

Social values, social constraints and material culture: the design of contemporary beer cans

'Systematicity is found in the opus operatum because it is in the modus operandi. It is found in all the properties- and property - with which individuals and groups surround themselves, houses, furniture, paintings, books, cars, spirits, perfume, clothes, and in the practices in which they manifest their distinction, sports, games, entertainments. In the ordinary situation or bourgeois life, banalities about art, literature or cinema are inseparable from the steady tone, the slow, casual diction, the distant or self-assured smile, the measured gesture, the well-tailored suit and the bourgeois salon of the person who pronounces them.'

(Bourdieu 1984, pp. 173-4)

Introduction

We agree with Rathje (1981) that archaeological investigation of the present is of prime importance. Unfortunately, the majority of modern material culture studies carried out in Arizona and elsewhere (see Gould and Schiffer (eds.) 1981, with references) have worked from an empiricist and functionalist perspective which has had the deleterious effect of strictly limiting the insights to be gained so that the conclusions tend to verge on the banal, e.g., the observations of Schiller *et al.* (1981) on re-use and re-cycling of items, or the details reported by Rathje that a study of material items at isolated din road ends revealed concentric rings of beer bottles and, in areas secluded from car headlights, sex-related objects which 'conformed to the activities that were assumed to occur at road ends' (Rathje 1981, p. 52). Perhaps more importantly, the majority of the studies which have been conducted have failed to realize the potential of the study of modern material culture as a critical intervention in contemporary society, an intervention with transformative intent.

Some approaches using insights from semiotics and structuralism (for example, Bath 1981, Hebdige 1983) and critical theory (e.g., Miller 1984) have made illuminating and pertinent contributions to the study of the symbolic, social and economic structure of contemporary western society. Miller, for example, shows how architectural styles may mediate social strategies legitimating dominance and power between various interest groups. Notwithstanding the general interest of Miller's study in common with other sociological studies of the present, it has one major drawback from the point of the study of material culture and the way in which it is used as a resource in relation to ideology and power - that it is not architectural forms or buildings in themselves that are analysed in any detail but, rather, discourses about them. Similarly, Barthes's study of fashion (Barthes 1985) is only concerned with written fashion rather than actual garments. If we are to demonstrate that archaeology really can make a distinctive contribution towards an understanding and critique of the present then, we feel, reference must not only be

made to discourses but must pay detailed attention to the material culture-patterning as well

This chapter is an initial attempt to achieve an understanding of a common and everyday item of contemporary material culture - beer can and beer bottle design. How can the designs on cans and bottles be explained? Our approach to this problem involves an investigation of the social meanings attributed to alcohol consumption and in particular those connected with beer drinking, we contend that the designs are embedded in the social and symbolic structures of everyday life. Our analysis extends to can design in two countries, Britain and Sweden. Even superficial observation reveals a fundamental difference in social attitudes towards drinking in these two countries. Whereas in Britain alcohol is not generally considered an item of key public or individual concern, in Sweden alcohol consumption is generally regarded as one of the most pressing of social issues, at least in governmental circles. If material culture-patterning is structured in relation to social processes in a systematic manner, as claimed throughout this book, then we might expect some considerable differences to exist between British and Swedish beer can design which can be meaningfully related to social strategies.

THE DESIGNS ON BRITISH AND SWEDISH BEER CANS

Sampling strategy

There are certainly over 1,000 beers retailed on the British market. *The Brewery Manual and Who's Who in British Brewing and Scotch Whisky Distilling 1983* records 727 brand names. There are many varieties of ale such as bitter, mild, scotch, brown ale, stout; however, in our analysis of can and bottle design we focus on a more fundamental distinction, between beer and lager. Although there are perhaps only 60 lagers brewed in Britain, lager sales accounted for about 25% of the market at the time of the survey in 1983. Lager takes its name from the continental brew, but is rarely, if ever, brewed in the same way as on the continent. It has been presented by the breweries as new and distinctive and has been heavily advertised (lager sales accounted for 2% of total beer sales in 1958, 8.6% in 1972 (Brewers' Society figures)).

Swedish beer (in Britain it would all be termed 'lager') is divided into three classes on the basis of alcoholic strength. Class I beer, with the lowest alcohol content, is not officially regarded as an alcoholic drink and is sold in supermarkets with Class II beers. Class III stronger beers are only available in the Systembolaget shops - government controlled outlets for all alcoholic drinks other than Class I and II beers. At the time of the survey we conducted there were 27 different Class III beer brands on the Swedish market which were either brewed by Swedish companies or foreign brands brewed under licence in Sweden (Systembolagets prislista 3, 1983). We were unable to find out exactly how many different Class I and Class II beers were marketed in Sweden. No official statistics exist and the breweries we contacted were either unwilling or unable to provide this information. Based on a search of retail outlets in all parts of the country from Malmö in the south to Kiruna in the north, we estimate that the number of different brands does not exceed 100 and is probably within the range of 80-90.

The following procedures were used to provide a representative sample of beer cans

for analysis

- (1) Sampling was confined to a two month period September and October 1983
- (2) Sampling was restricted to one British town, Washington, and one Swedish town, Lund.
- (3) Sampling was stratified according to different types of retail outlets
- (4) All imported beers were excluded from the sample Beers brewed under licence from a foreign company were included in the sample since it was found that in the majority of cases different can designs or bottle labels were used according to the country in which the beer was marketed
- (5) An identical number of British and Swedish cans or bottle labels was collected If the same brand was marketed in a can and a bottle, the can was chosen in preference

For the British data the cans (hereafter the term 'cans' is to be taken as an abbreviation for cans and bottle labels) studied were bought from four shops belonging to different supermarket chains, Savacentre (Sainsbury's / British Home Stores), Presto, Co-op, Liptons and one off-licence (Cellarman). For the Swedish data cans were collected from five different supermarkets, Vildgasen Livs, Fokus (independent stores belonging to the ICA marketing chain), Konsum and Domus (both belonging to the Swedish Co-op) and Tempo for beer classes I and II. Class III cans were purchased in the three Systembolaget (government alcohol monopoly) shops in Lund. These shops varied in size from the very largest to the smallest. An initial survey of all the different brands, or differently designed cans on sale in these shops was made. For Sweden a total of 60 different brands, irrespective of beer class, were available for purchase, and 78 from the British shops All 60 of the Swedish cans were collected and 60 (or a 77% sample) of the British. Of the 60 British cans 37 were beer cans and 23 lager cans. For Sweden the sample included 10 Class I cans, 29 Class II cans and 21 Class III cans Since the number of Class I cans was small, in order to facilitate statistical comparison five additional cans were collected from retail outlets outside Lund. These were only used in internal statistical comparisons of the Swedish data in relation to beer class.

Finding pattern in the variety

How do the cans differ? Do the cans differ significantly between British beer and lager types, between British and Swedish cans, and between the three classes of Swedish beer? We recorded 45 variables for each can, variables which cover different aspects of can design: the number of colours employed over the entire can surface and for the lettering, the background colour (if any) on which other colours, words or designs are superimposed, the frequency and substantive content of the wording (excluding legally required or purely technical information (e g., wort strength)), the language used, lettering style, field orientation of the wording, the frequency and form of representational and non-representational designs and major surface divisions in the design Since all the cans are a standardized shape and size, this factor was ignored (Fig 8 1)

Differences between British and Swedish beer can designs

Colours

Of the British cans, 37% possessed more than four different colours on the entire can surface as compared with 52% of the Swedish cans. The Swedish cans are not only more colourful but there is also more variability between them in terms of the numbers of colours utilized (variance of British cans 0.76; for the Swedish 1.32). As we might expect, this distinction is replicated in the numbers of different colours used for the lettering. No British cans utilize more than three different lettering colours while 20% of the Swedish cans do so. The choice of background colour also differs significantly. Black and red are the colours most frequently chosen for the British cans (35%), white and blue for the Swedish (58%). The British and Swedish cans were assigned a rank

General

- 1 name of beer
- 2 class of beer (Sweden only)

Colour

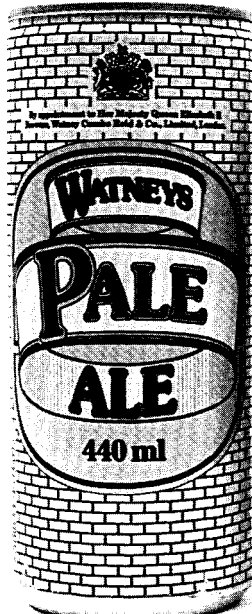
- 3 number of different colours on can
- 4 number of colours used for lettering
- 5 background colour
- 6 silver
- 7 gold

Wording

- 8 number of words
- 9 company name
- 10 storing/serving conditions
- 11 quality of raw ingredients
- 12 source of raw ingredients
- 13 character/type of beer
- 14 strength of beer
- 15 place of origin of beer
- 16 reference to past/tradition
- 17 foreign name

Lettering

- 18 printing
- 19 italics
- 20 handwriting
- 21 old-fashioned writing
- 22 3-D lettering: one colour
- 23 3-D lettering: two colours
- 24 3-D lettering: three or more
- 25 flat lettering: one colour
- 26 flat lettering: two colours
- 27 flat lettering: three or more



Field orientation of words

- 28 horizontal
- 29 vertical
- 30 diagonal: left to right
- 31 diagonal: right to left
- 32 oval/circular

Designs

- 33 number of representational design elements
- 34 representational design elements
- 35 number of abstract design elements
- 36 oval/circular panel
- 37 band around middle
- 38 band around top
- 39 band around bottom
- 40 diagonal band: left to right
- 41 diagonal band: right to left
- 42 reference to past/tradition

Surface division

- 43 top v. bottom
- 44 right v. left
- 45 back v. front

Fig. 8.1 The variables recorded for each beer can.

Table 8.1. *Ranks of the British and Swedish cans according to the frequency of the occurrence of background colours*

Colour	British	Swedish
black	2	9
red	1	4.5
yellow	5.5	6.5
green	3	6.5
brown	7.5	9
blue	4	2
orange	9	9
white	5.5	1
gold	7.5	3
silver	10	4.5

$r_s = -0.10$

according to the frequency of colour choice for various background colours and Spearman's coefficient of rank correlation proved to be non-significant (Table 8.1). So, colour choice differs significantly not only in terms of frequency but also in relation to rank of preferred colour choice. Colours most commonly associated with luxury and status - silver and gold - are utilized more frequently on the Swedish than the British cans both as a background colour and/or for representational or non-representational designs.

Wording, lettering style and field orientation of wording

A clear difference exists between the number of words displayed on the British and Swedish cans (Figs. 8.2A and 8.3). No British cans employ more than 50 words whereas 15% of the Swedish cans possess this feature. Most British cans use one to ten words (60%). Use of the company name for the beer name, reference to storing/serving conditions, beer type (brown ale, etc.), place of origin (e.g., Newcastle Brown Ale), and to the past and tradition are more frequent on the British cans. The quality of the raw ingredients used and the strength of the beer are more frequently described on the Swedish cans, on which product 'information' is much more detailed and descriptions more lavish. Foreign languages used for the beer name or to describe the product are a common feature of the Swedish cans but unusual for the British. Use of different lettering styles such as handwriting rather than printing occurs more frequently on the Swedish cans as does the use of three-dimensional lettering and two or more colours for flat lettering. The use of a vertical or a diagonal field for the orientation of the wording/lettering is virtually restricted to the Swedish cans, while in Britain word orientation is confined to a horizontal or oval/circular field.

Designs

The number of both representational and non-representational elements in the designs are far greater on the Swedish than the British cans (Figs. 8.2B, 8.2C and 8.4), and chi-square tests, adopting an arbitrary division between the numbers of cans with three or

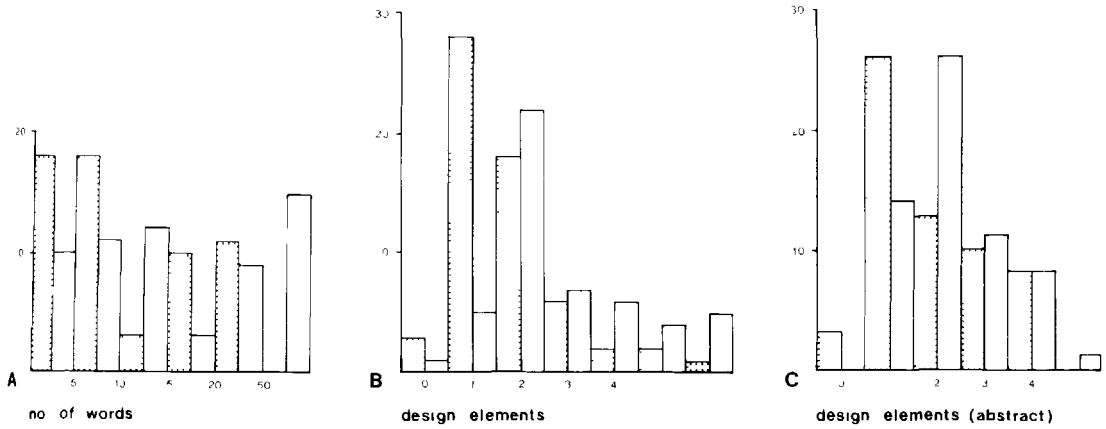


Fig 8.2 British and Swedish cans
 A the frequency of words on the cans 'legally required and technical information excluded)
 B the frequency of different representational design elements on the cans
 C the frequency of abstract design elements on the cans
 British frequencies are shaded



Fig 8.3 Writing on Swedish and British beer cans

more or less than three representational/non-representational designs were very significant ($p = 0.01$). Surface division, rare on the British cans, is a fairly common characteristic of the Swedish data. Table 8.2 gives the frequency of various types of representational designs on the cans. For both the British and Swedish cans a fairly restricted range of motifs are utilized, but with differing frequency. These can be divided into those specifically to do with the product, i.e., illustrations of the raw materials used, people, illustrations connected with its manufacture, distribution or consumption, symbols of distinction and depictions of nature or the natural, e.g., birds or landscape scenes, and other designs (usually trade marks on the British cans). In considering these designs it is important to notice what is not depicted as much as that which does appear. Raw ingredients (hops and barley) are more frequently depicted on the Swedish cans. In both countries these appear in stylized form, in a natural state, rather than in the form in which they are actually utilized for brewing (e.g., barley is depicted rather than malted grains). While the dry ingredients are shown, water, constituting between 90 and 98% of beer, is never depicted. Beer, the weakest of alcoholic drinks, is thus symbolically differentiated from water. Indeed in the brewing industry the water used for beer making is referred to as 'liquor' while water is a term reserved for the stuff used to wash equipment and utensils. There is thus emphasis on beer as a natural product and beer as alcohol rather than water. The representation of beer as a natural product is stressed more in Sweden than in Britain as is alcoholic content, expressed both in the use of a class system based on beer strength, and in descriptions on indi-



Fig 8 4 British and Swedish beer cans see text

Table 8.2. *Representational designs on British and Swedish beer cans and bottle labels*

	British		Swedish	
	N	%	N	%
<i>Raw ingredients</i>				
hops	5	8.3	19	31.7
barley	8	13.3	14	23.3
<i>People</i>				
men	16	26.7	7	11.7
women	1	1.7	1	1.7
historical figure	8	13.3	4	6.7
hand	1	1.7	—	—
<i>Manufacture, distribution, consumption</i>				
picture of brewery	1	1.7	—	—
oast houses	2	3.3	—	—
dray	2	3.3	2	3.3
beer barrel	—	—	5	8.3
brewing equipment	—	—	4	6.7
mugs/glasses	2	3.3	—	—
<i>Symbols of distinction</i>				
crown	3	5.0	16	26.7
scroll	11	18.3	13	21.7
medals	1	1.7	18	30.0
seal	2	3.3	6	10.0
trophy	1	1.7	—	—
star	2	3.3	1	1.7
royal coat of arms	6	10.0	8	13.3
other coat of arms (e.g. town, county)	16	26.7	13	21.7
flag	—	—	5	8.3
castle	1	1.7	—	—
<i>'Nature'</i>				
landscape scenes	3	5.0	9	15.0
foliage/flower/tree	11	18.3	8	13.3
animals/birds	12	20.0	21	35.0
<i>Other</i>				
magnet	1	1.7	—	—
milk churn	1	1.7	—	—
chain	1	1.7	—	—
rope	1	1.7	—	—
ship	2	3.3	2	3.3
horseshoe	1	1.7	—	—
globe/map	1	1.7	—	—
harp	2	3.3	—	—
bell	—	—	1	1.7

vidual cans. People are more commonly depicted on the British cans and in both countries there is an emphasis on masculinity and the past. If people are depicted they are invariably male and often historical figures such as cavaliers and vikings for Sweden, blacksmiths, brewery workers and cavaliers for Britain. Similarly, when the motifs are associated with the manufacture or distribution of beer, drays, rather than articulated lorries, wooden rather than metal barrels, are depicted. Symbols of distinction such as

medals, crowns, scrolls or coats of arms (real or fictitious) are common on both the British and Swedish cans in differing combinations as are depictions of foliage or animals and birds. The latter are invariably the male of the species and aggressive (e.g., falcons, eagles, lions, panthers). The major difference between the Swedish and British cans is not in the form of the representational designs but the employment in Sweden of a much wider range of combinations of the motifs on individual cans (Fig. 8.4).

On the basis of the discussion above it is clear that there is a considerable difference between the British and Swedish cans for virtually all the variables recorded. This is not an either/or distinction in terms of the individual variables but one of complexity and elaboration. The Swedish cans tend to be both far more complex than the British and clearly differentiated from each other. The results of this simple statistical analysis were confirmed by multivariate analyses of the cans. Fig. 8.5A shows the results of a principal components analysis for all the cans using standardized frequencies of variables 3, 8, 33 and 35 (see Fig. 8.1) as input data. The first two components accounted for 65% of the total variability, 36% on the first component. Variables 3 and 33 made approximately equal positive contributions to the first component with variables 8 and 35 contributing negatively. All variables contributed approximately equally to the second component, 3 and 8 positively and 33 and 35 negatively. On the plot of the first two components (Fig. 8.5A) a fairly clear separation exists between the Swedish cans clustered to the left and the British cans to the right due to the higher frequency of different colours, numbers of words, representational and non-representational designs used on the Swedish cans, especially Class II. It is mainly the simpler Class III Swedish beer cans which tend to cluster with the more complex British beer and lager cans. Internal differences between the British beer and lager cans and the Swedish beer classes are largely obscured, as we might expect, by the overall differentiation between the British and Swedish cans. However, the majority of the lager cans are high on the second component, separated from the majority of the beer cans on the basis of the possession of more colours and a greater number of words (see discussion below).

A similar result is apparent on the basis of a principal coordinates analysis conducted on a similarity matrix computed using the Gower coefficient for 26 independent quantitative and presence/absence variables (Fig. 8.5B). Again the majority of the (more complex) Swedish cans are clustered to the left of the plot, with the British cans to the right. Differentiation between British beer and lager cans, and the Swedish cans according to beer class, is more blurred than the overall British/Swedish distinction.

Differences between British beer and lager cans

Colours

Beer cans tend to use more colours than lager cans. Background colour also differs significantly with predominant use of black, red and yellow for beer, and green, blue and white for lager (Table 8.3). Silver only appears on the lager cans and gold appears, roughly twice as frequently on the lager as it does on the beer. In terms of background colour and use of silver and gold, British lager cans are more similar to Swedish cans than to British beer cans.

