

# The Promise and Problems of Alcohol Sociology

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I entered the alcohol field in 1974 as an impoverished graduate student in sociology at the University of California at Berkeley. Knowing nothing about alcohol research, but needing income, I accepted what I thought would be a very short stint as a National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) predoctoral dissertation fellow. The fellowship was offered by the Social Research Group (SRG) that was affiliated with the School of Public Health at U. C. Berkeley.

Since the early 1960s the SRG had done research on a range of alcohol and drug topics. In particular, the SRG had carried out a series of national, state, and regional general population surveys of drinking practices and problems. Over the years, SRG staff members Genevieve Knupfer, Don Cahalan, Robin Room, Walt Clark, and Ron Roizen collected and analyzed a huge mass of data. In order to make sense of the many distinct behaviors and problems that people reported following from alcohol use, the SRG researchers wound up "disaggregating" the syndrome of alcoholism. As sociologists they looked instead at the different ways that drinking interacts and conflicts with the drinker's life. This focus to their work gave rise to their critiques of the disease concept of alcoholism, to their development of the notions of "drinking problems" and "alcohol problems," and to their collection and analysis of a large and growing body of empirical data on U.S. drinking practices and problems.

All but one of the senior staff had trained as sociologists, and all brought to their work a real interest in the life that surrounded and interacted with drinking. As Room and Roizen would put it, the SRG shop perspective used alcohol as a window or lens for viewing broader questions of society and culture.

In 1977, the SRG was selected as one of the first five federal alcohol research centers and the only one devoted to social science research. By that time I was already on the staff. The new federal grant had opened even further an ongoing debate in the office as to the kinds of research that we as sociologists could and even ought to carry out. As part of that open-ended conversation I wrote a paper pointing out some of the highlights of Bacon's original call for a sociological study of drinking and encouraged us to take up the mission. Like Bacon, I was a relative newcomer to alcohol studies, and, Like Bacon, I meant my piece to be provocative. Though I understood some of the enormous

constraints of funding, I hoped to stimulate thought about new kinds of research projects.

There were several levels of irony and internal references in what I did.<sup>1</sup> The SRG staff were always reading and talking about the work of Jellinek, Keller, Bacon, and other original members of the Yale and Rutgers centers. SRG staffers poured over each issue of the *Journal of Studies on Alcohol* and they understood themselves as the young turks challenging the elders in the field. In turning to Bacon and quoting him chapter and verse I was engaged in a kind of scriptural argument familiar to my colleagues, and I was using the appropriate holy text. I was also making not very veiled comparisons between our situation at the SRG and the one the Yale center faced in the mid 1940s: Were we going to take Jellinek's path and focus only on the problems of alcohol use, or would we follow the oh so boldly put recommendations of the only sociologist in the original Yale group? Part I of the chapter below is essentially the paper I wrote at that time.

Unlike Bacon, I did not stay around my alcohol center. Shortly after I completed my dissertation on the American temperance movement I moved across the country to join the faculty of Queens College of the City University of New York.

In 1980 Robin Room wanted to publish my paper in the *Drinking Practices and Drug Surveyor*, an informal journal and newsletter aimed primarily at alcohol and drug researchers. I used the opportunity to write a section called "second thoughts" in order to broaden the scope of the paper to include anthropological and historical work and to make explicit some things that I had taken for granted. Part II of this chapter is most of that second section.

Shortly after that, Ronald Reagan was elected president. Under the auspices of budget director David Stockman, the Reagan administration proposed a series of budget-cutting measures, including major cuts in social science research. It was in this reactionary and threatening political climate that the Social Research Group changed its name to the Alcohol Research Group. Just prior to publication in 1981 I tacked on an after-word to make some political points addressing the conservative atmosphere of the early Reagan years and to pull back from what now dearly seemed to me to be the overly optimistic and gung-ho tone of the original piece. Part III is that afterward.

Another eight years has passed and I remain more than ever a student of the alcohol field. For me now the interesting question Bacon's paper raises is one I passed over originally because I did not really have an answer: why wasn't Bacon's agenda followed more, and why has it seemed so hard to put it into effect?

I now approach that question through the lens of the remarkable developments of the last decade. This has included: the rapid growth in public concern with alcohol problems, the amazing spread of the "12th step" movements inspired by Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), the appearance and rapid growth of the movement centered around Adult Children of Alcoholics, the creation of Mothers Against Drunk Drivers and a

vigorous anti-drunk-driving movement, and the increase with which individuals and groups use the terminology of addiction and compulsive behavior to describe all sorts of activities and problems.

Some observers have rightly interpreted recent developments as the rise of neo-temperance sentiment and movements in America. I term this the growing strength of *temperance culture* in America. The irony of Bacon's own work is, I think, that as a crusader and supporter of the alcoholism movement he participated in the creation of sentiment hostile to his own sociological project. In part IV I discuss this point.

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### **I. Selden Bacon's "Foundations for a Sociologic Study of Drinking Behavior" Revisited**

In 1943, Selden Bacon, then a young assistant professor of Sociology at Yale University, prepared a lengthy memo to E.M. Jellinek, Howard Haggard, and others who had gathered at Yale to study alcohol problems. At the time Bacon was rather peripheral to the scientists and researchers at the alcohol center. Bacon's memo was addressed to the opportunities created by the development of an interdisciplinary alcohol research center at Yale – what the people gathered around Jellinek and Haggard understood as the attempt to work out new post-Prohibition and post-temperance ways of understanding alcohol problems and the place of alcohol in society. They called this perspective the new scientific approach.

Bacon also wrote his memo in response to a paper of Jellinek's, published in the recently created *Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol* (of which Jellinek was the associate and managing editor) and called "Outline of Basic Policies for a Research Program on Problems of Alcohol." Jellinek's purpose in his paper was to "designate those aspects of the problems of alcohol most in need of research." For him, "the central problem of alcohol" was the problem of the origins and development of addiction and of other forms of abnormal drinking (p. 105). Jellinek divided projects into various headings; along with psychiatry, experimental psychology, and research of alcoholic diseases, he included sociology. Indeed, sociology was the last area to be discussed. Under the heading of "A" or high-priority projects, Jellinek listed five specific studies focused on social sources of inebriety or alcohol addiction. Although Jellinek's proposed projects involved conducting a variety of studies on the place of alcohol in society, the only question he allowed as truly legitimate concerned the social factors contributing to alcoholism.

