

# Alcohol Consumption and the Transformation of Living Conditions A Comparative Study

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter represents a synopsis of a research project which was begun in 1973 under the auspices of the Finnish Foundation for Alcohol Studies. The original aims of the study were rather loosely set. The main idea was to conduct a broad analysis of the world's alcohol industry, paying particular attention to the role of the international alcohol trade.

It soon became evident that no study of alcohol consumption, founded on comprehensive international data, existed—not to speak of such aspects of the alcohol question as production and trade. Again, this meant that the first task was to form a general impression of the consumption of alcohol in recent years. Looked at in this light, it became clear that this study of international alcohol production and trade should address itself to one main issue: what role do production and trade play in the virtually world-wide growth of the consumption of alcohol? In the course of the study it became increasingly evident that this question can only be answered by coming to grips with the theoretical problem of how to explain the growth of the consumption of alcohol generally.

Consequently the aims of this study can be compressed into two main tasks:

1. Forming an overall view of how the consumption and availability of alcoholic beverages have changed since World War II.
2. Analyzing the causes underlying alcohol consumption.

The historical limitations of this study should be emphasized and borne in mind. First of all, it deals mainly with industrialized capitalist countries. It was not possible to select the countries to be studied beforehand from a theoretical standpoint: the choice of the countries studied had to depend on the availability of adequate data and also on the various specific questions that were the subject of different stages of the study.

The theoretical and methodological thinking underlying the various parts of the study has been colored by the fact that, in the main, they have concerned *capitalist* countries. It is certainly true that the consumption of alcoholic beverages has also grown in the socialist countries and in the developing nations. To some extent, the same reasons may apply to them, too. Nevertheless, this is a matter which can not be studied until sufficient case studies representing different social conditions become available. It is difficult to say in advance how the divergencies between varying social systems should best be allowed for.

Secondly, this research is concerned with the post-World War II period—a period which has seen major social transformations take place in the capitalist world too. The changes which have taken place are crucial from certain points of view and some writers believe that they represent a qualitatively new stage in the history of capitalism (e.g., Fourastié, 1979, pp. 28–30; *Politische Ökonomie des heutigen Monopolkapitalismus*, 1972, pp. 30–45). It is not necessary here to give a theoretical verdict on these views. Suffice it to say that radical changes have taken place within the spheres of technology and social relationships and that these changes must also be taken into account in analyzing the consumption of alcoholic beverages.

This chapter is mainly based on three major sets of empirical findings from the various stages of this study. The first of these deals with the statistical world trends of alcohol consumption from the 1950s to the late 1960s and has been published in the third volume of the series *Research Advances in Alcohol and Drug Problems* (Sulkunen, p., 1976). The second deals with the availability of alcoholic beverages in the European communities (Sulkunen, P., 1978a); the third has to do with the links between changes in alcohol use and living conditions in Finland, as shown by the fall in the proportion of abstainers in the population (Sulkunen, P., 1979).

This chapter combines the empirical findings just mentioned, and then will demonstrate how they help to interpret and explain the tendency to grow which the consumption of alcoholic beverages has shown since the Second World War.

## 2. CONSUMPTION TRENDS

The fundamental facts that form the empirical starting point of this study were reached by an analysis of consumption records from a large number of

countries. These facts were presented in detail in the article mentioned above (Sulkunen, P., 1976) and therefore only a very quick review of them is needed here.

As is well known, the level of annual alcohol consumption fluctuates widely from country to country. There are also wide divergencies between the types of alcoholic beverages preferred in different countries. Furthermore, virtually every country for which statistics on the overall consumption of alcohol are kept has experienced a growth in alcohol consumption since World War II. Finally, the differences between countries have diminished, and this holds true both for the level of consumption and its beverage class structure.

Table 1 refers to the first two of the four points I have just made. The table represents a list where countries are categorized according to which particular alcoholic beverage accounted for the brunt of the overall consumption of alcohol in the early 1950s.

Comparing the various countries' growth indicators gives an interesting picture. Growth has been most rapid in countries where consumption has been low, and this has led to national consumption levels becoming more uniform. If one looks at matters in the light of variation coefficients (that is, the standard deviation of overall consumption levels in a group of countries, divided by the average overall consumption taken over those countries), the levelling out of consumption levels becomes quite marked (see Table 2).

Again, Fig. 1 demonstrates the differences between the structure of the alcohol consumption of different countries. Each arrow refers to a single country and represents the move from the mean value for 1950–1952 to the mean average for 1978–1980. The points of the arrows indicate the manner in which overall consumption is split up into various beverage classes. Accordingly, those countries where spirits are the preferred drink are to be found in the lower right-hand corner of the figure. The countries where people mainly drink wine lie in the lower left-hand corner, and the countries where beer is dominant are at the apex of the triangle.

There are exceptions, but the general tendency is for the arrows to gravitate towards the center of the triangle. In other words, the beverage preferences have tended to become more similar in countries with different traditional patterns of alcohol use (see also Brown, 1978, pp. 5–12).

It can be—preliminarily—assumed that the beverage class structure of the consumption of alcohol is a manifestation of differing drinking habits. Several grounds exist for this belief.

The first point is that overall consumption fluctuates widely according to the preferred beverage in each particular country. Table 1 clearly shows that consumption has been highest in wine countries and lowest in spirits countries, and that the beer countries occupy a position between the two extremes.

This bears out something which everybody knows from everyday experience

Table 1. Beverage Preferences and Total Alcohol Consumption per Capita in Selected Countries 1950–1952<sup>a</sup>

Countries	Percent of total alcohol consumption			Total consumption per capita <sup>b</sup>
	Wine	Beer	Spirits	
Wine countries				
France	79.1	5.1	15.8	17.6
Hungary	78.5	6.0	15.5	4.8
Italy	90.8	1.7	7.5	9.4
Portugal <sup>c</sup>	95.8	0.4	3.8	12.9
Rumania <sup>c</sup>	60.8	6.0	33.2	4.7
Spain <sup>c</sup>	69.8	1.8	28.4	8.1
Switzerland <sup>c</sup>	51.7	29.6	18.6	6.6
Beer countries				
Australia <sup>c</sup>	13.4	73.8	12.7	6.4
Austria	32.7	43.5	23.8	5.4
Belgium	11.0	78.4	10.6	6.6
Canada	4.0	61.7	34.3	4.9
Czechoslovakia <sup>c</sup>	10.3	63.1	26.6	4.9
Denmark	9.8	78.3	11.9	4.0
Germany Fed. Rep.	20.0	50.2	29.8	3.6
Ireland	3.5	75.0	21.5	3.4
Luxembourg	42.8	43.1	14.1	6.8
New Zealand <sup>c</sup>	4.2	75.3	20.5	5.6
United Kingdom	2.1	87.1	10.8	4.9
U.S.A.	9.8	51.7	38.5	5.0
Spirits countries				
Bulgaria <sup>c</sup>	27.4	13.4	59.2	1.1
Cuba <sup>c</sup>	12.2	34.6	53.2	2.0
Cyprus <sup>c</sup>	43.7	13.0	43.3	3.1
Finland	6.6	33.9	59.5	2.2
Germany Dem. Rep.	3.6	47.0	49.5	1.9
Iceland <sup>d</sup>	15.9	37.9	46.1	1.1
Israel <sup>c</sup>	16.4	25.3	58.3	1.4
Netherlands	3.8	28.2	68.1	1.9
Norway	7.2	41.6	51.2	2.1
Peru <sup>c</sup>	10.2	24.0	65.8	1.3
Poland	4.6	24.2	71.2	3.1
South Africa	29.7	21.4	48.9	1.8
Sweden	4.5	31.8	63.7	4.0
Turkey <sup>c</sup>	27.5	17.3	55.2	0.3
Yugoslavia <sup>c</sup>	18.9	8.2	72.9	2.7

<sup>a</sup> Annual average.

<sup>b</sup> Total consumption per capita given in liters of 100% alcohol, per year.

<sup>c</sup> Figures are based on estimates for 1950.

Table 2. Variation Coefficients of per Capita Alcohol Consumption in Various Groups of Countries

Group	1950	1960	1965	1969
1 <sup>a</sup>	0.77	0.63	0.61	0.55
2 <sup>b</sup>	0.75	0.60	0.53	0.45
3 <sup>c</sup>	0.70	0.64	0.55	0.48

<sup>a</sup> All of the countries mentioned in Table 1.  
<sup>b</sup> All of the countries of Europe.  
<sup>c</sup> All of the capitalist countries of Europe, the United States, and Canada.

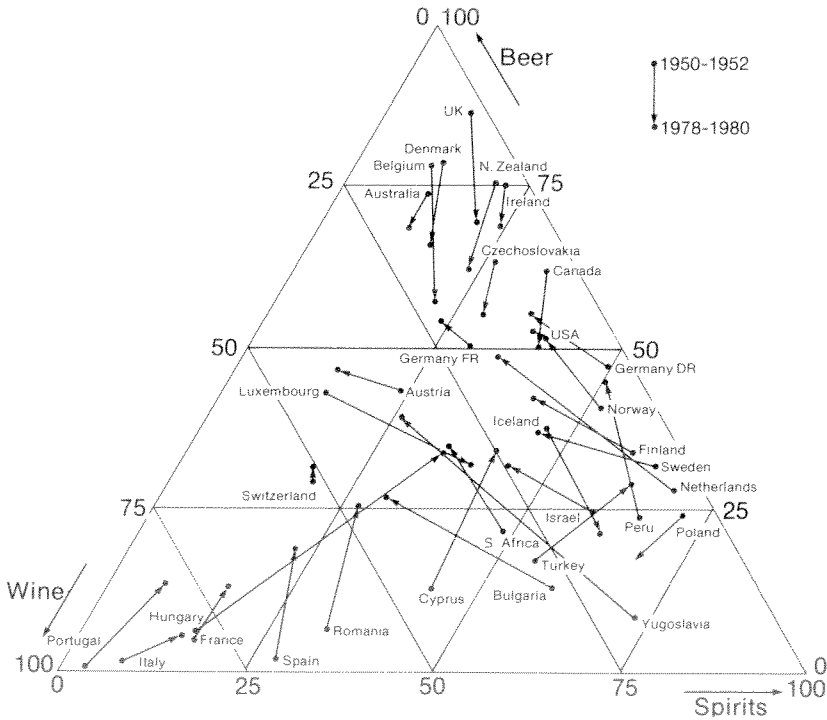


Figure 1. Distribution of annual average alcohol consumption by beverage class in selected countries, 1950–1952 and 1978–1980 (from *Produktschap voor Gedistilleerde Dranken*).

anyway—drinking is more of an everyday activity in wine and beer countries than in countries where distilled spirits is the preferred form of alcohol. Most of the alcohol consumed in wine countries consists of wine drunk at home with meals, an everyday occurrence (Lolli et al., 1958, p. 99; Sadoun et al., 1965, p. 20). In beer countries a large share of alcohol is drunk in restaurants, public houses, and so forth. In most spirits countries, where not much alcohol is drunk, drinking is a comparatively infrequent activity and a small segment of the population accounts for the bulk of the country's consumption of alcohol.

The presence of such different drinking habits between wine, beer, and spirits countries is important. It shows that differences in the beverage class structure of the consumption of alcohol are something more than just the forms in which alcohol is drunk: the divergencies reflect actual cultural differences. The role that alcohol plays in people's lives is different in the different types of countries.

Furthermore, other factors besides statistical records on alcohol use point to the existence of different types of alcohol cultures. The consumption of alcoholic beverages is tightly bound to the production of alcohol. Wine countries are countries where wines are made, beer countries are countries in which beer is manufactured, and spirits countries host distilleries. Only in rare cases does imported alcohol account for a significant share of a country's overall alcohol consumption. Indeed, the importance of international trade to the availability of alcohol is slight in general. The international wine trade accounts for something like 10% of the world's total output of wine. The corresponding figure for beer would only be about 5%. Nonetheless, the trend is for imports and exports to play a more important part, a point which shall be considered in greater detail later, in the context of availability.

The consumption of wine and spirits fluctuates nonsystematically according to how industrialized the country in question is. In contrast to this, beer would appear to be a drink characteristic of industrialized countries as opposed to agricultural ones (Fig. 2). This indicates that in wine and spirits countries the wines and spirits tend to be consumed by the agricultural populations who make them. Beer drinking is apparently tied to urban surroundings and to the way of life in towns.

The growth in consumption is a phenomenon which is rather uniform; the common denominator is the way in which the consumption of new, that is, noncustomary alcoholic beverage types tends to increase rapidly. Rising alcohol consumption is linked to the growing uniformity of drinking habits.