Wording, lettering style and field orientation of wording

More words are used on lager cans (Fig 8.6A) and the content of the wording also differs significantly. The company name is used more frequently (86% of the cans) for beer than for lager (52%). While reference to the type of the beer occurs on all the beer cans only 52% of lager cans possess such descriptions of the character of the lager. The place of origin of the beer, mentioned on almost half of the beer cans is only noted on a few lager cans which frequently make reference to storing/serving conditions and alcoholic strength - features rarely described in connection with beer. More beer cans make reference to the past or tradition while the use of a foreign 'language' only occurs

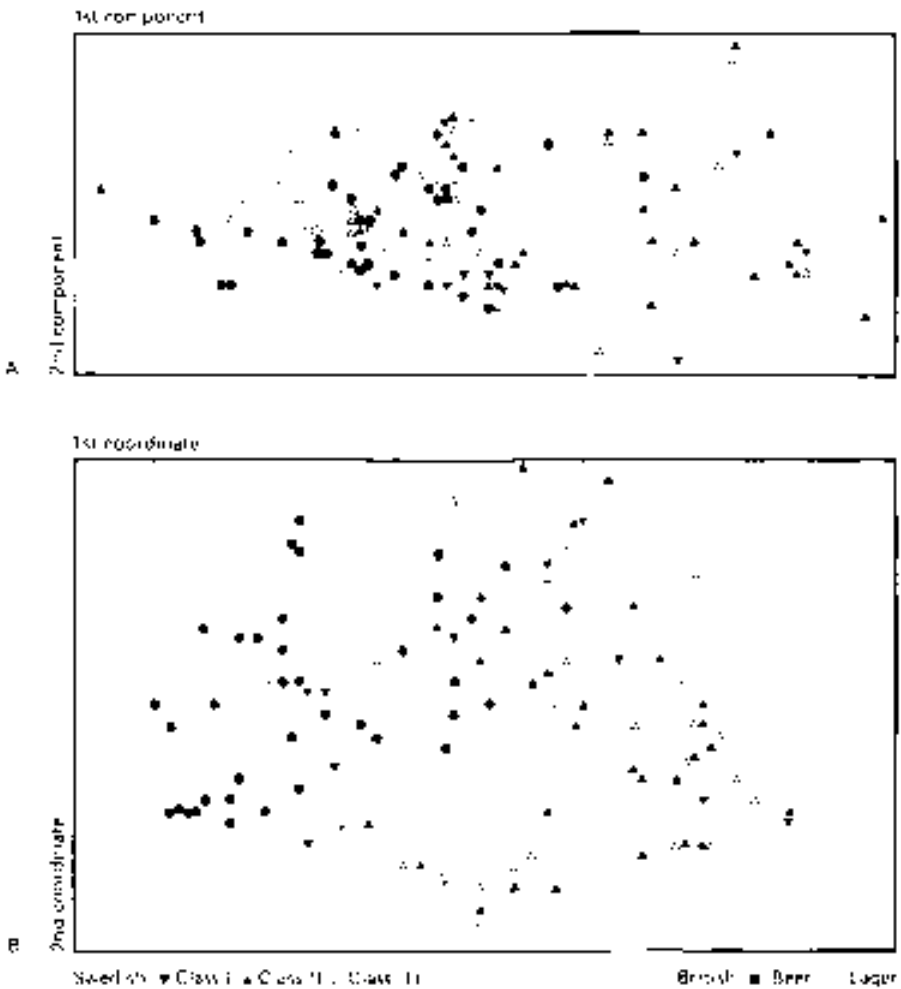


Fig 8.5 A principal components analysis of British and Swedish beer cans (input variables 3, 8, 33, 35, 37 Fig 8.1)
 B principal coordinates analysis of British and Swedish beer cans (input variables 3, 6-17, 29, 32, 33, 35-39, 42, cf Fig 8.1)

Table 8.3. *Ranks of the British beer and lager cans according to the frequency of the occurrence of background colours*

Colour	Beer	Lager
black	1	9
red	2	4.5
yellow	3	6.5
green	4.5	1.5
brown	4.5	9
blue	7	1.5
orange	7	9
white	7	3
gold	9	4.5
silver	10	6.5

$r_s = -0.17$

for lager: 35% of the lager cans have foreign-sounding names, many purchased from continental breweries. A wider range of lettering styles are generally employed for beer cans, particularly the use of handwriting and three-dimensional lettering.

Designs

Beer cans possess a higher frequency of representational designs (Fig. 8.6B) while abstract designs tend to be employed more often on lager cans (Fig. 8.6C), especially bands around the middle and bottom of the can. As one might expect, reference to the past or tradition is a more frequently employed characteristic of the beer cans. Use of surface division only occurs on the lager cans. Almost all representational designs occur more frequently on the beer cans except for crowns and mugs/glasses. The virtual absence of depictions of people on the lager cans is particularly noteworthy.

On the whole there appears to be less clear-cut differentiation between British beer and lager cans than between both these sets of cans considered together and the Swedish material. However, in some respects such as colour, frequency of wording, use of abstract designs and surface division some of the lager cans are more similar to the Swedish ones, while others have a more British style. This is borne out by the results of a principal components and a principal coordinates analysis (Figs. 8.7A and 8.7B respectively). On the plot of the cans against the first two components, the lager cans, as opposed to most beer cans, cluster on the first component on the basis of relatively higher frequencies of words and abstract designs. The lager cans are dispersed on the second component according to numbers of representational designs. This differentiation of the lager cans can be seen more clearly on the principal coordinates plot (Fig. 8.7B) in which they are not only differentiated from each other in terms of complexity, but also from most of the beer cans (Fig. 8.8).

Differences between Swedish beer classes

Colours

A negative correlation exists between increasing use of colours and beer strength such that the Class III cans tend to be least colourful (Fig. 8.9A). However, use of four or more colours for lettering is most common on the Class II cans. The use of different background colours is most restricted on Class III cans (81% utilizing blue, white or gold) and most variable for Class II cans. Gold is most common on the strong Class III beer cans and least frequent on Class II, while silver occurs with roughly the same frequency for all the beer classes.

Wording, lettering style and field orientation of wording

Descriptions are much lengthier on the Class II cans than for Classes I or III (Fig. 8.9B). The descriptions used (Fig. 8.1: variables 9-17) either do not differ significantly in frequency between the beer classes or are more common on Class II cans, except for strength, most frequently referred to on Class I cans, and reference to the past or tradition most frequently stressed for Class III beer. A wider range of lettering styles are employed for Class II cans and three-dimensional lettering is not frequently employed for Class I as opposed to Classes II and III. Field orientation of the wording is most variable for Class III cans with comparatively high percentages of cans with diagonal field orientation, right to left or left to right.

Designs

Class II cans possess more representational and non-representational designs than Classes I and III. Class I cans have larger numbers of representational designs than Class III cans which possess more abstract designs (Figs. 8.9C and 8.9D). Surface division is a more common characteristic of Class II than Class III cans and is rarely used for Class I. Depictions of raw ingredients are more common for Classes II and III while people are confined to Classes I and II, particularly Class I cans on which virile males occur

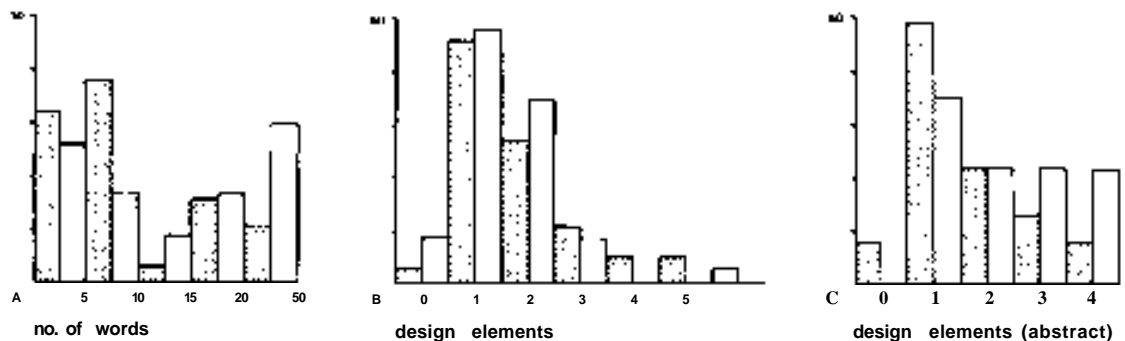


Fig. 8.6 British beer and lager cans

A: the relative frequency (per cent) of words on the cans (legally required and technical information excluded)

B: the relative frequency (per cent) of different representational design elements on the cans

C: the relative frequency (per cent) of different abstract design elements on the cans.

Beer frequencies are shaded.

(Fig. 8.10). Symbols of distinction are common for all beer classes with particular emphasis on crowns for Class II and medals for Class III.

The class variation between the Swedish cans is not as clear as that between British beer and lager cans on a multivariate basis (Figs. 8.11A and 8.11B). Some aspects of design, such as colour or depictions of people, are negatively correlated with increasing beer strength. Class III cans tend to be less elaborate than Classes I or II (Fig. 8.12), while the most complex designs occur on the medium strength Class II beers. The lack

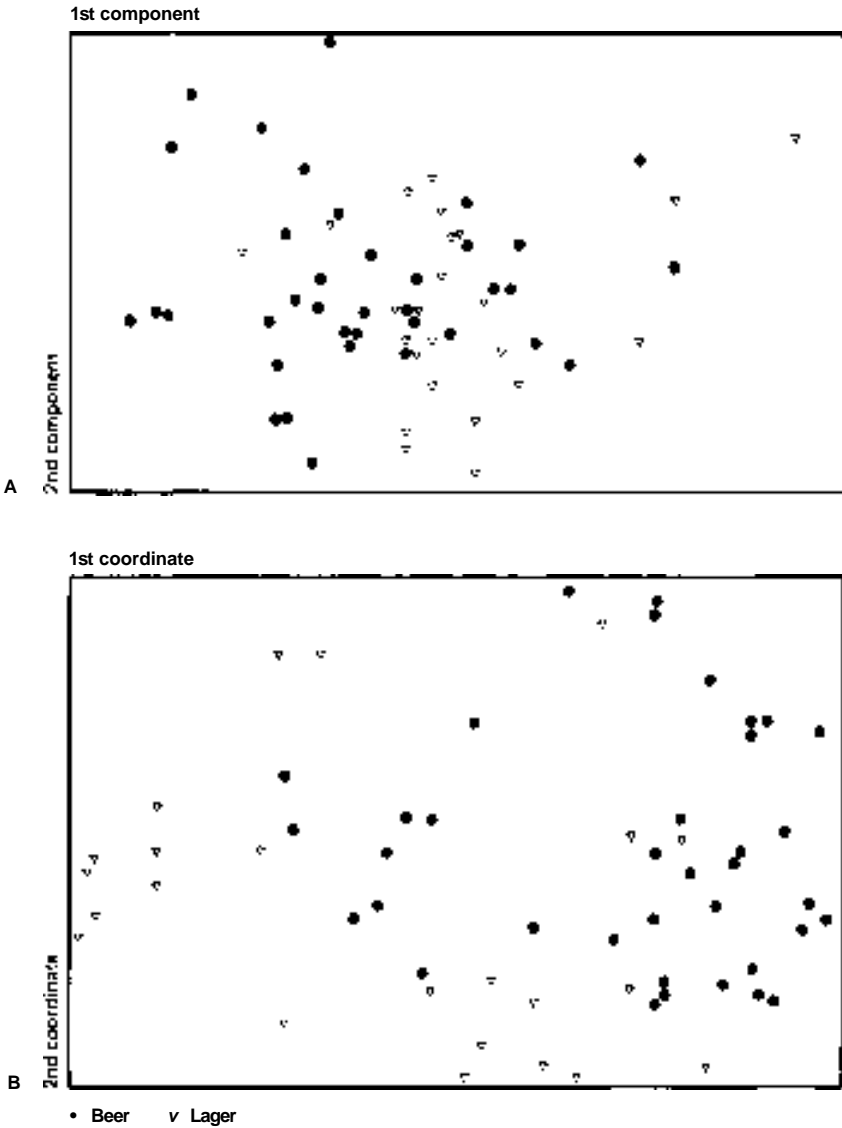


Fig. 8.7 A: principal components analysis of British beer and lager cans (input as for Fig. 8.5A)
B: principal coordinates analysis of British beer and lager cans (input as for Fig. 8.5B).



Fig. 8.8 British beer and lager cans.

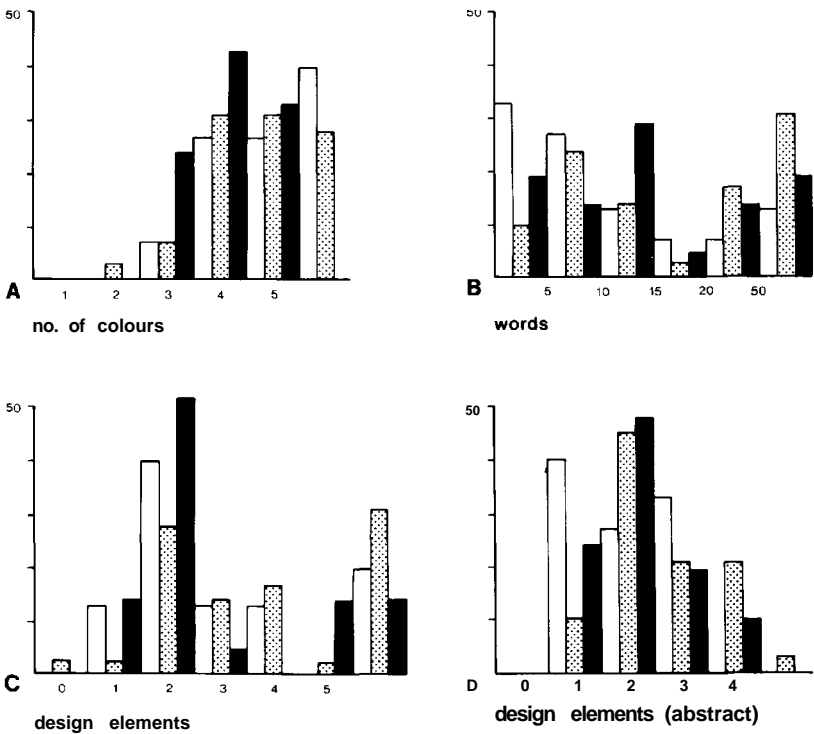


Fig. 8.9 Swedish beer cans

A: the relative frequency (per cent) of different colours on the three classes of Swedish beer cans
 B: the relative frequency (per cent) of words on the cans (legally required and technical information excluded)
 C: the relative frequency (per cent) of different representational design elements on the cans
 D: the relative frequency (per cent) of different abstract design elements on the cans
 Class II can frequencies shaded; Class III can frequencies black.

of a very clear-cut distinction across the classes on the plots can partially be accounted for by the fact that for a number of beer brands virtually the same designs are used for Classes I, II and III or Classes II and III with only minor differences such as background colour, the rest of the design remaining unaltered.

How is the structure of difference we have discussed above to be explained? To explain can design, the meaning of the difference, reference must be made to the location of the cans within social structures and social practices; can design is related to the meaning of the consumption of alcohol. This makes necessary an investigation of brewing and the marketing of its products, consumerism and the consumption of drink, and, because alcohol is a drug, the relation of drinking to images and conceptions of health and the body. So in the next section we look at the growth of the brewing industry within the development of the capitalist nation states of Britain and Sweden.

DRINK, THE STATE, CONSUMERISM, DISCIPLINE

Early industrial capitalism and alcohol production

The development of industrial capitalism involved the transformation of labour, distribution, and consumption, relations previously embedded in non-economic social forms, into relations mediated by the abstracted goals of commodity exchange and capital accumulation. With use-value subordinated to exchange-value, the commodity form became dominant. The associated commodification of labour, the institutionalization of wage-labour, made necessary the expropriation of the worker from the means of production with the latter now subordinated to the logic of capital accumulation

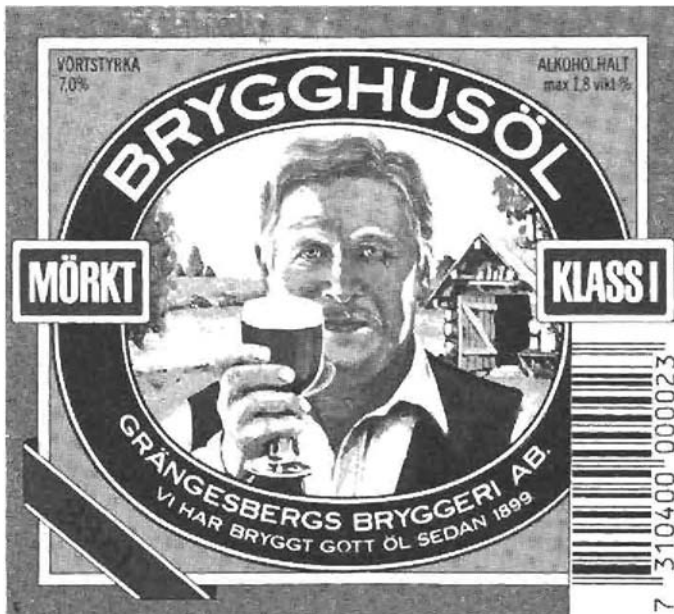
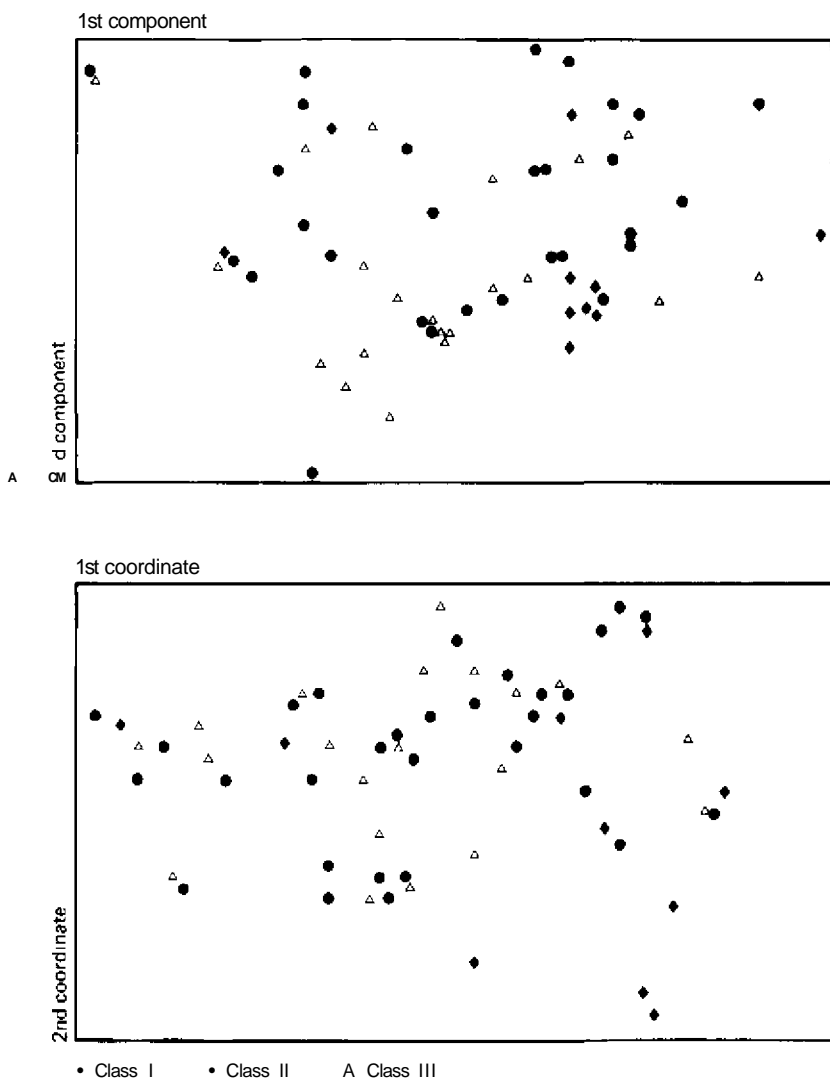


Fig. 8.10 Swedish Class I beer bottle label [see text].

rather than the satisfaction of need. Such changes developed at an early stage in the British and Swedish alcohol industries.

In Britain in the eighteenth century an increasing farm acreage, an effect of the enclosure movement, created a grain surplus of which much was converted into spirits. Distilling gin from such surplus grain was recognized as a very effective means of capital formation (Park 1983). So too was commercial brewing. With the aim of maximization of profit the characteristic features of industrial production - processing raw materials on a large scale using a wage labour force concentrated in one place and distributing the



8 B A principal coordinates analysis of Swedish beer cans (input as for Fig 8 5A)
 B principal coordinates analysis of Swedish beer cans (input as for Fig 8 5B)

product to a large number of wholesale and retail outlets - developed at an early date in brewing (Harrison 1971, p. 65; Park 1983).

The products of distilling and brewing were supplied to a growing urban population. Together with the increase in the relative importance of commercial as opposed to domestic brewing, it is such economic developments which form the determinate background to the dramatic increase in alcohol consumption from the eighteenth century in Britain and the associated problems of 'Gin Lane' and after.

By the mid-eighteenth century in Sweden, *brannvin* or distilled spirits had largely displaced beer as the national drink. Alcohol rapidly grew in importance as a commercial item in the agrarian economy. Distilling from grain and potatoes became a widespread domestic industry flooding the country with *brannvin*. According to a survey conducted in 1756 there were a minimum of 200,000 stills in operation. At least every seventh adult possessed a still (Svensson 1973, p. 17). In urban centres such as Stockholm and Goteborg consumption was public and conspicuous as in British cities (Mathias 1959, p. 127; Jarbe 1971, p. 58).