Selden Bacon's long memo was a reply to Jellinek's paper and a critique of it; Bacon offered a developed alternative vision of what sociological research on alcohol could be. Jellinek was relatively unfamiliar with sociology and its orientation. Bacon was a sociologist and he boldly drew upon a broad range of sociological and anthropological approaches and fashioned a lengthy shopping list of questions and issues for alcohol research. Jellinek it seems, recognized the significance of Bacon's critique for he

published the memo virtually as written in the *Quarterly Journal* in September 1943. He also wrote a special introduction to the piece, and subsequently created a monograph series called *Memoirs of the School of Alcohol Studies*, of which Bacon's paper was the first in the series.

Bacon's paper is still a remarkable document. Its questions remain absolutely contemporary and it has not been surpassed as a statement of a distinctly sociological perspective on alcohol. Although some of its phrases and references sound "old fashioned," much of the content of the paper, the questions it raises, and the perspective it offers strike the contemporary reader as new.

In essence, Bacon criticizes previous scientific approaches to studying alcohol for being concerned primarily or exclusively with questions of pathology. Other approaches, including Jellinek's, study alcohol only or principally insofar as it is a problem. Although that might be appropriate for the psychiatrist and physiologist, for the sociologist to study drinking and drunkenness as only a social problem and pathology is to miss the major phenomena – to miss the point of it all. Alcohol and drinking, Bacon said should be studied as part of normal social life: all the behaviors, ideas, customs, mythologies, patterns, processes, traditions, and institutions surrounding drinking are open for inquiry and examination. Such things should be studied the way the sociologist studies religion or the family or politics – not exclusively for the pathologies and deviancies, but in their wholeness, as significant parts of social life.

Part of the reason Bacon's argument sounds so new is because there has not been a body of work developed that self-consciously utilized the perspective he outlines. The "sociologic" approach has not been the one the alcohol field has taken; it has not even been an important minority voice. In the intervening years there have been a number of major studies that fulfill or speak to specific agendas raised by Bacon. But despite the breadth and depth of some of these studies, including a focus on normal drinking and on everyday life, researchers doing this work have by and large presented and justified themselves as problem – and pathology-oriented. Thus, while Jellinek acknowledged the legitimacy of Bacon's position, the pathology-oriented approach Jellinek outlined has remained the dominant one, even the only one, in the field.

A full discussion of why the alcohol field has been dominated by a problem-orientation is, of course, important but beyond the scope of this paper. Bacon discusses the issue at considerable length in a piece in 1976 and makes another call in 1979. Room (1979) also examines some of the issues involved in setting the early alcohol research agendas, while Johnson (1973) discusses the history of the Yale center and the alcoholism movement. Perhaps one important reason why Bacon's particular version of a sociological program was not adopted by more people was because Bacon never systematically developed it in his own work or with students; he himself became diverted from the project. After assuming directorship of the Yale and then Rutgers centers, Bacon was involved in the alcoholism movement as an organizer and as a promoter of the National Council on Alcoholism and of state alcoholism agencies and treatment facilities. When asked in a personal interview what happened in the more

than 30 years between his first major call for a sociological approach to studying alcohol and his next one in 1976, Bacon thought for a moment and then suggested that he had gotten "sidetracked."

Whatever the historical explanations may be for the failure of sociologists and other social scientists to develop a non-pathological approach to studying alcohol, it should be possible to begin it now. Indeed, much of a distinct sociological approach already exists half-stated in various pieces of research and analysis and as part of the background assumptions in many writings. But that "sociological" perspective needs to be articulated, developed, elaborated, discussed, examined, and strengthened. Selden Bacon began the task in 1943, providing us with both a tradition and an example. Bacon's paper, "Sociology and the Problems of Alcohol: Foundations for a Sociologic Study of Drinking Behavior," is an excellent place to begin again.

Bacon starts his paper with a few preliminary remarks about science and outlines some of the particular interests and orientations of the sociologist in "the scientific study of the problems of alcohol." He says:

*"The sociologist is interested in the customs of drinking, the relationship between these customs and other customs, the way in which drinking habits are learned, the social controls of this sort of behavior, and those institutions of society through which such control issues. The sociologist wishes to know the social categories in which much or little or no drinking occurs, he seeks correlations of amount and type of drinking with occupational, marital, nationality, religious, and other statuses. More importantly, he poses the broad questions: What are the societal functions served by the drinking of alcoholic beverages? What are the social rubs concerned with drinking? What are the pressures for and against this practice? How does this behavior pattern jibe with other institutions and folkways?" (p. 407)*

Bacon marks out a broad terrain concerning the relationship of drinking to virtually all other major social activities.

The chief polemical point of Bacon's piece is probably an attack on inquiry and research centered exclusively or primarily on the pathological. Although this critique has rarely been formally developed, it has animated most analyses of general population surveys – it has been the point of such studies. Indeed, survey research is probably the one area in the alcohol field where Bacon's critique has been most appreciated and absorbed; for example, elements of the following echo in the writings of Knupfer, Boom, Cahalan, Clark, and Roizen.

*"A factor that has delayed and discouraged an adequate analysis of drinking behavior has been the failure to recognize the relation of inebriety to all other forms of drinking. Consequently, there has been a failure to orient properly the abnormal phenomena that hitherto have dominated all studies in this field. Thus the exotic fraction of drinking behavior has attracted all the attention. . . . It is perhaps true that most sciences had their genesis in the observation and analysis of the immediately painful and the extraordinary, but that stare should by now have been passed. The entire field of social science may be freely criticized on this score; in many*

*instances it may still be found gazing in starry-eyed wonder at the occasional volcanoes, emeralds, and icebergs, to analogize from geology, when it has a gigantic earthcrust as in field of inquiry. The exotic and the pathologic are useful fields of scientific inquiry, but they have their limits..."*

*"The study of the exotic of pathologic members of a total group is not to be scorned. nor should the students of such types of persons be dissuaded; but such studies must be oriented within the total field and the generalizations limited to the segment studied. Studies of drunkards arrested by the police, although not so limited. . . are still concerned largely with the pathologic portion of all drinkers." (pp. 408-409)*

The vast majority of drinkers, Bacon points out, are not pathological and have never been arrested.

Like all those who eventually go on to do general population studies, Bacon offers a powerful and persuasive rationale for studying the non-pathological, the general population, and the ordinary phenomena of drinking and getting drunk.

