has been successfully completed, these campaigns have been considered by the Ministry of Health.

However, these campaigns have not completed the policy decision-making phase, always stalling at the end of this stage. Several public alcohol abstinence campaigns have already been developed and even planned (e.g. “Dry January”¹⁴ or “Don’t let alcohol knock you out”¹⁵) but

⁹ Tim Stockwell, et al. “Do ‘Moderate’ Drinkers Have Reduced Mortality Risk? A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Alcohol Consumption and All-Cause Mortality,” *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs* 77, no. 2 (2016): 185-198.

¹⁰ Craig S. Knott et al., “All Cause Mortality and the Case for Age Specific Alcohol Consumption Guidelines: Pooled Analyses of Up to 10 Population-Based Cohorts,” *BMJ* 350 (2015).

¹¹ Udomsak Saengow, et al., “The Effect of an Annual Temporary Abstinence Campaign on Population-Level Alcohol Consumption in Thailand: A Time-Series Analysis of 23 Years,” *BMJ Global Health* 9, no. 7 (2024).

¹² Ben Young, et al., “Effectiveness of Mass Media Campaigns to Reduce Alcohol Consumption and Harm: A Systematic Review,” *Alcohol and Alcoholism* 53, no. 3 (2018): 302-316

¹³ Victor Bekkers et al., “Public Policy in Action: Perspectives on the Policy Process,” in *Public Policy in Action*, ed. Victor Bekkers et al. (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2017), Chapter 1

¹⁴ Hugh Schofield, “French booze-free January falls flat with Macron government”, BBC, January 4, 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-67880240>

¹⁵ Camille Stromoni, “Après l’annulation de deux campagnes de prévention sur l’alcool, les acteurs de la santé publique dénoncent les ‘faux prétextes’ du gouvernement” (After the Cancellation of Two Alcohol Prevention Campaigns, Public Health Players Denounce the Government’s ‘False Pretexts’), *Le Monde*, September 13, 2023. https://www.lemonde.fr/sante/article/2023/09/13/annulation-des-campagnes-de-prevention-sur-l-alcool-les-acteurs-de-la-sante-publique-denoncent-les-faux-pretextes-du-gouvernement_6189115_1651302.html

they have never been implemented. The last one is particularly telling, Santé Publique France had prepared visuals for the campaign, but it was ultimately canceled after being presented to the Minister of Health's cabinet.

Now, let's turn our attention to the Dry January campaign, which involves many stakeholders. Created by Alcohol Change UK¹⁶, this initiative encourages individuals to abstain from alcohol throughout January. This campaign has been adopted in various countries, sometimes solely led by third-sector organizations, and in other cases, with support from government agencies.

In France, a network of third-sector is adapting and implementing this campaign. To enhance its impact, this network seeks government support for the creation of a national public campaign promoting the "Dry-January".

Institutional structure governing the policy problem

Let's examine the institutional structure for public health prevention campaigns. The central actor is Santé Publique France (SPF), a governmental agency under the Ministry of Health, responsible for improving and protecting public health¹⁷, notably through the design and implementation of campaigns.

SPF operates under the direct supervision of the Direction Générale de la Santé, a division within the Ministry of Health. The DGS sets the strategic objectives and directives for the agency (derived from interministerial strategies¹⁸). Consequently, the agency has minimal room for manoeuvre, as the Ministry retains control over all campaign disposition and aspects.

Once the campaign is approved, SPF directly implements it through media channels (television and radio) and social media (advertising, partnerships with influencers, etc.).

Moreover, this institutional structure fits into the institutions of the 5th republic and its institutional practices. Thus, the President of the Republic can *de facto* veto a campaign. And this seems to have been the case for the 2020 dry January campaign¹⁹²⁰.

Focus on the "Dry-January Network"

The current policy is challenged by the "Dry January Network", an interest group, which advocates for the implementation of public all-groups/abstinence campaigns, positioning itself as a stakeholder entrepreneur²¹. The members of this network are similarly impacted by public policy in this domain, and share common stakes and interests.