One particular point deserves to be mentioned here, a point which is borne out by statistics on the consumption of alcohol. The idea that alcoholism could be combated by making drinking more tied to clear normative standards and by replacing drinking which aims at marked drunkenness with more refined drinking habits is one which often crops up in writings about alcohol policy (for a classic

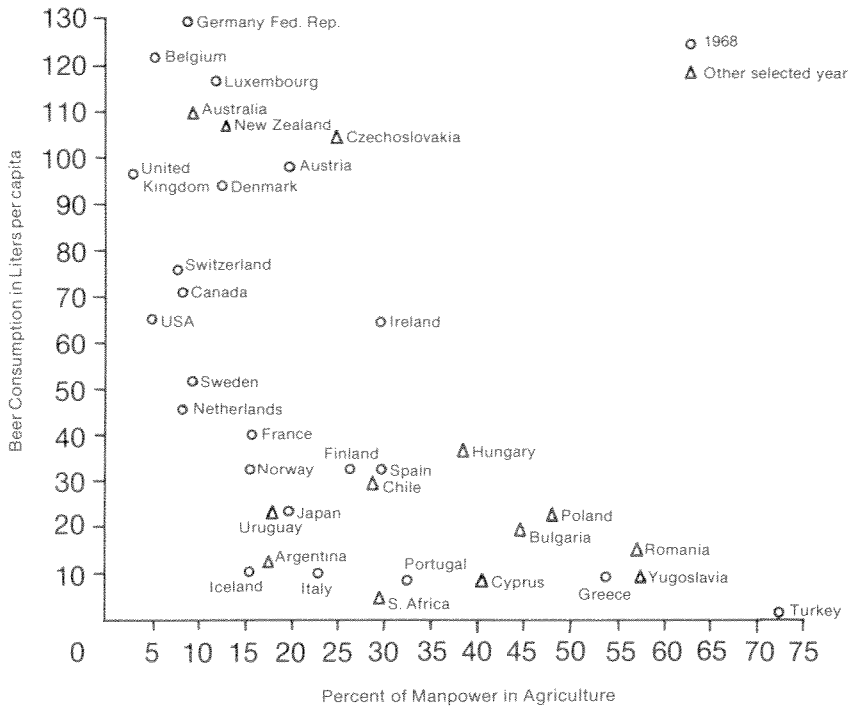


Figure 2. Per capita consumption of beer and the percentage of manpower in agricultural occupations (Sulkunen, 1976).

exposition of this idea, see Bales, 1946). But Mäkelä (1975) has shown that, for Finland, the growth in consumption which took place between 1968 and 1969 was not due to a process of substitution—rather, new drinking habits were adopted and the earlier habits also continued to exert influence. Growth is not substitutable, it is additive.

International consumption statistics give a similar picture. Overall consumption growth may be divided into component parts to see how much of the growth has been contributed by each particular beverage class. It is noteworthy that it is the customary beverages which generally act as the main agents of growth. It is wine which is responsible for the greater part of rising consumption in wine countries, beer in beer countries, and spirits in spirits countries. And this holds true despite the fact that the structure of consumption shows a propensity to level out.

In other words, the growing prevalence of alcohol use visible in most countries is not just additive, it is cumulative. New beverage types become

popular—a phenomenon which indicates the adoption of new drinking habits—but these new drinks do not merely take their place side-by-side with existing preferences. The old drinking habits also become more popular and widespread.

This statistical evidence has generated the questions to which the latter part of this study will be addressed. How should changes and fluctuations in consumption be interpreted and how can they be explained? What do we mean by saying that there are great cultural variations in alcohol use between different countries? If the traditional wine and spirits cultures are tied up with the manufacture of wines and spirits, and if beer drinking is linked to a high degree of industrialization, are changes in consumption then also bound up with the production of alcoholic beverages and general industrialization? Before proceeding to take an empirical look at these questions, we should first formulate the tasks in front of us a little more clearly.

### 3. INTERPRETATION AND EXPLANATION: THEORETICAL POINTS OF DEPARTURE

At first glance, the growth in the consumption of alcoholic beverages shown by statistics appears to be a comparatively trivial phenomenon. The economic growth and the increase in leisure time which have come about since the Second World War seem to constitute ready-made, obvious explanations for consumption growth and other aspects of the way in which people spend their free time. It is easy to think of the growing uniformity of drinking habits as symptomatic of how life styles are becoming more uniform in general.

Empirically, however, the matter is not quite that simple. First, the growth in alcohol consumption in various countries bears no apparent resemblance to the economic growth rate. Partanen (1979, p. 27) has shown that the correlation between the indicators of economic growth and the rise in the consumption of alcohol in the countries of Western Europe is very weak. Moreover, there is no correlation between the alcohol consumption growth rate and the decrease in the relative importance of agricultural labor or the rise in the number of people who live in cities and towns.

Secondly, the consumption of alcohol does not always rise even when the purchasing power of households goes up and the volume of overall consumption increases. Alcohol consumption either fell or at least remained stable throughout the whole of the period between the two world wars. This is somewhat peculiar, especially in light of the fact that people's leisure time increased more rapidly between the wars than it did afterwards in Finland, France, and Germany (Julkunen and Kunttu, 1978, p. 19; Fourastié, 1979, p. 77; Autorenkollektiv, 1974, p. 234).

Finally, there is the theoretical aspect to be considered. As well as affecting



the way in which people live, alcohol also plays an economic role. The use and the production of alcohol do have their own distinguishing features, but it is not surprising that economic development and general changes in living conditions and life styles are reflected in the consumption of alcohol. Indeed, whilst studying alcohol consumption, one of the aims of this study has been to reach a deeper understanding of these more general relationships.

## Alcohol Research

Sociological alcohol research has proliferated since the 1940s. Nevertheless, alcohol research has found surprisingly little to help one to explain and interpret the great fluctuations which have taken place in alcohol consumption. Alcohol research has tended to address itself to the causes of alcohol problems and the ways in which they should be controlled and how alcoholism can be cured.

In itself, alcohol consumption as such has been studied mainly from an ethnographic standpoint; the focus has been on describing the widespread cultural divergency observable within alcohol use and its consequences (for a lucid review of this research approach, see Heath, 1975). When the ethnographic tenor and its findings have been employed in attempts to explain drinking, it has usually been allied with psychological theories. The psychology has usually had a Freudian hue and tended to hold that the way in which alcohol affects the psyche (the alleviation of anxiety, feelings of power, the reconciliation of personality conflicts) represents a constant. In other words, the alcohol use of a given society depends upon the prevalence of such states of mind within that society. One of the pioneers of this research orientation was the Freudian anthropologist, Donald Horton (1943). Horton's example has been followed by Margaret Bacon et al. (1965), Field (1962), and McClelland et al. (1972). This psychological research framework does not really help us here; in the light of a comparative and historical study, such attempts to establish, with the help of cross-cultural data, an invariable and universal function of alcohol on the human mind are outright absurd.

Selden Bacon's famous essay (1945 and 1962) perhaps represents the sole systematic attempt to analyze alcohol use within contemporary society from the perspective of macrosociology. Bacon's essay takes a Parsonian approach in describing contemporary society as a complex system in which social relationships are specialized, stratified, tend to emphasize mutual dependence, and yet are individualistic. Bacon believes that alcohol plays an integrating role in such societies, and that this role is amplified by alcohol's ability to remove inhibitions and alleviate anxiety, aggression, and tension. But he also points out that alcohol has dysfunctional qualities: weakened performance and social isolation are especially severe in modern societies.

Surprisingly, Bacon's essay has not prompted social scientists to draw up functional models to explain growth in alcohol consumption. True, Bacon's

approach has become widely current but, nevertheless, it is still no more than a method of formulating the conflict between function and dysfunction which so plagues alcohol research.

There is no real tradition of looking at consumption from the point of view of long-term trends in alcohol research. Consequently, we must turn to general sociological ideas about consumption in our search for theoretical starting points in this study.

## The Sociology of Consumption and the Theory of Capitalism

Bacon's functionalist view is very close to general sociological consumption theories. What defines what people consume? What exactly is "consumption" anyway? How do cultural differences show up in consumption patterns and how do they change?

There is a serious—and obvious—shortcoming in Bacon's functionalist approach: it fails to take account of the economic aspects of alcohol. Furthermore, alcohol is invariably subject to State control measures in one form or another. Both economics and control affect the availability of alcohol and availability, naturally, affects consumption. Bacon's analysis is dubious for another reason, too: his claim that alcohol is increasingly functional in modern society is based on the supposition that alcohol represents a cultural constant in modern society and that drinking will always affect people's physical behavior in a given way. But in light of the cultural discrepancy of alcohol use shown by statistics, Bacon's reasoning is not just a simplification, it is downright misleading.

As is always the case in macrosociological research, we have to realize what kind of society we are dealing with. The main concern here is capitalist society, but the way in which the theory of capitalism should be applied to consumption styles is not self-evident.

If one accepts the basic Marxist hypothesis that it is the process whereby surplus value is accumulated which motivates and regulates the economy as a whole—including consumption—then the sociology of consumption can be schematically formulated as a question of the links between consumption and accumulation of surplus value (see Marx, no date, pp. 1–20). Fig. 3, is a representation of this view.

The first arrow in the diagram shows that the process whereby capital accumulates surplus value affects the structure of production and associated technology, and thus affects living conditions too (urbanization, falling agricultural labor, production techniques which necessitate highly trained work forces, and so on). Such being the case, the accumulation of surplus value dictates which kind of products become available (arrow 2) and what the needs of the population are (arrow 3). Furthermore, the accumulation process regulates which needs become satisfied (the distribution of income); this, again, may mean that the needs of the population will be manipulated. The fourth arrow reflects this last

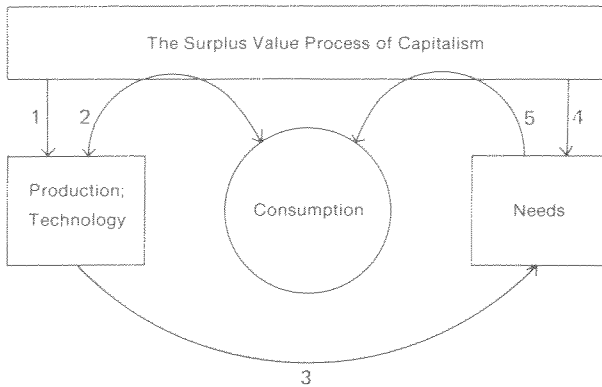


Figure 3. The surplus value process of capitalism as it relates to production and technology, consumption, and needs (Sulkunen, 1976).

aspect. Finally needs become transcribed into the consumption of given products through the agency of markets—which are themselves as integral part of the surplus value process (arrows 2 and 5).

The nature of these various influences and the extent to which they explain the great fluctuations which take place in consumption is nevertheless open to question. There are a variety of theories, most of which were inspired by the postwar reconstruction years and the marked economic growth of that period.

Optimism about defeating scarcity gave rise to the conception of the affluent mass consumption society. The psychoeconomic theories of Katona (1964), for instance, are at pains to demonstrate that consumption has virtually nothing in common with the dictates of material needs and hold that it is psychological factors which regulate consumption in the affluent society.

Nevertheless, many social scientists were disappointed by the way in which growth affected consumption. Veblen's pioneering classic of the sociology of consumption (1899) pointed out that the causes of the irrationality, the waste, and the squandering of the forces of production lie inside the capitalist economic system itself. Veblen held that the manner in which the economy produces more than is necessary to ensure the continuance of life is to blame for the conspicuous consumption. Later writers such as J.K. Galbraith (especially in *The Affluent Society*, 1962, and *The New Industrial State*, 1969) and Baran and Sweezy (1966) refined this train of thought, explaining dissipation in their theories of the economy of modern capitalism. Their conclusion was that the economic interests of the "producers" call for greater and greater output irrespective of needs and this leads to a constant surplus of production that will not be consumed of itself. The consumer is subjected to outright manipulation and cajoled into buying more and more, spending his money and time on useless goods. This

point of view appears in many different versions that can all be called surplus theories.

The very notion of the affluent society has generated argument. Analyses of consumption which rest on the theory of state monopoly capitalism often conclude that the way in which the crisis of the reproduction of capital affects production (the growing complexity of labor, higher working speeds, the general increase in the psycho-physical stress accompanying work, and so on) has resulted in the propagation of needs which the accumulation of capital is powerless to satisfy. This then gives rise to "the growing deficit of the reproduction of labor force" (see e.g., Mehnert, 1973, pp. 51-67; Autorenkollektiv, 1974, pp. 115-131; *Der Staatsmonopolistische Kapitalismus*, 1972, pp. 276-280). Many of the aspects associated with consumption—the use of alcohol, for instance—can be seen as a reflection of this deficit in the reproduction of the labor force, as needs being satisfied through substitutes. Mehnert (1973, p. 208), for one, has no hesitation in doing so.