*"Until the drinking behavior of a representative sample of the drinking population is observed, analyzed, and described, characterizations of the tiny proportion of abnormal drinkers are likely to be as biased and as fallacious as the studies of Lambroso about criminals, studies of the insane during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and comments about the lower-class poor issued by wealthy, upper-class philanthropists of almost any age."*

*The need for general orientation of problem drinking behavior within the setting of all drinking behavior, including abstinence and antidrinking activity is one of the major reasons for the type of study here proposed. (p. 410, emphasis added)*

After making his critique, Bacon returns to the theme of defining the sociological approach. Bacon titles one major section of his paper, "Framework for a Sociologic Study of Drinking Behavior." In this section the sociological concepts and terms Bacon employs are most outmoded and unfruitful, perhaps because Bacon drew heavily on the approach of William G. Sumner, who for many years had dominated Yale sociology. This conceptual framework I think, distracted Bacon from the alcohol-related phenomena more than it helped him focus on them. In short, Bacon would have done better, more enduring sociology if he had been less concerned with explicating and classifying things in terms of sociological notions current at the time in his circles. In many ways, the aims of Bacon's proposals are more relevant today than the specific ways he divided up issues and problems. Therefore, I want to simply draw out some of the points and suggestions his paper makes.

Bacon's focus is primarily on drinking construed in as wide a fashion as possible and he offers a number of tasks and guidelines with regard to studying it. He suggests closely observing the varieties of drinking-associated, drinking-related, and drinking-accompanied behaviors. These can be seen as research topics, as ways of asking questions about drinking:

*"Carefully collected and classified information concerning the ways in which people drink is a sine quo non for the study of drinking behavior. . . . To consider all drinking as the same kind of behavior is an affront to intelligence as well as to the senses." (p. 416)*

For example, Bacon urges studying what he calls "the rules" covering drinking:

*"There are right and wrong places to drink times to drink, people to drink with, types and amounts of alcoholic beverages to imbibe, subjects to talk about and activities to pursue while thinking, ways of mixing drinks, methods of imbibing (fast, slowly, with straws, inhaling of bouquet, holding glass, mug, or bottle, etc.), clothing to wear at drinking parties, ritual phrases and body movements, and so forth. These rules vary with different groups." (pp. 418-419.)*

Another issue we might include in a normative study of drinking Bacon identifies as the social factors that discourage and encourage drinking. In particular, he suggests that the ritualistic aspects of drinking be studied in a "wide scope":

*"That there are great rewards for drinking in our society can hardly be denied; being a genial and lavish host, being a connoisseur of wines or whiskies, being able to "hold your liquor," are obviously rewarding states of affairs. . . . Drinking is closely associated with many pleasant occasions and situations and besides arty direct reward it may hold in itself, is reinforced as a source of pleasure because of this association. . . . Drinking is a component of many rituals that may be deeply satisfying to the individuals participating in them. It is not impossible that the individual in this last instance may consciously dislike the taste and aftereffects of the alcohol but still derive great pleasure from the decal as a whole and be strongly opposed to any changes in the forms and procedures involved." (p. 420)*

In studying or researching these different parts of drinking and social life Bacon points out the lack of homogeneity in the society as a whole and the necessity of paying attention to subcultural differences.

One of the most interesting of Bacon's suggested areas for research and study, still relatively unexplored, he calls the "rationale or charter" of drinking. He has in mind here much of what might be subsumed under studying drinking norms, but what he is describing and talking about would better be called *culture* in the fullest or anthropological sense of the term. Indeed, Bacon refers to anthropology when defining *charter*:

*"Mythology, old saws, ethical systems, abstracted norms, all help to form charter. There is no need for this charter material to be logical. It is quite possible chat to an outside observer it will be both internally inconsistent and at complete odds with the "real" function...." (p. 414)*

Bacon is looking here for the background assumptions, the folklore or traditions and ideas regarding drinking and its effects. Again, the topic is nowadays best captured by the concept of *culture*:

*"The mythology, folklore, and superstitions about the powers and functions of alcohol form the charter of drinking behavior. . . . [I]t is nonetheless relevant and significant that such beliefs are powerful reinforcements to behavior, whether that of the prohibitionist or the excessive drinker. More than that, they are an integral part of the tradition handed on to ruing generations, and thus operate as instigators of behavior. The experience of a "good" education is no particular bar to the belief in fallacious concepts; highly trained lawyers and doctors may believe in the stimulating, body warming, and medicinal qualities of alcohol. Belief that drinking is a sign of vigorous manhood may be a spur to action outweighing the deterrent effects of statistics about accidents, poverty, or disease that may be invoked against the habit." (p. 415)*

Bacon continues with a list of fascinating sources of data for these "charter" or cultural elements:

*"There is a wealth of charter material concerning the drinking of alcoholic beverages. It can be found in maxims, m poems, in plays, in advertising, in songs, in books on etiquette, and innumerable other sources. It is a constant source of behavior, of rationalization, and of indoctrination. The part it plays in the total pattern of drinking behavior is of great significance. The theoretical background and announced concepts of organized religion, of law, of social work agencies, of recreation groups, of organizations of producers and distributors of alcoholic beverages, and of temperance and teetotal groups, as well as the attitudes of groups only secondarily concerned, play an important role that must be studied if the motivations behind both drinking and abstinence, and if the scene in which drinking occurs, are to competently portrayed." (pp. 416-417)*

This analysis of the elements of culture and everyday life, of the influences of various aspects of society on drinking and attitudes, and the use of all kinds of documents to research these questions, is probably the one area that has received the least attention and development in the decades since Bacon first proposed it. It remains an important and fruitful area for inquiry. Bacon, himself seemed especially sensitive to these sorts of cultural themes and questions. He discusses briefly at one point the importance of what he called "material apparatus" and offers some examples of their relevance for analysis:

*"In drinking behavior, this would refer to bottles, casks, tables, rails, spigots, glasses, aprons, checks, etc. Material apparatus is an essential part of behavior. It can set limits to action; it can, through association, stimulate action...."*

*"Material apparatus is also significant in drinking behavior in that certain articles come to have a value of their own. Cocktail shakers, old kegs, particular drinking glasses, and other items become significant symbols for particular categories of persons in the society. They may enhance the values of drinking. They may serve as symbols of evil m anti drinking groups. In our society the attempt to better one's social position by material purchase and by conspicuous consumption has been a practice of long standing. Material apparatuses relevant to drinking behavior, such as a chromium soda container, home ban, antique decanters, and bandy inhalers, are examples of drinking articles that may have a secondary, perhaps even a primary, importance because of their social clan prestige or 'snobbery value'." (pp. 416-417)*

This attention to the class or status-signifying aspects of drink is one of the least explored and probably most important aspects of drinking culture. It is heavily exploited by the alcoholic beverage industries in their advertisements, and it has been part of the defensive response of the beverage industries since at least the mid-19th century: the alcohol industry has long attempted to present itself as a provider of "classiness."