In 1855 the Swedish parliament introduced the *brannvin* reform measures which laid the basis for subsequent political reforms concerning alcohol. This reform abolished small stills for domestic use, setting the smallest quantity to be distilled at 300 kannor (780 litres) per day. On this produce the government received a substantial excise duty. This measure resulted in a drastic reduction in the number of stills operating to 451 in 1869 (Carnegie 1873, p. 5). In effect the 1855 reform transferred the right to produce



Fig. 8.12 Class differences between the Swedish beer cans: left to right Classes I—III.

brannvin to those already owning large factories, or with the means to invest capital. A concern for public temperance provided a general justification for the reform bill rather than its primary motive. With a system of widespread and unregulated production, taxation to provide state revenue could never be very successful but with production confined to a relatively small number of rationalized factories taxation could be very effective. State income from *brannvin* increased tenfold after the reform, making up more than one fifth of the total state revenue (Nycander 1967 p. 11). The *brannvin* reform thus provided a great increase in revenue and an extension of state control. It also provided the conditions suitable for capital formation on a large scale in a period in which industrialization was developing at an ever increasing pace. It was a time that the brewing industry, in part stimulated by government incentives, rapidly developed. By 1880 brewing had become the sixth largest industry in the country (Svensson 1973, p. 47).

So, in the eighteenth century in both Britain and Sweden drinking reached an unprecedented level. While in Britain this developed hand in hand with rapid urbanization, in Sweden it was largely among an exploited and depressed peasantry. The development of industrial capitalism in both countries stimulated and impelled consumption. We would wish to argue with Park (1983) that consumption of alcohol is not encouraged simply in that brewing and distilling are means of profit making and capital accumulation, but that drinking was (and still is) promoted and encouraged in a progressive way.

The profits from the industrial production of alcohol and its increasing consumption by a demoralized population detached from pre-capitalist social controls on heavy drinking (see below) enriched a significant number of the emergent bourgeoisie and the British and Swedish state coffers. Those owning the means of alcohol production formed a socially prominent and politically powerful interest group in both countries (Harrison 1971, pp. 58ff, pp. 340ff, Nycander 1967, pp. 14ff).

Changes in experience of work and leisure

By the nineteenth century, urbanization and the concentration of wage-labourers in towns and cities in Britain brought about changes in the character of daily life. Such developments occurred significantly later in Sweden and on a smaller scale. Dominated by the experience of industrial labour, the social communities of pre-capitalist society were increasingly replaced by occupational communities.

In such communities all aspects of daily life were permeated by the experience of labour and class contradiction in a class culture of work (Alt 1976). This collective experience was for most unskilled workers one of long hours and low pay. Generally the labour process tended to be harsh and exploitative under the inexorable impulse to maximization of profit. Profit accrued to capital owners and derived from the surplus value created by wage-labourers. Although increasingly separated from work, physically and institutionally through the commodification of labour, leisure was internally related to work in that recreation served to reproduce the occupational community and its group cohesiveness.

In Britain, beerhouse and gin palace provided escape from harsh labour. In contrast

to the traditional village alehouse and traveller's inn where classes mingled (Harrison 1971, pp. 45-6; Park 1983) these new drinking houses were located in working-class areas and were patronized by an urban working class (Smith 1983, pp. 370-2; Harrison 1973). With leisure dominated by the experience of labour, the pub provided a distinctive *class* experience, the social infrastructure for relief from industrial labour, but also an environment for the creation and reproduction of social solidarity (Alt 1976, p. 64). The public house was (and is) a colonized institution (Clark 1979, p. 245) embodying a contradiction between acting as a marketing mechanism for the capitalist enterprise of the brewing industry, inciting consumption for the profit of capital, and through colonization by the working class acting as the focus for the social reproduction of working-class solidarity. 'Leisure served the social reproduction of the working class, which gave them the capacity to labour, but it also created the internal social solidarity necessary for affirmative class action' (Alt 1976, p. 55).

Harrison (1971, chapter 2) has outlined the social relations of drinking in early nineteenth-century England (*cf* Park 1983; Smith 1983, pp. 377-9). Drinking and drink sellers were tightly related to wider social relations. They were closely associated with labour and recreation especially in that alcohol was one of the few safe beverages and in that drinking houses were practically the only public meeting place apart from the church. Public houses were a focus for entertainment, acted as labour exchange and trading centre. The publican often had responsibility for wage payments. Such were the positive social and commercial incitements to drink.

Thus the settlement of a wage-labour force around particular capitalist industries resulted in a 'determining relation between labour and leisure, mediated and reproduced through the associations of leisure' (Alt 1976, p. 65). Such associations centred on the public drinking house.

This centrality of the public house and drinking in the life of the industrial proletariat and the earlier inseparability of drink and labour and recreation needs to be stressed in opposition to the moral and later medical attacks on heavy 'problem' drinking (the definition of 'problem' drinking arising out of the very labour process which established the occupational community and its vehicle of social reproduction - the drinking house). Public house and drinking were (and to a lesser extent still are) inscribed in practice as opposed to the normative attacks on them.

In Sweden the smaller size of urban communities, together with their later growth (see Scase 1977), restricted the development of working-class sub-cultures. The drinking house played a similar role to that outlined above for British industrial communities (Magnusson 1985). However, the life-styles of Swedish workers tended to be more privatized than in Britain but, in part, this greater degree of privatization was a direct result of social control and disciplinary power.

Drink, social control and disciplinary power

It is no coincidence that the development of a temperance movement in Sweden ran almost exactly in tandem with industrialization, or that increasingly restrictive legislative controls on the sale of drink and the 'problem' of alcoholism developed as the nation rapidly industrialized between 1850 and 1950. The development of a fully

fledged occupational community reproducing its labour power through leisure time spent in the drinking house was, in part, broken with the advent of the so-called Goteborg system. The period from 1855 to 1900 in Sweden is characterized by the gradual enforced transference of drinking from the public to the private sphere, from the drinking house to the home.

The new methods of industrial production in Britain and Sweden with division of labour and removal of control of the labour process from the labourer required a new worker, disciplined and passive. Such an occupational role is incompatible with undisciplined drinking. Thus emerged a contradiction between the fostering of a market for the commodity drink and the incompatibility of drink with the new industrial labour process. This contradiction is not merely determined by changes in mode of production but is also related to developments in the technology and strategies of power. The factory-based labour process depends on discipline, a modality of power which renders bodily behaviour routine and repetitive, subject to codifiable rules, accessible to surveillance, to calculation (Foucault 1979). Disciplinary power is the capillary imposition of a heteronomy of the body aiming at the transformation of individuals and related to the requirements of capital for a new labour force (Foucault 1980, p. 158; 1981, pp. 140-1; Smart 1983, p. 122). Thus the factory system developed not as a functional means of increasing productive efficiency but as a means of implementing a disciplinary control over wage-labourers (Marglin 1976; The logic of the factory is political not economic; it is more efficient and profitable in terms of an economy *of power* (Foucault 1980, p. 38). The contradiction thus presupposes the class difference between capital owner and wage-labourer; the new methods of production created a capital-owning class with a direct interest in curbing working-class drunkenness (Harrison 1971, p. 40).

There was also the drunken 'mob'. Urbanization and demographic expansion was creating from the eighteenth century a large economically redundant population: the 'mob' - dangerous, unsupervised, escaping surveillance, drunk. Hence a further necessity for coordination and integration through discipline (Foucault 1980, p. 171). Thus social control, the subjection of people to normalizing judgement, is inscribed in the logic of disciplinary power (Foucault 1979, p. 304). It is worth noting in this context that the concern with working-class drunkenness is not necessarily related to an actual high incidence of drunkenness but is as much a sign of a moral and political challenge to the association of work and recreation with drink (Harrison 1971, p. 40).

So working-class leisure became an object of administrative and moral interest to the middle classes. Their capital, the means for creating wealth, lay in the hands of the workers; disciplined workers - capital and wealth was to be protected by a moralization of the population, by the 'administration of a cultural lobotomy and the implanting of a new morally superior lobe' (Storch 1977, p. 139).

With respect to drink, temperance reformers aimed at inculcating self-improvement and domesticity, privatized leisure dominated by bourgeois values and centring on the family home, at physically or psychologically separating the worker from the communal focus of the occupational community (Storch 1977, p. 149).

Excessive drinking was often blamed on the absence of the moral example of the

upper classes, ignoring the fact of drunkenness among the latter (Park 1983). Class segregation of drinking was connected with a concern for restoring 'wholesome personal contact between men of different social stations' (Storch 1977, p. 147).
disciplinary surveillance

This disciplinary surveillance and a concern to improve the morality of the working classes was particularly strong in Sweden. The Goteborg system began as an extralegal communal development and was later made compulsory through legislation and brought under increasing state control. In 1850 a group of the middle class bourgeoisie with a philanthropic interest in the alcohol trade organized a company in Falun which took over the operation of all drinking houses in that town giving up all revenues to the disposal of the municipal authorities. In the company charter it was stated that 'the morals and welfare of the working classes in our community have their worst enemy in the pub [Consequently] in these places a close scrutiny will be exercised in order that intemperate drinking may be checked instead of encouraged, that *brannvin* will never be dispensed on credit or account or to minors or persons already intoxicated and that cleanliness and order will be striven for to the highest possible degree' (quoted in Thompson 1935, p. 13). In other words the supposedly loose morality of the proletariat was to be checked by constant surveillance and the imposition of middle class standards of morality. Order was to be drawn into the disordered world of the drinking house. The method eventually spread over the entire country becoming obligatory through legislation in 1905. Carnegie, a Scot who visited Goteborg in the early years of the operation of the system, noted the difference between the Swedish company drinking house and the British gin palace: 'the fittings of the public houses rented by the company are not in the style of drinking palaces, resplendent in vulgar taste, with plate glass, mahogany, polished brass, and glittering with gilding, paint and flaring gas, but are simple and inexpensive nothing could be more orderly, sober, and respectable than the whole scene' (Carnegie 1873, pp. 10-12). One of the measures of the 1855 *brannvin* reform had been to enforce an association between food and drink in that food had to be available in licensed houses. Now the old disorderly drinking houses were not only to be cleaned up but also converted into cafes and restaurants. The pub was to become a thing of the past and consumption to be either privatized or 'civilized'.

The social embeddedness of drinking meant that temperance reform had little impact on levels of consumption in either Britain or Sweden (Harrison 1971, p. 306; Nycander 1967, p. 19) (Fig. 8-13). 'To abandon drink was to abandon society itself' (Harrison 1971, p. 50). Despite the advent of the Goteborg system in Sweden consumption rose to a maximum in the 1870s. Privatized leisure in Britain was unlikely to supersede communal drinking until more readily available consumer goods enabled an enriched home environment and until the values of consumerism could be fostered (ibid., p. 46). In some respects in Sweden the Goteborg system actually stimulated drinking because it was possible for the towns to make large profits from the sale of *brannvin* and pay for all the poor relief with this income.

The temperance movements had very different effects in Britain and Sweden. The one in Britain failed and became discredited. Harrison draws attention to the rebuttal of its central premises especially by the socialist movement: the notion that individual

personality was responsible for undisciplined drinking and the sectarian attack on the drink trade which became a scapegoat for more deeply rooted problems such as the centrality of drink in relation to poverty (ibid , ch 17) The period from 1880 to 1920 was one of political struggle in Sweden between right and left, fanatical prohibitionists and advocates of personal freedom, between the bourgeoisie and the developing socialist movement The first lodge of the Order of Good Templars was opened in Goteborg in 1879 This new temperance movement rapidly grew in strength stressing total abstinence and demanding prohibition Despite internal divisions amongst its supporters, especially the middle-class and religious factions of the Order and the socialists (Jonsson 1946), the question of prohibition was a live one at the turn of the century A referendum on prohibition was narrowly defeated in 1922 That prohibition was not introduced was partly due to the development of an alternative. the Bratt system of alcohol control, named after the Stockholm doctor Ivan Bratt who, with the backing of an influential lobby, put forward an alternative plan in pamphlets and newspaper

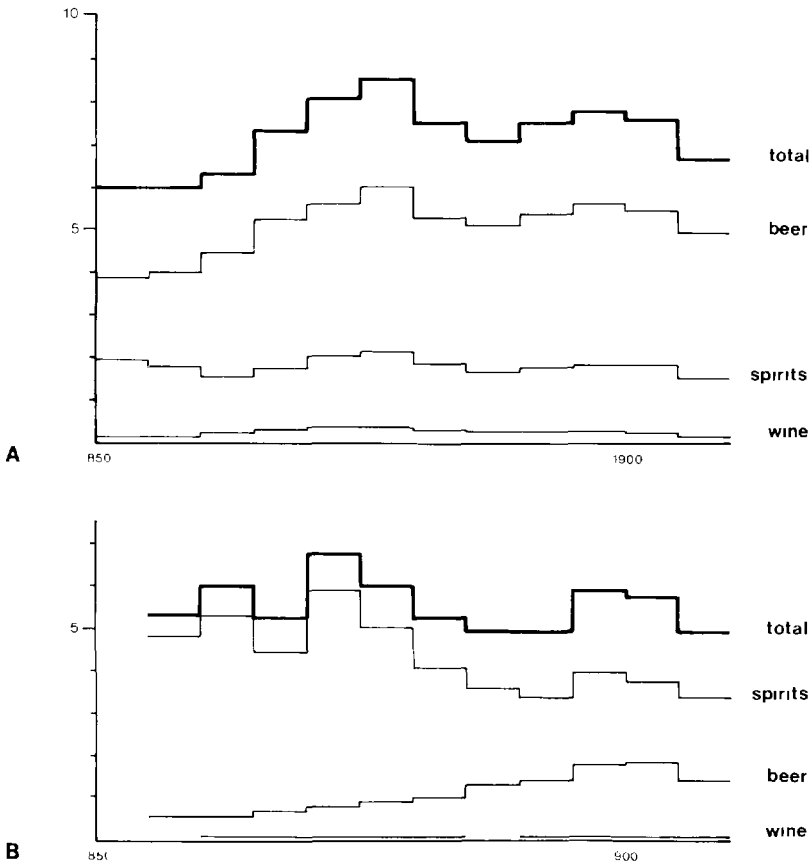


Fig 8 13 Per capita consumption (litres) of pure alcohol according to drink type for Britain (A) and Sweden B) 1850-1910 (Sources: Wilson 1940, Svensson 1973)

articles published between 1909 and 1912 (see Nycander 1967, Svensson 1973, Bruun 1984, for discussions)

The Bratt system was made obligatory under law from 1919. The two principles on which the system operated were removal of the private profit motive from the alcohol trade and control of the individual consumer by means of a rationing system. This system lasted until 1955.

The sole rights to the wholesale trade were vested in a state controlled company coordinating the manufacture, importation and distribution of all alcoholic beverages with the exception of beer (see below). The retail trade was vested in a series of localized system companies in the style of the old Goteborg system. Such companies could only be established in towns with a population greater than 5,000 inhabitants and most rural districts were entirely 'dry'.

The Bratt system permitted an unprecedented degree of disciplinary control and surveillance over the individual, almost perfect in its calculation and precision. In order to purchase spirits or wine it was necessary to obtain a ration book (*motbok*) from the local system company, within whose control area the applicant resided, and to which purchases were confined. Permits to buy alcohol were not granted to citizens who were

- (I) not over 21 years of age,
- (II) married women,
- (III) persons who had more than once during the last three years been found guilty of drunkenness,
- (iv) individuals convicted of crimes involving drunkenness,
- (v) persons committed to correctional institutions for alcoholics or those prohibited from drinking by the local temperance board (see below),
- (vi) persons convicted of selling, manufacturing or purchasing alcohol illegally.

The maximum spirit ration obtainable was four litres/month (reduced to three litres/month during World War II). Wine was not rationed as consumption was low, but all purchases were carefully noted down in the *motbok*. In practice very few individuals received the full ration after the first few years of the operation of the system. At the beginning of 1920, 20% of men and 77% of women received less than the legal maximum. By the end of the 1930s, the corresponding figures were 77% and 99% (Thompson 1935, p 112). The allocation of spirits was 'means tested' according to individual 'needs'. Applicants for a *motbok* were required to state on a special form their name, sex, age, occupation, place of employment, the parish in which they were registered, their income, capital, the amount of taxes paid and whether they had been in arrears for the past three years, the size of their family and the names, ages and dates of birth of all those members of the household in which they resided over 21 years of age and their record and reputation for sobriety. On the basis of this detailed personal information the allocation of spirits for each applicant was decided by personnel of the local system company. The allocation of spirits varied widely with the social standing of the individual applicant. Although the legal age to purchase spirits was 21 it was unusual for a man to receive a *motbok* until they were 25 or older. A married man had, in principle, the possibility of increasing his allocation, with age, to the maximum, provided he did

not fall into debt, receive social help, or be found guilty or suspected of temperance offences. As noted above it was impossible for a married woman to receive a *motbok* and self-supporting women rarely received more than one or two litres of spirits quarter (Systembolaget 1965, Thompson 1935, Socialstyrelsen 1952)

the *motbok* resembled a cheque book in which the maximum spirit allocation and associated purchasing restrictions were stamped. Detailed files on all consumers were kept at the local system company offices against which the signature of the holder of a *motbok* could be checked together with his/her ration allocation. These files were also open to the police and other public officials such as members of temperance boards. By means of the *motbok* and the files of the system company it was possible to keep a minute and precise registration and control of the drinking habits of even individual consumer, and any 'irregularities' could be investigated. For example, a man taking out his full ration of spirits within the first few days of the month and thereafter purchasing a large quantity of wine would almost certainly be subject either to an investigation or to surveillance by officials of the local system company in conjunction with checks by the police and the temperance boards for actual or suspected incidence of non-sobriety. Persons convicted of temperance offences would have their *motbok* confiscated for a shorter or longer period.

the *motbok* system was grossly discriminatory in terms of

- (I) sex - women were actively discriminated against both in terms of the possibility of obtaining a ration book and allowances allotted to them,
- (II) social class and standing - a close correlation existed between those holding the highest quotas and their social status (e.g., 1% of farm labourers received the full ration, 30% of businessmen in trade and communications),
- (III) income - the larger one's income, the more likely one was to receive a larger allowance (detailed statistics in SOU 1951:43). In 1930 the Stockholm system company rejected 136 applications solely on the grounds of 'miserable living conditions' (Thompson 1935, p. 116). Persons who did not pay their taxes on time were in danger of losing their ration books and those receiving social help were unlikely to obtain a ration,
- (IV) place of abode - persons living in rural areas generally received a lower ration.

Under the old Goteborg system social patterns of drinking had been largely transformed so that in the early years the Bratt system operated entirely in relation to sales for consumption off the premises. The result of this was that consumption in restaurants began to increase, and these were consequently brought under direct managerial control of the system companies and an elaborate system of rules was introduced intending to regulate consumption according to the time of day, the class of restaurant, the sex of the customer and the type of drink ordered. These controls on public consumption replicated those on private consumption in terms of both sexual and social discrimination. They ensured the continuance of privatized drinking if only to avoid greater surveillance in public. Checkers were frequently employed to inspect restaurants and to ensure, for example, that those ordering a drink also consumed it rather than giving it to someone else (Socialstyrelsen 1952, p. 271).

The Swedish brewing industry was not nationalized but brought under indirect state control. Breweries were spread over the entire country, strongly localized to towns and their rural hinterlands in which they had a virtual monopoly on sales promoted by legislation and an elaborate complex of cartel agreements with regard to area divisions and sales quotas (Gabrielsson 1970). The legislation was designed to restrict competition in the interests of temperance so that the effects of sales competition between breweries would not increase consumption. In 1919 a tripartite class system for beer was introduced on the basis of alcohol strength and in 1923 the strongest beer (Class III) was banned altogether on the domestic market and was only obtainable on a doctor's prescription.

It is clear that the Bratt system was directed in force towards underprivileged groups (women and the working classes) and especially tried to control the individual 'deviant drinker'. In addition to the moralizing forces of temperance attempting to uplift the British and Swedish working classes another aspect of disciplinary interest, displayed most stridently again in Sweden, was a general concern with public order, with bringing the dangerous classes under institutional surveillance (Fig 8 14). The imposition of an extensive penal discipline centring on the prison created a criminal class segregated from the general populace and constituted as dangerous to both rich and poor. This permitted the emergence of police and other predominantly state authorities exercising disciplinary and surveilling power (Foucault 1979, 1980 p 47). Just as the Swedish *motbok* system has no parallel in Britain the treatment of those individuals socially defined as alcoholics has no counterpart in British penal legislation.