We need not concern ourselves with the theory of state monopoly capitalism or with how critics of the affluent society regard the fundamental characteristics of modern capitalism and its economic laws in general. Suffice it to note that the contradictions inherent in consumption tend to be thought of as direct symptoms of the permanent crisis of capitalism (though the crisis of capitalism is a concept which is approached in a variety of ways). This is the reason for the moralism around mass consumption, the moralism which is inherent in the frequent complaints that mass consumption is nothing more than satisfaction of pseudoneeds brought about by manipulation. This critique of capitalism may be called the theory of the deformation of use values, arguing that capitalism both produces commodities which are not needed (substitutes) and fails to produce proper goods to satisfy genuine needs.

The theory of state monopoly capitalism and the surplus theories base their argument that use values tend to become deformed on their theoretical interpretation of the fundamental economic characteristics of *modern* capitalism. Attempts have also been made to show that the deformation of use values is an immanent tendency of the capitalist mode of production by drawing directly on the *general* theory of capitalism developed by Marx. W.F. Haug's well-known theory of commodity aesthetics is a good example (Haug, 1971). Haug's ideas are based on the general characteristic of capitalism whereby, from the point of view of the accumulation of capital, it does not matter that commodities satisfy genuine needs—all that matters is that they should sell. Packages therefore extol the use values of the goods they contain, and design and trade-mark symbols come to have great importance. When capitalist production develops oligopolistic markets for consumption goods, these protestations of worthiness bear less and less resemblance to actuality. As Haug puts it, *Schein* (appearance) becomes less important than *Sein* (essence). Affirmations of excellence envelop commodities; they form a crustation of imaginary use values.

The difficulty with Haug's theory lies in his distinction between "imaginary" and "genuine" use values. This also can all too easily lead to moralism; who are we to judge which consumption styles are due to manipulation and which are genuine responses to authentic human needs?

Marx's general theory of capitalism lends no direct support to the thesis of the deformation of use values. In order to bear value, every commodity has to satisfy *some* need—that is, it must be a use value. There is no theoretical short-cut which would show that alcohol or other mass consumption articles represent pseudo-use values or that they are manifestations of the manner in which capitalism degenerates the satisfaction of needs. Neither the general theory of capitalism nor current theories of modern capitalism can be transformed into a sociology of consumption.

A study of consumption must start from the realization that all commodities are use values. Failure to appreciate this can only lead to moralism. "How do commodities come to have use values?" is the question which should be asked. This means that the sociology of consumption belongs to the "study of commodities" (*Warenkunde*), the field which Marx so innocently mentions in passing in his *das Capital* (Marx, 1973, p. 50). My intention is to demonstrate how complex a field this "study of commodities" really is.

## On the Formation of Use Values

The main difficulty in studying use values is that use values are subject to historical and cultural change. A given commodity may well satisfy very different needs at different times and in different places. The first article to appear from this series of studies drew attention to this point (Sulkunen, P., 1976, p. 272). It described the fluctuations which have taken place in the consumption of alcohol and interpreted these changes as reflections of alcohol having developed new use values. The article went on to say that the new use values presently found in different societies tend to resemble one another and concluded that alcohol had become a recreational drug. One could formulate the aim of this present essay by saying that it attempts to demonstrate what exactly these new "recreational" use values might be and to explain how they came to be formed. A few comments are in order to clarify this formulation and to explicate the procedure of the rest of this chapter.

1. An investigation of use values does not constitute a circular or functionalist explanation of consumption styles on the basis of needs, although it does attempt to demonstrate the *kinds of needs* which alcohol or other commodities satisfy. Such an investigation will, of course, have to analyse what the relevant changes which have taken place in living conditions are and how they have affected the need structure of the population. It will be seen later (Section 6), however, that changing

needs (or living conditions) do not explain *why* alcohol has acquired new use values (i.e., why its consumption has increased) but they do bear on *what* these new use values *are*.

2. There is another reason why a theory of use values does not—and especially not in capitalism—constitute a circular or a functionalist explanation on the basis of needs. Needs and production, supply and demand, are linked together by a very complex economic and political process.

This point was already made in Section 3 above. Consequently, we shall have to consider whether something might have happened in the economic aspects of alcohol production or in its links with the structure of the capitalist economy at large, and whether this might have brought about a marked increase in the supply of alcohol. Increased supply would mean greater availability, which in turn could lead to the formation of new use values. This is an important question, looked at from the perspective of alcohol policy; nevertheless, while such suppositions have often been put forward (e.g., Bruun et al., 1975, p. 60), little research has hitherto been conducted on the subject.

This question will be discussed in the fourth section of this essay, which will also deal briefly with the role of the State.

3. The use values of alcohol represent something more than the physical and chemical properties of liquor and the way in which drinking affects people's minds. It was already pointed out above that the formation of use values is tied up with availability. It is only in places where alcohol is inexpensive and freely available, for instance, that alcohol's nutritional properties can become its chief use value. As noted earlier on when dealing with consumption statistics, different alcohol cultures are associated with the production of alcoholic beverages.

Notwithstanding, this is not the only reason why use values can not be analyzed in chemical, pharmacological, or even psychological studies. The way in which commodities are used reflects, to some extent, the commodities' physical properties (the nutritiousness of alcohol), but there also exist aspects which have almost nothing to do with chemical composition (communion wine). Goods possess social meanings and these can act as bearers of use value just as well as their physical properties. Social significations (or meanings) as bearers of use values will be discussed in Section 5.

4. There is a further point which affects the definition of use value: control. Control can best be looked at by surveying the fundamental characteristics of the capitalist mode of production. Under capitalism, consumption is distinct from production and belongs to the sphere of people's private lives. Consumption is, admittedly, subject to the surplus value

process (the reproduction of labor and the realization of commodity capital), but it cannot be directly controlled by capital (Sulkunen, P., 1978*b*). The imperatives which the surplus value process forces on both workers and capitalists (workers are compelled to reproduce their labor and capitalists must accumulate surplus value) take on different forms in consumption and production respectively. In the latter the capitalists can exert direct control, but in consumption the constraints are only realized through self-control. The production process—which is itself regulated by surplus value—does mold the needs of the worker and make labor subject to qualitative stipulations (see Fig. 3, arrow 1). Nevertheless, the way in which workers satisfy these needs and meet the stipulations is their own business; its sole societal expression lies in the value of their labor force (for the classical references, see Marx, 1973, pp. 591–604). The structure of consumption cannot be “derived” from the dictates of production, and it is not unambiguously dictated by capitalist domination.

On the contrary: consumption and production often conflict with each other. And the more exacerbated the conflict, the more important it becomes for “self-control to be externalized,” for the State to regulate matters. “Externalized self-control” is one element of alcohol policy, though there are others such as the fiscal and industrial concerns of the State (Mäkelä and Viikari 1977, p. 160). I shall deal with the way in which the State regulates the consumption of alcohol from one point of view only: how the State both regulates the formation of use values and how State control is itself dependent upon use value. This point will be discussed in detail in the context of the case of Finland in the final section of this essay.

5. Another form in which self-control becomes externalized is *normative control*. Consumption is part of private life; nevertheless, consumption is disciplined “externally” by the State and also by the moral code of society. The obligations dictated by the social moral code are internalized and reinforced by a variety of socialization mechanisms (the family, religion, school, political and civil organizations).

In fact, the alcohol question was one of the very first spheres where normative control developed into the ideology of discipline which is characteristic of modern bourgeois society. Harry Levine (1978) has shown that it was indeed the “middle-class” temperance movement which first used the twin concepts of addiction and control to define the alcohol problem in the early 1800s in the United States. Basing his argument on Foucault’s theoretical approach (1972), Levine interprets this trend as a manifestation of the manner in which bourgeois thinking defines deviancy as a disease of the will. Deviants—not just drunkards, but the mentally ill and the charges of orphanages and reform schools too—

were treated in a manner designed to propagate a strong, healthy, resilient moral sense which would enable people to withstand the temptations of booze and kindred lures. The early Finnish temperance movement was also founded on conceptions of this kind ("drunks are not ignorant, they are fallen") (Sulkunen, I., 1977, p. 60). It was a long time before the temperance movement adopted the idea that resolving alcohol problems is the responsibility of the State.

Levine says that it was the "middle class" who first defined the alcohol problem in terms of addiction. But we have to bear in mind that the same definitions of deviance and self-control apply throughout the whole of bourgeois society—to the working class as well. Normative control, therefore, is a pivotal regulator of private life in capitalist societies; it is a force which acts side-by-side with the regulating policies of the state. Normative control can be thought of as the other side of the phenomenon of individualism generated by capitalism: as a collective manifestation of self-control.

The relationships between normative control and use values are extremely complex. Certainly, alcohol research has probed norms and the way in which they affect drinking behaviour—but it has ignored the possibility that "drinking" may in fact denote several very different social phenomena which may be regulated by "drinking norms" in very different ways. The most celebrated school of normative research is founded on the concept of normative ambivalence. The concept has been employed to help explain both the consumption of alcohol itself and the cultural divergency observable in the harmful consequences which drinking brings about (Room, 1975, 1976). One example of this research trend is the work of Pittman (1967), whose classification of alcohol cultures rests on the basic hypothesis that some cultures are downright abstinent, while others are permissive, sometimes even overpermissive. Spirits countries (and the United States), on the other hand, generally have an ambivalent attitude.

The trouble with this classification is that even "permissive" alcohol cultures will, on occasion, apply very repressive normative standards to a particular manner of drinking. Normative control and the social significance of alcohol are very closely linked. Whilst normative control can regulate the formation of the use value of alcohol, it is itself dependent upon the way in which society views the significance of alcohol. Normative control is another aspect which will be discussed more fully in the context of the case of Finland.

#### 4. AVAILABILITY

Research that views itself as an instrument of alcohol policy usually regards availability as a causal factor explaining both alcohol consumption itself and the harm wrought by drinking. Such a causal notion of availability is too narrow for the purposes of this study. Its applicability is limited to abrupt changes in



alcohol's distribution channels or in the limitations placed on distribution, when the effects of all other simultaneous fluctuations may be controlled or eliminated (see Bruun et al., 1975, pp. 65–83 for a concise review of this research approach). A great deal of causal availability research has been conducted in North America in recent years, dealing with the changes in age stipulations which have taken place there. Another similar subject which has been studied extensively is the consequences of establishing new or different types of retail outlets for alcoholic beverages. The paradigm of this kind of work was set by the classic alcohol policy experiment which Pekka Kuusi conducted as early as the 1950s (Kuusi, 1957).

The causal approach to availability has also been employed to support or to refute the view that changes in availability *in general* have advantageous (or disadvantageous) effects, as seen from the point of view of alcohol policy (Room, 1972; Smart, 1977; Brenner, 1977). Such a way of looking at things is dubious. What it does is transform availability into an abstract concept that is subjugated to the practical logic of policy-making. In this sense, attempts to find operational measures of "availability" and test its causal "effects" are likely to reflect alcohol control ideologies and to feed day-to-day debates on alcohol policy, but they will hardly contribute to a scientific understanding of the role of supply in the changing patterns of alcohol consumption.

It is therefore important to underline that here the notion of availability is *not* a causal one. It refers simply to the circumstances under which alcohol has become a means of satisfying needs. The special aim of this part of the study is to outline how general structural changes in capitalist economies may have influenced the supply of alcoholic beverages.

This part of the study is limited to the European Economic Community (EEC) countries (Sulkunen, P., 1978*a*). The "qualitative" case study approach places limits on the number of cases that can be studied. Moreover, the EEC countries form an interesting group to study. The alcohol conditions pertaining there differ between the member countries, and international economic integration is an important aspect in its own right. Neither has procuring data proved troublesome, because The Commission of the European Communities has commissioned a wide variety of studies and technical reports that can be used as material for analysis (see P. Sulkunen, 1978*a*, for full documentation of these reports).

