

Reforming the self and the other: the temperance movement and the duality of modern subjectivity

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ABSTRACT *This article looks at temperance history to understand how modern preventive alcohol-control systems were created and to understand why their ideological basis has now weakened. Temperance movements made a core contribution to the development of alcohol-control systems, but their argumentation contained an interesting paradox. While they demanded availability restrictions on alcohol they also stressed individual self-determination in alcohol consumption. They were able to combine these goals, which in contemporary public health policy discourse are felt to be contradictory. This duality was possible for two reasons. First, the temperance issue was raised in nascent nation-states and parliamentary political institutions. Convictions of moral superiority led some of the movements to seek in national prohibition a complete solution to all social ills. Second, the movements were not indifferent to the desires that the self-controlling will was expected to constrain. Abstinence from drink was embedded in a Utopian vision of authentic living and independent emotional life in the individual family. As soon as the movements lost the Utopian content of their pursuits they turned into conservative single-issue movements. Today the role of parliamentary nation-states as moral communities has been lost and the endorsement of the good family-centred life can no longer be the narrow objective of public policy. Alcohol control can only be justified in terms of specific consequences, particularly those for public health.*

Self-control and legal regulation: how can you have both?

In alcohol-control policy monopoly systems and other availability restrictions are being relaxed in most parts of the world. Commercial interests as well as market-friendly ideologies no doubt have something to do with this but there are more encompassing issues involved as well. Alcohol-control policies are criticized for being paternalistic violations of individual freedom in lifestyle and consumption choices. Instead, new stress is laid on self-responsibility, as in other areas of new public health discourse (Petersen & Lupton, 1996). Alcohol policy is a fitting example of the problem that Nicolas Rose has described by arguing that freedom has become in the mass democracies of the twentieth century the primary programme of governance. We are governed not against but through our freedom. In the present situation, it appears that individuals can best fulfil their political

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obligations in relation to the wealth and happiness of the nation when they seek to fulfil themselves as free individuals rather than as obedient and disciplined subjects of the regulatory state (Rose, 1999).

Deborah Lupton (1995) has said that health has become an imperative rather than a right. Public health education stresses calculable risks rather than correct uses of pleasure, and the most successful alcoholism reform movements such as AA stress individual rather than social reform. With such less visible and less repressive ways of governing, freedom, participation and self-control are necessary resources for regulation.

This article looks at the historical literature on modern temperance movements to understand how preventive alcohol-control systems were created and why it seems so difficult to justify them now. Temperance movements had an important although not straightforward role in the process of setting up such control systems.^a Considering present-day public health discourse, the temperance discourse of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century contained an interesting paradox. While temperance movements demanded legal control to reduce availability, even the abolition of the alcohol supply altogether, they too were self-constructing projects, the aim of which was to create 'the good man who is able, through his character, to win the victory of Will over Impulses' (Gusfield, 1963, p. 31). How is it possible that a movement which stressed harnessing individual will-power to control the natural desires and impulses of man also wanted to achieve an alcohol-free society to the extent that some of them demanded, and a few succeeded in legislating, a total prohibition of alcohol use, a measure that hardly leaves room for choice and self-discipline? The solution to this paradox is a key to understanding on what ground the modern alcohol-control systems have stood, and why they are disintegrating now.

In this article we will argue that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century temperance movements the combination of self-constructing moral discourse and state-directed social policy was possible on two grounds. First, the emergence of parliamentary politics within the nation-state made possible the politics of moral superiority, which justified imposing on others a way of life that temperance supporters felt respectable for themselves. The will to abstain was presented as a duty in the name of a higher social and moral order. Second, the desires and impulses that the self-determining individual will was expected to control were not of equal value. Not only the disciplinary form but also the content of the good life was fixed in temperance rhetoric, as it was in the modern project as a whole.