¹⁶ Alcohol Change UK, "The Dry January® Story", (accessed on 26/09/2024), <https://alcoholchange.org.uk/help-and-support/managing-your-drinking/dry-january/about-dry-january/the-dry-january-story>

¹⁷ Santé Publique France, "À Propos", (accessed on 26/09/2024), <https://www.santepubliquefrance.fr/a-propos>

¹⁸ MILDECA, *Stratégie interministérielle de mobilisation contre les conduites addictives 2023-2027* (Interministerial Strategy for Mobilization Against Addictive Behaviors 2023-2027) (MILDECA, 2023).

¹⁹ Alice Tidey, "'Non' to Dry January in France, Says President Emmanuel Macron", November 16, 2019, <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2019/11/16/non-to-dry-january-in-france-says-president-emmanuel-macron>.

²⁰ Marion Sepeau Ivaldi, "Emmanuel Macron s'oppose au 'Janvier Sec'" (Emmanuel Macron Opposes 'Dry January'), November 14, 2019, <https://www.vitisphere.com/actualite-90614-emmanuel-macron-soppose-au-janvier-sec-.html>

²¹ John W. Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, 2nd ed. (Pearson, 2014), 122-124

This network operates mostly informally, without a dedicated coordinating structure, resulting in separate, uncoordinated initiatives each year for Dry January from each organization. However, within the network, the Fédération Addiction plays a key role. It holds the 'Dry January' license for France (granting usage rights to other organizations), manages the campaign's official website, and develops communication tools.

Composition:

This network is primarily composed of NGOs (40), including organizations helping alcoholics (e.g. Addict'AIDES), promoting public health (e.g. France Assos Santé), supporting health research (e.g. Ligue contre le cancer), or federations of associations (e.g. FAGE). Additionally, it includes two public hospitals and seven insurance companies /mutuals.

It's highly heterogeneous, notably in terms of:

- Membership size: from a few dozen to 300,000 (FAGE)
- Budget: from a few dozen thousand euros to 105M (Ligue contre le cancer)
- Legal structure: voluntary associations, foundations, non-profit/profit insurers, public health institution.

Furthermore, there is significant variation in terms of approaches to alcohol, with some taking an activist stance against, while others only express concerns.

Interests:

- Moral/Personal Values: Particularly strong for activist organizations.
- Economic interests: Alcohol consumption is costly for mutuals/insurance companies. And for all members, a public campaign could open access to public funding.

Resources

Despite having numerous resources, most remain fragmented and underutilized:

- Human resources: High, many individuals involved, some of whom are well-informed or/and committed activists.
- Economic resources: Significant, especially from insurers/mutuals.
- Political resources (ability to mobilize consensus): Low, public demand for government involvement remains limited.
- Cognitive/Knowledge resources: Strong. The network receives data (supporting its cause) from research institutes.
- Social capital: Low to moderate, with limited connections to political and media spheres.

Other Stakeholders

Let us now consider the other stakeholders involved in this policy with this stakeholder matrix²².

| Stakeholders and basic Characteristics | Interests* regarding Anti-Alcohol campaigns* | Position on a Dry January Campaign | Resources | Involvement in The Issue |
|---|---|--|---|---|
| Ministry of Health | Low | No preconceived position | Legal/Institutional: can commission, cancel, block a prevention campaign | Ultimate Policy-decision stakeholder Has previously blocked campaigns |
| Santé Publique France (Health Agency) | Medium: whether (or not) they will implement a new campaign (expanding activities)? | Slightly favorable | Nonpertinent | Main Policy-Development and Implementation Stakeholder Has already developed campaigns |
| President of the Republic (Emmanuel Macron) | Low (in electoral terms), potential loss of support from the wine lobby | Unfavorable -> doesn't want to disappoint the wine industry disfavor ²³ -> Openly advocate for daily wine consumption ²⁴ | Power: Veto authority (<i>de facto</i>) | Punctual strong involvement (Veto) |
| Public or private Health Research Institute | Medium: whether (or not) their research) is considered | In favor -> Implementation of a "Dry January" campaign based on their recommendation | Knowledge and Expertise | Low and punctual advocacy |
| Wine Lobby (including « Vin et Société », « Fédération française des Vins d'Apéritifs ») | Very high: concerned about wine's image + by wine sales | Strongly unfavorable -> Wants to preserve the status quo | Economic (Leverage: 440 000 jobs, 6.4 billion euros in tax revenue, 1.4% GDP) Political opportunity: wine as a marker of French identity | Continuous and very strong advocacy |
| Doctors (general practitioners) | Medium: affects their patient base | In favor -> campaign can support their advice to their patient's | Field knowledge Recognized profession in this domain | Low advocacy |