## Taxation and Prices

There has been a great deal of debate, particularly in those countries which have a State-controlled alcohol monopoly, about whether price increases can help to keep consumption within bounds. In this study, the international comparisons of price trends are not intended to contribute to this debate. They are instead addressed to the question of whether pricing has tended to inhibit consumption growth or to encourage it. It is, furthermore, important to survey the

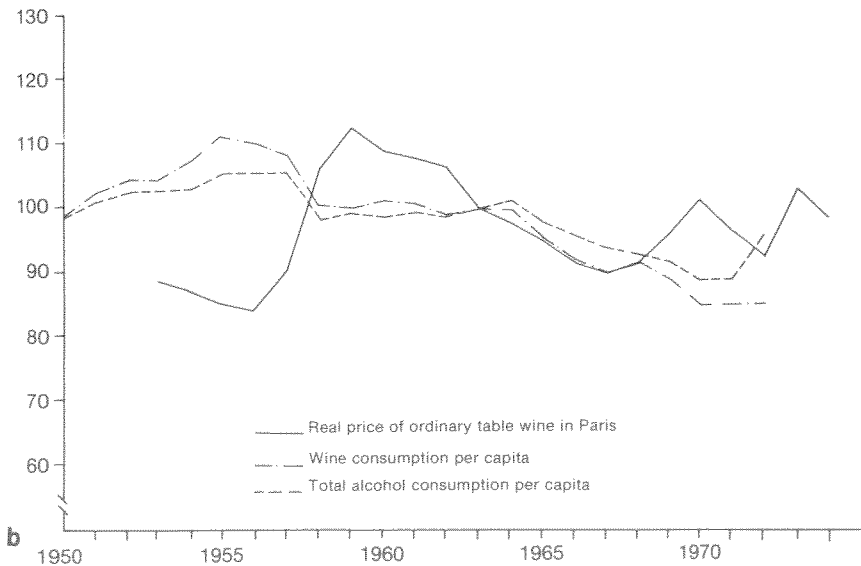
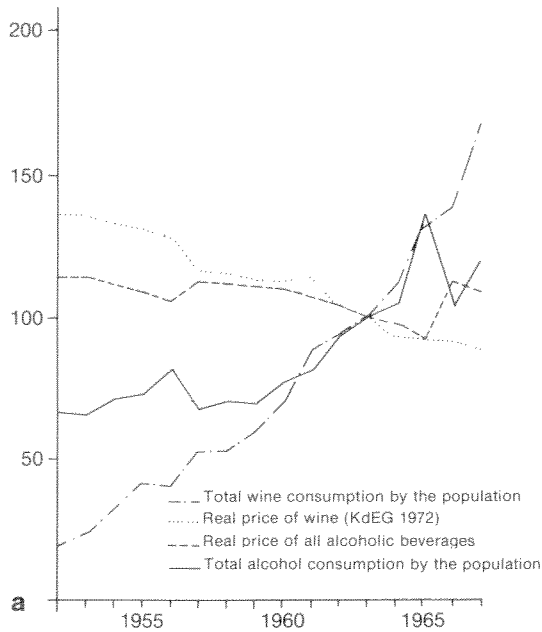


Figure 4. Indices describing the consumption of alcohol and its real price (1963 = 100) in (a) The Netherlands, (b) France, and (c) United Kingdom (Sulkunen, 1978a).

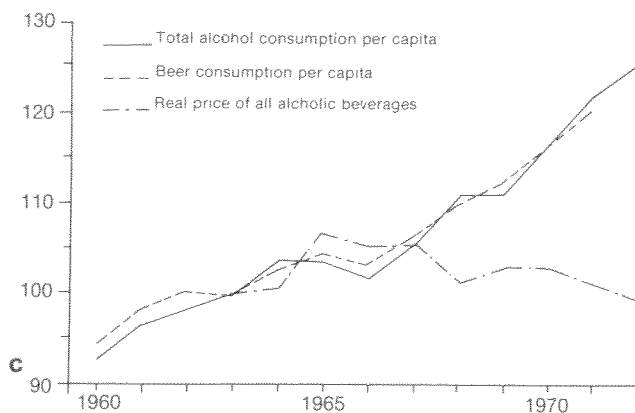


Figure 4 (Continued)

background of price developments in the long range, paying special attention to the part played by taxation.

The data were transcribed into graphical form; Fig. 4 gives the examples of the Netherlands, France, and England. These three countries are particularly interesting. (Detailed information for all the countries of the European Community is given in P. Sulkunen, 1978*a*).

The trends shown in the diagram do not provide a clear-cut picture of the relationship between price and consumption. Some countries, such as the Federal Republic of Germany, Denmark, and the U.K., have experienced such a distinct fall in prices accompanied by an equally obvious rise in consumption, that one is tempted to believe that the trends depict an actual causal relationship. But the examples of France and Ireland both prove, in opposing fashions, that there need be no link between consumption and price over the long term.

For the purposes of the basic argument of this study, it will be sufficient to point out that price developments clearly favored greater consumption in France, Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany, and the Netherlands. The same is also true of England since the late 1960s. With the exception of France, consumption actually did rise quickly in those countries. The conclusion that prices have favored increased consumption would be further reinforced if the data were expanded to include the rise in real incomes.

This would be a noteworthy finding indeed if it were possible to pinpoint the economic causes of the way in which prices have developed. Unfortunately, production costs present such a complex picture that it is not possible to delve into the matter here. It is possible, however, to say a few words about the effect of taxation.

Technical considerations aside, the first point which should be made is that the taxation levied on alcoholic beverages in what are usually termed the "new Community countries"—England, Ireland, and Denmark—is much higher than

in the other Community members. France, Italy, and the Federal Republic of Germany either levy no taxation at all on wine, or, if they do, tax it only slightly. Consequently, taxation can have had no real effect on prices in those countries. But there are some countries—the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands, and England—where taxation has been cut and where the outcome has been to reduce the price of beer and spirits. England and the Netherlands have deliberately cut taxation in order to curb rising consumer prices.

## Distribution Channels

The distribution channels of a given country tend to reflect its public's drinking habits. Beer countries—Belgium, the Federal Republic of Germany, Ireland, and England—are noteworthy for the fact that more than half of the beer and a fair share of the other alcohol which they consume is drunk in restaurants which depend upon selling alcohol for their livelihood (pubs, bier kellers, and so on). As always, there is an exception to this rule and, in the case of the countries of the European Community, the odd man out is Denmark. This is because most of the beer bought in Denmark (about two-thirds) is purchased from retail outlets and drunk at home. But Denmark is a comparatively young beer country—it only developed into one in the period between the two World Wars.

Spirits countries (among the Community countries, the Netherlands was one such until the 1960s) are characterized by not much alcohol being drunk at all, anywhere. Consequently, the network of restaurants, pubs, and so forth has been sparse. On the other hand, in wine countries and other places where the greater share of alcohol is produced in the agricultural countryside, the alcohol consumed by the producers themselves constitutes an important distribution channel. If we again look at the countries of the European Community, then Italy and France conform to the above description. France and Italy are also countries where the rural population tend to drink more than their urban counterparts.

It is evident that changes in distribution channels have *mirrored* changes in drinking habits rather than *caused* them. Nevertheless, we should distinguish between on-license outlets (restaurants, cafes, bars, etc.) and other distribution channels here. It is in the established beer countries that on-licence outlets have become more sparse. Furthermore, in these countries, the nature of these establishments has altered more noticeably than anywhere else. Retail sales now account for a greater proportion of the alcohol consumption of beer countries than used to be the case. The average restaurant is now bigger than before, offers a greater range of services (food, floor shows, music), and is more comfortably furnished and fitted. In other words, restaurants serve different purposes nowadays. Dutch and Italian restaurants would seem to have followed a similar path, though it remains true that they now have more restaurants per capita than 20 years ago.

Evidently the changes in the restaurant institution are associated with those changes in drinking habits revealed by the statistical trends mentioned earlier. Typical drinking occasions are no longer what they used to be. Countries where most drinking used to take place in bars, pubs, or cafés are now places where a fair amount of alcohol is consumed at home or at various places of entertainment. Those countries where most of the alcohol consumed was earlier drunk in the form of wines taken to accompany meals now imbibe other beverages as well. Drinking habits have become internationally mingled; the demarcation lines between one alcohol culture and another have gradually grown fuzzy. This is a process which accords with the picture we have built up so far.

There is one more important point to make. We must not forget that demand for restaurant facilities does not depend exclusively on how local drinking habits change. Tourism plays a significant part, too—particularly in the wine countries of Southern Europe, which now have a far brisker tourist trade than before.

Generally speaking, the policy taken by the State towards restaurants has tended to be passive. Regulations have merely been modified in order to run parallel to the course of developments. The English licensing system was broadened in scope somewhat in the 1960s. The French regulations pertaining to the maximum permissible number of places licensed to sell alcohol for consumption on the premises became more stringent in 1960, but this tightening up probably had little effect. French restaurants continued to become concentrated and to grow in size. The Netherlands passed legislation in 1967 which did away with the earlier restrictions on the allowable number of restaurants altogether. Notwithstanding, the restrictive effects of these Dutch stipulations seem to have been insignificant anyway. Tourist countries, however, have tended to give the restaurant and hotel industry direct support, and this has probably had some impact, particularly in the more important tourist meccas.

The causes of the course followed by retail sales are somewhat different. Demand, naturally, has provided impetus, but the “second commercial revolution” (Stacey and Wilson, 1965) brought about by rising concentration ratios and the growing tendency for the retail and wholesale trades to be dominated by chain stores and the like has meant that alcohol is now available from the same places where one does one’s everyday errands—large supermarkets. Indeed, this is one example of the way in which other economic events besides those which play a direct part in the alcohol industry can affect consumption. Moreover, the structural changes which have taken place in the retail liquor trade have generally necessitated abolishing the old regulations which moderated competition and helped curb consumption. The State has tended to remain obliviously indifferent to these changes.

The alcohol consumed by those who produce alcoholic beverages themselves exemplifies how changes in the overall economic structure can affect availability and thereby affect alcohol use as well. In countries where the bulk of alcohol is produced by the agricultural sector—in the case of the European Community,

France, Italy, and the Federal Republic of Germany—consumption is largely independent of commercial distribution channels. One example of the trend in these countries is the fact that, according to statistical evidence, the amount of tax-free alcohol produced by France in 1950 (manufactured under the “bouilleurs de cru” dispensation) totalled 224,000 hl of pure alcohol. The number of stills which operated under this dispensation was something over 3000. The corresponding recorded output for 1974–1975 was little more than 100,000 hl, and the number of stills had dropped to only just over 1000.

French statistics on wine consumption distinguish between two categories: taxable consumption and tax-free consumption—mainly wine consumed by the producers themselves. Tax-free consumption accounted for about 25% of all consumption in 1951–1953. By 1974–1976, however, the figure had dropped to a mere 14%.

The diminishing number of small holdings and the decline in the size of the agricultural labor force are the chief reasons for this change. The gradual industrialization of wine production has also played a part. Nowadays, it is by no means unusual for vineyards to not actually make wine; grapes are delivered to “wine houses” and wine cooperatives and the actual manufacture of wine takes place there.

The fall in the number of people entitled to the “bouilleurs de cru” dispensation has been abetted by State policy. The dispensation was made non-hereditary in the early 1950s. The reason why attempts were made to do away with the “bouilleurs de cru” system is that it was apparently responsible for a major tax loop-hole. Of course, the policy of curbing tax-free distilling has also aimed at reducing consumption and strengthening the position of commercial distillers and wine producers.

## International Trade and the Internationalization of Production

The internationalization of the production and distribution of alcohol is the most important element of those economic factors which, independent of demand, directed consumption patterns in the manner noted in our analysis of consumption trends. The international amalgamation of the alcohol market has tended to increase the range of beverages available in separate countries, and has also helped to render national drinking habits more uniform. The course taken by the economic structure of the alcohol industry and the more general internationalization of capital have both played a part. This tendency is a worldwide trend, but the following remarks draw mainly on data from the European Communities.

There are two ways to gauge the relative magnitude of foreign trade: one can either relate exports to production, or look at imports in the light of consumption. No matter which method is chosen, the international alcohol trade is surprisingly small in volume. The total amount of wine exported by the European

Community countries in 1972 amounted to less than 20% of their overall consumption. And the ratio is even smaller with regard to beer—3 or 4%, no more. Of course, matters vary from country to country, but the figures for the whole of Europe or the whole world are nevertheless small. The same is also true for the European Community in general, and the reason is that countries which do not produce beer or wine invariably have a low consumption of alcohol. No reliable data on spirits are available for the entire population of the Community, but the data for individual countries seem to suggest that distilled beverages adhere to the overall trend.

Still, even though international trade is comparatively negligible in proportion to production or consumption, some growth in its overall volume has quite clearly occurred. This is particularly true of wine and beer. The figures for the Community's internal beer trade ran to some 3 million hl in 1960, whereas the corresponding figure for 1976 was as high as 8 million hl. Nor should we forget that a considerable amount of spirits and, in particular, beer is produced on an international basis. It has been estimated that the output of the 12 largest overseas breweries in 1972 equalled the total exports of the Community as a whole—that is, ran to some 100,000 hl.

World trading in alcoholic beverages grew in the 1960s at more or less the same pace as the volume of international trade in general. Conversely, however, the global alcohol trade increased more rapidly than trading in agricultural commodities. It would therefore seem that the old established localized nature of production and consumption of alcoholic beverages is becoming a thing of the past—and that matters are moving at a faster pace with regard to alcoholic beverages than is true of foodstuffs as a whole.

The reasons for this pattern are not hard to find. Above all, the alcohol industry is no exception to the overall tendency for industry to become more concentrated. In 1950, for instance, the combined number of breweries in the countries which now belong to the European Community was about 4500. The figure had fallen to only just over 2000 by 1973. The growing capacity of the larger breweries now exceeds local market demand.

The alcohol industry grew so rapidly in the 1960s that breweries in particular found themselves compelled to diversify their activities by investing in other sectors and directing their attention to other countries. Domestic markets were quickly approaching saturation point.

