

My role is that of the lay citizen. My character is female, 25 years old, and Caucasian. In many ways, she is a rather typical representation of her demographic. She is living in Milwaukee, and like 82% of the Milwaukee population, has a high school diploma. However, like 77% of the population of Milwaukee, she has no bachelor's degree (Census.gov, 2016). She works as a Certified Nursing Assistant in an assisted living facility. Politically, she leans right and like 29% of the Wisconsin population, considers herself a "moderate republican" (Pew Research Center). She would also consider herself to be Catholic (like 25% of the Wisconsin population) and attends church weekly (Pew Research Center). She usually has one glass of wine before bed approximately five days per week. By the CDC's definition, this is moderate alcohol consumption and slightly more than the three drinks per week average of 25-year-old women in America (Ingraham, 2015).

It is impossible to say for sure how any particular person, given just basic facts like their age, income, political party and religious tendencies, might feel about lowering the drinking age. The complexities of any given person's experiences and environments certainly plays a significant role in their opinion on controversial topics such as these. However, because my character is simply a lay citizen and has neither extensive knowledge about the topic nor any specific personal experiences that may sway her one way or another, predictions can be made about her response to the consensus conference based on how others in her demographics have responded to opinion surveys on lowering the drinking age.

The first demographic that I will consider with respect to how my character might feel about the drinking age is her level of education. As mentioned above, she is a part of the majority of people in Milwaukee that has a high school, but not a college degree. Those with a high school education or less are slightly less likely to favor lowering the drinking age than those with a college

education (21% in favor versus 27%) (Jones, 2014). I think this is an interesting consideration and probably relevant to my character. Considering the drinking culture at colleges and Universities, particularly in Wisconsin, is so dominant, not having attended college may make one less acquainted with underage drinking. Therefore, my character may be wary of lowering the drinking age because she has not been immersed in such a culture before.

Another important characteristic to consider is political ideology. Again, my character is not unique in her environment because she leans right of center and considers herself a Moderate Republican. Just 18% of “politically conservative” Americans favor lowering the drinking age (Jones 2014). By contrast, political liberals favor lowering the drinking age at almost twice that rate at 34% (Jones, 2014). Again, because such a prominent part of Wisconsin’s culture revolves around alcohol consumption, I speculate that my character may be more likely than the average Republican to favor lowering the drinking age (Phillip, 2014).

My character’s religious affiliation is another important factor to consider when predicting how she might react to information presented in the consensus conference regarding lowering the drinking age. Those who attend church weekly are among the least likely to support lowering the drinking age, clocking in at just 19% (Jones, 2014). I think that my character’s religion, specifically her strict Catholic faith would make her less likely to support lowering the drinking age because of the Catholic Church’s view on intoxication and the common “sinful” behaviors that come with it. Therefore, I think my character’s Catholic faith would be another factor impeding her favor of lowering the drinking age.

The final quality that I will analyze is my character’s current drinking habits. Unsurprisingly, those who drink alcohol weekly (which my character does) are among the most

likely (35%) to be in favor of lowering the drinking age (Jones, 2014). Again, I think culture is a strong force at work here because if one is immersed in a certain culture, it seems logical that they may be comfortable with expanding it.

In conclusion, my character has many complex attributes that could impact her opinion on lowering the drinking age as well as how she will respond to information in the consensus conference. Overall, I think that my character is probably more likely to be against lowering the drinking age based on the demographics that I examined. However, her personal drinking habits paired with the drinking culture of her home state of Wisconsin may make her more receptive to arguments in favor of lowering the drinking age.

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