The final section of Bacon's paper contains a proposal for a community study. In the course of outlining the study Bacon reviews again, from a slightly different angle, the sorts of data available and useful to those studying the place of alcohol and alcohol problems in society. Under a heading of "historical data" he compiles an amazing list of data sources that would be appropriate for any sort of sociological study:

*"Historical sources containing material peculiarly relevant to drinking behavior should be sought industriously and with keenly critical appreciation.... The legal sources will be more abundant than others, but their imbalance on the side of the abnormal, the tabooed, and the criminal, as well as the rationalizing nature and political fluctuation of law in general, render them subject to marked limitations. Reports of temperance, religious, and other societies with decided views on the ethics of drinking are a useful source, but require always to be labeled as such. Surveys of vice, crime, drinking, poverty, and the like are not uncommon in any sizable community. Special studies of immigrant groups represented in the community should be carefully examined for relevant descriptions and analyses. Industrial and government reports on production and distribution can furnish suggestive information. In addition to legislative and judicial reports, taxing, licensing, and inspecting agencies often have maintained records over long periods of years. Reports of administrative officers such as the mayor, controller, etc., are usually on file. Political campaign speeches are often available. Sermons and tracts of the past are often well preserved, sometimes even better than official records. Travelers' comments are often surprisingly detailed and relevant. Novels written by members of the community, collections of letters, wills, and similar data may be maintained by local libraries and historical societies. Books privately printed by local antiquarians may be difficult to discover, but can repay the search. Diaries, parish records, institutional records, doctors' records etc., may also cast light on the drinking behavior of earlier days. Newspapers are of especial value because of their continuity; the advertisements, descriptions of social events, cooking hints, and general reporting can all be of great relevance. Novels of the time, whether or not concerned with the community, can be of real value in the presentation of insights and in unconscious reflection of the values, groups, and material culture of the time; that such works generally are concerned with a particular social class is no bar to their validity; that their comment on particular cultural phenomena is accidental or casual is, on the whole, an asset rather than a liability. Many other sources of an historical nature would undoubtedly be discovered: materia medica, pictures, warehouse receipts, recipe books, manuals on manners, social histories, material on drinking from fairy tales and anecdotes of heroes, reports of military men, ships' logs, all come to mind."* (pp. 434-435)

As Bacon notes, "The field to cover is vast."

The most glaring omission from Bacon's suggestions for study is the institutional context of drinking, especially the two most important actors in the alcohol field: the government

or state, including all agencies and bureaus at all levels; and the alcoholic beverage industry, including producers, distributors, lobbies, and advertising and public relations efforts. The government and the industry have been the two most significant institutions shaping drinking and drunkenness: the way drinking enters in our lives; the way it looks; how, when, and where drinking goes on; the kinds of things people drink; the way they drink; and so on. Insofar as the place of drinking in society has been organized, managed, administered, controlled, shaped, and influenced, it has primarily been done by the government and by the industry. In most cases the reasons or the rationale for actions have not been determined by considerations of health, but by economic and political considerations: what is necessary for social order, what is necessary for fiscal considerations, and what is necessary for the industry. Although Bacon mentions institutions such as temperance and public health groups, he stresses insufficiently their importance in shaping drinking patterns.

If a developed list of questions regarding the state or government, the alcohol beverage industry, and other organizations and movements (especially nowadays Alcoholics Anonymous and the alcoholism movement) are added to Bacon's social and cultural questions, we have, I think, a dazzling array of material within the sociological domain.

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## **II. Anthropology, History and Alcohol Studies: Second Thoughts in 1980**

The previous section, first written several years ago, was prepared as a discussion piece for the Social Research Group. Since then I have realized that I had a couple of expectations or hopes for alcohol sociology that were not stated in the paper.

One obstacle to reviving the minimal "sociologic" approach Bacon called for 35 years ago may be the field of sociology itself. Sociology may not be the social scientific or humanistic discipline capable of taking on these questions. It is possible, indeed it seems likely, that anthropologists are at this time the ones most equipped or prepared to engage in such studies. At the minimum, they may be the ones to lead the social sciences and the alcohol field in this program.

One individual who has been speaking in the tradition and for the general aims of the program that Bacon proposed is the anthropologist Dwight Heath. In a number of papers over the last 10 years, Heath has repeatedly urged an approach to the study of alcohol in society that casts as wide a net as possible, considers all sorts of questions, and is not obsessed with pathology.

In 1975 Heath published a very long "Critical Review of Ethnographic Studies of Alcohol Use" in the annual volume put out by the Addiction Research Foundation of Toronto. The paper is a thorough, extremely thoughtful discussion of the vast anthropological literature, its assumptions and orientations. Heath is clearly trying to address the alcohol field; he points out that despite all their studies "anthropologists have generally remained on the fringes" of the alcohol field. Echoing Bacon's complaint to Jellinek,

Heath says that is at least partly because in alcohol studies "there is often an obvious – even if not explicit – preoccupation with alcoholism (in a clearly problem-oriented or ameliorative sense) which takes precedence over attempting to understand alcohol in a normal, customary, and value-free sense." Heath suggests that anthropologists have not shared this preoccupation because the focus on problems is at odds with the realities of the societies that anthropologists study:

*One of the most striking contrasts between the roles and meanings of alcohol in western and non-Western cultures is the immense emphasis on "social problems" in the former, and a relative absence of such concerns in the latter. This does not necessarily mean that there is a full consensus about drinking and behavioral consequences in Non-Western societies, nor does it mean that drunkenness does not sometimes result in social psychological, economic, or other problems for individuals or groups in such societies. The evidence does, however, very strongly suggest – and in many instance; explicitly affirm that alcoholism, addiction, and other pathological manifestations are extremely rare in cross-cultural perspective. (1975, p. 34, emphasis added)*

The gist of Heath's argument is that because of the nature of drinking in non-Western societies, anthropologists have a strong disciplinary investment in studying drinking as part of everyday life. For anthropologists to follow the mainstream of alcohol studies, and focus primarily on the causes and consequences of alcoholism and alcohol problems, would in most cases narrow their field of study down to almost nothing.

Anthropology is concerned with the differences between the West and other cultures, and anthropologists often point out how the modern world is unusual and even unique among cultures. This difference certainly holds true regarding the place of alcohol in society; in fact, drinking appears as almost an ideal case. Heath raises the issue several times in his 1975 article, as if attempting to wake up the alcohol field to the larger world.