The Protestant ethic and the construction of modern subjectivity

We are dealing here with the same problem that was the focus of Max Weber's analysis of Protestant self-discipline and Michel Foucault's analysis of sexuality in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century modernity. If the Protestant ethic stressed the lifestyle virtues of frugality and self-determination, how could it also

promote legal regulation rather than individual action to attain its ideals (Weber)? If, on the other hand, the modern social order stresses discipline and control, how is it understandable that contemporary morality turns into discourse about caring for the Self rather than about subjugation to legal constraints (Foucault)? And how have the two coexisted, becoming only now contradictory alternatives?

The North American and Western European temperance movements are good examples of the modern subjectivity problem for two particular reasons. First, these movements had an impact that was far wider than the social and moral issues related to drunkenness as such. Second, they were an integral part of turn-of-the-century progressivism. Progress meant for them a 'reform' of both of the facets of modern subjectivity: the Self and the society that conditions the Self. The progressive intention was both to make life better and to make the persons who lead that life more complete; therefore the notion of progress rested on a general understanding of what is the universally good life, good not only for the Self but for the society as a whole.

Temperance and Puritanism

In *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* Daniel Bell argues that the coming of the capitalist consumer society that began in the 1920s soon signalled the demise of the Weberian ideal type of Puritanism. The spirit of 'modernism' (in contrast with the current wider usage, Bell uses this word to mean mundane hedonism) took over the puritan heritage as soon as the mass-consumption society began to flourish. Bell follows one of the traditional American criticisms of consumer society in arguing that mass-producing industrial capitalism runs smoothly 'only if the machinery of gratification and instant demand is well oiled, usually with cosmetic fragrance' (1976/1996, p. 283). Puritanism and its values adjusted to the needs of production and accumulation are functional only in the very early phases of industrialization, whereas the consumer society requires the full reign of the culture of modernism with its opposite values of acquisitiveness and hedonism.

The temperance movement gained a transient victory in prohibition, which in the American tradition represented, so Bell argues, fear of change. Although the temperance movement had its source in the puritan 'doctrines of industry, thrift, discipline and sobriety', the creation of the Anti-Saloon League in 1896 was a defensive reaction of rural small-town America against the cultural threats posed by the immigrant Catholic population, the debilitating effects of urban life and the corruption of public sociability (Bell 1976/1996).

This is exactly how the once-flourishing temperance movements now look in North America and Europe. They are rural, mostly followed by old people and animated by tradition rather than by an offensive spirit.^b The idea that hedonistic 'modernism', the opposing twin brother of the Protestant ethic born of capitalism, with its values of instant gratification, pleasure and egoistic individualism, has taken the upper hand in the consumer society seems like a fitting description of the legitimacy crisis of public lifestyle regulation today.

On the other hand, it is too simple to associate temperance as such with moral or cultural conservatism. The anti-alcohol and other lifestyle movements (missionary, youth, sports, family etc.) and of course the labour movement of the early century were reactions, certainly, but more to the misery and moral confusion caused by the change that already had occurred in the industrializing societies than to anticipated modernization. In their own way each of these movements advocated a vision of progress that involved a new and better form of life. The centre of that new life was the individual, and the communities that individuals constituted were, first, classes and then increasingly nations. Gender was not a community in the same sense, but female groups had a leading role in many of the reform movements and certainly in the temperance movements.

Reforming the Self. . .

The temperance movements that spread all over Western Europe and North America in the late nineteenth century^c were an ideal-typical case of the worldly asceticism that Weber thought to be functional in generating the spirit of capitalism.^d The useless pleasures of intoxication and spending money and time on alcohol, and the immorality associated with drinking, especially in public drinking places, was the antipode of the accumulative ethos of entrepreneurial life.

The first major efforts to reform American drinking habits in the early nineteenth century were led by the Calvinist ministry of New England. Religion and individual perfectionism went hand in hand. To be saved was evidenced through a change in personal life. The man of spiritual conviction could be known by his habits (Gusfield, 1963). Also in Britain the earliest temperance pursuits were born among the Calvinistic Methodists. In Wales the mid-nineteenth-century temperance movement was influenced by Welsh Nonconformist theology that required the followers of Christ to be noble examples of self-denying abstinence from all excesses, in business and in pleasure. In eating, drinking, dressing and all things pertaining merely to this life they should be 'moderate and reserved' so that they give proof of their heavenly citizenship (Lambert, 1983).