The first Swedish 'alcoholic law' was eventually passed in 1913. It was primarily a public order measure aimed at the protection of society from unwanted alcoholics, using

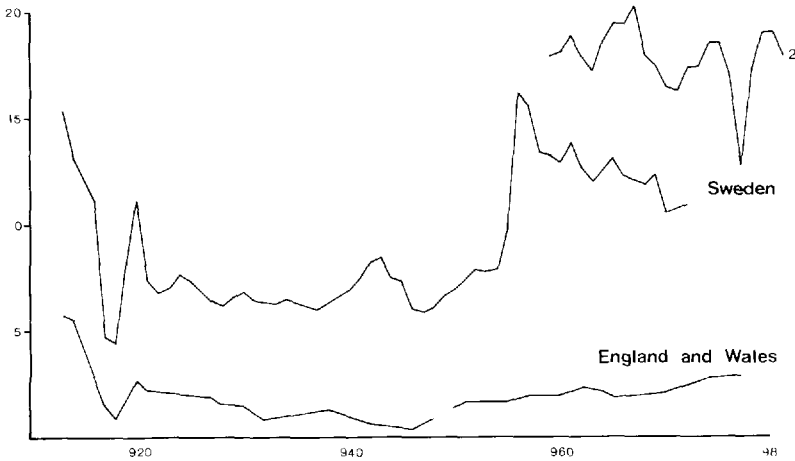


Fig 8 14 Convictions for drunkenness in England and Wales and Sweden per 1 000 inhabitants over 15 years of age (England and Wales 1913-48 convictions per total inhabitants). For Sweden the number of people taken into custody for drunkenness is also shown (2). Drunkenness in Sweden was decriminalized in 1977. Sources: Royal College of Psychiatrists 1979; SOU 1952:53; SOU 1974:90; *Alkohol tati til* 1973:82. The higher frequencies for Sweden are probably as much a result of increased police activity as indicating an objectively greater amount of drunk and disorderly conduct.

compulsory internment as a means to this end if necessary. According to the 1913 law, temperance boards were to be set up in every town, their duties being to promote temperance and take action against abusers. Changes in the alcoholism laws, in 1922, 1931, 1938 and 1954 permuted earlier interventions on the part of the temperance boards. The duties of the temperance boards, originally confined to the most visible and obviously chronic abusers' were thus continually extended and their powers widened such that 'preventive measures' and 'investigations' could be undertaken prior to the internment of the most intractable offenders (Fig 8 15). Detailed records were kept of actual or suspected temperance infringements. In the case of a report of an individual for temperance infringement, 'preventive measures' (Fig 8 15) might include talking

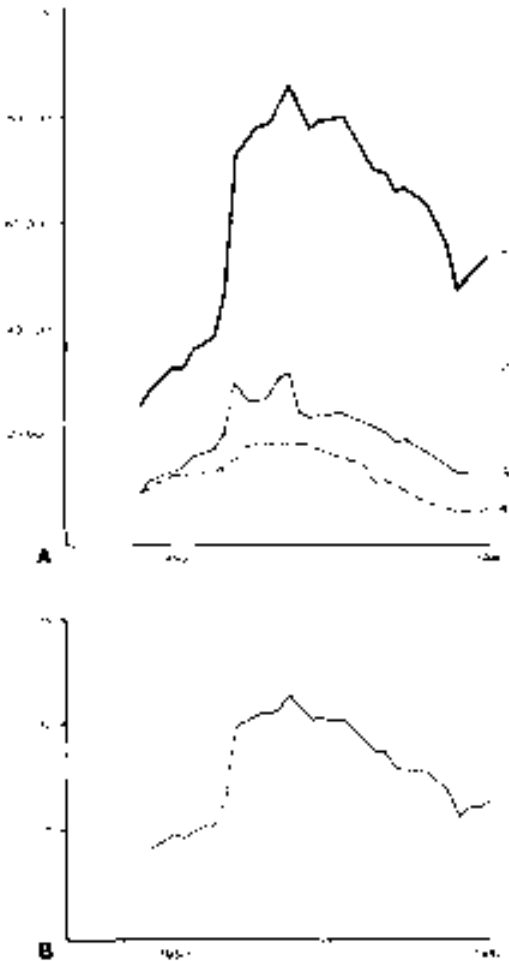


Fig 8 15 Activities of Swedish temperance boards 1945-80. Source *Socialvardstatistik*. A (1) total number of investigations (2) number of people only subject to an investigation for an alleged breach of temperance (3) number of people subject to slight preventive measures (4) number of people subject to more severe preventive measures including coercion and imprisonment. B the number of people per 1,000 inhabitants against whom a temperance board has proceeded.

to the individual, threats of committal, placing him or her under 'supervision' or giving aid to change his/her personal environment or place of work. An individual not influenced by these 'remedial' measures would then be interned (Wiklund 1948, Sjöhagen 1953, Bremberg 1973). A whole variety of institutional treatment became available for committal, ranging from internment in 'total institutions' (often converted prisons) to labour camps in the countryside, boarding with private persons of 'impeccable moral character', to hostels in which leisure hours away from work had to be spent (Sjöhagen 1954, Malmén 1966, Bremberg 1973).

Class contradiction formed the determinate background to these controls and the development of the 'problem' of working-class leisure in Britain and Sweden. Working-class leisure moved into the space of inter class relations where 'the discovery and emergence of disciplinary techniques of power cast the dominant classes as collective teacher prompting the people to learn and observe the one way of life considered properly human' (Bauman 1983, p. 36, see below on the teacher-judge). And drinking a lot just wasn't properly human. 'socially, they [alcoholics] do not fulfill the demands that are usually made on citizens. A high degree of alcoholic indulgence causes social unfitness' (Dahlberg 1939).

Just as the penal system tends to produce criminals and delinquents (new prisons are invariably rapidly filled), a system such as the one in Sweden designed to cure alcoholics invariably finds, or creates, people to treat. More broadly, 'problem' drinking with its moral and/or medical connotations is related to the expansion of disciplinary interest in the use of the body in leisure time and its health. The determinate relation between discipline and the capitalist labour process means that heavy drinking (however defined) and 'alcoholism' are defined as being problematic, as 'deviant'. This is in turn related to the contradiction between the behavioural consequences of drink and the disciplined way of life *required* of the capitalist worker. This is not to belittle the often severe personal and physical distress which may be associated with heavy drinking. It is, however, to question the identification of such drinking as deviant, as an object of societal intervention in the form of disciplinary (educative, medical/psychiatric, penal) and legislative (taxation, restrictions on availability and drinking hours) procedures.

Consumerism, the welfare state and the medicalization of drinking practices

Since the Second World War the British and Swedish nation states have produced highly developed welfare systems. The desire to maintain a healthy working population for capital accumulation and the consumption of consumer goods has led to an increasing degree of medicalization of drinking practices. The moralizing focus of the nineteenth and early twentieth-century temperance movements invoking the inculcation of bourgeois values centring on family-based leisure has become augmented in the welfare state by an increasing degree of medical intervention and definition of the perceived problem, that of alcohol addiction or alcoholism. Enforced disciplinary procedures such as the restriction of the availability of alcohol in Sweden or restrictions on drinking hours in Britain have become supplemented by a bio-politics of life focussing on the regulatory control of the health of the population. This regulatory 'goal' of the state increasingly conflicts with and contradicts the fostering of consumerism.

With the commodification of labour in capitalism and the institutionalization of disciplinary power in various state apparatuses the worker lost direct control of the labour process. The wage form of industrial capitalism created the consumer of alienated products of labour. The worker was 'free' to spend his her wage and consume in leisure time. Such a freedom acted as a compensation for loss of control over the labour process and, increasingly this *economization of power* led to the notion that freedom lay in leisure-time and leisure-space, consumer needs for leisure consumption being satisfied by appropriating marketed goods (Bauman 1983, pp 38-9). The maintenance of class hegemony, required, however, that the 'acceptable arena of human initiative is circumscribed by the act of purchasing' (Ewen and Ewen 1982, p 75). This entailed that a socially privatized existence, mediated by consumerism, came to supersede the mediation of social relations and consciousness by the conditions of class experience of labour (Alt 1976).

The exploitative and harsh nature of labour as a determinant of political struggle has given way, through higher wages and reduced work time, to the aim of improving at an ever increasing pace the standard of living, primarily by providing extended possibilities for consumption. Consequently labour becomes culturally devalued as a source of values. Individual freedom is defined symbolically through commodity consumption, through style. Consumable leisure is ennobled as a subjective answer to the discipline of the machine (Ewen and Ewen 1982, p 35).

And indeed the development of new bases for stable economic growth in monopoly capitalism has invoked an expanded use of disciplinary technology in industry related to a rationalization of the labour process. Deskilling and replacement of craft skills by specialized machine operations have accompanied the separation of mental (administrative) and manual (operational) labour in corporate capital organizations (Braverman 1974). The disciplined, atomized body of the worker, treated not as a unit but as a mechanism made up of separately usable parts is economically more efficient.

The development of consumerism and the extension of hegemonic concern to consumption as well as production means that the worker is no longer considered as merely a unit-in-production. Increasing attention has been paid to the prediction and control of the worker-consumer through companies' personnel management and marketing policies, aggressive advertising and a cultural apparatus directed at the shaping of a consumer consciousness (Ewen 1976, Ewen and Ewen 1982, Featherstone 1982, Inglis 1972, Packard 1981).

Already, in the nineteenth century new forms of distinct and specialized recreation-libraries, music halls, museums, for example, developed as diversions. In Britain these increasingly began to remove the public house from its central place within the recreation of the occupational community. In addition a mode of *national* recreation developed which has encouraged the replacement of unstructured sports and activities, which required unspecified amounts of space, time and participants, by spectator sports with a codified set of rules - consumable sport. Legislative and disciplinary control in Britain regularized and restricted drinking hours. Improved housing and the increasing availability of consumer goods meant that the home was in process of becoming the origin and physical setting for leisure - increasingly privatised leisure.

Class segregation in public drinking meant that private as opposed to public drinking began to be seen more and more as a mark of respectability

Regarding conceptions of the body, the belief that fatness signified health was challenged. The healthy body became the athletic body. The athletic physique associated with the new leisure sports required disciplined training and was incompatible with heavy drinking. The relation between work and drink (drink imparting strength and energy) was also weakened in that reduced working hours and better working conditions meant alcohol was less needed as a restorative.

These processes tended to sever the relationship between drink and work and weaken that between drink and recreation while the relationship between drink and socializing remained. These changes have continued in Britain with the increasing dissolution of the occupational community with its determinate structures of working-class localism, especially since the 1940s through the effects of changes in the production process and through the state's social and political policies (Clarke 1979, p. 240, Clarke *et al.* 1976, pp. 35ff).

In 1955 the popularly termed 'October revolution' occurred in Sweden - the Bratt system of alcohol rationing was abolished following the findings of a special government investigative committee (the 1944 Temperance Committee, which published seven lengthy volumes reviewing the entire system of alcohol control). The Bratt system had never been popular from its inception. Popular support for the temperance movement declined drastically after the 1920s. In an increasingly affluent consumer society developing after World War II a special alcohol rationing system stuck out like a sore thumb. Although in the 1950s only about one fifth of *motbok* holders were allowed the maximum ration of spirits the system was, ostensibly, only meant to restrict excessive and not moderate drinkers. Most damning of all was the realization that the system was a failure. Alcohol consumption had increased because of the rising ratio of people taking out their full ration to those who did not (there was a widespread popular belief that failure to take out the full ration might lead to reduced entitlements (Thompson 1935, p. 113, note 12)). The system of individual control of the excessive drinker was largely ineffective. For example, by far the greatest number of drunkenness offences were committed by precisely those individuals denied a *motbok* (Dahlberg 1951, p. 38). The very irregularity in which alcohol was treated in relation to other consumer goods stimulated and incited consumption (and still does).

The post-Bratt liberalization of alcohol control policies substituted individual control for an attempt to control total consumption, via a system of progressive taxation of drinks in relation to alcohol content. This was accompanied by an increased emphasis on the dissemination of information (e.g. in schools! and via advertising strategies intended to produce healthy drinking. Commercial advertising for alcohol was initially restricted and finally banned altogether (see below); Healthy drinking was promoted by an attempt to persuade people to consume drinks of lower alcohol content (i.e. wine and beer rather than spirits). Alcohol-free drinks were (and are) promoted and there was a general attempt to sever the connection between drink and leisure, drink and sociability - to promote a drug-free culture especially amongst the young (SOU 1974: 91, Socialstyrelsen 1983, pp. 52-3). These techniques are supplemented by continued

restrictions on the availability of alcohol, with strong beer, wine and spirits being sold only in the government alcohol monopoly (Systembolaget) shops. Sales in restaurants remain very closely regulated at a local government level. Permits to sell alcoholic drinks for consumption on the premises are comparatively few in number compared with Britain (Fig 8.16) and generally only given if food is part of the service. Prices of drinks in restaurants are so high that the sheer cost of public drinking ensures

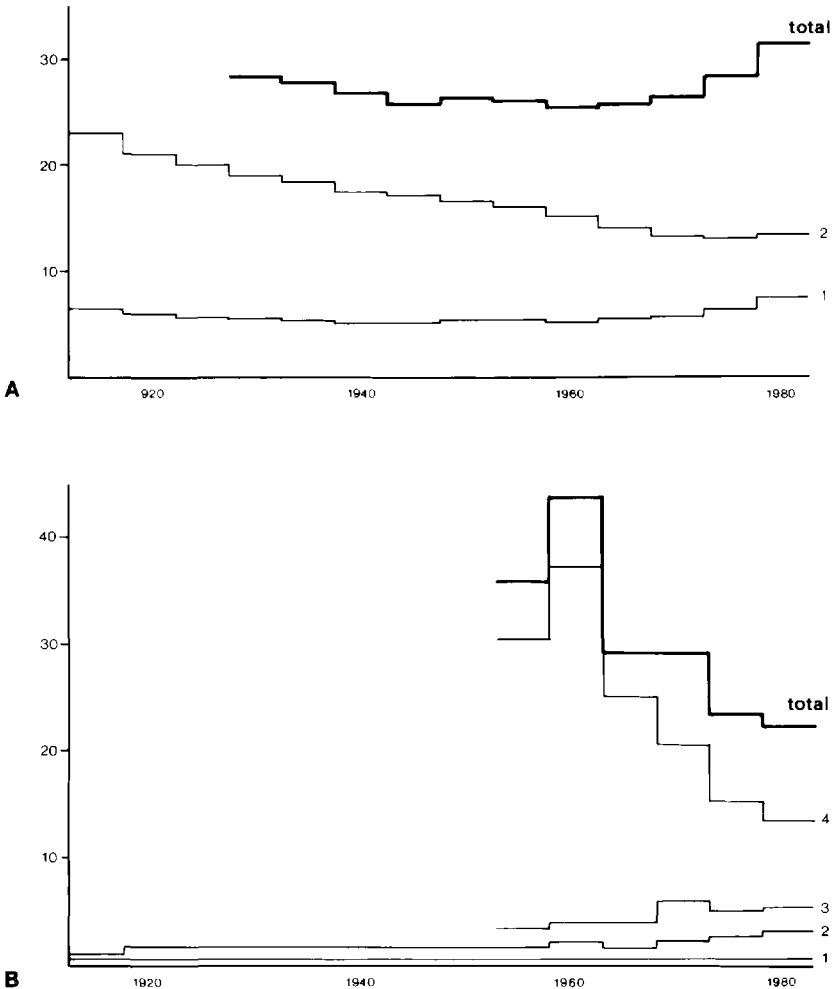


Fig. 8.16 The number of outlets per 10 000 inhabitants for alcohol

A England and Wales

- 1 alcohol for consumption off the premises
- 2 alcohol for consumption on and off the premises

B Sweden

- 1 Systembolaget (government alcohol monopoly retail shops)
- 2 restaurants
- 3 restaurants (Classes I and II beer only)
- 4 sales outlets for beer (Classes I and II)

privatized consumption (Fig 8 16B; An entire micropolitics of power is involved in processing applications to serve alcohol (Fig 8 17) which may be compared with the situation in Britain in which power is vested in local licensing magistrates. The wording of the Swedish law concerning licence applications is so ambiguous that, in practice, almost any grounds may be used by the numerous authorities invoked to refuse permission to serve alcohol (Vatanen and Lengvall 1983). An age restriction forbids the purchase of alcohol in the government monopoly shops, set at 20, despite the age of majority being 18. The present day restrictions in Sweden appear liberal in an historical perspective but contrast markedly with those in Britain where restrictions have, since the nineteenth century, been confined to granting licences for the sale of alcohol and, since 1828, with imposing restrictions on opening hours of public houses (see Wilson 1940, Monekton 1966, 1969).

In relation to the development of consumerism and increased leisure the consumption of alcohol in both countries has risen markedly since the 1940s (Fig 8 18) and in Britain all alcoholic drinks have been made freely available in supermarkets since the 1960s. Despite the far wider range of restrictions in Sweden, as compared with Britain throughout the twentieth century the perceived problem of alcoholism has remained. Alcohol is still considered 'one of our greatest social problems' (Proposition 1976 77 108 (Swedish government white paper)) yet consumption is considerably higher on a per capita basis in Britain (Fig 8 18) where government interest is still primarily fiscal, alcohol control a matter of minor interest and public opinion indifferent (Bradley

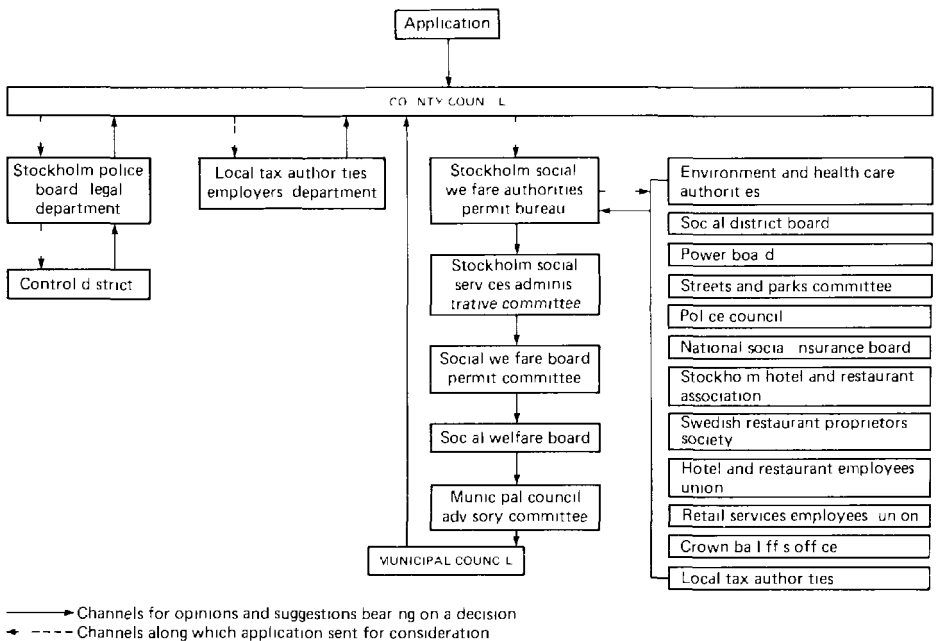


Fig 8 17 The micropolitics of power involving an application for a licence to serve spirits in Stockholm (after *Dagens Nyheter*, 14 July, 1983 p 21)

and Fenwick 1974) Indeed in Sweden alcohol consumption is on a per capita basis one of the lowest in the industrialized world yet it is one of the leading countries involved in alcohol research

The exceptional concern with alcohol 'problems' in Sweden, very closely tied up with disciplinary power, is intimately related to a massive proliferation of discourses on