International economic integration is another important factor which has spurred the international alcohol trade. A substantial part of the increase in trading can be attributed to the general removal of import quotas and customs tariffs. England is a case in point. Immediately after joining the Common Market in 1973, England's own imports and its exports to other Community countries shot up. Indirectly, the "spontaneous harmonizing of taxation" (that is, the tendency for those Community countries who have taxed alcohol heavily to lessen their levies) has encouraged brisker trade. Persistent efforts to harmonize the taxation

systems within the EEC have failed so far, and therefore the Community countries do not yet have a unified alcohol taxation policy.

## The Wine Policy of the European Community

General trading policies have proved to be insufficient to provide the European Community with guaranteed free trade in alcoholic beverages in the manner sought at the inception of the Community. There are several reasons for this. In the first place, the taxes which the member countries levy on alcoholic beverages are widely disparate. And secondly, there are a great many regulations pertaining to wine and "alcohol" (*alcohol*, in the language of the European Communities, refers exclusively to strong alcohol which is either used as a raw material for beverages or industrial products or directly for human consumption)—a consequence of alcohol production's ties with agriculture.

There have been moves to harmonize the taxation levied on alcoholic beverages, but these attempts have met with failure. Nor has it proved possible to draw up an overall Community "alcohol policy," that is, fabricate a unified system for regulating the production and trade of strong beverages. Beer is an industrial commodity and the volume of the international beer trade is so slight that no need has been felt for an overall beer policy.

A Common Wine Policy has, however, been in force since 1970. This has had a notable effect on the supply of wine both inside the Community itself and elsewhere. Furthermore, as the Common Wine Policy seems likely to continue to be a marked force in the future as well, it is necessary to take a closer look at its operation.

The declared aims of the Common Wine Policy are agricultural: to safeguard agricultural incomes and to achieve and maintain a balance between production and consumption; to make trade policy towards third countries (not members of the EEC) more uniform and controlled; to promote improvements in the structure of production; and to guarantee consumer equality. The Policy consists of four main components: (1) a system of guaranteed prices, (2) a system to regulate trade with countries outside the Community, (3) controlled production, and (4) a system for classifying and controlling the quality and branding of wines.

The chief difficulty facing the Common Wine Policy is familiar from all agricultural sectors: chronic overproduction and chronic underemployment of the rural population. This general problem has been exacerbated by the rapid but uneven increase in agricultural productivity, especially since World War II. This has meant that either production has had to be curbed, or consumption encouraged. The fate of the underemployed rural population has also given cause for concern. Vineyards are in an especially difficult plight since both produced quantities and quality—and hence prices—fluctuate widely from one year to the next.

Nor has the Common Wine Policy eased matters. It is true that production



has been rationalized, quality improved, and vineyards prevented from becoming too large. Nevertheless, productivity has continued to rise as a result of better harvests and more fertile land (plantings have moved down from slopes to more level terrain). The system of guaranteed prices has caused production to grow more quickly than would otherwise have been the case. It has proved impossible to encourage consumption sufficiently to absorb higher outputs. This is the reason why current policy lays even more emphasis on pushing consumption up (Commission of the EC, 1977).

A great deal of attention has been paid to the Community's external trade, the structure of which is undergoing revision. Imports from outside of the EEC have fallen and internal trading within the Community has increased. Some attempts have been made to boost the Community's exports, but owing to Community prices being far higher than on the world market in general, these have not met with much success. Even the system of guaranteed export prices has had no market effect.

The Common Wine Policy's ineptitude and its great cost mean that unrelenting political pressure is exerted in order to lower the taxation levied on wine in nonproducing countries, with the final aim of pushing consumption up. Nevertheless, it is thought that chronic overproduction will continue; matters will become worse still once Spain, Portugal, and Greece enter the Community.

## Concluding Remarks on Availability

Changes in the economic structure of capitalism are linked to the economy of the alcohol industry in four main ways.

1. Agriculture's crisis of chronic overproduction is just one facet of the overall reproduction crisis of capitalism. Agricultural productivity has risen phenomenally—much faster than nutritional needs—in the developed capitalist countries since World War II as a result of improved agricultural technology. These improvements in the technology have been based on expensive inputs from outside the agricultural sector itself (inorganic fertilizers, mechanization), which have not allowed increased productivity to essentially lower cost of agricultural products (Johnston and Kilby, 1975, pp. 35–65). The outcome has been a structural oversupply of agricultural products especially in Western Europe. Encouraging the production and consumption of alcoholic beverages has been one way of absorbing the excess.
2. Monopolization and the associated widening of global markets has made the supply of alcohol more international in scope, increased the range of beverages available, and probably lowered production costs somewhat.

3. The growth of mass tourism has generated new branches of industry, and these new businesses are often tied up with drinking in one way or another (restaurants, the entertainment industry).
4. In common with that of other foodstuffs, the distribution system of alcoholic beverages has acquired added capacity. This has led to a distinct increase in the availability of alcoholic beverages in some cases.

Would it be fair to say that, in consequence, the growth of the consumption of alcohol has been brought about by the pressures which the capitalist economy at large has exerted on alcohol supply? The answer must be no.

The correct conclusion is that the changes in availability have—instead of explaining consumption growth as such—laid strong foundations for the formation of new use values of alcohol. Besides having increased, the supply of alcoholic beverages has also lost its localized character. Marketing areas have transcended national borders. One can now buy an increasing range of drinks from all over the world no matter which particular country one lives in. Conversely, less and less alcohol nowadays comes from the same region where it is consumed, and even less from the consumer's own farm or garden.

In this sense, increasing internationalization explains the tendency for the divergencies between the beverage structures of differing alcohol cultures to become less marked. To the extent that different alcoholic beverages have differing use values and bear various social significations, supply has laid the foundations for the formation of new use values by acting on beverage structure.

Still, one should guard against analyzing these new use values by merely looking at supply. One should focus on the links between consumption growth and changing living conditions.

But before getting down to this discussion a few remarks are necessary on the role the State plays in regulating supply. As pointed out before, the State's attitude towards higher consumption and greater supply tends to be either passive or outright encouraging.

There are four classic reasons why alcohol production and consumption should be controlled by the State (Mäkelä and Viikari, 1977). These are: the State's financial interests, considerations of industrial policy, the maintenance of law and order, and the State's social function. (Earlier on, the latter two reasons were conceptualized as "externalization of self-control through the State.")

Since the turn of the century, each of these reasons has made itself felt in virtually every country which now belongs to the European Communities. Nevertheless, not one has been used by the State (or the organs of the European Communities) to actually limit consumption or supply since the end of the Second World War.

The above four links between the supply of alcohol and the transformation of the overall economic structure of capitalism explain in part why the State's

policy has not restricted the growth of the alcohol industry and why it has even provided direct support to improved availability. Another explanation is that the alcohol industry is nowadays able to bring far more political pressure to bear than before. It is more difficult to explain why alcohol has not been viewed with more fiscal interest. The fact that the revenue from taxes levied on alcohol have become relatively unimportant to national budgets has undoubtedly played a part.

But we are still far from having completely explained the laxity of State policies. Since the Second World War, the temperance position has lost ground in all countries and it has been easy to rally support for the abolition of old restrictive controls. This leads us to the interesting question of the way in which the State's function as externalized self-control has changed, a matter which is integrally tied with two further points. These are the new use values of alcohol and the attendant moral codes, or normative control. We shall next turn our attention to these questions.

## 5. LIVING CONDITIONS AND THE FORMATION OF NEW USE VALUES OF ALCOHOL

Whilst there has certainly been much debate over the causal effects of availability on overall alcohol consumption, the connection between changing living conditions and consumption growth has attracted even more attention. The view that increased consumption of alcohol is explained by industrialization, urbanization, rising living standards and consumption, improved education, the changing role of women and the family, and so forth is obvious, self-evident, and even platitudinous. Few studies, however, have been attempted detailed analysis of how such causal effects might be generated. This will be the subject of the following section of this chapter. We first have to consider how changes in living conditions *might be thought to* tie up with increases in the consumption of alcohol; to this end a few hypotheses will now be developed.

Speaking about the theoretical points of departure of this study, we said above (Section 3) that our analysis of consumption growth would aim at explaining how the new use values of alcohol are formed and what these new use values actually are. The analysis of availability revealed some of the *requisites* for the formation of new use values; our analyses of living conditions will focus on the *content* of the new use values.

### Symbolic Use Values and the Stratification of Use Values

Critics of the affluent society and Western culture are forever pointing out that consumption is becoming increasingly vulnerable to incessant, ever more "scientific" manipulation. Advertising certainly seems to play an important part

in the use of alcohol—as has often been noted, very few commodities are advertised as much as alcoholic beverages (Partanen and Ilmonen, 1980; International Trade Centre, 1975).

Recent studies of mass communication and advertising, however, have been more cautious as regards the causal effects of publicity on behavior (Tudor, 1979). The volume of advertising, for instance, would seem to depend on the volume of consumption, and not the other way round (Partanen and Ilmonen, 1980). Lindner (1977) holds that theories of advertising which stress the effects of manipulation—such as W.F. Haug's theory of commodity aesthetics—fail to appreciate the part advertising plays in the overall process of the reproduction of capital and are therefore misleading. In Lindner's opinion, commodity capital does not see advertising as a tool for manipulation but as an instrument for realizing the value inherent in goods. And since the consumer is concerned with the satisfaction of needs, advertising is most efficacious when it appeals to actual (or actually imagined) needs. Lindner sums up his ideas by saying that advertising is the transcription of everyday experience and needs into the language of commodities. The power of advertising stems from the fact that most commodities are invested with added values (*Zusatznutzen*, para-economic value) which have nothing to do with their tangible properties. Added value is tied up with the social signification of commodities, its nature is symbolic, and advertising can thus graft it on to virtually any article. Furthermore, advertising can make use of almost any social signification, including the symbolism of the feelings of affection and even of alternative life styles (the feminist movement, youth culture, and so on). Veblen's (1899, p. 75) "invidious pecuniary comparison" is one example of this kind of social signification—the price which the consumer pays to purchase a given article becomes part of the article's use value, symbolizing the buyer's wealth.

Not that Lindner's views on the symbolic added value of commodities are anything new as such. Goblot (1925) and Halbwachs (1933) (mentioned by Terrail, 1977) and later Bourdieu (1974, p. 60, 1979) all emphasize the importance of consumption styles—dress, home furnishings, food—as markers of social class. Baudrillard (1968, p. 233) develops this train of thought to its extremity in his famed definition of consumption being the manipulation of signs.

Lindner's real merit lies in his assertion that social signification serves to satisfy genuine needs, irrespective of advertising. Advertising merely avails itself of social significations. To use Haug's terminology, the aesthetics of commodities (package, "image," "looks," etc.) is an *element* of use value; only the needs which this element satisfies are often different from those met by the commodities to which it is attached. The (social) needs which fashion satisfies, for instance, are not the same as the (physical) need to clothe the body; yet the use value of fashion is every bit as real as any other use value. In fact the cut of an outfit can act as a bearer of value just as well as the material from which the clothes are made.

It is therefore fair to say that social signification often acts as a kind of symbolic use value—and can even do so irrespective of the physical properties of the commodity in question. Social significations satisfy real needs and can also serve as bearers of value. This means that there are no grounds for distinguishing between “actual” and “artificial” use values; in any case, whether use value is borne by social significations or by the physical properties of a commodity is largely immaterial to such a distinction.

Where alcohol is concerned, it is especially important to remember that a beverage’s social significations can well be more significant than the psychological, physical, and pharmacological characteristics of alcohol. Conversely, commodities such as domestic fuel, salt, and water have use values whose social signification is negligible, though it must be admitted that even salt and water can act as symbolic use values on special occasions.

Social signification is every bit real and objective as a commodity’s physical properties. Nevertheless, social signification is a cultural fact and, as such, is subject to change. In common with a commodity’s physical properties, social signification need not necessarily develop into use value. Whether it actually does or not depends on a host of factors: availability, state policy, and normative control, as outlined earlier.

What kind of social signification can a commodity possess? This question cannot be answered without recourse to semiological concepts. Lotman and Uspenskij’s (1977) distinction between mythical and nonmythical consciousness provides a particularly useful tool. They define mythical consciousness as consciousness whose structure possesses one sole linguistic plane, that is, has no metalanguage. In a language of this kind, which might just as well be called mythical language, things are described as being *named*. In other words, linguistic labels serve to represent a (mythical) “collectivity of proper names.” Lotman and Uspenskij’s analysis should, to do it justice, be considered in far greater detail, but a rough and ready definition will serve the present purpose. A mythical social signification is one which transposes everyday experience to “another (mythical) reality.”

This implies that if a commodity has a social signification which serves to express everyday social significations in mythical language, then this said social signification constitutes the mythical symbolical use value of the commodity. Sacramental paraphernalia, for instance, conform to this definition. Children’s toys often possess mythical use values as well: the child uses these mythical use values to transpose his everyday experience into the collectivity of proper names of his playthings, thereby learning to control his experience. Of course, *which* “mythology” everyday experience is transposed to depends upon the culture in question and, equally, the things which the mythology expresses depend upon everyday life.