Max Weber stressed the Calvinists' duty to rationalize the whole of life in the name of salvation. According to the doctrine of predestination, rational asceticism and good works were not seen as a means of attaining salvation but as an indispensable sign of election among the few loved by God: 'The Calvinist, as it is sometimes put, himself creates his own salvation, or as would be more correct, the conviction of it' (1970, p. 115). The hardest challenge to bringing all of life to heel to reason was the power of emotions: 'The most urgent task was the destruction of spontaneous, impulsive enjoyment; the most important means was to bring order into the conduct of its adherents' (Weber, 1970, p. 119).

... *and the Other*

Weber's analysis has been criticized for its neglect of power (Turner, 1992). This defect is particularly striking as regards the history of the temperance movements, most of which were not content to reform their own ranks but wanted to impose their moral views on the rest of the society as well, by legal and sometimes by coercive means.^c As in Foucault's (1987) analysis of sexuality, the modern temperance discourse on drinking not only advocated the repression of a behaviour but produced it as a category—or a set of categories—of power over others, not only over the Self. As the 'progressive' temperance movements' activity developed into a 'moral crusade' (Gusfield, 1963; Lambert, 1983) they started a struggle for prohibition^f—denying the right either to produce, to sell or to consume alcohol—for everybody and often especially for 'others'.

All the prohibitionist temperance movements were anchored in three different social classes: the entrepreneurial middle class, the new nationalist middle class and the working class. Whatever their class background, motives and interests, the temperance groups were out for political and not just personal reform. The entrepreneurial classes in Western European societies found it quite easy to amalgamate teetotalism into their own religious doctrines and their everyday practices as businessmen and industrialists. However, they were not thinking about themselves at all when they campaigned against the café, the public house or the saloon. Their interest was to discipline the rising working class for whom the public drinking places were venues of political agitation and causes of relaxed attitudes toward factory hours (Harrison, 1971; Dingle, 1980; Lambert, 1983; Rosenzweig, 1983; Magnusson, 1985; Brennan, 1989; Barrows, 1991).

But the cultural issues of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Europe and North America were not a matter of interest to the bourgeoisie alone. The rising nationalist middle classes—teachers, journalists, the clergy and civil servants (Gellner, 1983)—had their own stake in the cultural struggle. The 'Ruritania's' of rapidly industrializing young countries quickly developed educated middle classes who needed, on the one hand, the support and the loyalty of 'the people' for their nationalism and, on the other hand, a romanticized image of the people for ingredients in their self-identity as the leading element in modern society (Gellner, 1983). As the reality of the lower classes hardly matched the idealized image, zealous reform attempts followed. For them, temperance policy was a key strategy to combat misery and immorality, especially with respect to family life. This was particularly important for women, who were largely responsible for the new reform movements in all parts of the Western world.

Furthermore, the 'dangerous classes'—industrial workers and peasants—were in a situation where worldly asceticism acquired for them a meaning very different from that in entrepreneurial culture: not accumulation, but survival. The fight against the alcohol capitalists was an early form of class consciousness and organized political activity, including street demonstrations and parliamentary action as soon as political platforms were opened to them (Rosenzweig, 1983; Roberts, 1984; Gutzke, 1989). Some of these activities were called 'drinking strikes', anticipating

industrial strikes and constituting collective action that later became important in labour organizations: not only refusal to be exploited by the drink capitalists but also meetings, picket lines and mass mobilization (Sulkunen, 1986).

What is remarkable about the temperance movements is how easy it was for them to unite in their efforts to discipline the Other. Two factors explain this ease. One is the changing political institutions of the modern state, the other was the notion of the good life that was thought to be the content of progress and that was surprisingly similar in different temperance groups, independently of their doctrinal background, social class and even national traditions.

