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Alcohol in the Canadian Context

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This chapter gives a brief history of alcohol control in Canada and lays out the main actors and processes that have contributed to the shaping of current Canadian alcohol-control policies. It examines the rationale and mechanisms of the initial alcohol control arrangements during the opening decades of the twentieth century, how these changed over time, and federal and provincial jurisdictions and involvement with regard to alcohol issues. Given *Sober Reflections'* emphasis on the role of research in alcohol policy development, this historical background is followed by an overview of the relationship between Canadian research and alcohol policy issues since the 1950s. In order to provide a context for subsequent case studies we also offer a summary of key players in the alcohol policy arena, including the beer, wine, and spirits industries. Because members of the general public are also players, both as consumers and as a political constituency, we offer summary information on trends in alcohol sales (using archival and survey data) as well as on public opinions concerning recent and emerging alcohol policy issues.

Various social and economic forces have influenced political initiatives and decisions involving alcohol. The alcoholic beverage industry and its many allies have always been major players in the arena of alcohol control. Given the predominant role of the provinces in the regulation of the alcohol market as well as the state fiscal interest in alcohol sales, the business interests, particularly for the beer and wine industries, were highly protected. Historically, Canada's alcohol policies were also shaped by public opinion about alcohol and about the role of government in regulating individual behaviours. Although Canada is "wet" by pre-Second World War standards, public support for government alcohol monopolies remains strong

and has contributed to their survival in all provinces except Alberta.¹ However, consumer demands for greater access to alcohol have also resulted in more consumer-friendly alcohol outlets and the gradual erosion of alcohol control systems in several provinces.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ALCOHOL CONTROL IN CANADA, 1919-90²

For much of the century after Confederation in 1867, the "liquor question" was a major political issue throughout Canada. Until the First World War the issue was primarily formulated in terms of prohibition, whether at the local level ("local option"), the provincial level, or the national level. Thus prohibition was the subject of the first national plebiscite in 1898, with the prohibition side winning in every province except Quebec (Smart and Ogborne 1996). While only in Prince Edward Island was provincewide prohibition instituted in this period (in 1902), local-option elections in the late nineteenth century dried up much of the Maritime provinces and rural Ontario and Quebec (Hose 1928, 15).

Prohibition came as a wartime measure to most Canadian provinces between 1915 and 1917, backed up between 1917 and 1919 with wartime prohibition at the federal level. But almost immediately there was a reaction against it. Wine and beer was legalized in Quebec in 1919 and in British Columbia in 1921, and spirits were legalized in both provinces in 1921. By 1927 the Prairie provinces, Ontario, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland (then a separate country) had followed suit (Hose 1928).

The Canadian Model of Alcohol Control

The long struggles over prohibition had defined the liquor question in terms that greatly influenced the form of repeal. Drinking problems were particularly associated with public drinking, the "old-time saloon," and with the private interest of the saloon or storekeeper in increasing sales. While there were variations between provinces, the systems adopted at repeal were designed to avoid these perceived problems. In most provinces there was at first little or no provision for "liquor-by-the-drink"; alcohol (other than light beer) was only to be sold for consumption at home. In all provinces the province became the wholesaler and retailer of spirits and wine and, in some places, also of beer. In several provinces (e.g., Ontario and Newfoundland) for several decades the province also had a role in the production of spirits. The private profit motive was thus substantially eliminated, particularly at the sales-point for alcoholic beverages.

At the time of adoption of most of the Canadian systems, government monopolies on alcohol sales already had a lengthy history (Room 1985).

Russia had instituted a wholesale and retail monopoly system, starting in 1895, before switching to prohibition with the wartime mobilization of 1914 (McKee 1997). The idea of a local government monopoly, known as the "Gothenburg system," was in fact proffered as the major alternative to prohibition by forces in Europe and North America, which acknowledged that drinking caused problems but which opposed prohibition. Thus prohibition was fought off in Sweden in the 1910s and 1920s with the alternative of the "Bratt system" of local (and eventually state) monopolies. When the United States eventually moved towards repeal of prohibition an influential study financed by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., favoured a monopoly system as the best alternative (Fosdick and Scott 1933). In Canada Saskatchewan had already experimented with a provincial monopoly system between 1915 and 1917 (Hose 1928, 4).