²² Zsuzsa Varvasovszky and Ruairí Brugha, "A Stakeholder Analysis," Health Policy and Planning 15, no. 3 (September 2000): 338–345

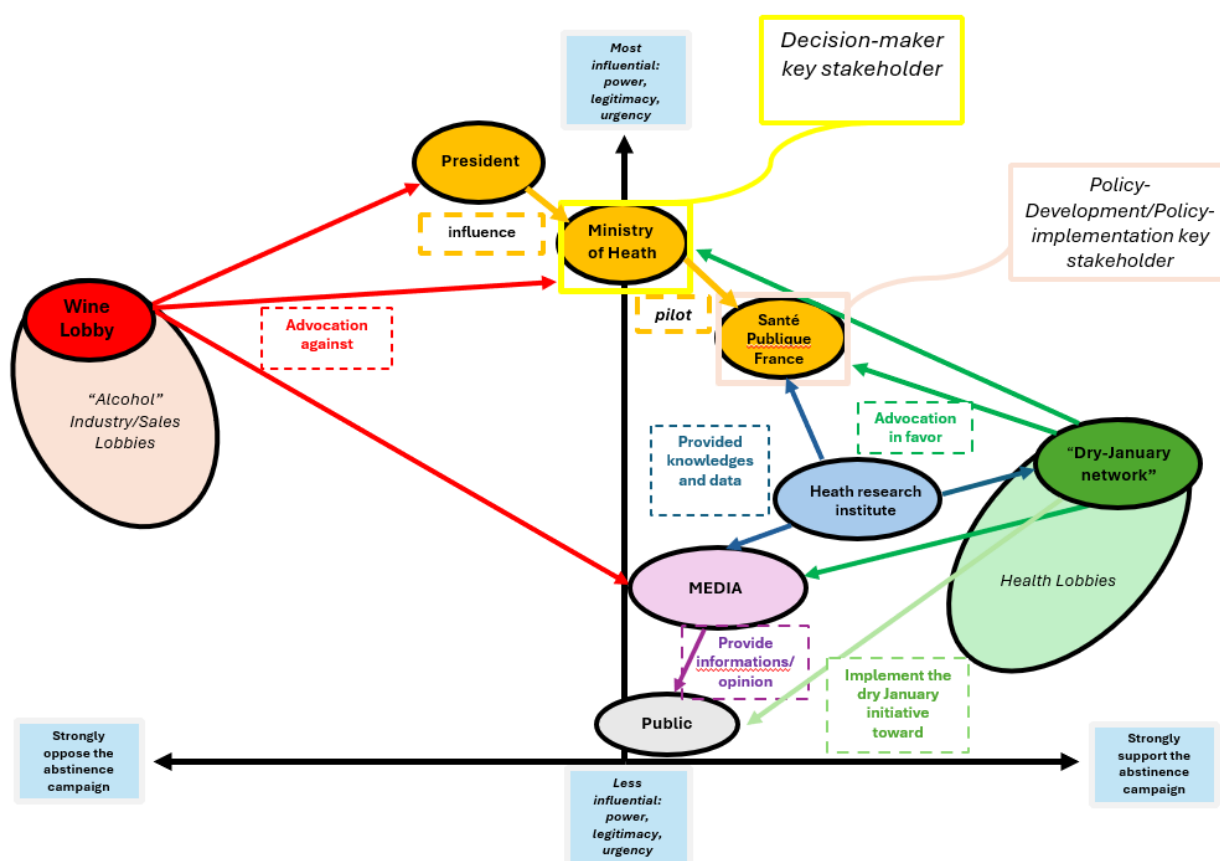
²³ Angélique Chrisafis, "Row in France as Government Reluctant to Back Dry January," The Guardian, December 30, 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/dec/30/row-in-france-as-government-reluctant-to-back-dry-january>