Free will in a free society

Will, duty and moral superiority

Weber (1970) stressed that in contrast with earlier forms of Christian asceticism the Protestant ethic demanded the rationalization of the whole of man's life under the power of his reason. Also temperance reformers, following John Locke, made the modern distinction between will and desire. As Harry Levine has argued, the disciplined will was seen as a reasonable regulator of the natural desires of humans, and alcohol was seen as a poison that destroyed, not only challenged, one's will, the most valued underpinning of human dignity. This distinction made it possible for the early American temperance movement to define alcohol abuse as an addiction that became to be seen as the result of *defective will*, no longer of *defective desires* such as that for drunkenness, as in colonial pre-temperance morality (Levine, 1978). The will was to be trained to master lower passions—hence, civilization required constant and continuous self-discipline (Valverde, 1998).

In European temperance movements, too, the idea of free will was associated with the rise of total abstinence rather than moderation. For teetotallers in Britain in the 1830s the idea that man must trust his reason in not drinking excessively was foreign. Impulse renunciation and the control of desire and spontaneity could best be served only by total sobriety, which ensured self-command (Harrison, 1971; Lambert, 1983).⁸

At the turn of the century there were few competing discourses and they were notoriously unsuccessful. The obvious alternative was medicalization, but even in France where medical doctors were quick to gain dominant authority of the problem that still lasts today, alcoholism never developed into a clear-cut clinical category. The stumbling block was exactly the issue of free will that was defective in this particular 'monomania', but could not be properly analysed as a medical condition (Valverde, 1998). In England, the Society for the Study of Inebriety was in its early phase even more determined that alcoholism is a physical disease and that the Society was strictly committed to a scientific rather than social reformist stand in the matter. Compromises had to be made, however, and increasingly the issues of character and preventive policy were integrated to the Society's programme (Berridge, 1990).

Politically the mainstream argument focused on character reform, but not in isolation from major social questions. In the Protestant ethic, high above the individual rational will there was, according to Weber, a sense of duty. To be industrious in business and assiduous in work was a calling, a duty to obey the will of God, and the same applied to the pleasures of life as well as to the efficient use of time. The highest duty of all was confidence in being chosen among the elect, and rational, will-controlled life was the indispensable proof of this faith. The higher order that ordains the rationalization of life legitimizes contempt and hatred towards those who disregard their duty and thus demonstrate that they are the enemies of God (Weber, 1970).

Since the Protestant was among the elect, he was entitled to feel moral superiority, but he also had a duty to institute the will of God in the secular world through law. Therefore American and later European Prohibitionists were not inconsistent with their doctrine that the state should impose a total interdiction on drinking while they also thought that the problem was the diseased individual will and the loss of self-control. For them, alcohol was the agent that destroyed the will, and thus the rational will-power of individuals to control their desires and impulses alone could not be trusted. Instead, prohibitive legislation and control mechanisms were needed as its supports and guarantees.

The Self and the citizen

Among the Nonconformist or Free Church temperance movements the mission of liberating the whole society from the curse of alcohol therefore posed no major doctrinal problems. Their version of Prohibitionism followed directly from their religious background. However, the same combination of the two ideals, free rational will and legally decreed alcohol-free society, was also characteristic of other temperance movements, whose contact with the Calvinist doctrinal tradition was less obvious or even hostile. Working-class temperance movements in Britain (Harrison, 1971), Sweden (Ambjörnsson, 1988; Johansson, 1992) and Finland (Sulkunen, 1986) were based on the ideals of working-class respectability and self-reliance while they also aimed at legislating out the non-respectable, both among their own ranks and in the society at large.^h

The prohibitionist argument, which required extended state intervention, was based on the modern (in the current, wider sense) idea of constructing the inner selfhood by external means. Temperance was not only about not consuming alcohol, nor only about eliminating the profit motive from its production and sale, but also about the formation of character in a free society. For example, the United Kingdom Alliance, founded in 1853, denied that there was any simple choice between individual liberty and state intervention. The Alliance reformers working in mid-Victorian slums realized that government actually had to create the rational citizen who makes his/her economic decisions after mature consideration of his/her long-term self-interest. The care which prohibitionists wanted government to bestow on its citizens did not involve direct provision for their welfare: the aim was to give

indirect aid by cultivating citizens' initiative, rationality and providence (Harrison, 1971).