*"Alcoholism – even in the general sense of problems associated with drinking – is rare in the vast majority of the societies of the world one might even go so far as to note that it is almost unknown outside of the mainstream of Western culture, although it is becoming a widespread concomitant of acculturation which often accompanies the impact of modern industrial society."*

*"Another striking feature of the ethnographic literature on alcohol studies, in marked contrast with a major portion of the writings on alcohol in Western society, is the relative lack of concern with social problems, education, prevention, therapy, or even alcoholics and alcoholism as meaningful categories. As already discussed this is in large part a reflection of the fact that, in cross-cultural perspective, "problem drinking" is very rare, and alcoholism seems to be virtually absent even in many societies where drunkenness is frequent, highly esteemed, and actively sought." (p. 76)*

Other anthropologists have addressed these points as well. In his introduction to a fine volume on drinking in a variety of cultures, Mac Marshall (1979) agrees that "the field of anthropology has never held center stage in the inter-disciplinary scientific explorations of alcohol use and abuse that have been conducted in the Western world for a century

or more." Marshall also observes that because of the intellectual thrust of their discipline, anthropologists have not been primarily concerned with alcoholism and alcohol problems.

*"Rather, as part of their effort to comprehend alien ways of life, anthropologists have been intrigued primarily by the myriad styles of normal drinking behavior that exist when people come under the influence of "demon rum." In keeping with the discipline's holistic approach to data, anthropologists have been at pains to point out how alcohol use (and occasionally, alcohol abuse) is woven into the very fabric of social existence." (p. 2)*

Marshall concludes his volume with a summary of the major generalizations to be drawn from the cross-cultural work already done by anthropologists. The first one he lists reads:

*Solitary, addictive, pathological drinking behavior does not occur to any significant extent in small scale, traditional, preindustrial societies; such behavior appears to be a concomitant of complex, modern, industrialized societies. (p. 451)*

Thus, for the anthropologist studying traditional society, to concentrate on the dominant concerns of the alcohol field-alcoholism and alcohol problems-would be to miss the major drinking phenomena in those societies. Again, one can argue that that is true in studying alcohol in modern society as well.

Historians, especially those doing social history, may also be prepared to follow out some aspects of Bacon's program. Because of the extraordinary prominence of the public debate about the "liquor problem" in America and other Western nations, there remains a mass of untapped historical materials regarding the place of alcohol. Much of the explicit writing is from a temperance perspective, but that can provide a useful handle on the larger culture, and on questions of social definition. The rebirth of social history in the last 10 years or so has also generated interest in precisely those areas of life most touched by alcohol: family, work and play. Further, recent historical studies of working-class and ethnic cultures, stimulated by E.P. Thompson and Herbert Gutman, offer other opportunities for studying the place of drinking and alcohol free from some of the assumptions of pathology and disease. It is also worth noting that historical research provides an excellent, efficient, and relatively cheap way of investigating policy questions. The past, including the recent past provides a wealth of "natural experiments," of changes in laws, sentiment, populations, administrations, enforcement, and community groups.

As has long been recognized, a social science concerned with alcohol in society in all its forms involves a variety of disciplines. The program Bacon outlined, and I have tried to second, is social in the broadest and strongest sense of the word. It may be that at this time anthropologists and historians will lead, with sociologists running to catch up. The others (economists, psychologists, political scientists, geographers, etc.) remain to be heard from.

The eventual fruit of a successful program of sociological, historical, and anthropological research and writing on the place of alcohol in society could include things like descriptions and analyses of drinking styles and cultures, drinking places, songs, rituals, and ceremonies; the symbolism of drink in the larger culture; the relationship of drink to class, gender, age, and so on; as well as studies of the alcohol beverage industry and of government policy and actions of the state. The result would be a parallel conceptual and empirical domain to the present social scientific studies of alcoholics and alcohol problems. The development of such a field would be good, but it was not all I had in mind. There are two additional wishes or hopes I have for a new alcohol social science.

One wish is that through the weight of theory and data the orientation of most work on alcohol would be changed. I hope that new research would not simply exist alongside current ideas, but would challenge them and offer alternative conceptions. When I wrote the previous section, I had in mind specific examples, notably MacAndrew and Edgerton's (1969) book *Drunken Comportment*, which argues strongly against the notion of alcohol as a disinhibitor and superego dissolver. I think it is an extremely important work that has probably made a great difference in steering the last 10 years of sociological, anthropological, and historical work away from the abyss of chemical reductionism. Other examples would be the work of Cahalan, Cisin and Crossley (1969) and Room (1978), as well as other critiques of the disease notion of alcoholism, the symptoms and states. A recent example would be Gusfield's (1981) analysis of the rhetoric and drama of the drinking and driving issue.

Because I had in mind my favorite examples of what a sociological perspective could bring to the alcohol field, I initially assumed they would be the routine product. That is not the case. All my favorites were written by people knowledgeable about the alcohol field and working from within it. They were arguing against, critiquing, or in some way dismantling orthodoxies of one sort or another. They were explicitly and self-consciously developing alternative sociological explanations and concepts. While some research following the program I have outlined might return to critique the alcohol field, it is not certain that much would. Nor is it certain that researchers would avoid orthodox ideas and frameworks. Clearly such a critique is an important task.

My second wish is that a sociology of alcohol would develop a critical perspective on modern society. In arguing against an emphasis on pathological and problematic drinking – in siding with Bacon against Jellinek – I do not mean to suggest eliminating a concern with social problems. Rather, I mean to open up the question of what are the various relationships between alcohol and other social issues. Because alcohol routinely intersects with so many parts of life, it can be used to get at the unseen or taken for granted sides of everyday life, such as work, family life, play, recreation, rituals and processes of socializing, definitions of masculinity and femininity, assumptions about adolescence, and working-class and middle-class cultures and styles. The point is not only to see other parts of everyday life from a new angle, but to do so critically with explicitly humanist and political criteria – to raise issues of social justice, freedom, democracy, domination, civil liberties, and oppression. One of the things most worthy of respect in the vigorous 200-year debate about the place of alcohol in modern society –

from the early temperance movement on – has been the focus on change and reform. However misdirected it has sometimes been, the discourse about alcohol has usually been organized to talk about problems: something is wrong, usually something rather important. I think that is a good thing about the field and I would not want to abandon that.

Alcohol sociology could produce a great many interesting studies of the ways people drink, the laws governing drinking, of the various drinking cultures and subcultures – lots of surveys and ethnographies, histories and phenomenological accounts, all with an unquestioning and uncritical view of the larger social context. The classic concerns of temperance writers and speakers, on the other hand, were serious and critical: family violence, poverty, personal failure, industrial and road accidents, loss of freedom, and human misery. In Europe and America the liquor question has traditionally allowed for discussion of the antisocial consequences of things like routine business practices, monopolistic corporations, advertising, and even the profit motive. I am not suggesting that every piece of work needs to focus on some major problem. Rather, I am urging a conception of the field where it is part of the common normative style to talk frankly about major social problems that are alcohol-related without assuming or requiring that they be alcohol-caused. One example of what this could mean is understanding drunkenness and drinking (including rituals, place, time, environment, and so on) as non-pathological (or even healthy, sane, wise) responses to difficult, oppressive, or impoverished environments. Thus, it may be that like the family, the drinking culture or the place has often been the "haven in a heartless world."