The modern Canadian alcohol control model, however, can be said to date from the institution of the Quebec system in 1919. This system involves a detailed control of the sale of alcoholic beverages, particularly at the retail level. These controls are primarily a provincial, rather than a national or local, responsibility. Control is maintained through a system of specialized provincial agencies, which themselves conduct retail sales or license private parties to do so. There is usually some provision for local concerns about problematic sales to be taken into account by the provincial agencies. The mandate of the alcohol control agencies extends only to the conditions and circumstances of alcohol sales and does not normally include other aspects of alcohol policy, such as drinking-driving or treatment of alcohol problems.

While in some respects the off-premise³ sales system has proved quite stable, there have been numerous changes over the years, so that the system in the 1990s looks quite different from the system in the 1930s. The provincial liquor store of half a century ago discouraged impulse purchases and, in fact, incorporated a posture of discouragement of sales. Campbell (1993, 174) describes the British Columbia Liquor Control Board store of that era:

Only a small sign identified the store's purpose, and dark green windows and curtains hid the interior. The starkness inside discouraged lingering; the atmosphere was reminiscent of a bank, with the assets kept safely behind a formidable counter. In larger stores customers first lined up to have their mandatory liquor permits approved, although the approval was often ignored in practice. With another clerk they placed their written orders and paid for the purchases in cash. From a third clerk the customers received their goods. All the staff and usually the customers were men; few women and no children entered a liquor store.

This is, of course, a substantial distance from the ambiance of the self-service stores common in most provinces today, increasingly replete with promo-

tional materials and beverage-tastings. In most provinces the government monopoly on off-premise sales was also somewhat diluted over the years. In British Columbia, for instance, licensed hotels and neighborhood pub stores were allowed to sell BC beer and wine in 1985 (Campbell 1993, 190). In Ontario wineries were allowed to set up stores to sell their products, originally only at the vineyard but later also from off-site stores often located next to or within supermarkets. In Quebec in 1978 grocery stores that were not part of a retail chain were allowed to sell wine bottled in the province. Although the privatization of the Alberta government liquor stores occurred in 1993, retail wine stores had been introduced in 1985, retail beer stores in 1989, and retail sales by hotels in 1990 (West 1997).

Two other aspects of the original Canadian model of alcohol control had radically changed well before the 1980s. Originally, there had been some provision for the control of the amount sold to the individual customer. Quebec customers, for instance, were limited to purchasing one bottle of spirits at a time, and Manitoba customers to one case of spirits per week. With a "special quantity permit," Saskatchewan customers could purchase up to ten gallons of beer or wine or a case of spirits, so long as they did not make any other purchase for two weeks (Hose 1928, 24). The permits, issued in most places on an annual basis, were apparently regularly used as an individual-level control in the early years of the systems: As Moffit (1932) indicated, patrons were required to present the permit with each purchase, and on occasion staff entered sales information on the permit itself. He also noted that suspension or cancellation of permits, as well as interdiction, were frequently used both for infractions of the law and at the discretion of the store manager. As late as 1958 Saskatchewan liquor stores maintained an "interdict list" of persons forbidden to purchase alcoholic beverages (Dewar and Sommer 1962). A vestige of this effort at control of the individual customer, in the form of a signed purchase slip for each purchase, remained in the Ontario system as late as the 1960s, but the attempt to use the alcohol sales system as a means of social control at the individual level never aspired to the thoroughness of the Nordic systems of the same era (Sulkunen, Sutton, Tigerstedt, and Warpenius 2000). The only such controls now left in the systems are prohibitions on sales to those already intoxicated or under the legal purchasing age.

Public drinking places were greatly restricted in the original versions of the modern Canadian model of alcohol control. No provinces initially allowed on-premise sales of spirits, and only Quebec allowed wine as well as beer to be sold by the drink (Hose 1928). When beer parlours were allowed in British Columbia in 1925, they were differentiated as far as possible from the old saloon; in fact, the public display of the words "bar" and "saloon" was banned. "No bar was permitted; patrons had to sit at tables where waiters served them draft or bottled beer." No food or soft drinks could be sold, no

entertainment or games were permitted, and there were separate sections for men and for "ladies and escorts" (Campbell 1993, 176-8). In "the large Edmonton beer parlor," Sommer (1965, 107) noted, there was "nothing much to do except converse (if you happen to be sitting with other people) and drink beer. Hot meals are not served, there are practically no other diversions (television is turned on only for special events, and then only with the specific permission of the provincial authorities) and no one standing can be served." Women were not allowed in the Saskatchewan beer parlors at all (Dewar and Sommer 1962). The large male-only beer parlour remained a standard feature of Canadian drinking practices well after the Second World War.