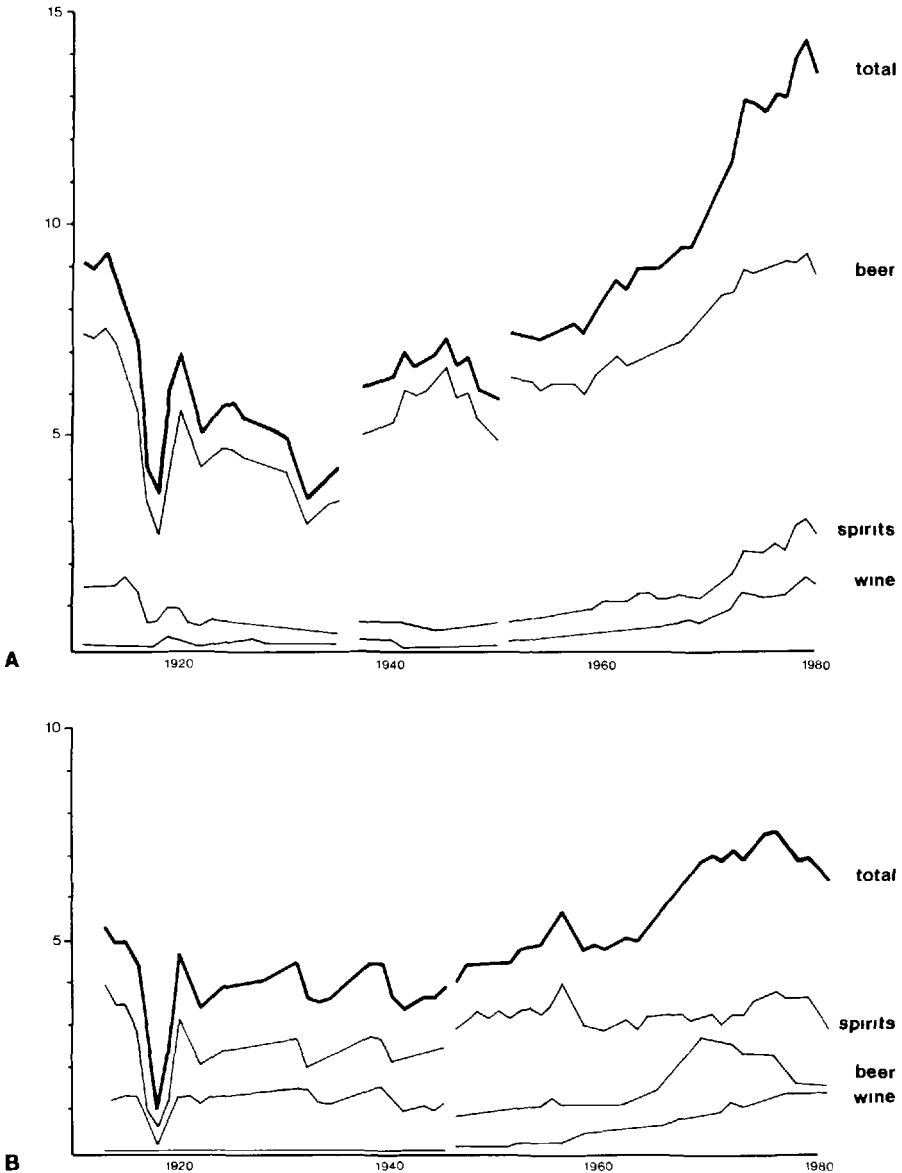


Fig 8 18 Per capita consumption (litres) of pure alcohol according to drink type for Britain (A) and Sweden (B). Sources: Brewers Society, Wilson 1940; SOU 1952: 52, SOU 1974: 90; *Alkoholstatistik* 1973–82 (Britain after 1951 per inhabitant over 15 years of age, Sweden after 1946 per inhabitant over 15 years of age)

alcohol and statistics concerned with every conceivable aspect of alcohol use, or potential use (e.g., attempts to estimate the degree of home distilling on the basis of the ratio of yeast sold to that required to make bread on the basis of the quantity of flour sold, the remaining yeast being assumed to be used in distilling (SAMO 1981 21, pp 14-15; to the investigations of the 1944 Temperance Committee concerning the frequency of venereal disease in relation to alcohol consumption (SOU 1951 43, pp 109-24) The exercise of disciplinary power produces both knowledges and their object It is certainly not the case that a simple objective high incidence of problems associated with alcohol 'naturally' gives rise to a legitimate and objective concern the very close connection between temperance agencies and research work done on alcohol and alcoholism attests to this

to a great extent, both in Britain and Sweden, the intervention of the law as a mechanism of control has been displaced by attempts to produce a normalization of the population, both moral and medical The universal reference has become the norm rather than the law the normative judgement of the doctor-judge, the social-worker-judge, the teacher-judge imposing homogeneity while measuring and observing individual deviance (Foucault 1979, pp 304-5) The medical imperative of health has complemented the notion of the disciplinary body The worker, the body-machine, is to be maintained as well as controlled These techniques of power relate to the insertion of a capitalist conception of the worker unit into the production consumption cycle

Since 1982 the old alcoholic laws in Sweden have been replaced by two acts, the Social Services Act and the Act on the compulsory care of abusers Social aid has thus been separated from the means of coercion, still maintained as a last resort Significantly, the old style temperance boards are no longer separate administrative agencies of state control but are integrated with the welfare services as a whole (social welfare, child welfare, welfare for the aged, etc.) This has broadened the means of social control of deviant drinkers in that the chances of them being 'recognized' are extended through the entire gamut of welfare services

Despite the impossibility of constructing any universally applicable definition of alcoholism (see e.g., Christie and Braun 1968, p 65) it nevertheless is the case that people do and have applied the terms 'alcoholic' and 'alcoholism' to what, at any historically contingent moment, appear to be clearly delineated persons or types of states The alcoholic, far from being a social fact is, rather, a social accomplishment (Schneider 1978), a product of discourse, classification, definition and struggle between various interested parties In the welfare state, medical definitions of 'problem' drinking as mental 'illness', rather than as a sign of a lack of essential moral fibre, tend to objectify drinking, removing it from its determinate, constitutive context The consumption of alcohol as drug and its physical consequences may then be treated by experts sanctioned by science and the state, observing all according to the healthy norm and treating the unhealthy, dysfunctioning, deviant individual The development of the welfare state is bound up with the transference of the power to detect and define the alcoholic from civil to medical authorities, involving the repudiation of the idea that the alcoholic was simply a social degenerate and the perception of alcoholism as an illness or a problem The apparent irrationality of excessive consumption becomes explained in the new

medical framework not only as illness, but as mental illness. It is not surprising, therefore, to find ever increasing proportions of deviant drinkers treated in mental or psychiatric hospitals or wards or, given the much greater concern with alcohol in Sweden, that the Swedish figures should dwarf those for Britain (Fig. 8 19). In the welfare state, to drink excessively has become linked to madness so the lunatic and the drinker become grouped together. The hospital has become a major agency of regulative social control (Fig 8 20, and the treatment or control of deviance is rooted in techniques of power over the body and in transformations of its conception (*cf.* Szasz 1975; Doyal 1979; Bologh 1981;

Consumerism is internally related to the techniques of disciplinary power discovered and increasingly exercised from the seventeenth century. While partly a resistance to, a compensation for institutional discipline, both consumerism and discipline form a

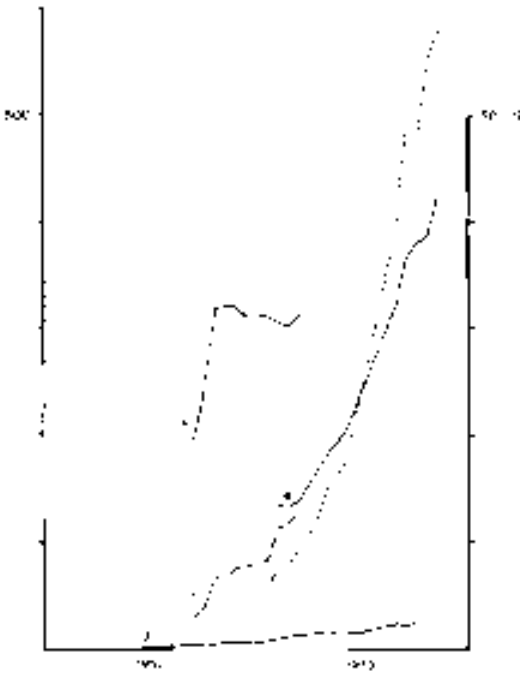


Fig. 8 19 The frequency of alcoholism in mental hospitals or psychiatric wards in Britain and Sweden per 60,000 inhabitants.

- 1 Sweden: frequency of patients with disorders associated with alcoholism in mental hospitals and psychiatric departments in general hospitals. Source: Hermer 1972.
- 2 Sweden: frequency of discharge, transferred and discharged/excluded of patients with disorders due to alcoholism from mental hospitals and psychiatric wards of general hospitals. Source: Statistiska Medel, London HS 1981: 7.
- 3 England and Wales: admissions to mental hospitals and units under regional hospital boards and teaching hospitals where the primary or secondary diagnosis was alcoholism or alcohol psychiatric illness. Royal College of Psychiatrists 1979.
- 4 Sweden: the percentage of diagnosed patients who were alcoholics. Source: Hermer 1972.
- 5 Sweden: the percentage of diagnosed male patients who were alcoholics. Source: Hermer 1972.

determinately contradictory nexus of meanings and attitudes focussed on the human body. This nexus also includes the regulatory interest in the health of the body.

Consumerism is not about freedom from control but is about self-imposed 'autonomous' discipline: 'it is about the joy of controlling the body of one's own individual will, with the help of sophisticated products of technology which offer the visibility of the formidable power of one's controlling agency' (Bauman 1983, p. 40). So the body needs to be trained, cultivated, taught, and thus brought into line. In training the body is an object of both institutional heteronomous discipline and individual autonomous self-surveillance. In such discipline, the body is viewed both positively and negatively, some aspects to be developed, some suppressed; the body is both redeeming and sinful. Consumption of a product either magically brings about a desired end or acts as recompense for lack of it (*cf* Williamson 1978, on advertising the product as magical agent and/or substitute for a desired end). Consumption opposes prohibition: cook-books and diet books; drinking and temperance and health education.

Health education demands constant vigilance of the body as machine, self-responsibility for maintenance of health and appearance. This appeal of the health educationalist to the rationality and hence value-freedom of self-preservation masks the influence of the consumer culture's idealization of youth and beauty (Featherstone 1982, p. 25) - consumerism's norm.

So according to the imperative of health, the body must remain an object of constraint and drill however much it consumes in displaced compensation for the capillary operation of institutional discipline.

Such consumption is abstract in that the use-value of the product is suppressed in relation to its abstract exchange-value. So 'the body is trained into a capacity to will and absorb more marketable goods, and . . . routines are instilled through a self-inflicted drill which makes possible just that' (Bauman 1983, p. 41). The body is not to discern



Fig. 8.20 View of Lund, Sweden, from the south. In *Ceremonial Chemistry*, Szasz (1975) writes of the transference of the power to define deviants in capitalism from the theocratic (religious/Christian morality) to the therapeutic (scientific/medical) state. The decline of religious/civil power to define the deviant and the rise of scientific/medical power is symbolized in the architecture of Lund (and other Swedish cities). The huge modern building dominating the skyline and visible for miles around from all directions is the hospital. The cathedral with its twin towers, to the right, is scarcely visible. Pure chance? The hospital is the largest employer in Lund and for all Sweden no less than 10.5% of the working population is employed in health care. (Photo: John Duncan)

and appreciate but merely to absorb. It doesn't matter *what* is consumed but merely the style and symbolism of the act of consumption.

The brewing industry

It is in the context of a consumer society that the general activities of the British and Swedish brewing industries, and their products, since the 1950s needs to be viewed. In both countries rationalization, mergers and take-overs have dramatically diminished the number of breweries with a national rather than regional distribution network for their products (Fig. 8.21). This trend is particularly marked in Sweden with a reduction in the number of factories from 223 in 1903, to 16 in 1983. The repeal of legislation restricting competition, occurring at the same time as the abolition of the Bratt system led to one company, Pripps (now 75% state owned) establishing a virtual monopoly over the entire beer market, accounting for 74% of all beer sales by 1977 (Dsl 1978: 34; Anell and Persson 1984, p. 58). In 1983 one of Pripps' brands (Pripps Bla) had a 33% market share of all beer brands (*Prippsnytt* 1983, p. 2; PLM 1983).

In Britain a similar development occurred with six breweries dominating the market. Increasingly oligopolist, the larger British breweries rationalized pub design, altered the product on sale and replaced tenants with managers producing a tendency towards centralized rather than local control over the context of public drinking (Hutt 1973; Boston 1977; Protz. 1978). Such a development was related to attempts to open up the drinking market to a new customer: a young (*cf.* Featherstone 1982, pp. 21f.), classless 'consumer' rather than a 'member'. As Clarke notes 'this newly forged interpellation dissolves previous patterns and habits of "how to drink" and substitutes for them preferred "styles" of drinking' (Clarke 1979, p. 245). With the decline of the British

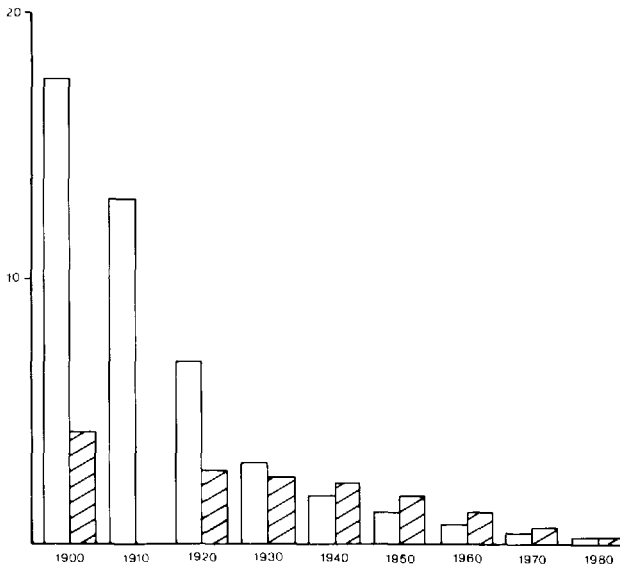


Fig. 8.21 The number of breweries in Britain and Sweden (shaded) per 100,000 inhabitants. Sources: Brewers Society; Anell and Persson 1984; Mårtensson 1961 (no data for Sweden 1910).

occupational community, the pub is less patronized by occupational peers with the fetishized status of wage-labourers reproducing their relationship to work in the public bar, than by consumers seeking entertainment and symbolical affirming their mobility and freedom (Alt 1976, p 72;

Emphasis on styles of drinking and consumption has the concomitant that it matters less what the product is or tastes like than what it means. The original use value of the product becomes submerged beneath its exchange value in a market of images. The individual is on display, is self-conscious, exercising self scrutiny, self-surveillance measuring appearance and performance against the norm (Featherstone 1982 pp 19-20)

The old tripartite class system was retained in Sweden for beer following the abolition of rationing and the strong Class III beer was made available in the government alcohol monopoly (Systembolagets) shops. The weaker Class I and II beers were sold freely in food shops as before. The introduction of a fourth class of medium strength beer (mellanöl - Class IIB) in 1965 was related to an attempt to radically alter the image of beer. Prior to the 1960s beer was widely regarded as a drink associated with older working-class males. The advertising campaign associated with the new beer was directed to making beer classless and to appeal both to the young and women (see below). Image was all that mattered. The advertising images were numerous and provocative to those concerned with temperance. The effectiveness of this campaign and the rapid increase in beer consumption, especially amongst the young, eventually led to the withdrawal of this beer from the market through legislation in 1977. However the image and style value of beer remained and continues to be promoted by the breweries, as it does in Britain.

So beer is marketed by brewery companies like any other product and such companies have not failed to exhibit all the features of the capitalist corporation - vigorous advertising programmes and market creation, especially in the last 20 years. But beer is not just any consumable item, it has strong historical and social links with community life and socializing in both Britain and Sweden although after legislative and social intervention, most beer in Sweden is drunk in the private home. Beer is also an alcoholic drink, a drug. Alcohol, in its many varieties, may be consumed as intoxicant, as food, as medicine, social lubricant, or as religious sacrament. This density of alcohol's social and historical mythology (of Barthes 1973c), the multiplicity of use and exchange values, resonate with the contradictory nexus of the meanings of the human body in contemporary capitalism. Drinking is inserted into structures of disciplinary power, consumerism, and a health imperative of a bio politics of the population.

We have aimed to show how the capitalist state may be held to relate to the production and consumption of alcohol through a number of relatively autonomous institutions. To summarize, the major fields of relation are

- (1) (a) [he production of alcohol as a commodity bears on commercial, industrial and agricultural policies and interests,
- (b) production of alcohol contributes substantial revenue to the treasury through exaction of excise duty

- (2) The consequences of alcohol consumption bear on
- (a) public order,
 - (b) industrial productivity
 - (c) the health of the population

(cf Makela and Viikari 1977, Makela et al 1981, Bruun *et al* 1975) State intervention may occur through reference to four major forms of power

- (1) legal-juridical power which creates restrictive or enabling legislation,
- (2) disciplinary power focussing on the body as a machine to be supervised and placed under surveillance,
- (3) techniques of power focussing on the health of the population (Foucault 1981, Part 5),
- (4) techniques of power channelled through modes of information dissemination gathering and processing, e g television, radio, publications, computer technologies (Poster 1984)

We have attempted to avoid a simplistic conception of the state as a unitary repressive power, as a coherent set of institutions performing a pre-given role in the reproduction of capitalism. A lack of coherent functionality is contained within the logic of the capitalist state. The state fosters consumerism, pursues policies which enable the production and consumption of alcohol as a commodity in the capitalist economic cycle, while exercising various forms of power in dealing with the consequences of drinking on the population. Consumption opposes and contradicts control, discipline and health. In returning to the can designs we shall consider two related forms of everyday material culture - advertisements and newspapers - as a way of refining and elaborating this fundamental contradiction we have noted as structuring drinking practices, preparing the ground for explaining the structure of difference which the can designs exhibit.

ALCOHOL IN THE MEDIA AND ADVERTISING

Drink and the news

Newspapers, as ideological vehicles, to a large extent 'produce' as much as 'reflect' public opinion not only expressing but also repressing and excluding certain issues from discussion. The mass media and the formation of a public and public opinion are, historically, mutually supportive. As Gouldner has put it, a public is formed when the links between culture and social interaction are, in essentials, attenuated so that people can share something (e g, news) without being involved in a process of interpersonal interaction (Gouldner 1976, p. 109). Newspapers, and the mass media more generally, actively create and facilitate a process by which *a public*, as opposed to a *community*, is formed by dramatically increasing the exchange of information at a distance. Newspapers thus mediate a relatively abstract experience of the social world varying in terms of social and spatial distance from the readership (local, home, international news, etc.) and produce a diffuse but nevertheless structured set of meanings for consumption. Their overt content owes much to competition for readers and advertisers within the

general field of cultural production, endlessly seeking to increase their readership at the expense of competitors, involving the production and subsequent interpretation of information which, by its very inclusion, becomes identified as 'news'.

We are concerned in this section to investigate the sets of meanings newspapers present as associated with drinking, to ascertain to what extent alcohol rates as a news item, and the meanings associated with this news coverage. We again undertook a comparative study of Britain and Sweden, analysing newspapers over a four-month period from September to December 1983. Since it was beyond the scope of this study to analyse a whole range of different types of British and Swedish newspapers and magazines it was decided to choose two 'serious', as opposed to tabloid, daily papers with a similar political outlook and a national distribution. For Britain *The Guardian* was studied and for Sweden, *Dagens Nyheter*. Both of these papers are of identical page size with similar circulation figures and both put forward an 'independent liberal' political position. In Britain the press is far more centralized than in Sweden or for that matter most other European countries (see Williams 1979). Although *Dagens Nyheter* has its primary circulation in Stockholm and the surrounding area, it is also read in all parts of Sweden and may be held to fulfill a dual role as a Stockholm and a national newspaper. At the time the analyses were undertaken *Dagens Nyheter* had larger circulation figures than any other daily morning newspaper in Sweden. By contrast the circulation figures for *The Guardian* by British standards are small but truly national. Since *Dagens Nyheter* has a periodicity of seven issues a week and *The Guardian* only six a week, a British 'liberal' Sunday newspaper, *The Observer*, was also analysed to further facilitate adequate comparison. Although, inevitably, there are differences in the amount of editorial and non-editorial matter published in the British and Swedish newspapers, whether articles are written about alcohol or advertisements inserted is a matter of choice largely independent of overall newspaper size.

Table 8.4 gives the results of the survey of the number of articles written about alcohol and the number of adverts. An obvious and striking contrast exists. While 58 articles were written about alcohol in the British newspapers over the four-month period, 203 appeared in *Dagens Nyheter*. When the number of adverts is considered the situation is reversed. *The Guardian* and *The Observer* contained 95% more adverts than *Dagens Nyheter*. This difference is, however, a result of differences in alcohol control policies between the two countries rather than a reluctance on the part of those concerned with marketing alcohol to advertise in Sweden. Since 1979, advertisements in the press, apart from trade journals, have been banned in Sweden for spirits, wine and strong beer. No such restrictions exist in Britain and for the four-month period analysed there was an interesting trend in the British data - the number of articles about alcohol declined from September to December while the number of adverts increased significantly, a trend obviously geared to persuade consumers to buy alcohol for the Christmas/New Year holiday period.

A contrast in the visibility of alcohol exists between the British and Swedish newspapers. In Britain alcohol is primarily visible as a concrete marketed product available for consumption through the medium of advertisements. In Sweden alcohol is highly visible but in another way - as an abstract product to be discussed, dissected and

Table 8.4. The frequency of articles written about alcohol and alcohol adverts in British and Swedish newspapers for the period September-December 1983

month	A		B		C		D		E	
	G+O	DN	G+O	DN	G+O	DN	G+O	DN	G+O	DN
Sept.	21	45	40	6		4	14		8	3
Oct.	15	49	70	4	1	4	15	—	9	1
Nov. ¹	12	59	89	3		6	29		21	
Dec. ²	10	50	111	3	—	4	32	—	29	2
Total	58	203	310	16	1	18	90	—	67	6

G: *The Guardian*, O: *The Observer*, DN: *Dagens Nyheter*.