In temperance discourse the modern individual unfolding in nascent industrial culture was therefore divided into two parts: *the inner Self* and the *external citizen*. The enlightened nation-state, imbued with aspiration and commitment to moral and social progress, was thought to be the external instrument for constructing the inner Self of citizens, capable of self-control and competent to act as sovereign members of society. This was possible on the condition that the state be responsive to the will of the citizens, and that this will be formed in the political process within the democratic institutions of the nascent nation-state.

The rise of parliamentary politics in the nation-state

The rise of temperance activity was not only a matter of enthroning reason to reign in everyday life but also a showcase of the new parliamentary democracy not compatible with the *ancien régime*. All prohibitions in the USA, in Britain, Norway, Sweden and Finland were voted in, down or out either in parliaments elected in general elections or in a referendum. Moreover, the woman's suffrage movement was closely linked to temperance groups in the USA (Gusfield 1963; Rose, 1997) and in Britain (Harrison, 1971; Dingle, 1980), and American middle-class progressives considered prohibition to be an effective measure against big business and political corruption (Timberlake, 1963).

According to Dingle (1980) the prohibitionist phase of the British temperance movement differed from earlier activities not so much in ideological argumentation as in political methods. The belief in eliminating demand through the individual pledge of abstinence eroded when the British parliament became an open forum that could be used to outlaw supply. However, the fact that Prohibitionism was closely associated with parliamentary politics does not fully explain the duality of the argumentation in favour of individual freedom to exercise self-control on the one hand, and on the other hand a total solution through legislation which left little room for individual self-determination.

The romantic Puritan

The naturally good desire

Colin Campbell, in his *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism* (1987), has made an important amendment to the Weberian understanding of Western individualism. Capitalist individuality is not only oriented towards rational competition and accumulation, assiduity in work or frugality in consumption, prescribed by the worldly asceticism of the Protestant ethic. There is another Protestant ethic of romanticism and passion, a preoccupation with authentic pleasure and original individuality.

Daniel Bell's famous argument has been that these ethics are contradictory. The hedonistic aspect of modern individualism was one alternative to puritanical asceticism that gained momentum as capitalism matured to the stage of the consumer society. As regards attitudes towards intoxication this is to some extent true. Modernist romantic groups of intellectuals have often established heavy-drinking counter-cultures in opposition to the decency of normal bourgeois life (Room, 1984; Seigel, 1986; Roszak, 1995; Arppe, 1998).

We argue, however, that the romantic search for authenticity was also present in the Puritanical world-view of the temperance movements. The modern project has set culture apart from nature so that order and progress is thought to result when the conscious will (culture) controls 'raw' (natural) desires. Temperance movements were important proponents of this dichotomized view, as Levine has shown, but they made another distinction too: that between artificial, unnatural desires and necessary, truly authentic needs and wants of man. The American temperance leader Daniel Dorchester (1884, p. 2) wrote: 'The true philosopher discriminates between acquired desires and appetites, or vitiated, perverse, and inordinate impulses, and those which are normal, necessary, and beneficial'.

American temperance rhetoric was particularly influenced by the Scottish tradition of natural philosophy that understood Nature as a complete and functional order. It was a human duty to understand it and to cast social life to conform to the requirements of a higher order.¹ The unnatural and acquired desire for alcohol was considered a bad and inordinate impulse in itself, not just because its satisfaction resulted in bad consequences. Consequently, abstinence was connected to a romantic search for a true and full modern subjectivity rather than simply a pragmatic solution to avoid trouble.

Reform everything!

For the successful temperance movements sobriety was only one element in a new total way of life steered by rationality and self-control, and its function was to ensure progress whereby the public and the private good would be merged. To end the practice of imbibing liquor would serve the interest not only of the individual Self, but of the society as a whole (Gusfield, 1963). Thus, the temperance mission had a far wider scope than just the control of addictive alcohol use. It was a belief that the abolition of drink from society would correct all evils brought by industrial poverty, political corruption and irresponsible citizenship.