There is, however, another type of social signification as well: one which does not transfer everyday experience to another linguistic plane but merely

articulates it. I am speaking of social signification which either serves to demonstrate (to others) the social role of an article's owner, or reinforces his identity (to himself), or else functions as an instrument of interaction in its own right. I shall refer to this kind of social signification as *instrumental*. Moreover, there are three separate subdivisions. (1) *ostensive* signification (which serves to demonstrate roles, status, social class, and so on—Veblen's "conspicuous consumption" is an example), (2) *identifying* signification (which identifies one to oneself), and (3) *integrative* signification (which functions as an instrument of interaction).

Returning specifically to alcohol, we have to realize that our classification of social significations into mythical and instrumental does not directly correspond to stages of drunkenness. What particular type of signification one will be dealing with at any one time depends upon one sole point: whether everyday experience is transferred to "another reality" or not. It is easy enough to find examples of mythical drunkenness. The kind of boozing where the drinkers pay no heed to differences in social rank, where everyone in the drinking circle is hail-fellow-well-met with every other reveller can be seen every day—and one does not even need to be heavily intoxicated to behave in such a fashion. It may well be that instrumental signification is often tied up with the palatableness and commercial image of what is being drunk, but one can get drunk at cocktail parties too—though cocktail parties are usually events where the instrumental value of social drinking predominates.

Just calling a social signification of alcohol "mythical" does not imply actual knowledge of what drinking really means. There are many different types of myths, all of which nonetheless describe (or, in semiological terms, "model") reality and are therefore dependent upon reality. One of the most interesting tasks for alcohol research, opened up by the distinction between mythical and instrumental social meanings of alcohol, is to study in what way the mythologies around alcohol are, in the last instance, reflections of actual everyday reality.

On the basis of the foregoing we can now take a systematic look at the kinds of potential use values which alcohol may have in general.

First of all, alcoholic beverages have their nutritional properties. These include both the way in which a drink can act as a source of energy, and drinks used as thirst quenchers. Secondly, alcohol possesses pharmacological properties, the most important being its intoxicating effect—whilst alcohol can be used to alleviate pain and has other kindred effects on the nervous system, these aspects are of lesser consequence. The nutritional and pharmacological properties of alcoholic beverages constitute alcohol's chief psycho-physical hallmarks.

On the other hand, alcohol also bears social significations—sometimes mythical and sometimes instrumental. The following instrumental significations are probably most important: ostensive, identifying, and integrating. Ostensive significations, for instance, come into play when a host takes a great deal of care over which wines he should give his guests with their meal, Again, a bottle of

Ballantines whisky in the drinks cabinet, even empty, may serve as an identifying sign. And when, for example, alcohol provides the framework for interaction in a restaurant or at a cocktail party, it is its integrating aspects which are to the fore.

This list of the properties and implications which provide alcohol with its potential use values is intended to emphasize how complex and intertwined the various aspects of alcohol use may be. It is possible for different aspects to act as separate, readily distinguishable use values; more often, however, the various facets are linked together. Once more, it is important to remember the conceptual difference between a commodity's physical properties and its use value. Physical properties and social significations are no more than potential bearers of use value. Which particular aspects become actualized depends upon factors which will be considered more closely a little later; still, only rarely are use values mutually exclusive. As Mäkelä (1979) points out, the manner in which alcohol can be used both as a food and an intoxicant can easily overlap and become confused. Complex, culturally defined mechanisms come into play and the (symbolic) use of alcohol as a food can obscure the (real) use of alcohol as an intoxicant.

We can therefore say that it is common for various use values to become stratified and linked to each other. To return to the figures given in the second section of this chapter, there are strong grounds for assuming that, when consumption grows cumulatively and drinking habits become more diverse, the stratification of the use values of alcohol will be even more complex than before. It is hardly surprising that it should become more and more difficult to understand just what alcohol is.

### Living Conditions and the Stratification of the Use Values of Alcohol

The concept of symbolic use value advanced above leads on to the question of how changing living conditions might, by altering the general structure of needs, create new stratifications of alcohol use values. I now intend to put forward some hypotheses about these relationships.

Speaking somewhat hyperbolically, one might say that the recent and on-going transformation of capitalism has affected living conditions in three main areas: social class, work, and the social environment.

**Work and Class.** Studies of the manner in which work affects drinking have tended to rely on risk or stress models. The underlying assumption has been that the risks involved in a given job or implicit in a given working environment—or the stress brought about by the very nature of the work itself—cause people to drink more (Roman and Trice, 1970). That semiautomation increases the psycho-physical stress of work (Autorenkollektiv, 1974, pp. 116–117) or causes the worker to derive less satisfaction from his job (Braverman, 1974)

can, perhaps be taken for granted. It follows that the pharmacological properties of alcohol are often viewed as recuperative agents and enhance alcohol's use value.

From a demographic perspective it is rewarding to study work from the standpoint of changes in the occupational and class structure. Looking at things in this light, postwar capitalism displays two chief hallmarks: (1) a drop in the overall importance of the agricultural labor force and (2) a rise in the numbers of white collar workers. Interestingly, the white collar ranks have even swollen in the traditionally industrial countries where the rural population has no longer fallen all that steeply in the postwar period (Gronow et al., 1977, p. 476).

Naturally, the growing importance of wage labor in itself has already a fundamental effect on life styles and consumption. Wage labor widens the gap between production and consumption, modifies the "time structure" (i.e., sharpens the distinction between work and leisure), and affects human relationships in general.

Notwithstanding, looked at from the perspective of consumption patterns it is the growing importance of the service industries which has had the greatest impact on need structures. Capitalism is still capitalism, not a service economy (see Bell, 1972; Gartner and Riesman, 1978, p. 162), but the growing importance of the white collar occupations to the economy has a decisive influence on the nature of work and the quality of the labor force.

In order to grasp this fact, one has to see both sides of the reproduction of the labor force. On the one hand, the reproduction of the labor force implies the worker's recuperating from his exertions; on the other, it entails the worker being compelled to maintain and enhance his strength and skill.

A worker's strength and skill are not determined solely by how long or how well he has been formally trained or educated. Formal education or training is not the only qualitative trait which distinguishes various categories of wage laborers from one another. The type of work itself is important, too. Workers engaged in producing commodities transmute Nature to create useful artifacts, whereas office workers and persons who are employed in buying and selling are concerned with other persons, with symbols, and with signs. As well as knowledge and skill, office workers must also be able to use other people in impersonal interaction. Referring to Habermas (1975) this might be termed "instrumental interaction competence."

Ottomeyer (1977, p. 70-95) emphasizes that, in itself, wage labor generates "instrumental indifference" as a coping mechanism. The example which Ottomeyer himself analyses (a sales assistant in a clothing shop) demonstrates, however, that instrumental interaction competence is not only a coping mechanism but is also an important labor force qualification in some white collar occupations.

Advertising and marketing studies have found that advertisements employ different themes, depending upon whether the target group is the middle class or industrial workers. Advertising which is aimed at the working class tends to



revolve around "quick pleasures," whereas the middle class are bombarded with images of the status and prestige vested in various commodities. Lindner (1977, p. 127–143) maintains that the reason is that industrial workers have jobs which gives them a "use value orientation," and that their attitude towards consumption goods is therefore "matter of fact" (*nüchtern*). A further point is that industrial workers and white collar employees have different career structures. Superficially at least, the white collar man's prospects are open, and he can always aspire, illusory though it may be, to eventually ascend to the privileged ranks of the upper middle classes. This explains why the white collar worker's consumption is more instrumental (Lindner's term is "Um-zu Orientation"), and also why he tends to be more fashion-conscious, have a more outwardly directed sense of style, and so on (see Riesman's treatment of the other-directed personality, cf. esp. 1950, p. 115).

**Social Environment.** The manner in which the transformation of capitalism affects the social environment has recently attracted wide attention. Finland is a good case in point: changing living conditions have brought about a very strong tide of migration both within Finland herself and from Finland to other countries, too. As is usually the case, the resulting new housing needs have been met with large suburban dwelling areas with low standards of service and loose social networks.

The consequent changes in the social environment have been complex and subject to extensive research. I shall merely point out two chief ways in which it affects social relationships. The first is the isolation of the nuclear family (e.g., Bott, 1971, pp. 92–96), and the second the weakness of social networks (Daun, 1974, p. 236–261) or at least, the network's openness (Fischer et al., 1977, pp. 201–203)—particularly in new residential areas. The two trends are strongly tied to each other and each implies a disintegration of organic personal relationship organizations (relatives, neighbors). These organizations have had to be replaced: it may well be that this is a function which has come to be fulfilled by "afternoon dances" (Haavio-Mannila and Snicker, 1980), "the local," and other institutions associated with the use of alcohol.

**Hypotheses.** Each of the changes in living conditions which we have just briefly enumerated might be thought of as being able to create new use values for alcohol. In fact, most of the changes are likely to have chiefly affected the social significations of alcohol.

Few alcohol studies have taken social signification as their conceptual point of departure. Studies from other theoretical perspectives, are, however, sometimes useful as "second-hand" data for the analysis of social significations. Let us take some Finnish examples to illustrate this point. Bruun's study of small drinking groups (1959) aptly documents the stereotyped notion of the Finnish working man's aggressive and competitive drinking behavior—which in my view verges on the mythical. Furthermore, Bruun's observations (1959, p. 84) stress the symbolic nature of alcohol: he found no statistical connection between the

quantities of alcohol consumed and the changes in drinking behavior in small groups.

The work of Kuusi and Allardt also demonstrates that agricultural workers (Kuusi, 1957, p. 129; 1948, p. 63) and industrial hands (Allardt, 1957) tend to drink less frequently than the middle class, but that they drink more on the occasions when they do use alcohol. The population-wide interview data for 1976 collected by Simpura (1979) follow the same pattern, also found in other countries (for example England; see Edwards et al., 1972; Cartwright et al., 1978). Of course, additional data would be needed here too to decide whether such superficial statistical indicators imply actual class differences within the social meaning attached to drinking. Still, everyday experience and common sense tell one that the drunkenness of the Finnish working man or peasant has mythical aspects: a transposition of everyday experience to "another plane of reality" takes place, the routines of normality are left behind, taboos are broken, and role stipulations are ignored. This means that drinking is an occasion of a special kind which is not compatible with drinking every day or very frequently.

On the basis of the foregoing conceptual analysis we can now advance some hypotheses about the new use values which alcohol has most probably acquired as a result of the course taken by living conditions in developed (capitalist) countries in recent decades.

1. The growing dominance of wage labor usually implies that work and leisure become markedly separate spheres of life. Drinking is increasingly limited to the private sphere of leisure, which is subject only to the individual's self-control. At the same time it becomes much easier to control people's drinking at work.
2. Work comes to cause greater psycho-physical strain and this means that the pharmacological effects of alcohol acquire more relevance as a use value than before.
3. As the service industries become relatively more important employers of wage laborers, the scope of those social needs (the instrumental interaction competence) which can only be satisfied by goods which bear instrumental signification also grows. Alcoholic beverages are preeminently suitable in this regard.
4. The disintegration of the social environment and the attendant isolation of the nuclear family tend to increase the importance of instruments of social interaction. Alcoholic beverages are excellent bearers of these instrumental social significations.

Assuming that these hypotheses are justified, one would expect instrumental signification to come to bear an ever greater range of the use values of alcohol as a consequence of the transformation of living conditions. Similarly, alcohol's

pharmacological properties should become more important, and one would also expect alcohol consumption to grow in general.

## 6. LIVING CONDITIONS, POPULAR DRINKING HABITS, AND THE FORMATION OF USE VALUES

### Drinkers, Drinking Habits, Drinking Occasions

How can such hypotheses be put to the test? Needs cannot be studied apart from the manner in which they are satisfied; the only way in which people can articulate their needs is by satisfying them.

One can thus proceed in one way only: by looking at the actual use of alcohol. Here, as the very starting point of this study should make clear, this can only mean describing the drinking habits of the population as a whole. Consequently, this last section will describe how the changes in living conditions discussed above (social class, work, the social environment) might have altered the general need structure, provided alcohol with new use values, and thus increased consumption.

There are, in principle, three ways in which these effects might be observed.

1. Most countries have a group of abstainers, and this group is usually both easily noticeable and clearly different from the public as a whole. These groups tend to fall in size as consumption rises. Teetotallers generally share kindred socioeconomic backgrounds and they tend to concentrate in certain regions. Changing living conditions can disperse these segments of the population.
2. Changing living conditions can alter the need structure of those who are already drinkers, qualitatively changing the way in which they drink. One would certainly expect this to show up as different drinking habits and the quantities drunk might also grow.
3. Changes in living conditions may also alter the spatial and temporal structure of everyday life so as to provide more opportunities for drinking. Women become more mobile when they become wage laborers, for example, and this might give them more chance to drink.