I do not think there is a contradiction between looking at the non-pathological aspect of drinking, as Bacon proposed, and viewing the larger society from a critical perspective. But that combination is by no means inherent in the proposal for an alcohol sociology. The development of such a perspective depends only partly on factors internal to the field; it also depends upon changes in the larger society, in political and intellectual life, and in related academic disciplines. There are some hopeful signs. There are the beginnings of a political economy of alcohol that looks at the industry, the alcohol markets, and the structuring of alcohol consumption by corporations and by the government. The emergence of women's studies has at least opened the possibilities for examining the broad questions of women, drink, the home, saloon, advertising, and so on, beyond the current exclusive focus on women alcoholics. Studies of Indians, blacks, Hispanic, and other Third World groups allow for discussions of colonization, cultural and economic domination, and so on. Research on drink and the work environment allows, theoretically at least, for a variety of questions on work and working conditions, worker control, and management control practices; for example, it should be possible to study employee alcoholism programs in relation to the tradition of scientific management and employer control of the work environment.

The "alcohol problem," as it was first defined in the 19th century and has continued to be discussed in the 20th century, is above all a social and political question. At present, however, the vast majority of research on alcohol, and funding for it, is for the physical sciences: biomedical, chemical, and genetic research. Despite the overwhelming

importance of social factors, social science is still the poor cousin of the physical sciences in alcohol research, and the majority of social scientific research is pursuing variations on Jellinek's questions first posed in the early 1940s on alcoholism and problem drinking.

However, we do have an alternative. We can at long last take up Bacon's suggestions – the path not taken – and begin developing a truly social science of alcohol.<sup>2</sup> By now it should be becoming clear that an overweening and exclusive focus on pathology is limiting and self-defeating: as the anthropologists point out, one misses most of what is going on that way. There are many potential areas of study, but they will remain potential unless sociologists and other social scientists take them up. No single researcher and no single research unit can pursue all or even most of the questions available. However, we can begin to define the terrain and contribute to legitimizing – for the alcohol field, funding agencies, governmental health agencies, and the general public – a perspective on alcohol problems that situates them in terms of the larger social forces and issues. The really important contribution of social science is to direct attention and examination to all facets of the place of alcohol in society.

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### III. Afterward: 1981

The previous sections were written before Ronald Reagan became president in 1980. Since then, his administration sought to drastically cut or totally eliminate federal funding for social science research. In a long article on the cuts, the *Washington Post* (June 19, 1981) reports that at the National Institute of Drug Abuse, a list was compiled of "all the research that used the word 'social' and that became the list for cutting – \$9 million in studies, or 20 percent of the agency's budget." One OMB official told of being asked why Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health Administration (ADAMHA) couldn't get more funds, and replied: "I guess that's because ADAMHA does a lot of work that's not hard science." One budget officer reported that "we were instructed to reduce science education by half and to reduce support for the social sciences by three quarters."

Although a tiny portion of the federal budget, the social science cuts will have a devastating effect on research. The *Washington Post* reported the following:

*"At NSF [National Science Foundation], basic research in three fields – social, behavioral, and economic science – costs little more than half the price of maintaining the Pentagon's military bands. Nevertheless, social science has been hacked and the bands remain. Stockman listed cuts in NSF grants for social, economic, and behavioral research – studies of everything from the gross national product to the origin of man – from \$49 in million in 1981 to \$16 million in 1982."*

All new social science grants at the Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health Administration (ADAMHA), between \$10 million and \$20 million, are targeted as well.

*"The fields of study being hit include economics, political science, sociology, cognitive psychology, linguistics, anthropology, and social and developmental psychology. In three areas – anthropology, economics, and political science – the NSF is the only U.S. government agency that gives grants for basic research. Basic work in those sciences will be almost wiped off the federal government's books."*

All sources seem to agree that the cuts are not primarily for budgetary reasons, but for political reasons. The *Washington Post* points out the "office of Management and Budget Director David A Stockman and others have complained for years that social sciences produce little or nothing useful, and that their studies are often used to support liberal social programs." Many social scientists, including conservatives, have protested that the administration's view of social science is incorrect. Despite these arguments, the administration appears firmly committed to the idea that most social science research is inextricably wedded to liberal politics and that it produces little of worth.

One irony of the cuts is that the most value-neutral, middle-of-the-road, and politically cautious research will be hit the hardest. The type of research advocated in this paper – critical ethnographic and historical studies – has never received much funding and thus will not be severely affected by the cuts. Further, such work can often be done by a single researcher in the field or library. On the other hand, large-scale studies of the general population, or longitudinal research, require large budgets for staff, interviews, mailing, and computer time.

The attempt by social scientists in the United States to make their work politically neutral and noncontroversial has not saved it from the new conservative attack. There will undoubtedly be some attempts to tailor research to the new ideology. But it seems unlikely that federally funded social science will be preserved by further attempts to be middle-of-the-road and neutral. Much social science – and this is especially true for alcohol studies – cannot get any more neutral.

The point is that the *idea* of free and open social science is under attack. Some conservative groups associated with the New Right, notably the Moral Majority, regard social science research as part of "secular humanism;" which they believe is undermining the moral character of America. In effect, this implies the elimination of government-sponsored social research. Conservative think tanks and policy institutes will still be able to fund social scientists to find out the things they and their wealthy and corporate sponsors want to know. The point of government-sponsored research is that it can be free from the agendas of private, profit-making corporations. The aim of all science – social as well as physical science – is the unrestricted pursuit of truth about the world in all its richness and complexity. Sadly, that must now be defended.