The most important movement in American temperance history, the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), joined forces in 1898 with the Anti-Saloon League (founded in 1895) to pursue prohibitionist policies (Rose, 1997). Their message was constructed on the ideals of an abstemious and hard-working lifestyle that is today associated with right-wing traditionalism, and in fact this is what the WCTU came to represent already in the lifetime of the Volstead Act. But at the end of the century they were not traditionalists at all. They were allies of all the major reform movements to support woman's suffrage (adopted, incidentally, in 1920,

the same year when the national prohibition came into force), dress reform, cremation, vegetarianism, Christian Socialism, the Populist party and the Labour movement. Frances Willard, the legendary WCTU leader, once declared: 'We believe in a living wage; in an eight-hour day; in courts of conciliation and arbitration in justice as opposed to greed and gain; in "Peace on Earth and Good-Will to Men"!' (quoted in Gusfield, 1963, p. 76).¹ The Prohibition Party, founded in 1869, advocated a federal income tax, woman's suffrage, the regulation of railroad rates, the direct election of United States senators, free schools, and an inflationary monetary policy. These were issues that also animated the agrarian populism of the late nineteenth century (Gusfield, 1963).

In the Nordic countries the progressivism of the temperance movements led them to collaborate closely with the nationalistic peoples' parties, the peasants' parties and the labour movement (Sulkunen, 1986; Johansson, 1992; Fuglum, 1995; Slagstad, 1998). For all these groups as well, obedience to the natural order was the key to real emancipation, a belief particularly expressed in the temperance rhetoric close to that of the labour movement. Alva and Gunnar Myrdal, the famous Swedish labour reformers of the 1930s, were very clear about the normative content of their social policy. Naturally good and rational desires were to be singled out and supported by state social policy, against corrupted and 'conventional habits':

The positive task in social policy is to make clear what a person should rationally desire in terms of her own values, if she had improved knowledge. . . . Bad habits must be straightened out. The unwise must be enlightened. The irresponsible must be aroused. There is plenty of room for a comprehensive, socially organised education of the entire nation. (Cited in Hirdman, 1997, p. 66)

Ronny Ambjörnsson, the Swedish cultural historian, has identified a term that the Swedish temperance socialists used to describe their ideals about enlightened modern working-class life: *skötsamhet*. It contains the same elements as its British equivalent 'respectability': cleanliness, orderliness, temperance and self-respect, even a sense of superiority. But the Swedish word (*sköta* = care for) implies also reliability and a sense of responsibility for others (Ambjörnsson, 1988). Unregulated sexuality, gambling and immediate satisfaction implied also unregulated and conflict-ridden social relationships, whereas individual abstinence represented a wider belief in progress and civilization, through '*bildning*', self-education of the working class.

The sanctuary of the home

The naturally good life was centred on procreation and the cult of the private family. Regulating sexuality through family policy was, of course, connected to the 'population question' (Winter 1989; Bock & Thane, 1991) which also was the theme of the Myrdals' social reform programme (Myrdal & Myrdal, 1935), but it was

deeply embedded also in temperance rhetoric. In several European countries temperance advocates joined forces or even overlapped with the eugenic movement. In Austria (Eisenbach-Stangl, 1991), Switzerland and Germany (Spode, 1993) both socialist and nationalist abstinence leaders such as August Forel, Alfred Ploebz and Rudolf Wlassack were also race hygienists. Incarceration, abortion and sterilization were used against 'alcoholic degeneration'.

A zeal for home protection was shared by all American temperance movements, independently of their particular political and religious affiliations (Rose, 1997). The WCTU women even created a Home Protection Party that they hoped to join with the Prohibition Party. The idea of the home was to be extended well beyond the private family, and woman's suffrage was the weapon to protect the values of the home against 'rum power'.^k

The cult of the private home was a natural continuation of what Charles Taylor (1989) has called the 'affirmation of ordinary life' in Protestantism since the sixteenth-century Reformations. Sanctity is not to be gained in other-worldly isolation in monasteries but in a pious devotion to the duties of ordinary life. At the centre of this affirmation is marital love, the worldly affection between two adults.^l

Isolation of the temperance movements

The temperance movements gradually lost their reformatory and Utopian role to other movements and to party politics. In fact many of them were transitional organizations that channelled religious and moral energies into party politics (Harrison, 1971). In the process the centrality of the temperance mission became reduced and the influence in society ebbed.