A - number of articles written about alcohol (editorial matter)

B - number of adverts

C - number of front page articles

D - number of front page adverts

E - number of colour adverts

1 - Two issues of *The Guardian* and one issue of *The Observer* lost because of an industrial dispute.

2 - Five issues of *The Guardian* lost because of an industrial dispute and one issue of *The Observer* and two issues of *Dagens Nyheter* lost because of Christmas holidays.

debated. This contrast in the forms of visibility of alcohol is replicated when we consider differences between the newspapers in terms of the number of times alcohol rates as a front page news item, front page adverts, and the sizes of the articles and the adverts. Alcohol was only given front page coverage once in *The Guardian*, never in *The Observer*, but no less than 18 times in *Dagens Nyheter*. Adverts never occurred on the front page of *Dagens Nyheter* while being inserted on the front page of 90 editions of *The Guardian* and *The Observer*. Similarly, a high proportion of Swedish articles about alcohol (about 20%) tend to be lengthy, occupying more than 26% of a newspaper page whereas only two articles in the British newspapers were of any length, this difference being reversed in relation to advert size.

The survey thus reveals a much higher degree of news coverage of alcohol in Sweden than in Britain but what of the content of the articles? The topics discussed were classified according to 14 general content categories, in terms of newspaper classification, and attitude expressed toward alcohol consumption (Table 8.5). The results of this analysis (Table 8.6) indicate that the major topics discussed in the British articles concerned alcohol production, consumption and sales figures and articles about wine as a cultural drink in association with food preparation accounting for 67% of the total number of articles. This correlates with an emphasis in terms of the newspaper classification on women, personal, consumer affairs and finance. Put in another way the emphasis is on alcohol in relation to capital investment and profit making (e.g., articles about investing in vintage wines or brewery profits rising during the long hot summer of 1983) and as a product intimately related to leisure time activities (e.g., knowledge of the correct wine to serve with such and such a dish). The articles in *Dagens Nyheter* are more evenly divided across a whole range of issues. Aspects of legislation, alcohol and crime, temperance organizations and pubs and restaurants, topics not discussed in the

Table 8.5. *Variables recorded for the newspaper analysis*Var. *Topics discussed* (variables 1-14)

- 1 Health (e.g., alcohol related diseases)
- 2 Alcoholics and alcoholism (case studies of individuals, etc.)
- 3 Welfare and social policy
- 4 Legislation and issues arising from it (e. g., restrictions on sale of alcohol)
- 5 Drinking and driving
- 6 Alcohol and crime (e.g., thefts of alcohol; smuggling)
- 7 Illegal trading or production of alcohol (e.g., home distilling)
- 8 Temperance organizations, teetotallers, temperance related organizations
- 9 Alcohol production (breweries, vineyards, finance, etc.)
- 10 Alcohol marketing (e.g., prices; selling wine; new initiatives; Swedish Systembolaget alcohol stores)
- 11 Alcohol consumption (consumption and sales figures)
- 12 Wines and food (cultural issues)
- 13 Pubs and restaurants
- 14 Other

Articles in terms of newspaper classification (variables 15-21)

- 15 Home news
- 16 Foreign news
- 17 Arts
- 18 Women / Personal / Consumer affairs
- 19 Financial
- 20 Sports
- 21 Letters

Articles in terms of attitude to alcohol (variables 22-24)

- 22 Positive
- 23 Neutral or not made explicit
- 24 Negative

British articles, were given fairly substantial coverage in Sweden (about 35% of the total number of articles). While a substantial number of articles were concerned with alcohol marketing (13%) the main object of discussion was the Systembolag government alcohol monopoly with articles about mundane features such as experiments in queuing systems for customers, and detailed accounts of price rises. Illegality was a favourite topic for discussion, no less than 25% of the articles being concerned with drinking and driving, illegal production of alcohol (home distilling) and trading (illegal drinking clubs) and crimes involving alcohol. Most of the crimes reported were not acts of physical violence following drinking but thefts or smuggling of alcoholic beverages. Corresponding with these topics the majority of the articles rated, in terms of newspaper classification, as home news. Attitude of the articles to alcohol was difficult to record without a very detailed semantic analysis. Unless very obvious it was recorded as 'neutral or not immediately evident'. As we might expect, in those articles written fairly explicitly a greater number of those in Britain expressed a positive attitude toward alcohol consumption while in Sweden a larger proportion were negative or restrictive in tone.

We know of no comparable study in Britain but in Sweden a similar survey was carried out during 1970 using a sample of 56 newspapers and magazines (Englund, Solberg and Svensson 1974). This survey showed a similarly high number of articles

Table 8.6. Results of the content analysis of numbers of articles about alcohol

		Topics discussed													
Variables:		1		2		3		4		5		6		7	
month		G+O	DN	G+O	DN	G+O	DN	G+O	DN	G+O	DN	G+O	DN	G+O	DN
Sept.		3	1		4	3	4		3	3	4	—	4	—	5
Oct.			1	1	4	—	4	—	3	—	1	—	3	1	4
Nov.			2	2	3		5		3		2	—	11		5
Dec.		—	3	—	3	—	1	—	4	1	5	—	2	—	5
Total		3	7	3	14	3	14	—	13	4	12	—	20	1	19
% Total		5	3	5	7	5	7	—	6	7	6	—	10	2	9
		8		9		10		11		12		13		14	
month		G+O	DN	G+O	DN	G+O	DN	G+O	DN	G+O	DN	G+O	DN	G+O	DN
Sept.				2	1	2	4	1	3	7	4	—	—	—	8
Oct.		—	3	3	3	—	9	5	2	5	5	—	6	—	1
Nov.			7	4	3	2	11		1	4	4	1			1
Dec.		—	4	2	3	—	3	—	7	6	5	—	—	1	5
Total			14	11	10	4	27	6	13	22	18	—	7	1	15
% Total		—	7	19	5	7	13	10	6	38	9	—	3	2	7
		Newspaper classification													
		15		16		17		18		19		20		21	
month		G+O	DN	G+O	DN	G+O	DN	G+O	DN	G+O	DN	G+O	DN	G+O	DN
Sept.		6	37	1	1	1	1	9	6	3	2	—	—	—	—
Oct.		2	18	3	3	—	—	7	11	3	1	—	—	—	3
Nov.		2	41					6	16	4	2	—	—	—	—
Dec.		2	36	1	2	—	1	4	6	2	5	—	—	—	—
Total		12	132	5	6	1	2	26	39	12	10				3
% Total		21	65	9	3	2	1	45	19	20	5	—	—	—	1
		Attitude													
		22		23		24									
month		G+O	DN	G+O	DN	G+O	DN								
Sept.		9	4	10	35	2	6								
Oct.		5	10	9	32	1	7								
Nov.		4	4	6	43	2	12								
Dec.		1	6	8	37	1	7								
Total		19	24	33	147	6	32								
% Total		33	12	57	72	10	16								

G: *The Guardian*, O: *The Observer*, DN: *Dagens Nyheter*. Variable numbers refer to Table 8.5.

about alcohol in the Swedish press, especially in daily newspapers and an advertisement frequency of between 8.42 and 4.10 adverts per issue (*ibid.*, pp. 19-22, Tables 1-4) in the large daily newspapers; 5.49 adverts per issue during a 'normal week' and 8.42 adverts per issue in the two days immediately preceding the June midsummer holiday. This advertising rate is considerably in excess of a 'normal week' for the 1983 sample of British newspapers (1.43 to 3.17 adverts per issue) and were it not for the legislative

restrictions in operation in Sweden today we might expect to find not only a considerably higher number of articles about alcohol but a higher advertising rate.

In general, then, the newspaper survey highlights the contrast between Britain and Sweden regarding the social meaning of drink: in Britain, primarily a product for consumption, in Sweden, alcohol as an abstract product, topic for concern and discussion.

Advertisements

As Williams (1980, p. 184) has noted, advertising is, in a sense, 'the official art of modern capitalist society: it is what "we" put up in "our" streets and use to fill up half of "our" newspapers and magazines'. Advertising is increasingly conspicuous, permeating all areas of social life from the public and political to the private arena. The material products sold through advertising are never in themselves enough, even in the simplest of adverts, but imbued with denotative and connotative social meanings, meanings in part created through the advertising medium, and assigned to different products through play on underlying structural principles, through reference to and elaboration of ideas and practices of our capitalist society: 'advertisements are selling us something else besides consumer goods: in providing us with a structure in which we, and those goods are interchangeable, they are selling us ourselves' (Williamson 1978, p. 13). So adverts create systems of difference, distinguish one product from another in the same category, assigning distinctive meaning to products for sale.

Advertising may have a profound effect on influencing drinking and public knowledge about alcohol, for example by strengthening or weakening the association in people's minds between alcohol and lifestyles or desirable activities. In a more general way advertisements may have an effect on the social acceptability of alcohol and of the industries that produce and market it. Many analyses of alcohol advertisements have been concerned to reveal such factors as play upon individual susceptibilities (e.g. Bromme 1971; Breed and DeFoe 1979; Strickland, Finn and Lambert 1982). Our concern here is more to develop a critique of alcohol advertising obliquely, while concentrating on analysing the range of social meanings associated with drink in British and Swedish advertisements.

We are interested in three sets of questions:

- (1) To what extent are different meanings associated with drinking in British and Swedish advertisements?
- (2) To what extent do these meanings differ according to the type of drink being advertised, i.e. wine, spirits and beer?
- (3) How do these meanings relate to an understanding of contemporary beer can or bottle label design?

Sampling - problems

Before presenting the results of a series of analyses it is necessary to consider the nature of state alcohol policies in relation to advertising in Britain and Sweden. For Britain the situation is quite simple. There are no statutory restrictions whatsoever on the advertising of alcoholic drinks other than those which apply to advertising in general. Only a few

voluntary limitations exist with a limited degree of legal backing television companies do not usually accept advertisements for spirits, some publishers restrict alcohol advertising in magazines intended for young people, alcohol advertisements should not be aimed specifically at the young or associate drinking with drinking (CPRS 1982, p 56)

In Sweden, since 1917 with the advent of state control over wholesale and retail distribution of all alcoholic beverages, with the exception of beer, alcoholic drinks produced in Sweden (i.e. spirits and some wine) have not been advertised. All advertising was therefore initiated by agents for imported brands and by the Swedish breweries. This advertising was effectively free and increased steadily in frequency (SOU 1974: 91, pp 265-6, Tables 20.1 and 20.2). In association with the abolition of alcohol rationing in October 1955 a six month temporary ban on advertising was introduced and during the 1960s and 1970s a series of voluntary agreements were made between the government alcohol monopoly, the Swedish brewers association and agents for foreign wine and spirits importers. Flagrant disregard for these guidelines might lead to an import ban on the part of the government alcohol monopoly or enforced withdrawal of a particular advertisement. The main feature of these voluntary agreements was an agreement on the part of the brewers not to advertise strong beer (Class III). This permitted a virtually free hand in advertising beer not sold in the government liquor stores (Classes I, IIA and IIB). During the late 1960s and early 1970s a flood of unrestricted advertisements for beer, especially the new middle strength 'mellanol' appeared.

Since the early 1970s an extensive series of restrictions, voluntary and compulsory, on advertising alcohol in Sweden (SOU 1976: 63, Bilaga 3, SOU 1974: 92, Bilaga 6, pp 53-6) poses problems for a valid comparison of the meanings ascribed to alcohol and different classes of alcoholic drinks in British and Swedish advertisements since any differences noted might be the result of different restrictions on advertising content rather than choice on the part of the advertiser. In 1976 in Sweden a restrictive code of practice prompted by prevalent abuses of previous voluntary agreements, restricted wine and spirits advertisements to a picture of the product, raw ingredients used to manufacture it and such features as glasses and serving equipment. The wording of such advertisements was similarly restricted.

After a series of government investigative committees and much debate, advertising for all alcoholic drinks, except beer Classes I and II, was eventually banned by law in 1979. Beer advertising was virtually restricted to newspapers and magazines. The fact that advertising for certain of the weaker classes of beer was still permitted was, no doubt, due in part to an extensive propaganda campaign on the part of the Swedish breweries who consistently argued that, in effect, to advertise beer (of the weaker kinds) promoted temperance, since if people drank beer this might encourage them to drink spirits and wine, drinks higher in alcohol content, less frequently (Hamberg 1978, *Fakta* 1978, pp 12-13).

In order to mitigate some of these problems it was necessary to obtain a sample of Swedish advertisements prior to 1979 when the spirits and wine advertising ban came into force and over a long period of time before the fairly stringent voluntary agreement on wine and spirits advertising was introduced in 1976. A systematic sample of wine,

spirits and beer advertisements was taken from a monthly periodical, *Det Basta*, for the period 1966-1979 (1966-1980 for beer advertisements) *Det Basta* (the Swedish language version of *Readers Digest*) was chosen for two reasons, first it contained a consistently high number of alcohol advertisements per issue, and secondly, circulation figures were high (*c.* 230,000-350,000 copies sold every month during the sampling period) This sample of old advertisements was supplemented by a collection of beer advertisements from 1983 Of the 16 adverts which appeared in the Swedish newspaper survey from *Dagens Nyheter* (see above) only ten were beer advertisements The remaining six adverts were placed in the paper by the Systembolaget alcohol monopoly designed to improve its public image or warn people of the 'dangers' of alcohol consumption, especially the young No temperance adverts appeared in the British newspapers sampled Since the number of adverts was so small an additional random sample of twenty different adverts was taken from the evening newspaper with the largest circulation figures, *Expressen*, and six different monthly or weekly magazines (see Table 8.8 with large circulation figures which might be expected to appeal to different social groups or interests This sample, although small, is representative of the types of beer advertisements being produced during 1983 Since these advertisements are somewhat restricted in content as a result of governmental regulations, in the comparisons which follow between the British and the Swedish advertisements the older beer advertisements are used in preference to those from 1983 if significant differences occur

For Britain a 50% random sample of the 310 advertisements from the British newspaper survey was taken, stratified according to drink type as spirits advertisements were roughly twice as frequent as wine advertisements A weakness of the British data is that only three advertisements for beer appeared during the four month period Most adverts for beer occur on TV, radio and on billboards All billboard adverts in the Newcastle upon Tyne area were photographed in January 1984 and again in April 1985 to provide 25 different adverts for analysis In spite of the difficulties in obtaining the sample, we are confident that it is adequate for our purposes

The advertisements

Table 8.7 gives the variables recorded for a content analysis of the adverts and is based in part, on discussions of advertising in Andren, Ericsson, Ohlsson and Tannsjö (1978) Chapman and Egger (1983), Dyer (1982), Millum (1975), Williamson (1978: and Winship (1981) As all the adverts were coded jointly no problems of inter-coder reliability arise and any possible biases in determination are at least likely to be consistent Table 8.8 gives the results of this analysis

In assessing the results of the analyses presented in Table 8.8 of the 405 advertisements we considered (I) invariant features of the advertisements, i.e. those features associated with alcohol in general and not differing significantly in relation to the type of drink advertised or the country (ii) features showing a systematic difference between the British and Swedish advertisements but largely irrespective of the type of drink being advertised, (iii) features displaying considerable variability both in relation to the drink being advertised and the country, and (IV) the specific meanings attributed to beer

The design of contemporary beer cans

both in Britain and Sweden using the results of Table 8.8 and individual analyses of a number of specific advertisements.

Invariant features of alcohol advertising

One striking feature of Table 8.8 is how few invariant features there are connected with drink in general. Those that do occur are primarily related to sex and age. Men are always more frequently depicted than women, either as models or as 'cropped' depictions, e.g., a male hand. Young or middle-aged men are preferred to old men. If women are depicted they are invariably young and in the company of men. While males may be depicted individually, or in groups, groups of female friends drinking never occur. If women are depicted as role models they are more likely to have eye contact with the viewer of the advertisement than male models. Drinking is never associated with families, and hierarchical relationships between those drinking are also virtually absent (one Swedish beer advertisement). So, the main features of the advertisements displayed for drink *in general* may be summarized as:

<i>Appropriate to alcohol in general</i>	<i>Largely or totally inappropriate</i>
men	women
young/middle-aged men	old men/women
single males/groups of males	families/groups of females
convivial relationships	hierarchical relationships

Features showing a systematic difference between Britain and Sweden

Those features displaying systematic variation between Britain and Sweden, irrespective of drink type, are similarly limited and confined to packaging, the quantity of drinks displayed and patterns of consumption. The drink packaging is always displayed more frequently in the Swedish advertisements and depictions of more than one package and glasses filled with drink are more common. Advertisements showing consumption in an ordinary home or with a meal only occur in Sweden. The British advertisements tend to make more use of familiar, everyday props while those used in Sweden are more frequently of a luxurious or expensive nature. While British advertisements tend to make heavy use of slogans, jokes or paradoxical use of language, the Swedish ones have a more 'serious' intent with much use of value-transference, flattery and temptation as techniques of persuasion. These differences may be summarized as:

Britain	Sweden
qualities of the drink	quantities of the drink
public drinking	private drinking
drinking as isolated activity	drinking connected with food
drinking normalized	drinking problematized
packaging less important	packaging more important

Table 8.7. *The variables recorded for a content analysis of the British and Swedish alcohol advertisements*

Var.	<i>The product itself</i>
1	alcohol content specified or referred to
2	packaging (bottle or can) shown
3	more than one package shown
4	glass shown
5	more than one glass shown
	<i>People: appearance</i>
6	people or person present
7	young man/men
8	middle-aged man/men
9	old man/men
10	young woman/women
11	middle-aged woman/women
12	old woman/women
13	working-class man/men
14	middle-class man/men
15	upper-class man/men
16	working-class woman/women
17	middle-class woman/women
18	upper-class woman/women
19	beautiful man/men
20	beautiful woman/women
21	ordinary-looking man/men
22	ordinary-looking woman/women
23	formal clothing (including working clothes)
24	casual clothing
25	eye contact with female
26	eye contact with male
27	cropped picture of female (i.e., only parts of body shown: head, hands, legs, etc.)
28	cropped picture of male
	<i>People: groups</i>
29	single male
30	single female
31	couple
32	family
33	group of friends: mixed sex
34	group of friends: male only
35	group of friends: female only
36	reciprocal relationship (persons depicted concentrating on each other)
37	semi-reciprocal (one person concentrating on another whose attention elsewhere)
38	divergent relationship (each person's attention directed towards something different)
39	people object-orientated towards the product advertised
40	people object-orientated towards something else (e.g., TV)
41	hierarchical relationship (including sexual domination)
	<i>People: activities</i>
42	handling the product
43	drinking the product
44	relaxing with drink
45	working
	<i>The setting</i>
46	home (ordinary)
47	party
48	meal
49	pub or restaurant

Table 8.7

50	countryside
51	working place
52	setting opulent or idealized (usually a home)
53	setting fantastic (anything that could not happen in ordinary life, e. g., a room with all furnishings, etc. in the same colour with only the drink advertised being a different colour)
	<i>Props used¹</i>
54	familiar, everyday
55	idealized, wishful or expensive
56	fantastic
	<i>Techniques of persuasion</i>
57	eye catcher (picture more than 50% of advert)
58	sexual connotations
59	emphasis on slogan
60	paradox or syntactic/semantic peculiarity
61	value transference (some quality, person or phenomenon is made to seem obtainable through using the product)
62	popularity (suggestion that the product is in great demand)
63	nature (suggestion that the product is natural and therefore it is self-evident that one should consume it)
64	flattery (if you're clever or possess good judgement or taste you will consume the product)
65	temptation (owner of the product can achieve some generally desirable state or status)
66	testimonial (some person states the product is good)
67	newness
68	gift (the product makes a good gift)
69	entertainment (the advert contains a joke or a pun)
70	narrative (the advert tells a story)
71	reference to history or tradition
72	reference to art or culture
73	product is cheap
74	product is expensive or exclusive
75	one is initiated into a secret

I.e., anything in advert not a person or the package of the product advertised.