²⁴ During the 2022 Opening of the Salon de agriculture (Agricultural Show) to journalists from the regional press. "I drink wine at lunch and in the evening"

| | | | | |
|---------------|---|--|--|--|
| Public | Medium: target of stakeholders of prevention campaign | Slightly in favor -> Interest in Dry January (5M participants ²⁵) but no request for public policy to intervene | Nonpertinent | Growing participation in the Dry January initiative each year |
| Media | None | In favor of the campaign (for most of them) | Capabilities to highlight the initiative and underline decision-making blockages | Medium published numerous on Dry January every year, but few regarding the policy process |

Stakeholders map

The stakeholder map is an extension of the power/interest model²⁶, specifically chosen to underline the duality of interests between the Dry January Network and the Wine Lobby.



²⁵ Panel Selvitys survey

²⁶ C. Eden and F. Ackermann, *Making Strategy: The Journey of Strategic Management* (London: Sage Publications, 1998), cited in John M. Bryson, "What to Do When Stakeholders Matter," *Public Management Review* 6, no. 1 (2004): 28-31

Reasons for “failure” in the policy decision process

As of September 2024, Dry January has not evolved into a public campaign. To understand the failure of the Dry January network, we must first analyze the success of the Wine Lobby, the other crucial interest group.

A temporary victory for the wine lobby

The wine lobby has developed a diverse and well-structured argument, which it appears to have successfully deployed in the media and toward key political figures involved in the decision-making (President, Ministers, Minister of Health and his cabinet, MPs), resulting in the maintenance of the status quo.

First, the wine lobby frames its defense of wine consumption as a defense of French tradition and the French “art de vivre”. This connection between wine consumption and French identity resonates strongly in the French political space of ideas. It is echoed not only by conservative and far-right politicians and influencers, but also by some liberals and leftist politicians. For instance, former Agriculture Minister Marc Fesneau (MoDem [center-right]), when asked if he was going to do the dry January, responded that he preferred “Measure and moderation rather than prohibition and constant injunctions.”²⁷ Continuing its identity-based defense of wine, the wine lobby has framed alcohol abstinence as puritan behavior, contrasting it with the image of the French *bon vivant*²⁸.

Here, we see that the wine lobby can develop a political argument in defense of wine consumption that fits into a broader French political context of identity-based fears.

Furthermore, the wine lobby promotes pseudo-scientific arguments (listed on the website of the wine lobby ‘Vin et Société’), claiming health benefits from wine consumption. This is based on outdated^{29,30} scientific literature suggesting that drinking wine has antioxidant, cardioprotective effects.

This discourse is constantly deployed by the wine lobby in the media, and by many other actors (conservative politicians, other agribusiness actors, etc.).