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#### IV: The View from 1989: Alcohol Studies in a Temperance Culture

In the 1980s, social science research and writing on alcohol were shaped by the rise of neo-temperance sentiment and the continued strength of Regains. Federal funding for social scientific work on alcohol, drugs, and mental health was not eliminated, but it was channeled in narrower and more problem-oriented directions. In research not funded by federal alcohol grants, the ratio of "problem- and pathology-oriented work" to what we might call "alcohol in society, culture, and history work" is probably higher than it was in 1980; although there is much more of both types now, a greater percentage of all research is problem-oriented.<sup>3</sup>

Contrary to what I seemed to predict, in the 1980s history – not anthropology – led the field in small-scale studies examining the place of alcohol in the larger society. I should have known that: the same issue of the *Alcohol and Drug Surveyor* that carried my essay on Bacon also contained another article of mine – an annotated bibliography listing and briefly describing many recent books of good historical work on one alcohol topic or another. There are two simple reasons why historical research has been more plentiful. First, there are many more historians than anthropologists (or for that matter sociologists). Second, because it is easier to gather data for historical work, people in fields such as sociology and literature can more easily do research about alcohol history than they can research a contemporary non-Western culture. There is now an alcohol history organization with a small journal and it holds meetings in conjunction with the American Historical Association. The Alcohol Research Group held an extremely successful conference on the social history of alcohol in 1984 at which nearly 100 papers were presented. There have also been small alcohol history meetings and colloquia. Much of this work is fine history and a real contribution to understanding the place of alcohol in America and other countries.

The questions raised by Bacon's article of most interest to me now center on what have been the obstacles to implementing Bacon's vision, and on why the alcohol field developed as it did. In 1942 there were two paths: Jellinek's, which looked at problems and pathologies, and Bacon's, which investigated the place of alcohol in the larger society and culture examining the drinking patterns of the majority – non-pathological drinking and drunkenness. The proverbial man from Mars might ask: Why did Jellinek's vision and not Bacon's come to dominate social scientific writing on alcohol?

Put that way the question seems a bit absurd to anyone within American culture. One simple answer is that nobody with money would pay very much for the kind of "basic research" Bacon proposed because outside of the social sciences nobody cared much about it. Research on alcohol problems, however, had an audience of concerned politicians, health professionals, and lay persons. Alcohol studies in the 1940s, as a century before in the 1840s, existed because many people in America were concerned with alcohol problems. Jellinek's problem-based perspective would always be the

dominant one because the alcohol problem orientation had such a sizable constituency in America.<sup>4</sup>

What is not readily apparent is why so many people in America have been so concerned with alcohol problems. A comparative perspective helps us understand the United States better. In the 19th or 20th centuries some European countries also established multidisciplinary fields to study alcohol. Scientific alcohol research and even scientific alcohol journals developed in Finland, Sweden, Norway, and parts of Britain. I term these societies "temperance cultures" because they have had longstanding organized constituencies concerned about drinking as an evil or problem. Alcohol is regarded as a problematic substance in temperance cultures in a way that it is not so regarded in non-temperance cultures. The United States of America was the first temperance culture, the most influential one, and in most respects the most fervent one. All the temperance cultures are Protestant, and all have at some time consumed a significant portion of their alcohol (about 40 percent or more) in the form of distilled spirits. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, the scientific study of alcohol first developed in these temperance cultures and it reflected the concerns of the temperance movement and regarded alcohol as a toxic and strongly addicting substance. In the mid-20th century, the scientific study of alcohol reflected the concerns of the alcohol movements of that time and focused primarily on alcohol addiction as a problem of some individuals. Since the 19th century, alcohol research has been rooted in and closely associated with the perspectives of popular movements concerned with alcohol problems.

"Well, all right," our man from Mars might say. "That may help explain why Jellinek's approach dominated, but that still does not explain why Bacon's agenda was not addressed better, more completely, and why it did not constitute even an important minority voice in the field. Why didn't the sort of work Bacon proposed ever coalesce into a distinct perspective within the alcohol field?"

Part of the answer, as I suggested in my original essay, was that Bacon did not really develop the perspective in his own work nor did he sponsor much of this work during his long tenure as the director of the Center of Alcohol Studies. Rather, Bacon became "sidetracked;" as he put it. In fact, he became heavily involved in promoting Alcoholics Anonymous and the alcoholism movement.

In 1973 Selden Bacon was interviewed for two days by the staff of the Social Research Group. At the end of the second day someone asked Bacon what he thought had been the most important development regarding alcohol in America since the repeal of Prohibition in 1933. A number of things could come to mind as reasonable answers: the increased legitimacy of drinking in America; the movement of most drinking from the saloon and bar room into the home; the more general integration of drinking into so many aspects of daily life; the growth and power of the alcohol beverage industry; the growing body of scientific work on alcohol; the total disappearance of classic temperance forces; the success with which alcohol control was instituted, and the remarkably invisible way it smoothly continues to function. Without a moment's hesitation, Bacon answered "Alcoholics Anonymous."

E.M. Jellinek was the first person at the Yale center in the 1940s to become a promoter of Alcoholics Anonymous and its definition of alcoholism as a disease, but Bacon quickly joined him. Even before Bacon took over as head of the Center of Alcohol Studies, he was a strong advocate of AA. For years he, A.A. founder Bill Wilson, and National Council on Alcoholism (NCA) founder Marty Mann constituted what Bacon called a "traveling road show" spreading the word about A.A. and alcoholism. With his fellow missionaries he advised local and state governments on setting up alcoholism agencies to teach people about the disease of alcoholism and to refer people to the growing organization of self-proclaimed "recovered alcoholics." As head of the Yale and then Rutgers alcohol centers – the only significant university-based alcohol research centers – he helped legitimize AA and its approach. Through the Yale and Rutgers famous summer schools he instructed many social workers, ministers, teachers, and health workers.

For Bacon, for Jellinek's young protégé Mark Keller (who became the long-term editor of the *Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol*), for others at the Yale center, and for many of his generation, Alcoholics Anonymous was a godsend. They had lived through prohibition and its excesses, including the development of what Robin Room aptly calls "the wet generation" of heavy drinkers rebelling against Victorianism and prohibitionism. Bacon and the others abhorred the puritanical moralism of classic temperance and its attempt to force people to give up alcohol because of the problems of a minority of drinkers. They believed in modern science and medicine and wanted to see a modern scientific way of dealing with the problems of alcohol. The charismatic Bill Wilson spoke to Bacon and to others concerned with alcohol issues as effectively as he did to hundreds of thousands of drunks. Wilson offered a near perfect answer to the question of what to do about the real and obvious problem of people who drunk too much for their own good: send them to AA

There were, it is worth remembering, other treatment options possible. European nations, especially the Scandinavian and British countries, also had plenty of binge-drinking, middle-class alcoholics of the type that AA first recruited, and the rest of Europe also had many people who injured their health drinking. Those countries developed a range of options and treatment modes, mostly incorporated into the well-supported public health and state-sponsored medical systems. But in America, with its expensive and privatized health care system, such options did not seem realistic alternatives. Besides, there remained Bill Wilson and the very American-style self-help program of AA.