By the end of the century the British prohibition movement had become one of the conservative elements (Dingle, 1980; Shiman, 1988) that we today associate with the term 'Victorian', in which it was believed that social ills could be explained in terms of individual character weaknesses. As a consequence the movement alienated the working class to such a degree that after 1890 most British socialists considered the temperance movement to be directing the working man away from his proper interests rather than serving them (Harrison, 1971).

In the same way the American temperance movements increasingly adopted a defensive position in national policies. Following Richard Hofstadter (1955), Gusfield (1963) concludes that in the move from an assimilative to a coercive doctrine of reform, prohibitionist arguments gradually developed into a theory of conspiracy. It was believed that evil men in the big cities of the East manipulated currency, tariffs and the national policy to their advantage. The temperance movement identified itself with an underdog position to defend the people's right to self-government and justice. The polarization of the issue evoked ideas of a plebiscitarian dictatorship of the majority in much the same way as in the socialist revolution in Russia. Also the nationalism embedded in the temperance argument turned inward and took a defensive position, especially in the USA. As in Britain earlier, the prohibitionism became a single-issue movement, and its isolation from

wider political concerns was inevitable although its core values of the home, the nation and individual citizenship were still the same as in the wider social fabric.

Discussion and conclusion

The contradiction between internal self-control and external discipline reflects an immanent ambivalence in the constitution of the modern subject. On one hand, modern subjects are free and reflexive agents, both capable of and at liberty to construct a personally valid concept of the good life. On the other hand they are subjects in the sense of being subordinated to a higher external power.

The temperance movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were striking examples of how these aspects of modern subjectivity could be integrated into an ideology that prepared the way for the modern welfare state. The success of these movements has been much more long-lived than the apparent failure of the national prohibitions would lead us to believe. Their solution to the duality has continued in the alcohol-control systems in the Northern European and North American states but may be failing now.

The first part of their success is based on the fact that the temperance movements coincided with the establishment of nation-states and parliamentary political institutions. Combined with convictions of moral superiority, this led some of the movements to seek in national prohibition a total solution to all social ills.

Second, the ideal of personal abstinence was embedded in a Utopian view of the authentic and emotional life that could find its full satisfaction in the private family. The modern individual unfolding in the nascent industrial culture was divided into two parts: *the inner self*, which was expressed in private life, and *the external citizen*, which was governed and disciplined by public laws.

In current discourses on public health and alcohol policy we see a break but also continuity with the early temperance ideologies. The continuity involves the stress on self-control through exercise of rational will over desires and impulses. The break concerns the factors that bridged the apparent contradiction between self-reform and coercive reformation of others. First, the political community of the nation no longer constitutes a moral community in which personal salvation is in the public interest. Faith and pleasure have become strictly private matters; as citizens we are responsible and liable to public constraints only in so far as our choice involves consequences to others.

Second, the idea of the universally good life can no longer be sustained because the division between natural and non-natural desires has lost its meaning. The division carried over from the temperance and other lifestyle movements to justifications for modern alcohol-control systems, and more generally to theories of welfare (states). In the early 1960s welfare could be still discussed in terms of correct and false needs; today welfare is a public matter only in so far as it concerns resources—their use in need satisfaction is a matter of private preferences. The progressive ideal of life centred on the private family is no longer the natural objective of welfare policy and justification for social control.

The lesson current alcohol-policy debates can learn from temperance history is that unless very dramatic—and unlikely—cultural changes take place, justifications for control measures are limited to harms that drinking causes to others, not the drinkers themselves. And that such justifications are likely to be weak, probably too weak to do much good in the face of claims to consumer choice and market freedom.