Variability between drink type and country

Alcohol content is only specified or referred to in Swedish advertisements for spirits and especially beer (33-63% of the ads). In both countries the packaging is more frequently depicted for wine and spirits than for beer but when more than one package is illustrated this is rarely in connection with spirits but for wine or beer. When glasses are shown these tend to be in connection with beer rather than wine or spirits but the inclusion of many glasses tends to be in connection with drinking wine or spirits rather than beer. Young men and women in the British advertisements are most frequently depicted drinking spirits or beer rather than wine. However, middle-aged men are least frequently depicted in relationship with beer drinking. In Sweden young or middle-aged men are most commonly shown in relation to beer or wine consumption, especially beer, while middle-aged women (never depicted in the British ads) are most commonly shown drinking wine. Working-class men in both countries are primarily associated with beer drinking, never with wine consumption, and only in relation to spirits in

Table 8.8. Results of the content analysis of British and Swedish alcohol advertisements. Figures in rounded percentages. Numbers of adverts also given for British and Swedish 1983 beer adverts.

Var.	Wine%		Spirits %		Beer				
	British	Swedish	British	Swedish	British		Swedish (1966-80) %	Swedish (1983)	
					N.	%		N.	%
1	—	—	—	4	—	—	33	19	63
2	36	96	54	91	7	28	75	21	70
3	26	32	4	21	3	12	20	7	23
4	18	60	14	32	12	48	84	17	57
5	8	28	24	28	3	12	24	3	10
6	16	24	43	25	5	20	45	4	13
7	2	10	18	3	5	20	25	3	10
8	10	10	16	4	1	4	19	—	—
9	—	—	—	3	—	—	5	—	—
10	—	10	10	3	1	4	23	—	—
11	—	10	—	1	—	—	4	—	—
12	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
13	—	—	6	—	3	12	15	3	10
14	8	16	13	3	2	8	16	—	—
15	2	6	21	7	—	—	1	—	—
16	—	—	—	—	1	4	4	—	—
17	—	16	7	4	—	—	11	—	—
18	—	4	7	1	—	—	—	—	—
19	—	6	17	—	—	—	5	—	—
20	—	6	10	—	—	—	9	—	—
21	2	8	8	4	2	8	40	2	7
22	—	8	—	—	1	4	17	—	—
23	6	20	34	7	1	4	15	1	3
24	—	4	5	3	3	12	27	1	3
25	—	—	4	1	—	—	7	—	—
26	—	—	5	1	1	4	9	—	—
27	—	4	10	3	—	—	3	1	3
28	4	6	17	15	1	4	4	3	10
29	4	—	22	16	2	8	17	1	3
30	—	—	—	1	—	—	7	—	—
31	—	8	12	1	—	—	8	1	3
32	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
33	—	14	1	1	—	—	12	—	—
34	2	—	—	—	2	8	5	1	3
35	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
36	4	6	—	—	—	—	3	—	—
37	—	6	2	—	—	—	12	—	—
38	—	6	4	—	1	4	7	—	—
39	2	—	10	—	1	4	5	—	—
40	—	—	5	—	3	12	1	1	3
41	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
42	2	6	10	11	3	12	1	2	7
43	4	8	2	3	3	12	1	2	7
44	—	10	6	1	—	—	19	1	3
45	2	—	9	—	1	4	7	1	3
46	—	4	—	—	—	—	12	2	7
47	—	10	1	—	—	—	1	—	—
48	—	4	—	1	—	—	33	3	10
49	—	—	2	—	3	12	13	—	—
50	16	2	17	3	1	4	9	3	10

Table 8.8 (cont.)

Var.	Wine%		Spirits %		Beer				
	British	Swedish	British	Swedish	British		Swedish (1966-80) %	Swedish (1983)	
					N.	%		N.	%
51	—	—	2	—	1	4	8	1	3
52	4	22	9	5	—	—	16	4	13
53	4	—	1	5	—	—	—	—	—
54	10	6	24	4	19	76	64	7	23
55	4	26	12	16	1	4	13	—	—
56	8	8	4	4	2	8	—	—	—
57	60	72	70	37	22	88	93	24	80
58	—	4	10	1	—	—	5	—	—
59	38	30	48	4	12	48	23	9	30
60	8	2	27	1	7	28	7	4	13
61	4	24	4	29	1	4	45	5	17
62	6	8	12	32	4	16	13	3	10
63	24	8	25	8	—	—	17	3	10
64	—	2	—	5	—	—	1	—	—
65	4	14	—	24	—	—	29	2	7
66	6	—	5	—	—	—	—	—	—
67	—	—	—	4	—	—	4	1	3
68	—	2	5	1	—	—	—	—	—
69	8	—	12	4	10	40	8	1	3
70	2	16	25	15	2	8	4	—	—
71	2	8	44	18	4	16	9	—	—
72	2	—	14	—	1	4	—	—	—
73	26	6	1	—	—	—	4	1	3
74	44	42	56	33	3	12	15	10	33
75	10	—	3	4	—	—	3	—	—

Variable numbers refer to Table 8.7. British wine and spirits data from *The Guardian*, *The Observer* and *The Observer* colour magazine, Sept.-Dec. 1983. Swedish wine and spirits adverts from *Det Basta* 1966-79. British beer adverts 1983-5 from billboards in Newcastle. Swedish beer adverts 1966-80 from *Det Basta*. Swedish 1983 beer adverts from *Dagens Nyheter*, *Expressen*, *Hemmets Journal*, *Allt om Mat*, *Aret Runt*, *ICA Kuriren*, *Manadens Journal*, *Det Basta* July-Dec. 1983.

British and Swedish wine N = 50, British spirits N = 100, Swedish spirits N = 75, British beer N = 25, Swedish beer (1966-80) N = 75, Swedish beer (1983) N = 30.

Britain. Middle-class men may be depicted drinking wine, beer or spirits while the upper classes are never associated with beer drinking. Attractive looking men or women are primarily associated with spirits in Britain and wine in Sweden whereas ordinary looking people, irrespective of sex, are generally associated with beer drinking. Similarly, formal clothing is shown as most appropriate for spirits consumption in Britain, wine in Sweden. Casual clothing (never shown on British wine advertisements) is most frequently shown in relation to beer.

As regards groups of drinkers single males in both countries are shown drinking spirits or beer rather than wine. In Britain single females are never depicted in relation to drink but occur in Sweden on beer advertisements. Couples, in the British advertise-

ments, are only shown drinking spirits whereas in Sweden they are associated with beer or wine consumption. Groups of friends of mixed sex are virtually never shown in the British ads (one example for spirits) but occur in Sweden in relation to wine or beer drinking. Groups of male friends in both countries are primarily shown beer drinking. Reciprocal relationships tend to be associated with wine and divergent or object orientated relationships (e.g., people admiring the drink) occur largely in relationship to spirits or beer.

The activities associated with drinking differ very considerably both in relation to country and drink type. In Sweden only beer is associated with work whereas in Britain beer, wine or spirits are shown in work situations, especially the latter. In Britain people relaxing with a drink are only shown in relation to spirits whereas handling the drink or drinking it is primarily associated with beer. In Sweden relaxing is most frequent for beer, handling for spirits and drinking for wine. Consumption in an 'ordinary' home or at a party is only shown in Sweden in relation to beer or wine. Drinking with a meal is shown for Sweden in relation to all drink types, but especially beer. Food is not associated with drinking in the British ads, the preferred locations being the countryside for wine and spirits or opulent 'home' surroundings. Beer drinking in both countries is shown in pubs but not for wine or spirits. Opulent settings (usually the home) are primarily shown in relation to spirits consumption in Britain and for wine or beer in Sweden. Ordinary props are most frequent for beer and expensive props for spirits and wine in Sweden.

Heavy use of visual imagery is common to all drink types in both countries. Most of the ads are designed to catch the eye. Reference to the expensive or exclusive nature of the product is the second most common technique employed for wine and spirits. For British beer much emphasis is placed on the slogan, while value-transference is employed for Swedish beer. Suggestions that the product is popular are most frequently used for Swedish spirits and British beer advertising.

The complex sets of images in the British and Swedish ads in relation to drink type may be generalized as:

	<i>British wine</i>	<i>Swedish wine</i>
Age and sex	middle-aged men	young or middle-aged men and women
Class	middle class	middle-class men or women, upper-class men
Appearance	ordinary, formal clothing	ordinary or beautiful, formal clothing
Groups	single male or male friends	single male, couples, friends of mixed sex
Relationships	reciprocal	reciprocal, semi-reciprocal or divergent
Activities	drinking	handling drink, relaxing, drinking
Associations	countryside	party or opulent surroundings
	<i>British spirits</i>	<i>Swedish spirits</i>
Age and sex	young or middle-aged men, young women	young, middle-aged or old men, young women
Class	working, middle or upper-class men, middle or upper-class women	middle-class men or women, upper class men
Appearance	beautiful or ordinary men, beautiful women, formal clothing	ordinary men, formal or casual clothing
Groups	single male or couple	single male
Relationships	orientated to product or something else	none
Activities	drinking, relaxing or handling drink	handling drink
Associations	countryside or opulent	countryside or opulent

	<i>British beer</i>	<i>Swedish beer</i>
Age and sex	young men	young, middle-aged or old men, young women
Class	working or middle-class men, working-class women	working or middle-class men and women
Appearance	ordinary, casual clothing	beautiful or ordinary, casual or formal clothing
Groups	single male, groups of males	single male or female, couples, groups of males or mixed sex
Relationships	orientated to something other than product	divergent or orientated to product
Activities	drinking or handling product	handling product, drinking, relaxing
Associations	pub	home, meal, pub, working place, countryside or opulent setting

These, then, are elements of particular life-styles which advertisers tend to consistently project or associate with specific types of drink in Britain and Sweden in addition to those features we noted associated with alcohol in general and those distinctive to Britain or to Sweden largely irrespective of drink type.

Meaning in beer advertising

A statistical analysis of advertising, as presented above, is an incomplete technique for uncovering the specific meaning structures associated with drink. Here we employ some specific analyses of individual advertisements, in combination with the results of the previous analysis, to look a little more closely at the denotative and connotative meanings associated with beer consumption.

Both Swedish and British adverts refer to relationships and meanings commonly associated with drink - masculinity and conviviality, as opposed to family life and hierarchical relationships. Such conventional meanings and associations serve to legitimate the product on offer as do the techniques frequently found in advertising generally: associating the product with the countryside, with the 'natural', with nostalgia and tradition, and claiming a product is popular.

However, the differences between Swedish and British adverts are striking. Swedish beer adverts, as opposed to the British, consistently indicate a concern for establishing the consumption of their products as a normal practice associated with many types of relationship. Swedish adverts also indicate a different pattern of consumption - packaged private consumption: quantity in private surroundings as opposed to public conviviality. They also avoid light-hearted punning.

The British beer adverts establish links between their products and tradition, consumption with friends in the pub, and with locality through reference to a whole mythology of 'Geordieland' North East England in the particular cases we considered. Lager adverts, in contrast, attempted to link the product with conceptions of 'style'. Drinking is on the whole accepted as a normal activity; there is no need to establish it as such. It is thus possible to have light-hearted, tongue-in-cheek adverts using slogans, jokes, puns. British wine adverts make reference to a more restricted set of meanings than Swedish wine and British spirits and beers: the consumption of wine is relatively low in Britain (Fig. 8.18A) and is associated particularly with middle-class cultured consumption.



Fig. 8.22 McEwan's Best Scotch

Newcastle upon Tyne, Jan. 1984

Notes

An express return, first class too, from the south of England (with its poor beers) back home to the real stuff - McEwan's Best Scotch in Newcastle (the train is crossing one of the Tyne bridges). However it's not an Intercity 125 of the 1980s but the Flying Scotsman (depicted in traditional oil painting) from the good old days of steam when Geordieland north-east England was more distinct than now. The beer is thus associated with tradition and local community. The connection is further emphasized by McEwan's Best Scotch appearing on an engine name plate - all the qualities of steam engines (traditional, wholesome) are transferred to the beer. But to remind you that McEwan's Best Scotch is available now down at the local off-licence and pub, the pump decoration of the 1980s pub, showing the marketing design, appears within the engine plate together with a freshly poured pint.



Fig. 8.23 Pripp
Translation of caption

Det Bästa, 1969

A beer which awakes memories

This is Pripp. A beer which stirs memories.

What do you remember?

We ourselves remember tankards with hops engraved on the glass and oak barrels in cool cellars and bottles that you have to open with a cork screw and beer labels with long rows of gold medals.

We have achieved a lot over the years.

Now we're old and big and broad in the stomach which suits a proper brewer.

Now we have stainless steel barrels, thick as the hull of a ship

And the bottles have crown corks

and the cans have ring-pulls.

Because just as in the old days there is a rush for good beer when you're thirsty.

We remember.

This is why we brew Pripp.

Notes

The beer is given significance through reference to tradition and nostalgia. The use of 'we' is deliberately ambiguous and the reader is left uncertain as to who it refers to - the **company** Pripp or a fat brewer. The brewer referred to is presumably the embodiment of Pripps brewery which in turn gives substance to the brewer's body. Thus the modern mechanized brewing process is humanized in terms of an unspecified **person**. While we are told certain details such as the substitution of metal for wooden beer barrels, the reality of the modern brewing industry and the alienated labour involved in the production process, in short the social relations of brewing in monopoly capitalism, are carefully left unmentioned. While we are told of changes, it is the past which is depicted — wooden barrels and engraved tankard - but connected with the present via the open modern bottle of Pripp. So although ostensibly about change, the advert in fact fuses past and present through its imagery. By drinking Pripp today, you're drinking the past; indeed we are challenged 'what do you remember?'. In the advert history is empty, devoid of any **content** apart from changes in beer **containers**. The insecurities of technological change are smoothed over. **Even** if we don't remember the old beer bottles and tankards Pripps do. This assures us that the beer produced, Pripp, is the same as produced in the past. Through drinking Pripp we can get back to the past, the good old days. Shown a nostalgic past of old beer barrels and tankards and challenged to remember it as our past which we reconstruct through remembering to buy Pripp, the gap between past and present can be filled and reconciled by the product.



Fig. 8.24 Pripps Eagle
Translation of caption

Dagens Nyheter, 13 Oct. 1983

Pripps
Eagle
Not too bitter. Not too weak. Just right.
A full bodied flavour of malt and hops. And fresh.
Right price. It's Pripps Eagle.
Beer Class II

Notes

A group of young men are watching TV. We are drawn into the picture as if we're there watching TV with them, sharing the sociability of the occasion, for it is sociability of males which is being indicated in the advert: informal clothing, watching a typically male sport- soccer. They're drinking at home from the can; informally dressed, they're drinking informally from the can (soccer - a male consumer sport; Pripps Eagle - a male consumer product). Eagle is presented as a beer to be consumed in leisure time (cf. Fig. 8.31, Lyckholms), and it is implied that sociability can be achieved with this beer. Everyone is drinking in quantity. The advert is concerned to stress the packaging; our attention is drawn to the can in the foreground, from can to can and to the TV screen. The caption replicates the central area on the can. The room background is insignificant in relation to the cans, the young men and the soccer on the screen, the Eagle life-style, just right.

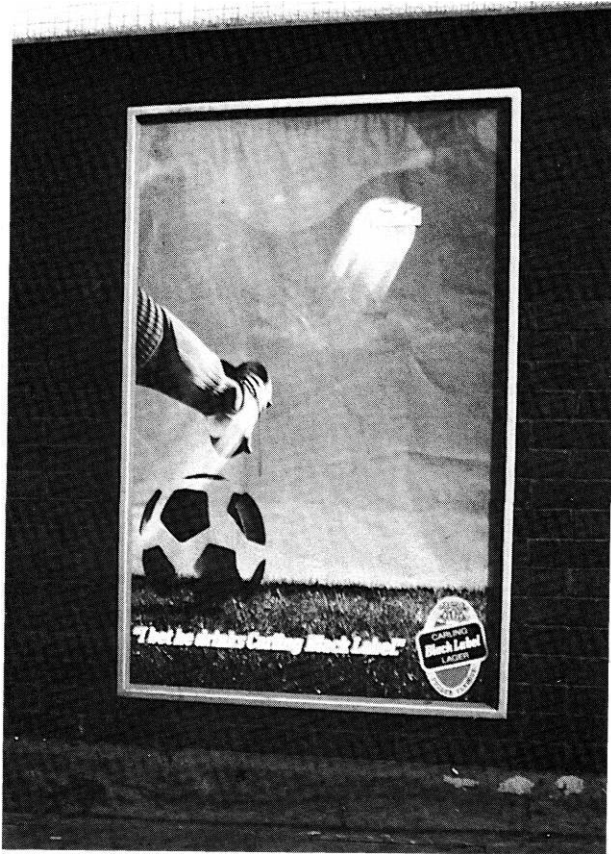


Fig. 8.25 Carling Black Label Newcastle upon Tyne, Jan. 1984

Notes

This is part of an advertising campaign using the slogan 'T bet he drinks Carling Black Label' representing the exceptional qualities of the Carling Black Label drinker. Mocking and humorous reference is made to those adverts which claim their product will bring about a magical transformation of the consumer. The point is not that Carling Black Label drinkers are superhuman (the humour is to entertain and so involve the viewer in the set of meanings of the advert) just special, one of a clan, those who drink Carling Black Label and, as implied in this advert, enjoy soccer. The link between Carling Black Label and soccer is emphasized by the orange, white and black colour connections between football sock and boot and the Carling design in the corner.



Fig. 8.26 Harp Lager

Newcastle upon Tyne, Jan. 1984

Notes

It is claimed that the pint of Harp Lager stays sharp-tasting to the end; this is conveyed by a simple reference *IN* musical notation, associating, in the process of decoding, the drink with a pre-existing set of meanings. It is implied that sharpness is a desirable quality in drink: not warm and soft, but cold and sharp (Lager is served chilled, as opposed to traditional cask-conditioned ale served at cellar temperature). But this advert is part of a campaign mainly shown on TV using the slogan '... stays sharp to the bottom of the glass' in which the Harp drinker shows he is sharp. So Harp signifies sharpness. The Harp drinker is quick-witted, cool-headed in sticky situations. Drinking Harp becomes part of being smart and clever.

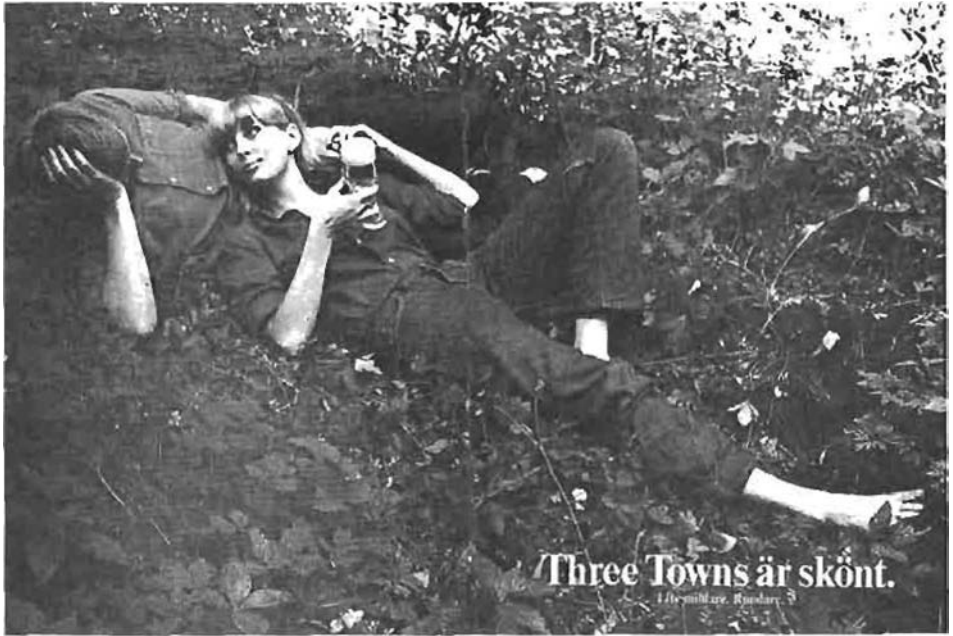


Fig. 8.21 Three Towns
Translation of caption

Three towns is beautiful.
A little milder Rounder.

Notes

The words are most superfluous to this advert and, indeed, they are assigned to an unimportant position. The 'beauty' of Three Towns has its symbolic referents in the beauty of nature and the beauty of the people (and their beautiful relationship? The 'mildness' and 'roundness' of this beer finds its correlation *in* the natural. Real consumption is not actually shown as in the other Swedish adverts but is imminent. Our anticipation is shared with the girl who will surely turn her head from her lover and consume the beer. Time is momentarily arrested she has raised her glass; we anticipate the next act and are thus drawn into the world of the advert.



Fig. 8.29 Dart

Det Basta Feb. 1984

Translation of caption

You're not really afraid of the dark?

Dark beer has more taste.

Dart has a rich colour which means a rich taste.

Rounded and a lull-bodied feeling.

Belter for a good lunch.

More idling as a social drink.