But the key element of success for the wine lobby is its direct connections with numerous politicians (its networking). The lobby can rely on a parliamentary group sympathetic to its interests (about a hundred deputies from both the right and the left³¹). Lobby representatives are

²⁷ Le Parisien, “Dry January: ‘Je ne vais pas le faire,’ avance Marc Fesneau qui préfère la ‘modération’ [Dry January: ‘I’m not going to do it,’ says Marc Fesneau, who prefers ‘moderation’],” Le Parisien, December 16, 2023, <https://www.leparisien.fr/societe/dry-january-je-ne-va-is-pas-le-faire-avance-marc-fesneau-qui-prefere-la-moderation-16-12-2023-GMGLZ5MTPFDN3BL4GZDWSNO6KI.php>

²⁸ Agathe Pigneux, “Le Dry January ou le symptôme d’une société du contrôle [Dry January or the Symptom of a Control Society],” La Revue du Vin de France, January 24, 2024, <https://www.larvf.com/le-dry-january-ou-le-symptome-d-une-societe-de-contrôle,4845771.asp>

²⁹ Stockwell et al., “Do “Moderate” Drinkers Have Reduced Mortality Risk?” 185

³⁰ A. Britton, M. G. Marmot et M. Shipley, “Who benefits most from the cardioprotective properties of alcohol consumption—health freaks or couch potatoes?,” *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health*, vol. 62, no 10, 1st October 2008, p. 905–908

³¹ Groupe d’études : vigne, vin et œnologie [Study Group: Vine, Wine, and Oenology] https://www2.assemblee-nationale.fr/instances/resume/OMC_PO807603?force

also invited to the Élysée for meetings³², and wine industry regularly hosts important political figures (the president, ministers) at their events, such as the Salon de l'Agriculture³³. The wine lobby openly acknowledges its close ties with the head of state and has praised his policy³⁴³⁵³⁶.

Dry January: A Successful Initiative that has yet to find a way to enter public policy

Since the first campaign in France in 2020, the Dry January network, through its members, has actively communicated on social media and in the medias about this initiative³⁷. The marketing and communication surrounding this campaign have been highly effective. Surveys show that most French people are aware of the initiative³⁸, with many already participating or planning to participate.

This month of abstinence is framed as a challenge to take on with friends. The messaging is far from moralistic; instead, it's portrayed as simply taking a "pause" from alcohol. The focus is on the benefits of this break, such as "saving money, or "better sleep".

Rather than emphasizing the negative effects of alcohol consumption, the communication highlights the positives of taking a break. It doesn't push people to deeply question their relationship with alcohol but instead encourages them to join millions of people in undertaking a shared challenge.

To support its message, the network relies on documented research from other institutes, as well as surveys commissioned and conducted among participants of previous Dry January campaigns.

This initiative returns to the media spotlight every year, featuring on-the-ground segments where reporters interview passersby about the challenge³⁹.

However, advocacy for a public campaign remains weak. It largely consists of uncoordinated and dispersed statements from member organizations of the network, criticizing the Ministry of Health or the President for not embracing this initiative⁴⁰. For example, in 2024, there was only

³² Example: May 2, 2024, Working meeting between the Presidency of the Republic and representatives of the agricultural sector (including the wine industry).

³³ Example: February 25, 2023, Emmanuel Macron's visit to the Wine Pavilion at the International Agriculture Fair

³⁴ Daily Mail Reporter, "French Wine-Growers Celebrate After Country's Leaders Ditch Plans to Promote Dry January", Daily Mail, November 22, 2019. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7713211/French-wine-growers-celebrate-countrys-leaders-ditch-plans-promote-Dry-January.html>

³⁵ Stéphane Horel, "For Winemakers, Macron's Presidency Feels Like a Dream Come True", Le Monde, April 1, 2022, https://www.lemonde.fr/en/les-decodeurs/article/2022/04/01/for-winemakers-macron-s-presidency-feels-like-a-dream-come-true_5979538_8.html

³⁶ Denis Saverot, "Emmanuel Macron : Un président qui aime le vin, qui en boit, qui en est fier !" (Emmanuel Macron: A President Who Loves Wine, Drinks It, and Is Proud of It!), La Revue du Vin de France, <https://www.larvf.com/emmanuel-macron-un-president-qui-aime-le-vin-qui-en-boit-qui-en-est-fier,4778341.asp>