In the early days, in the 1940s and even for most of the 1950s, AA seemed small, precarious, and precious. AA did seem to challenge orthodoxies – of the century-old temperance movement and also of the completely unresponsive medical establishment. AA was populist, a genuine people's movement providing an alternative to the conventional wisdom and to the failed religious and medical remedies. The rebellious impulse that led Bacon as a young assistant professor to challenge Jellinek's proposals for a "Research Program on Problems of Alcohol" and offer his own radically sociological agenda also led him to embrace AA as his cause and movement.

It is worth tracing some highlights of that development. In the 1945 Alcoholics Anonymous provided the Yale center with a way of conceptualizing drinking problems and a program of action. A.A. along with the Yale center produced the National Council on Alcoholism, which promoted the ideas even more effectively. In the 1950s, AA members, the Yale center, and NCA convinced state and local governments to form alcoholism agencies and persuaded the American Medical Association (AMA) to proclaim alcoholism a disease. Much recognition and legitimacy followed. In the late 1960s, A.A. members in Congress, A.A. members writing letters, the NCA, the AMA, and related friends successfully lobbied to create the first federal alcohol agency: the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. In the 1970s, NIAAA began supporting the Employee Assistance programs that had been independently developed since the 1940s by recovering alcoholics within large corporations.

No one at the beginning, or for many years thereafter, could have imagined the phenomenal legitimacy that A.A.'s ideology would achieve: that undesirable habits and deviant or compulsive behavior of all types would come to be interpreted in A.A.'s language – from workaholics to chocoholics. By the early mid-1980s A.A. was not only the dominant treatment for alcoholism in America, it was also the remedy for drug addiction and many other personal problems. From Al-Anon to Gamblers Anonymous to Overeaters Anonymous to Drug Addicts Anonymous to Cocaine Anonymous to Love and Sex Addicts Anonymous to Adult Children of Alcoholics – the twelve-step movement had arrived.

In the 1980s, the NCA and other groups lobbied to get warning labels placed on alcohol bottles and cans, the fetal alcohol syndrome was "discovered" and widely warned about, Congress passed legislation using the threat of withholding federal highway funds to force states to raise their drinking age to 21, Mothers Against Drunk Drivers was formed and a new anti-drunk-driving sentiment was organized. By the mid-1980s, *Time Magazine* was calling attention to the powerful strand of anti-drinking sentiment in America and terming it "neo-temperance" or new temperance. Furthermore, all this occurred during a time when alcohol consumption was decreasing.

Despite the failure of constitutional prohibition, temperance culture and ideology never really lost its hold on America. Within American society alcohol remained a powerful symbol of evil, of the loss of self-control and individual responsibility. The other understanding of alcohol – as a social beverage, a pleasure-making substance, a drug that makes one merry – was spread in movies, song, and through advertising; as in the 19th century, that much older and more positive image coexisted alongside the now deeply rooted negative one. Within American culture alcohol became like a wild animal that had been domesticated. But alcohol was only partly tamed: it was never a puppy or kitten. Rather, like a pet wolf, bear, or cougar, alcohol was still thought capable of great and unpredictable damage. That sense of unpredictable danger has for 200 years remained part of the unshakable image of alcohol in American culture. If some individuals seemed to forget the danger, others never did, and the continuing stream of drunkards, recovered or not, provided further testimony to alcohol's profound risks. In America, the public consciousness of and discourse about the dangers and risks of

alcohol use have increased since the 1940s due, in part, to A.A.'s rise and enormous success.

As a result of these many years of activity, there is today far more political, medical, governmental, and other organized concern with alcohol as a problem than there was in the 1940s. In short, Bacon's efforts in the alcoholism movement worked against his own anti-temperance, anti-puritanical research agenda. In ways that Bacon could never have foreseen, his activities promoting the alcoholism movement created an atmosphere that makes an organized program of the kind of sociological work he proposed even more difficult to achieve in 1989.

Finally, there is an additional reason why Bacon's proposed research on non-pathological drinking could not have coalesced into an important minority voice in the alcohol field. Alcohol is not only a drug, beverage, and symbolic object. It is also a commodity. The alcohol field is not neutral in a political-economic sense. The alcohol beverage industry has a great investment in public attitudes toward alcohol and everyone understands that. Describing alcohol nonproblematically always runs the risk of "playing into the hands of the alcohol beverage industry." No serious alcohol researcher could long afford to be accused of that.

Individual researchers will always be able to do work in the spirit of Bacon's proposal – to do research and writing that seeks to locate alcohol in the broad patterns of society, culture, and economy. But as an organized, visible and *funded* enterprise within the field of alcohol studies, from the moment he proposed it Bacon's project was probably an impossible dream.

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## Notes

1. For example, in 1975 Room published a piece that explicitly called for large scale studies of drinking norms. My repeated mention of drinking norms throughout this essay was addressed to the themes and issues of Room's paper.

2. I have tried to do bits of the program outlined here in my own work, some of which is listed in the references.

3. This is, of course, only an informed impression. My sense is also shared by Robin Room (personal communication). However, Room points out that Jellinek's 1942 proposal actually only focused on alcoholism and not on other kinds of problems resulting from drinking. People at the Yale center considered others sorts of alcohol problems to have been part of the temperance movement's domain; both Jellinek and Bacon sought to avoid that association. Many current alcohol research topics – such as drinking by teenagers, drunk driving, the fetal alcohol syndrome, and the range of drinking-related problems – were not actually included in Jellinek's proposal. Since neither Bacon nor Jellinek was embracing the classic temperance concerns, and since Bacon dearly distinguished his proposal from Jellinek's by focusing on the non-pathological, I regard work on all kinds of alcohol problems as fundamentally in the spirit of Jellinek's agenda Bacon as my chapter tries to make clear, was proposing something very different.

4. Even the alcohol beverage industry was forced to make its accommodation with the problem orientation. From the late 1940s or early 1950s on, the beverage industry accepted the alcoholism movement's definition of alcohol problems as rooted in the bodies and minds of some drinkers. A problem exists, the industry granted, but they insisted, the problem lies in the man and not in the bottle.

5. Severely handicapped by the limitations of soft money funding and its uneasy relationship with the University of California, the Alcohol Research Group has over the years helped nurture sociological, historical, and anthropological perspectives on drinking. Many researchers have benefited from contact with that remarkable nexus of intellectual activity. Although there is no organized presence in the alcohol field representing the spirit of Bacon's proposal, a loose but growing network of researchers keeps pursuing topics that Bacon first raised 1942, and ones he never anticipated. They are mainly affiliated with professional associations in history, anthropology, and sociology. These American scholars have also found strong friends and allies in Europe, especially in Finland, where sociologists form an important voice within alcohol studies.

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