Dark beer is more exciting.

Notes

No one is afraid of the dark, it's irrational, so why be afraid of dark beer? The bowler hat is dark, but an everyday object, hardly frightening. And against the dark background the beer appears light, reaffirming that the colour of Dart should not be a cause of concern (dark beers are unusual in Sweden; most are light-coloured 'lager' type). Dart is rich, and British: the bowler hat signifies Britishness as does the name (darts is a game associated with British pubs). Indeed on old Dart beer labels from the 1960s a dart board was portrayed. On the contemporary (1983) packaging this is replaced by a British flag as in this advert. The text tells us that it is exciting to drink Dart, that it makes a good social drink. The sociability of British pubs is transferred to Dart, dark like British beers. Masculinity is also indicated; a woman's hat would be out of place. The advert makes play on the difference between British and Swedish drinking, by drinking Dart you can achieve the British freedom from alcohol restrictions.



Fig. 8.28 Federation Best Scotch

Newcastle upon Tyne, Jan. 1984

Notes

Here are the lads down at the local club (the Federation Brewery produces beers for Working Men's Clubs) having a good singalong, perhaps joining in with the night's entertainer (Clubs provide stage entertainment). These are just ordinary blokes (a mirror image of what we would want to be?), the sort of people who enjoy a good time with a pint of Federation Best Scotch. It's what clubs are all about - getting together with your mates and drinking Federation Best Scotch (and are they in fact not toasting Best Scotch? - all the glasses are full and they're singing a song in praise of the beer). It's clearly a Geordie club - the pint is 'bonny' and 'canny'. It's also the lads who are drinking Best Scotch (wives wouldn't, it's a man's drink); the only woman is the barmaid in the centre, friendly and warmly glowing in the bright lights of the bar, mirroring the warm welcome glow of the pint in the corner. The advert associates the beer with the warm social atmosphere of the men in the local North East of England club. A Best Scotch design reminds you what to look for at the club and in the off-licence.



Fig. 8.30 Newcastle Exhibition

Newcastle upon Tyne, Jan. 1984

Notes

This is one of a series of adverts which depend on puns on 'exhibition' (extrovert, exile, expert, etc.). In decoding the simple pun on 'sex' and 'ex' (the popular name for Newcastle Exhibition), helped if necessary by the picture of the drink, we are drawn into the system of meanings created by the advert. Exhibition, the beer, is associated with and becomes itself a part of everyday vocabulary and reality. The beer is thus given meaning (a function of adverts generally). There is also an implication that sex and Exhibition are actually interchangeable - 'I went out for a pint of Ex instead - it's more satisfying'. Such valuation of drinking accords with the popular mythology of the dedicated Northern drinker, and indeed the product is *Newcastle Exhibition*, a local brew.



Fig 8.31 Lyckholms
Translation of caption

Del Basta. April 1970

If you have a job in which it is necessary to be sharp,
Lyckholms makes a fine accompaniment to lunch.
It contains only a little alcohol.
But tastes as beer should taste.

Notes

The advert stresses the connection between alcohol and food and a concern with the strength of beer: this beer contains so little alcohol it is possible to work in forestry, with all its attendant dangers, after drinking it. However this does not mean the taste is sacrificed, nor does the drinker forfeit his masculinity - these men are forestry workers, lumberjacks. You can drink and impose bodily discipline at the same time; this product enables you to mitigate the contradiction. However, as Lyckholms is perfect for lunch on the job, it is implied that when not on the job another (stronger?) beer would be more suitable. The greenness of the forest and the workers' clothes blend into each other, as does the Lyckholms bottle, all making a harmonious whole. This beer is definitely not out of place or unusual in this situation. Just as the workers are in the natural forest, so it's natural to drink Lyckholms. Naturally in this situation (dangerous work) you'd be sensible to drink

Lyckholms. The people are selected to look ordinary and masculine? The use-value of the beer is stressed but also the exchange-value: in such a situation Lyckholms can be substituted for a stronger beer without sacrificing taste or identity as a malt. The advert thus addresses and 'solves' two problems: how to be masculine and drink weak beer, and how to drink and work, especially in a dangerous industry. There is a strong contrast with the British adverts; this problem would not occur in a British advert.



Porter och äggula!

Förre köper man porter i en på apotek. På läkarrecept. Nu kan den bestå
 medicinen i äggula överallt. Men det är ju bra som man konstigt öder. Första pillerets smakade inte heller god.
 Och inte första malörtedroppen. Det finns folk som snabbt med att beställa porter. Säger att
 det kräver en mera avancerad smak. Precis som sniglar och ostror. Skitlock.
 Porter är bra. Lättsmak. Närliggande. Smaken väjer man sig vid. I går. Utsädda.
 Recept: Häll upp ett glas porter. Häll i en äggula. Rör om. Drink!

Fig. 8.32 Porter
 Translation of caption

Da Basta, May 1968

Porter and Egg yolk!

In the past you used to buy porter only from the chemist. On doctor's prescription. Now the bitter medicine can be bought everywhere. But it is a bitterness you get used to. The first glass doesn't taste at all good. Nor do the first drops of wormwood. There are people who show off by ordering porter. It is said that it requires a more advanced taste. Just like snails and oysters. Crap, Porter is good. Easily digested. Nutritious. You get used to the taste. Ugh! Sorry

Recipe: Pour out a glass of porter. Pour in an egg yolk. Stir. Drink!

Notes

This black and white advert occurs in a publication in which all the adverts are in colour and so creates an immediate impact. The darkness of the advert matches the darkness of the porter. The black and white photography also signifies the past and it if the past and the traditional element which porter is made to signify. The reference to a lime when porter could only be bought from the chemist refers to the history of alcohol control in Sweden when strong Class III beer could only be bought in (his way). The medicinal and health angle is stressed: porter as medicine and medicine as bitter like porter. The nutritious qualities of porter are correlated with the richness and nutrition of an egg yolk. The text is in staccato style. The qualities of the porter are affirmed then denied: porter requires un advanced taste' This is then ridiculed but reaffirmed at the end of the text when presumably a novice who has not cultivated the taste for porter is repelled by the drink. In this manner the status of porter as a drink for the connoisseur is reaffirmed. Unlike other beers, porter is not to be simply drunk but 'digested', thus asserting the nutritious qualities, that porter is more akin to food than to drink. Drinks don't usually require a recipe (unless a sophisticated cocktail) but porter does and one is provided at the end of the text. Porter is a snobbish drink, tint for the ordinary person, but for those who would appreciate snails and oysters. The repelling qualities of snails and oysters, requiring an advanced taste, are correlated with the taste of porter. It is to be drunk in small quantities and savoured - now the size of the glass and there is only one foregrounded bottle. Porter is a drink you could order without embarrassment in an expensive restaurant: a drink for the cultivated. Clearly porter doesn't even require company: it is company in itself, hence the single male, an individual, apart from the crowd. He clearly knows what he is doing when drinking porter. The photo is in black and white, but porter is not a simple drink, a case of black or white, it can both repel and be cultivated, a unity of opposites.



Fig. 8.3.3 Vaux Double Maxim

Sunderland. Jan. 1984

Notes

The roast lamb of the Sunday dinner has been transformed into Double Maxim. The beer thus comes to represent all that Sunday dinner and the roasted joint of meat represents-homely English tradition, no fancy continental trimmings (the bottle label is consciously anachronistic (personal communication, M. Berriman, Marketing Manager, Vaux Breweries)). Lean meat, the stuff of life, wholesome, full of *goodness*, flavour-some, bringing strength: all these qualities are transferred to the beer.

TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE DESIGN OF BEER CANS

We noted a major contradiction between principles structuring drinking in the capitalist state, a contradiction between drinking as promoted consumer activity or as an act of self definition connecting with life-styles, and drinking as being contrary to the requirements of bodily discipline in the production process and consumers' control over and conceptions of their bodies. In an advanced capitalist society such a contradiction is increasingly antagonistic, and more so in Sweden than in Britain, given the greater degree and nature of state intervention in defining alcohol as a dangerous substance with its contemporary concomitant in the increasing medicalization of drinking practices. The development of monopoly capitalism has involved an increasingly interventionist state imposing control through the norm, and measuring and defining deviation from that norm, rather than imposing direct disciplinary control as in the past.

As an institutional complex, the state guards the general interest of *all* classes with respect to capitalist exchange relations. In this manner the economic is politicized to an increased degree. However, 'although the circuit of state monopoly capital requires specific forms of political intervention, the institutional separation of the state casts doubt on its functionality' (Jessop 1982, p. 237). Through the politicization of the economic, the state mediates the consumerist compensation for asymmetry of control within the productive process and the ability of the productive process to maintain capital accumulation and deliver the goods. The state must reconcile the maintenance of expanded production and capital accumulation with the demands of the electorate and pressure groups. The separation of the state has entailed that the effects of its intervention have, as often as not, had the reverse effect to that intended, hence despite the massive degree of state intervention to control drinking throughout the twentieth century consumption has risen rather than declined.

The differences between British and Swedish can design may be understood as different ideological 'resolutions' of the consumption/discipline contradiction. In Britain due to the social position and development of public drinking as a mediation between work and leisure, the public house being a 'colonized' institution, the continued social importance of the public house as a focus of sociability which is nevertheless being supplemented by private consumption, and the pub as a focus of the symbolic-expression of the 'ideals' of consumerism, discipline becomes subordinate to consumption with regard to the material forms of drinking. In Sweden consumption is subordinate to the requirements of discipline. Forced into the home, and largely hidden, private consumption for the purposes of intoxication opposes massive concern, state and independent, with the attendant restrictions and the proliferation of discourses concerned with alcohol consumption.

The presentation of alcohol in both countries is mediated by a particular logic of signification. In one respect the elaboration of can design is connected with the need of companies to create difference and, therefore, meaning for a consumer market. If this were not so we might expect the cans to be completely plain and state little more than 'beer' and the name of the company producing it. As a Swedish can designer puts it ('people drink with their eyes' (Ericson 1980). Beer may be good to drink but, in the

market of images created, it is also good to think the maintenance of differences allow possibilities for self definition and this should not be considered in a purely negative light Consumerism is not simply to be considered as a total and hermetic culture of mass ideological repression We have concentrated in this chapter on the products of the brewing industry and images in advertising and the media and not so much on the reception and cultural use of beer Clearly the disjunction between private consumption habits and temperance discourses in Sweden draws attention to the thoroughly mediated form of the consumption of commodities not simply reducible to a consumer ethic (Douglas and Isherwood 1978, Kellner 1983) Some, especially members of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies have stressed the autonomous use of material culture in sub cultural style and artifacts as contributing to non-ideological discourses and practices (e.g., Hall and Jefferson (eds.) 1976, Clarke 1976, Willis 1971, Hebdige 1979) In Sweden, the introduction of beer cans opened out a new way to drink appealing to the counter culture of youth groups in which the beer can could literally be ripped open with the forefinger, the contents drunk, and the can subsequently crushed and discarded—a style of drinking which took place on the streets and was heavily loaded with a deliberate flaunting of governmental restrictions and control of alcohol

In Britain can designs create difference and establish meaning for particular beers and lagers, they are a part of a process of creation of exchange-values Beer cans draw on and reproduce a set of meanings associated with beer they emphasize tradition, place of origin (most beers until recently were local brews), and inherent differences - types of beer Breweries are fully conscious of these possibilities for creating difference (personal communication, M Berriman, Marketing Manager, Vaux Breweries) the efforts of the breweries in the early seventies to create national new brew have been superseded by an awareness that beer with a local connection (real or invented) sells better (*cf* Sharman 1983), old brewery names have been revived, local origin stressed, 'traditional', 'real' ales made more available

The creation of exchange-values is particularly marked in relation to the distinction between beer and lager Whether you're a lager drinker or a beer drinker clearly extends beyond the product itself and is associated with social categories Lager cans, part of a marketing operation initiated by breweries to capture a new section of the market young, seeking a distinctive social image are designed to appeal to a classless consumer There is considerably less use of traditional representational designs associated with beer - depictions of raw ingredients, oast houses, drays, etc A different colour set is employed, abstract designs are more frequent than for beer and representational designs less common there is less emphasis on the character of the beer or its place of origin, and more emphasis on strength and predominant use of foreign names Thus a different, more abstract and less traditional image is stressed, a different style of drinking The logic of competition with beer leads to the marketing of lager as a distinctive product fulfilling a different role and opening out further possibilities for defining social relationships

Swedish cans make a similar reference to a symbol set which signifies masculinity and tradition and in addition quality, and naturalness, and connection with foreign beers (with already defined and accepted meanings), in creating significance for the marketed

product. But this functional need' of brewing companies to manufacture difference and distinction, whatever their subsequent cultural use or transformation, cannot of itself provide a satisfactory account of the differences in the degree and type of elaboration of the British and Swedish can designs. The greater complexity of the Swedish cans is however, in part explicable in terms of mechanisms of ideological control and legitimation emanating from the economic logic of capitalism when contradicted and mediated by structures of consumerism, health and bodily discipline.

Alcoholic drinks may be held to constitute an internally related symbolic field. As Bourdieu points out, the consumption of goods 'always presupposes a labour of appropriation, to different degrees depending on the goods and the consumers, or, more precisely, that the consumer helps to produce the product he consumes, by a labour of identification and decoding which requires time and dispositions acquired over time' (Bourdieu 1984, p. 1001). The symbolic field of alcoholic drinks may be represented as in Fig. 8.34, in which the three major forms of alcohol - beer, wine and spirits - are related to and yet at the same time opposed to each other. This is clearly apparent in the similarities and differences revealed by the statistical analysis of the adverts. At a secondary level, drinks are sub-divided according to quasi-objective features of taste and appearance and finally according to brands sold on the consumer market, at each point the distinctions proliferating. The choice of such and such a drink for one occasion or another is dependent on cultural conceptions of its social usage. In terms of general cultural connotations the relationship between classes of drinks, based on the newspaper and advertisement surveys in Britain and Sweden may be presented as

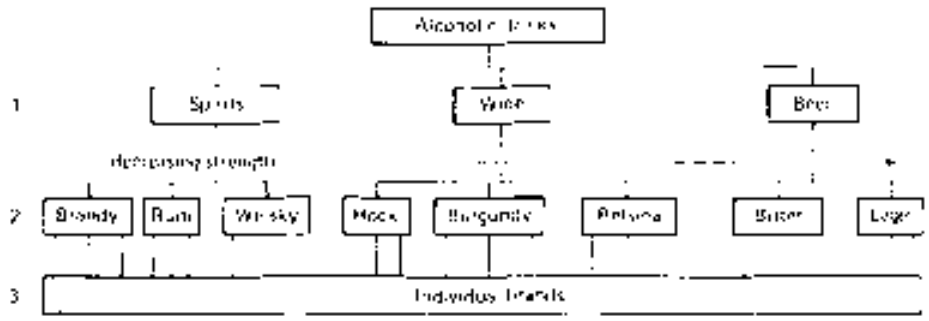
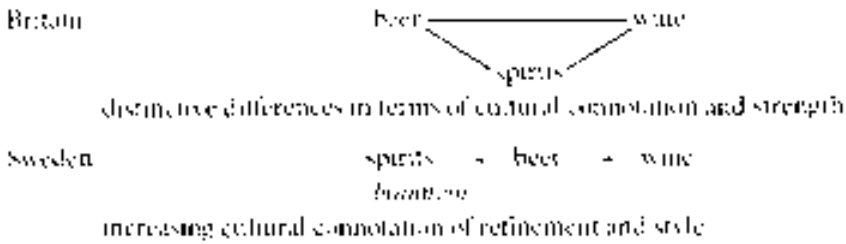


Fig. 8.34 Simplified presentation of the structural relationship between various alcoholic drinks

In Sweden, beer does not fit readily into established cultural connotations of alcohol. The history of alcohol control in Sweden has, by and large, been a history of attempts to reduce the consumption of spirits of *brannvin*, in terms of volume of pure alcohol the dominant drink (Fig 8 18B). Spirits have always been associated in Sweden with drunkenness, crime, alcoholics, persons of low morality or, more recently, as constituting medical/psychiatric deviants. Wine, on the other hand, has been regarded as the drink of culture, of refined taste. Spirits and wine thus mark opposite extremes of a polarized scale: spirits relate to wine as the vulgar to the refined. Beer, however, does not fit readily in terms of such a categorization. On the one hand, it is the principal table drink in Sweden (at least for lunch, for dinner in less 'refined' social circles) and therefore culturally acceptable. On the other hand, beer has also been traditionally associated with drunkenness and a lack of bodily discipline in much the same way as *brannvin* (teenagers getting drunk on *mellanol*, a fourth beer class sold between 1965 and 1977, was a principal cause of us removal). Brewers have always been able to claim that their products stimulate sobriety because of their low alcohol content yet, at the same time during the period of alcohol rationing it was strong beer (despite its strength still weak in alcohol content in relation to wine or spirits) and not drinks higher in alcohol content - wine and spirits - that was removed from the market. This is especially surprising in view of the particularly high level of spirits consumption (Fig 8 18B).

Beer has an ambiguous status, a lack of fit into the established scheme of things. As such, it automatically becomes more dangerous, a substance requiring a finer degree of control. Because of this lack of fit it has become hedged around with boundaries and classes. These classes, unique to beer (there are no classes for wine or spirits), and by no means natural, enable consumers to measure and regulate alcoholic intake and to maintain self-surveillance over their bodies (see the Lyckholms advertisement, Fig 8 31). Beer, then, is the type of alcoholic drink most subject to a contradictory nexus of meanings in Swedish society, symbolized through the development of a class system. By contrast in Britain beer much more clearly fits into an established scheme as a working-class drink in a symbolic field in which alcohol is not constituted as dangerous. The comparative lack of distinction between the Swedish beer classes, as compared with the beer/lager distinction, is explicable because beer classes, unlike beer brands or beer types do not open out the same possibilities for the manipulation and construction of meanings. The meanings cross-cut the classes in terms of product brands. The differentiation that does exist between the classes can be related to social meanings connected with alcohol strength. Physiologically, it is very difficult to get drunk on Class I or II beer unless it is consumed very rapidly on an empty stomach and in vast quantities. As beer must be, and is presented by the breweries as alcohol rather than water, this has the concomitant that the strong beer cans usually have simpler designs because since this beer is only sold in the alcohol monopoly shops its qualities as beer rather than water lend it a self-legitimizing force. The Class I cans with their emphasis on male imagery clearly reduce the potential threat to masculine prowess that drinking very weak beer might produce. The most complex designs occur on the medium strength Class II beer which because of its greater availability in supermarkets and increased strength when compared to Class I beer, has the largest market share. The proliferation of the designs

on these cans creates a dense web of meanings and images drawing attention away from us strength and towards its exchange-value as alcohol, as a product to be consumed in leisure time

Most of the differences noted in the discussion of British and Swedish beer can design can be considered in terms of a difference of complexity and elaboration. The Swedish can designs are far more elaborately designed in terms of colours, wording, styles, or orientation of lettering, numbers of representational or abstract designs. We suggest that this is because there is a greater need to mediate the consumption contradiction through the design in Sweden than in Britain especially given the ambiguous status of beer in Sweden in relation to other alcoholic drinks. However, the form of the mediation of the contradiction is effected in a similar way in both countries, but given the ambiguous nexus of meanings surrounding beer is more developed in Sweden. The creation of life styles in relation to brand distinctions mediates the contradiction by obscuring it, by encouraging the focus of attention towards the product's exchange rather than use value.

As part of everyday culture beer cans form systems of communication expression and representation, creating a symbolic order of meaning. The power of the symbolism on the cans in the structuring of social attitudes towards alcohol in general and beer in particular is its seeming naturalness. As we have seen the representational designs are restricted in content and legitimate the product in terms of purity and naturalness masculine, as alcohol, and via the medium of the past or tradition. Beer cans with space age or high-tech designs simply do not exist. The very repetitiveness of the use of the same types of designs, endlessly connected and re connected in various combinations, lends them a false obviousness or a naturalizing quality which they would not otherwise possess. The symbolism on the cans creates an *imaginary* set of relationships to the present and the consumption of the product in the present - by invoking a mythical past. The symbols used have little to do with present-day sociopolitical realm or the manner in which beer is actually produced or distributed. The designs on the cans, if looked at in a detached manner, are patently ridiculous what *real* connection by there between lions or eagles, coats of arms or sailing ships and beer¹. Precisely, none. What is surprising is that these designs appear natural to all of us. The obviousness of the designs is an obviousness effected through the power of ideology. The more alcohol is considered dangerous, as in Sweden, the greater the number of codes employed to mediate the contradictions involved in consumption and effect an artificial view of reality - a reality in which the freedom of the consumer is to symbolically define him or herself and participate in the reproduction of capital.