³⁷ "Nous demandons un soutien affirmé des pouvoirs publics au Dry January" (We Demand Strong Support from Public Authorities for Dry January), Le Monde, January 3, 2024, https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2024/01/03/nous-demandons-un-soutien-affirme-des-pouvoirs-publics-au-dry-january_6208831_3232.html

³⁸ Guillemette Quatremère et al., "Notoriété et participation aux premières éditions du défi d'un mois sans alcool en France à partir des résultats du Baromètre de Santé publique France," Bulletin Épidémiologique Hebdomadaire 2024, no. 2 (2024): 32-40

³⁹ Example: Manon Mella, "Tout le monde boit, l'alcool est partout et nous on boit pas': Des jeunes racontent leur vie sans alcool" ('Everyone Drinks, Alcohol Is Everywhere, and We Don't Drink': Young People Share Their Lives Without Alcohol), France Inter, January 8, 2024, <https://www.radiofrance.fr/franceinter/tout-le-monde-boit-l-alcool-est-partout-et-nous-on-boit-pas-des-jeunes-racontent-leur-vie-sans-alcool-3925859>

⁴⁰ Example:

one open letter, with limited coverage, supported by just a single member⁴¹. Unlike the wine lobby, there is no documented lobbying effort directed at key politicians in the decision-making process (no open letters, no meetings). The relationship between the network and the Ministry of Health appears to be limited to mere lamentations about the lack of participation from Santé Publique France in this initiative.

The actions of the network cannot be considered a complete failure, as Dry January has become a recognized event, covered by the media, well-known among the French public, and attracting many participants. In the medium/long term, the likelihood that Santé Publique France will join this campaign is high, especially since many local municipalities have been supporting the initiative since 2022 (including Paris, Nantes, and Toulouse).

However, it can be argued that a more sustained and coordinated networking⁴² effort, supported in the media and on social networks with communication urging the Ministry to take charge of the campaign, could have led to a different outcome. The network could also leverage external economic actors who might benefit from this campaign, especially the soft drink industry (alcohol-free cocktails, beer, and even wine).

Implementing these potential actions would likely require better mobilization of the network's resources (both human and financial) and improved coordination among members. This might include the creation of an *ad hoc* organization with specific human and financial resources for these tasks. For example, the current situation where communication relies primarily on the Addiction Federation leads to limited financial and human resources.

Dry January and the Kingdon's Multiple Streams Framework⁴³

Problem Stream:

There is a consensus among all stakeholders and the public that alcohol consumption is problematic. However, there is a divergence of opinion on whether moderate and/or occasional (festive) consumption is problematic.

Moreover, there is no consensus on the need for the Ministry of Health to be involved in campaigns such as Dry-January.

➔ Source of the divergence:

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- Charles Delouche-Bertolasi, "Mois sans alcool: 'En France, tout est fait pour qu'on lève le coude'" (Month Without Alcohol: 'In France, Everything Is Done to Encourage Drinking'), Libération, January 7, 2023, https://www.liberation.fr/societe/sante/mois-sans-alcool-en-france-tout-est-fait-pour-quon-leve-le-coude-20230107_V7Y7JR7X4BFCBONJ2WUYDQ3B4Y/
 - "D'un trait de plume, Emmanuel Macron a annulé le 'Dry January' en France, dénonce le Fonds actions addictions" ("With a Stroke of the Pen, Emmanuel Macron Canceled 'Dry January' in France," Denounces the Addiction Action Fund), France Info, January 1, 2020, https://www.francetvinfo.fr/sante/drogue-addictions/d-un-trait-de-plume-emmanuel-macron-a-annule-le-dry-january-en-france-denonce-le-fonds-actions-addictions_3766985.html

⁴¹ "Nous demandons un soutien affirmé des pouvoirs publics au Dry January" (We Demand Strong Support from Public Authorities for Dry January), Le Monde, January 3, 2024, https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2024/01/03/nous-demandons-un-soutien-affirme-des-pouvoirs-publics-au-dry-january_6208831_3232.html

⁴² Andrew Gunn, "Policy Entrepreneurs and Policy Formulation," in Handbook of Policy Formulation, chap. 16 (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2017)

⁴³ John W. Kingdon, Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies, 2nd ed. (Pearson, 2014)

- Economic perspectives: Alcohol consumption is an important industry in France.
- Values: Debate between Health (stoicism) versus the pleasure derived from alcohol (hedonism).
- Government Intervention: necessity and legitimacy of government intervention, or is private initiative sufficient?