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Notes

- ^a Interestingly, in many countries the temperance movements were opposed to alcohol monopoly systems after the battle for prohibition was lost. Still their existence effectively blocked any attempts at rapid liberalization (Lundkvist, 1979; Warpenius & Sutton, forthcoming).
- ^b Already by the end of the nineteenth century in the USA the main supporters of temperance movements were fundamentalists and conservatives, and the age of the members rose during the early decades of the twentieth century (Gusfield, 1955, 1957). In the Nordic countries temperance movements declined after the 1910s (Sulkunen, 1986; Johansson, forthcoming) but they maintained their political influence even though the number of members decreased again radically after the Second World War. As a result of urbanization people lost their connections with former temperance organizations and thus the movement became mostly rural. The older generations were significantly over-represented and the movements failed to recruit from new generations (Warpenius & Sutton, forthcoming).
- ^c Harry Levine (1992) makes a distinction between two temperance cultures at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: English-speaking (Britain, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand) and Nordic (Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Finland). Two features explain the strong position of temperance movements in both areas: a specific heavy drinking habit (use of spirits) and Protestantism.
- ^d Weber himself did not use temperance ideology to illustrate the social effects of secular self-control in his analysis of the Protestant ethic, but it applies perfectly to the anti-alcohol rhetoric of the time.
- ^e In certain religious temperance movements the ascetic principle did imply an inwardly oriented concept of reform. Lambert (1983, pp. 115, 117) for example observes that in Welsh Calvinism this theory 'resulted in an attitude which took obedience to the will of God as implying complete satisfaction with, and acceptance of, things as they were. In practice religion became an apologia for social inequalities instead of a criticism with a new standard of values to impose upon the life of men.' However, in Protestant temperance movements this was an exception rather than the rule.
- ^f Prohibition was a serious political option in all the temperance cultures that Levine (1992) analysed: in Britain, the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand and in Nordic countries—Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Finland. Sweden never had a prohibition but instituted other forms of rigorous availability controls. The Norwegian prohibition (1916–27) remained partial, excluding wine and beer (Fuglum, 1995). In Switzerland, Austria and Germany (partial) prohibitions were proposed but never gained wide political support (Roberts, 1984; Eisenbach-Stangl, 1991; Spode 1993).
- ^g The doctrine of teetotalism was imported to the Nordic countries a couple of decades later with the same content: total abstinence is best because drink destroys, not only challenges the free will of individuals (Sulkunen, 1986; Eriksen, 1996).
- ^h The connection between the working-class question and the alcohol question was decisive in terms of the actual establishment of alcohol political regimes. In those countries where the working-

class movement and temperance movement maintained strong interconnections, prohibition had the strongest support. The working-class question was supposed to be solved via the control of alcohol use. In Britain (Harrison, 1971; Dingle, 1980) and Germany (Roberts, 1984; Spode, 1993) labour movements rejected this line of reasoning and criticized it as being too individualistic; in Finland (Sulkunen, 1986), Norway (Fuglum, 1995), Sweden (Ambjörnsson, 1988), Scotland (Paton, 1977; Smout, 1997) and Belgium and Holland (Roberts, 1984), temperance reform was regarded as a major tool to achieve social reform agitated for by labour movements. Differing religious orientations and positions of class struggles gave contexts in which the alcohol question was interpreted, but despite national differences alcohol was defined as a severe social problem in all industrialized modern countries during the late nineteenth century.

- i Gilles Lipovetsky (1992) has argued that modernity has been a deontic age that now is disintegrating. A diversity of obligations to will the good have structured the social order: obligations to God, to the Nation, to Progress, to Humanity etc.
- j Many Protestant followers were progressives who believed that the Kingdom of God was coming on earth as a result of human efforts to spread religious liberty and democracy. Advances in science, technology and culture as manifested in a broad range of economic, political and social reforms were regarded as evidence of the second advent of Christ (Timberlake, 1963).
- k 'It is not enough that women should be home-makers, but they must make the world itself, a larger home' (quoted in Rose, 1997, p. 23).
- l 'It was God's will that husband and wife should love one another. . . . But at the same time this love must not be merely centred on itself; it cannot be at the expense of our love of God' (Taylor, 1989, p. 226).