These three points make up three different strategic approaches for studying the ways in which changes in living conditions affect alcohol's use value. Empirical methods for these approaches are available.

One example of the way in which one can use data on entire populations is Single and Giesbrecht's summary (1979) of the drinking habits of Ontarians since World War II. Their study reaches the conclusion that whilst the drinking

habits of Ontario have tended to become more like the drinking habits found in other countries, drinking habits in Ontario have also diversified. A larger proportion of the population than before now uses alcohol—a trend which is also observable in those groups which had previously displayed a strong tendency towards temperance (those whose native language is neither English nor French, the old, the young, and the poor). Furthermore, alcohol is now used in a different way. Ontarians nowadays tend to buy more expensive brands and to prefer imported drinks, and the surroundings in which they drink have become more diverse as well.

Using market research findings one finds that a process of diversification is also at work in England (Sulkunen, I., 1977). Something is also known about the way in which different segments of the English public drink. Harrison (1971) demonstrates that by the mid-nineteenth century drinking habits in England had already attained the form which they were to hold, in the main, until the outbreak of World War II. The chief English drink is beer, which is mainly drunk by working men in pubs. There are great differences in drinking habits between the sexes and various social classes (Mass Observation, 1943). Survey studies indicate that English drinking habits still conformed to this description in the 1960s (Edwards et al., 1972).

Beer did not lose pride of place and pubs did not become more middle class until well on into the 1960s. Nowadays, however, more alcohol is consumed at home and differences between the drinking habits of different social classes have declined (Cartwright et al., 1978). Women and young people are now accustomed to use alcohol and this has increased the proportion of the whole population who drink.

England and Ontario seem to indicate that the appearance of new groups of consumers, new drinking habits, and different surroundings for drinking is tied up with changing living conditions. Furthermore, one can well interpret these phenomena as reflections of new use values. Nevertheless, the data which are available at the moment do not allow us to fully explain how changes in living conditions—social class, work, and the social environment—influence alcohol use. We would need more comprehensive data about the identity of the new groups of drinkers and about which people have changed their drinking habits in order to test our hypotheses about the relationships between changing living conditions and changing drinking habits.

### Abstainers in Finland

Finland is a unique country in that survey data on her (more or less) entire population are available for the 30 years from 1946 to 1976. Reanalysis of these data will help to elucidate the connection between changes in living conditions and drinking habits in both a qualitative and a quantitative sense.

The first batch of these data may be found in Kuusi's (1943) Gallup-based

Table 3. Percentages of Finnish Population Aged 19 Years or More Who Were Lifelong Abstainers in 1946 and 1976<sup>a,b</sup>

	1946	1976
Entire population	19	9
Men	5	4
Women	31	15
Farmers	22	21
The old (30–64 years)	22	16
The young (20–29 years)	17	3
City dwellers	14	8
Countryside dwellers	20	11

<sup>a</sup> By demographic categories.

<sup>b</sup> Source: Sulkunen, 1979, Tables 1, 2, 5, and 6.

study of the Finnish alcohol problem. The material on which Kuusi's work is based was collected in the autumn of 1946. Data on the whole Finnish population were subsequently collected by Klaus Mäkelä (1971) in 1968 and 1969 and by Jussi Simpura (1977a) in 1976.

These data were subjected to a reanalysis to elucidate how the number of consumers of alcohol had grown by looking at the fall in the number of abstainers (Sulkunen, P., 1979). The advantage of limiting the analysis on abstainers is that the distinction between users and non-users is the simplest of the variables on drinking behavior and provides the possibility of comparing the data for 1946 with other years.

The data for 1946 are not fully comparable with the data for the later years owing to differences in the way the questions were formulated and the definitions used. Nevertheless, if the data are modified in certain ways, it is possible to define the categories of monthly abstainers and lifelong abstainers in a way that is logically identical in the 1946 data and the more recent interviews.

Apart from the fact that the proportion of abstainers in 1946 would probably have proved greater if modern research techniques had been employed, Table 3 gives a fair impression of changes in the proportion of Finns who were abstainers between 1946 and 1976. The most significant finding in the table is that the proportion of abstainers plummets down in 1969, and that this fall is mainly due to women since very few men have ever been total abstainers. The number of women abstaining for the whole of their lives also falls dramatically in 1969, but this tendency remained marked later on, too.

One can estimate the immediate effect of this drop in the proportion of the population who are teetotallers on the overall consumption of alcohol. Such an estimate was made on the basis of the 1968 and 1976 data on the number of

people who abstained for 1 year. Assuming that those who had been teetotallers in 1968 but had begun drinking by 1976 drank roughly the same amount of alcohol in 1976 as the average user drank in 1968, the growth in the body of consumers accounts for no more than approximately 15% of the overall growth in the consumption of alcohol which took place between 1968 and 1976. The rest of the increased consumption is attributable to established drinkers drinking more and to the combined effect of this and the rise in the number of consumers in general.

Consequently, even a substantial rise in the number of consumers (from 75% to 89% of Finnish 15- to 69-year-olds between 1968 and 1976) does not necessarily have a significant effect on overall consumption. The most interesting aspects come to light if one analyzes the drop in the proportion of abstainers in connection with changes in living conditions.

Sociodemographic variables would appear to indicate that in 1946 abstinence was most widespread amongst women, those whose occupations were connected with farming, and those who lived in the countryside. Notwithstanding, the differences between city dwellers, farmers, and the population as a whole are surprisingly small. By 1976, these differences—with the exception of age and farming—had either disappeared or become far less marked (Table 3). Age and occupation, however, present a diametrically opposed picture: not a great deal of difference attributable to age is discernible for 1946, but older people were markedly more temperant than the young in 1976. Farmers tend to be abstinent, it is true, but this is because they are generally older people.

Closer analysis reveals that the growth in age differences is the result of more pronounced divergency between generations (and not therefore of aging itself). Comparison of same-age cohorts in 1946 and 1976 (those born between 1916 and 1925 are the only ones for whom such comparable data are available) demonstrates that those whose age made them most likely to use alcohol in 1946 retained the same drinking habits in later years too—they might even have begun to drink a little more (Table 4). Furthermore, their parents had also behaved similarly in 1946. Consequently, the age differences discernible for 1976 are

Table 4. Elapsed Time Measured from Previous Drinking Occasion among Those Born between 1916 and 1925: in 1946 and 1976

	Never	One month or more	Less than one month
1946			
Twenty- to twenty-nine-year-olds	17	28	55
1976			
Fifty- to fifty-nine-year-olds	14	28	58
(N = 467)			

due to the fact that those born after 1925, and particularly between 1945 and 1954, were extremely unlikely to abstain from alcohol.

More interestingly still, virtually each and every 20- to 29-year-old used alcohol in 1976, irrespective of sex, occupation, or geographical location. Some 3% of 20- to 29-year-old farmers were teetotallers in 1976; the corresponding mean percentage for the population as a whole is also 3%. Similarly, some 3% of those who lived in the countryside were teetotallers—and the figure for city dwellers is the same. Some 2% of men and 3% of women remained teetotallers all their lives. But the old differences can still be seen in the data for older people, and the differences are most marked in the highest age category (65- to 69-year-olds).

From the standpoint of the aims of this essay this result is most important. A generation gap has emerged in attitudes towards alcohol. Young people turned against temperance en masse in the 1960s. Furthermore, older people remained steadily much more temperant and among them the traditional differences remained. In the older age group, the most likely to remain teetotallers were women, those who lived in the countryside, and farmers.

Is, then, this renunciation of temperance solely characteristic of the postwar generation? All of the data sets include information on the age at which people took their first drink. This information can be used to elucidate the question. Among adult men no essential reduction in the number of abstainers took place. Most adult men tend to begin drinking by the age of 20, and those who do not have always been likely to abstain for the rest of their lives.

On the contrary, Finnish women have always shown a tendency to begin drinking in adulthood. One of the reasons why the abstaining population became very small in Finland by 1976 is that a growing number of women of earlier generations started to drink at a comparatively advanced age after 1969, the year when the liberal legislation came into force increasing the availability of alcohol dramatically (see also *Simpura, 1977b*).

As regards drinking by teenagers, these data show that, beginning with those born towards the end of the 1930s, every generation, boys and girls alike, began to experiment with alcohol at a younger age. This trend was already visible before 1969, which implies that the renunciation of temperance by the young generation, especially by those born after the war, is by no means attributable solely to the new legislation on alcohol distribution. This conclusion is reinforced by other, more recent data, which show that starting with those born after 1960 the average age at which people first took a drink later grew (*Ahlström, 1979*).

In sum, the decline in the proportion of people who do not drink at all among the Finnish population was a process which consisted of two elements:

- (1) Abstinence when young disappeared almost totally among those born between the end of the 1930s and the end of the 1950s. This took place in the course of the 1960s and 1970s, partly even before the liberal reform in the system of alcohol distribution.

- (2) Women of the earlier birth cohorts increasingly abandoned temperance, even rather late in their life cycles. This process was accelerated by the 1969 reform.

## The Wet Generation

The foregoing analysis of abstainers both substantiates and complicates our picture of the way in which changing living conditions have influenced alcohol consumption in Finland.

We have seen that alcohol has come to play a part in the lives of increasingly large numbers of Finnish people. But contrary to what a survey researcher might expect—on the basis of the hypotheses advanced in this article (Section 5)—changes in people's living conditions have had no immediate effect upon the amounts which *individuals* drink. Instead, it is the various birth cohorts which have been important. There is evidence to suggest that the age group which is responsible for the most dramatic decline in the proportion of total abstainers really is a "wet" generation and not just one which has renounced temperance. Simpura (1978, Tables 20 and 21) shows that in 1976 it was the birth cohort which was then between 20- and 29-years-old which drank the most—and the most unrestrainedly. Earlier this leading position belonged to the middle-aged. The exceptional wetness of those whose birth occurred around the war is further underlined by the fact that young people have recently become more abstinent once more. If this leads to a permanent increase in the proportion of abstainers in the total population in the next few years, then one must conclude that the 1969–1974 consumption increase really was mainly attributable to one particular generation: those born around the war.

To what extent the Finnish experience can be generalized is uncertain at this point. In Ireland, for example, the decline in the number of abstainers has followed a generational pattern similar to that of Finland (Walsh, 1979). Yet reliable evidence for the US (Glenn and Zody, 1971; Johnson et al., 1977) shows—unexpectedly—that age differences in abstinence are not generational but are due to aging.

Consequently, lacking a coherent basis for comparisons with other countries, the following conclusions apply to Finland only. Nevertheless, they do have a theoretical relevance in view of our earlier hypotheses about the relationships between alcohol consumption and living conditions.

First of all, the overall rise in consumption displays a remarkable correlation with the life cycle of the Wet Generation. If we somewhat arbitrarily define the Wet Generation as those born between, let us say, 1935 and 1955, most of its members will have been born in the exceptionally large baby boom which occurred immediately after the Second World War. This unusually large birth cohort came of age in the early 1970s, and even most of those who had received a university education had begun to build a life apart from their parents by that



time. In other words, the postwar generation reached the age when they would be likely to drink most at the very moment when most of the postwar growth in overall alcohol consumption occurred. That was, furthermore, the time when alcohol policy (prices, licensing policies, the widening of the distribution network, and more effective advertising) was very conducive to consumption growth. The way in which consumption growth came to an end in 1974, on the other hand, is often regarded as the result of alcohol policy measures and a less auspicious economic climate. There is another factor which may well have played a part, too: by 1974, the Wet Generation had reached the age when their leisure was curtailed by mortgages and parenthood.

We have to underline that the tendencies which we have just described are not immediately due to the comparatively large size of the Wet Generation. The Wet Generation has a distinct character all of its own; its propensity to drink is without parallel in Finnish history since the turn of the century.

The existence of the Wet Generation might also explain the marked geographical uniformity of Finland's consumption growth. Beverage structure and consumption levels have followed very similar courses all over Finland—and have done so simultaneously in different parts of the country (Ahlström-Laakso and Österberg, 1978). The implication is that Finland has an unusually integrated, uniform alcohol culture, as might be inferred from the uniformity of the Wet Generation too.

### Living Conditions, the Wet Generation, and Normative Control

We shall now take a look at the Wet Generation in the light of the formation of new use values of alcohol, paying particular attention to the part played by changes in living conditions.

To begin with, the Wet Generation causes us to reconsider change in living conditions itself. The exceptionally marked social change undergone by Finland has been called the "Big Migration" (Gronow et al., 1977, pp. 471–480). But it would be a mistake to believe that the Big Migration affected the whole of Finland's population in the same fashion. The generation gap was not only one of moral attitudes and patterns of behavior; the way in which the Big Migration caused the differences between generations to become more pronounced can be seen from living conditions, too. This is readily apparent if the background variables used in Simpura's data are analyzed by age groups. The generation which was born during and immediately after World War II was far better educated, much less likely to depend upon farming for a livelihood, more mobile, and more urban than its predecessors (Sulkunen, P., 1979, pp. 26–27).