Policy Stream:

In terms of prevention campaigns, this stream is highly developed due to the past implementation of anti-alcohol campaigns targeting specific groups/behaviors, as well as suggestions from foreign actors (Health agencies, NGOs) and national actors (NGOs, research institutes, civil servants working for Santé Publique France) regarding the possibility of public-wide or abstinence campaigns like Dry-January.

Political Stream:

Most of the elements have already been mentioned before:

- ➔ Public opinion: There is a passive interest in the Dry January campaign, evidenced by significant participation, but disinterest in its implementation (or not) as a public policy.
- ➔ National mood toward alcohol: the sentiment leans toward the defense of moderate wine consumption, viewing wine positively as part of the French art of living, and as a central element of French identity⁴⁴.
- ➔ Political Forces governance: May 2017 - September 2024 (center-right); since September 2024 (right-wing), Slightly unfavorable: While these governments tend to be aligned with the agribusiness lobby, the implementation of Dry January is not politically charged, making it as a viable option even in this context.
- ➔ Policy-makers (cost-benefit analysis): Neutral; low risk in both implementation/non-implementation, low gains in implementation/non-implementation.

Policy window:

In this case, the policy window represents the opportunity for Dry January to re-enter the decision-making process. Since Dry January occurs independently of the policy process every year, a small window of opportunity opens annually. However, this window is more significant during a change in the Minister of Health and his cabinet, and especially during a shift in the majority (as occurred in September 2024). Therefore, this window arises from a change in the political stream.

The Kingdon model effectively highlights the current and past misalignment of the various streams, leading to an incomplete opening of the policy window. However, the window is not

⁴⁴ Demossier, Marion. *Wine drinking culture in France: a national myth or a modern passion?*. (University of Wales Press, 2010).

entirely closed, the Dry January network may still have the potential for success under current conditions.

We can also deduce from this model, that a significant shift in the political stream (the potential election of a leftist government in the upcoming election) could create a fully open window.

Conclusion

The analysis of public policies regarding alcohol consumption prevention campaigns in France highlights the challenges and obstacles that many policies must overcome. A divergent definition of the problem (is moderate/festive consumption problematic?), the existence of an organized and opposing stakeholder (wine lobby), and an unfavorable political stream can lead to the failure of implementing a public policy as an apparently benign public campaign encouraging alcohol abstinence.

The failure to move from policy decision-making to implementation in recent years leads us to suggest some recommendations on how the Dry January network could be more.

First of all, the current network lacks coordination in implementing Dry January. Their initiatives are not aligned, each actor operates independently. Developing at least a collective and coordinated action plan could allow this private initiative to have a greater impact at the media level and politically.

Secondly, some of the more militant actors in this network need to coordinate to respond to attacks from the wine lobby and to highlight the connections between the wine lobby and policy-makers in order to destabilize that relationship.

Thirdly, the network must focus on building relationships with political decision-makers, particularly at the national level, by actively reaching out to them. This could involve creating a cross-party parliamentary group sensitive to the issue or, for example, inviting the Minister of Health (or members of her cabinet) to discuss the campaign and participate in their January events.

Finally, the network must remain vigilant and proactive in responding to opportunities presented by the policy window. The recent appointment of a new Minister of Health in September should be seen as a valuable opportunity to request a meeting to discuss their initiative.

These suggestions could help strengthen the resources of the pro-Dry January network and weaken the wine lobby, which would lead policy-makers to ultimately make Dry January a public campaign.

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