In a nutshell, social class and work are what distinguish the generations of the Big Migration. From the point of view of the social environment, it is important to realize that the generation gap is also a geographic gap.

The way in which the Wet Generation approaches human relationships is

another aspect in which it differs from earlier generations. Interview data analyzed by Haranne and Allardt (1974, pp. 52–55) indicate that young people's social ties have more "conditional solidarity" than those of their parents. Young people are less likely to feel bound to family, friends, or marriage partners than their parents. Furthermore, the degree to which young people feel bound to others depends upon circumstance and the usefulness of solidarity.

These findings would seem to suggest that the Wet Generation's human relationships possess an affinity with the kind of instrumental interaction competence which, as we have already seen, plays a role in investing alcoholic beverages (and other commodities) with instrumental use values.

It may be that one reason for the Wet Generation's behavior is that its members were more immediately affected by changes in living conditions than their parents. Nevertheless, not every member of the birth cohort born after the Second World War left the place where he or she was born, or switched from farming to another occupation. Yet the generation uniformly renounced temperance. What is especially interesting is the fact that the differences in drinking habits between two sexes, as measured by abstinence versus drinking, have almost completely disappeared.

Other generations have also experienced change in living conditions, though the change may not have been quite as marked as among those who experienced the Big Migration while young. Older people—and especially older women—did not, however, come to renounce temperance as a result of changing living conditions until they gradually did so after the 1969 revision of the Alcohol Act. How might this be explained?

Once more, we have to remember that new use values are formed collectively. This is particularly true when use values rest on social significations. Social significations are generated on the plane of collective consciousness. Whilst each individual can use existing social significations in a variety of ways as he sees fit (Bourdieu 1974, p. 60), no one can create social signification at will to suit his own individual circumstances or tastes.

The idea of the Wet Generation can usefully be compared to the concept of the political generation. Political scientists use the term "political generation" to describe the way in which people who have shared similar experiences at the critical age for political socialization often come to form like views of the world and ideological attitudes in consequence (Rintala, 1962, p. 7). By the same token, when living conditions change, the resultant new social signification of consumption manifests itself in the collective consciousness and behavior of young people.

Klaus Mäkelä (1977, pp. 57–60) has demonstrated that attitudes towards alcohol policy are, in Finland, an integral part of the overall structure of moral views. Changing the moral climate therefore meant that social attitudes towards the alcohol question came to have a less pronounced moral foundation. The 1969 revision of the Alcohol Act can thus be interpreted as one facet of the meta-

morphosis of society's general moral consciousness. Mäkelä maintains that the young people of the 1960s formed a new political generation, and that they were the first to adopt cultural codes which corresponded to the more flexible philosophies and ideologies generated by modern capitalism. The boom in electronic mass communication enabled them to propagandize their ideas effectively.

Could one then claim that the whole of the growth in consumption is explained by the changed moral climate? Is the moral climate only indirectly linked to changing living conditions, which would mean that there would be no need for a theory of the way in which alcohol's use values change? Irrespective of what alcohol actually is and the nature of the connection between it and changes in living conditions, need one look no further than to governmental and normative control to explain the widespread fluctuations which have taken place in alcohol use? Could the Wet Generation's renunciation of temperance be seen to be a simple reflection of that generation's liberalmindedness so that it would not have much to do at all with living conditions and new use values of alcohol?

For an examination of these questions, we must have some picture of the social signification of alcohol in Finland. We shall also need to know something about the way in which it has changed. Only then will we be able to appreciate how moral codes—or, as I prefer to say, normative control—have acted as a brake to consumption growth.

I do not intend to dispute that the Finnish norms which regulate alcohol use are part of a more general moral and philosophical cultural code; nevertheless, I do think that further explanation is necessary. Why have the established norms which affect drinking in Finland been so unequivocally restrictive even though consumption has remained comparatively slight? And why have these norms viewed women's drinking in an especially harsh light?

We cannot consider these points in any great detail here. Let us merely note that the Finnish cinema's way of depicting drinking shows that alcohol constitutes part of the mythology of masculine self-consciousness and that the relationship between men and women is of crucial importance. Broadly speaking, the mythology manifests the antagonism which the masculine self-consciousness holds towards capitalism as an agent which destroys peasant culture and its traditional way of life (Falk and Sulkunen, 1980). Indeed, this antagonism and the aggressiveness of Finnish drinking habits are tied up with the social definition of alcohol problems as chiefly matters of law and order (Mäkelä, 1977, p. 52).

Again, whilst general moral norms have prevented the formation of new use values, it does not follow that increased drinking in Finland bears the same social significations as before.

Admittedly, the transformation of the way in which the collective moral consciousness views alcohol was affected by a general change in moral codes which pervaded the whole of society. The 1969 revision of the Alcohol Act can be regarded as a single facet of this process. Nevertheless, not all segments of the population have begun to drink more—or renounced temperance—regardless

of living conditons. If one examines the data for men and women separately, one finds that living conditions, in a statistical sense, provide an even better statistical "explanation" of feminine temperance for 1976 than 1968 (Sulkunen, P., 1979, pp. 43–67). This conclusion is reached by operationalizing living conditions as age, employment status, occupation, income, education, family ties (whether married or not), and abode (countryside/town). Among men, these hard facts of life are much less closely related to temperance, and the degree of statistical association weakens from 1969 to 1976. This might be held to indicate that living conditions only come to affect women's drinking habits after the moral ramparts have been breached (and after the availability of alcohol has risen too). Men, on the other hand, show an increasing tendency to regard temperance as a matter of personal choice.

This conclusion becomes even more apparent if we confine our attention to the section of the population where temperance is most widespread and which has only gradually renounced temperance after 1968—adult women. The data given in Tables 5 and 6 compare the proportion of abstainers among those employed outside the home and among those domestically occupied for adult women who live in the countryside and those who live in urban areas, respectively.

It should be borne in mind when reading the tables that the distinction between town and country as an indicator of living conditions is apparently less important for 1976 than 1968. Consequently, it should come as no surprise that the discrepancy between the urban and rural prevalence of temperance falls as well.

Being employed outside the home, on the other hand, has a comparatively fixed importance as an indicator of living conditions.

The most significant finding in the tables is revealed by the growing discrepancy in the proportion of abstainers among employed and among domestically occupied women. So many employed women have become drinkers—in rural areas too—that the original discrepancy has grown even though more and more domestically occupied women have begun to drink in rural areas as well.

Table 5. The Proportion of Women Born before 1939 Who Were Abstinent for 1 Year: in 1968 and 1976 in the Countryside

Employment status	1968		1976	
	Percent	N	Percent	N
Employed, temporarily unemployed, or studying	53	57	25	163
Pensioners	68	19	51	117
Domestically occupied	61	94	42	55
Total	59	170	37	335

Table 6. The Proportion of Women Born before 1939 Who Were Abstinent for 1 Year: in 1968 and 1976 in Towns and Cities

Employment status	1968		1976	
	Percent	N	Percent	N
Employed, temporarily unemployed, or studying	28	80	11	261
Pensioners	71	21	44	150
Domestically occupied	40	48	38	55
Total	38	149	25	466

This seems to suggest that living conditions (in this case employment) did come to have a marked effect on drinking habits, but not until normative control had become less powerful and the social significations of alcohol had changed. Being employed outside the home (wage labor) provides women with greater opportunity to drink and, above all, brings them into possession of money of their own, money which they can use at their own discretion. Furthermore, as pointed out in the hypotheses earlier on, wage labor gives rise to instrumental human relationships that are not so strongly centered around the home, the family, and neighbors. The need for means of communication which bear instrumental social significations increases. These changes in living conditions generated new, mainly symbolic and instrumental, use values for alcohol, but only after the constraints set by normative control codified in restrictive legislation were lifted.

We can therefore say that living conditions play a more active part in the formation of new use values whenever normative control comes to exert less influence on people's drinking habits.

This analysis brings us back to general theoretical considerations of the role of living conditions as a determinant of alcohol use. We have already observed that there is no direct "functional" link between living conditions and drinking, not at the individual level at least. Now we can also refute the opposite view that sees alcohol use as totally determined by general moral—or governmental—constraints. This latter view, if accepted, would make all reference to the notion of needs unnecessary and redundant. It would also do away with the conception of use values where alcohol use is concerned. Historical fluctuations of alcohol consumption could be interpreted as reflections of general moral and ideological cycles of liberalism and conservatism. The disposition to drink would be seen as an "anthropological constant" and the distinctions between different uses of alcohol would be largely irrelevant. Control would replace that which is being controlled as the key element in explaining drinking behavior.

Our analysis has led to a reconciliation of these two conflicting views of naive functional reductionism versus total rejection of needs as the connecting link between living conditions and drinking behavior. The emergence of the Wet

Generation is of particular importance here. It has alerted us to the fact that the formation of new use values, especially in as much as they are based on new social significations, is a collective—and thus a cultural—process. It is based on changes in living conditions, no doubt, but only insofar as this change is experienced collectively. Secondly, the process by which new use values are formed, while not created by it, is regulated by governmental and normative control. The 1969 Finnish Alcohol Act was not only a practical measure that made alcohol more freely available. It also heralded the breakdown of a moral barrier that had surrounded alcohol for a long time. The Act was a sign of the victory of the new moral code espoused by the Wet Generation, a moral code in which alcohol had an especially important symbolic value. Only then could the social significations of alcohol—which had slowly developed over the course of the Big Migration but been harnessed by the old moral order—be transformed into actual use values and start serving their proper functions under the new living conditions.

Still, in evaluating the importance of normative control, one should remember that Finland is a special case. In Finland, normative control of drinking is very tightly linked to the general moral consciousness, which has relegated drinking to a nook of its own, removed from ordinary everyday life. Normative control has forged a very powerful moral barrier around alcohol and this has lagged behind changes in living conditions. It has prevented alcohol from acquiring the use values which the everyday life of white collar urban workers could otherwise have given it. Changing living conditions' effect on use value did not become discernible until the Wet Generation had first broken the moral barrier down.

The origins of the Finnish moral barrier lie in the mythical social significations with which Finnish peasant culture invested alcohol. These significations have exerted a dominating influence on the way in which alcohol is viewed, perhaps because Finland does not have a strongly established middle class. Thus, there have been no groups which would have borne the social significations of alcohol which the Big Migration transformed into actual use values. Finland's alcohol culture is distinctly ambivalent. The moral barrier around alcohol is founded on social significations of drinking which were generated by the peasant culture, whereas the new use values of alcohol are the product of the living conditions of contemporary white collar capitalism. It will take some time before these can be reconciled.

## 7. SUMMARY

This article has attempted to advance some theories which might help to explain the international trend towards consumption growth discernible since

World War II. These trends were described in detail in an earlier article. The task of explaining these trends is here formulated as one of examining the kind of new use values which alcohol acquired during that time and explaining how and under what conditions they were formed.

The first task in this article was to draw a general picture of the way in which alcohol availability has changed and to relate this to the general economic development of capitalism. I found that the changes which had occurred in the availability of alcoholic beverages were often similar to the course followed by other commodities and were often due to the same reasons, too. In the countries which belong to the European Communities at least, the specific measures taken by States in order to regulate the use of alcohol had become less restrictive. This is even true of taxation. What proved to be special about the supply of alcohol was the manner in which the production of alcoholic beverages was linked to agriculture. Alcoholic beverages tended to lose their distinctly local character and this made it easier for alcohol to take on new social significations.

The course taken by the availability of alcohol is not the cause of the increase in consumption; instead it has created the preconditions for the formation of new use values. Changing living conditions have provided the substance and the content of these new use values. In white collar capitalism, the use values of alcohol can be expected to consist of its instrumental social significations and of its psycho-pharmacological properties. Since new use values mainly rest on social significations, they must be subjected to semiological analysis.

The theoretical conceptualizations were applied to a reanalysis of survey data in order to study the way in which risen alcohol consumption is connected to changing living conditions in Finland. The links proved to be collective, not individual. The process whereby alcohol becomes invested with new use values is a cultural one, even though it is living conditions which determine the character of the new use values. Moreover, the normative control which has affected how people drink in Finland has acted as a moral barrier, preventing alcohol's new social significations from becoming use values. New use values were only formed after the moral barrier was broken down.

Thus the explanation of the postwar rise in alcohol consumption consists of three elements. First, new living conditions have changed the need structure of populations in highly industrialized countries. This is the ground for qualitatively new, largely symbolic instrumental use values of alcohol. Secondly, the supply of alcohol has been linked to the general economic structure in a manner which has increased the availability of alcoholic beverages. This has been a necessary precondition for the increase in consumption. Thirdly, normative control—embodied in restrictive legislation—has broken down in the collective consciousness. In Finland, this breakdown was abruptly brought about by her Wet Generation. This generation changed the social significations of alcohol, which have, in Finland, tended to be strongly mythical and to rest on the predominance of traditional peasant culture.

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