The 1940s and 1950s, however, brought increased calls for liquor-by-the-drink – for licensed restaurants and cocktail lounges. Though in decline, the still lively temperance movement fought vigorously against these proposals, losing in Ontario in 1947 but managing to stave off defeat until 1953 in British Columbia (Campbell 1993, 184) and until 1958 in the Prairie provinces (Gray 1982, 108). Though the Ontario attorney general had claimed that "out and out prohibitionists were no more than a corporal's guard," the Ontario premier was personally defeated in the next election in a backlash against the 1947 legislation (Archibald 1990, 2).

As elsewhere in the British Commonwealth, the nature of public drinking was transformed in Canada in the postwar decades. While bars remained an important part of the scene, they were no longer a male preserve, while a thriving restaurant culture with alcoholic beverages (mostly wine or beer) served with meals grew up alongside them. Throughout most of Canada it became possible to purchase individual drinks at a bar, and liquor-by-the-drink ceased to be more than an occasional local issue by the end of the 1960s.

The "Wet" Elites and Alcohol Control

In Canada, as in the United States, prohibition offered a wonderful target for the youth rebellion of the 1920s and 1930s, who railed against the Victorian ideals of middle-class family life and propriety (Room 1984). The resulting "wet generations," which came to political power in the postwar period, were relatively intolerant of any general consideration of alcohol policy, allowing only for the building of alcoholism treatment for the unfortunate few predestined to have problems with drinking. As the subtitle of an important US report put it in 1981, it took until then to get "beyond the shadow of prohibition" (Moore and Gerstein 1981).

But while repeal left behind only a relatively inconspicuous alcohol control structure in much of the United States, the alcohol control structures in Canada remained much more visible in everyday life, even after the advent

of liquor-by-the-drink. Government efforts to structure the individual's choices in the alcohol market remained obtrusive. In an era when the doctrine of consumer sovereignty has been very strong, the existence of government liquor stores, with limited numbers and limited hours, runs squarely against the dominant doctrines of free markets and consumer sovereignty. Though Canadian alcohol controls are today only a shadow of what they were in the 1930s, they have remained a favourite target for complaints about the "nanny state." Those who think of themselves as political opinion leaders or who work in the mass media tend to think of alcohol controls as unnecessary and even offensive, and those in their social circles tend to think the same way. They are thus surprised at or disbelieving of public opinion data that show that the broad Canadian population is quite conservative when it comes to keeping alcohol controls in place (e.g., Room, Graves, Giesbrecht, and Greenfield 1995; Single 1997; Giesbrecht and Kavanagh 1999).

FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL ROLES

Both the federal and the provincial levels of government have jurisdiction over alcohol issues. Both the federal government and the provinces, for instance, tax or collect revenues from alcoholic beverage sales, license alcohol producers and importers, and regulate advertisements for alcoholic beverages. Drinking-driving is sanctioned both under federal criminal law and by provincial highway traffic acts. Some treatment services for alcohol problems – those in the general health system – are jointly financed. Yet, to a large extent, the story of the societal response to alcohol in Canada in the twentieth century is a story played out at the provincial level, although the response has often become national through diffusion from one province to another.

This pattern was set with the federal response to the 1898 plebiscite on national prohibition. When Quebec voted five to one against prohibition while the rest of the country voted in support, the federal government of the day declined to act (Smart and Ogborne 1996, 45–6). Frustrated at the federal level, temperance forces transferred their attention to the provincial level, and this was the level at which the battles over prohibition and, later, over alcohol control systems were played out (with the exception of a short-lived federal wartime prohibition in 1918–19, which was added on top of provincial prohibitions). The provincial alcoholism treatment commissions were established before there was substantial federal involvement in alcohol-related health matters.

A 1928 federal law, the Importation of Intoxicating Liquors Act, makes the provinces responsible for buying, importing, and controlling alcohol. However, there were some aspects of alcohol issues in which the federal

government was involved. In the first place, as part of its general responsibility for the Canadian economy, it tracked alcoholic beverage production, imports and exports, and, in principle, was generally supportive of the industry as a segment of the Canadian economy. More specifically, it collected federal taxes on alcoholic beverages, which meant that there was a federal oversight of the industry to make sure the taxes were collected. Through its control of the national borders, the federal government had a responsibility to apprehend and discourage smuggling, which undercut not only its own revenues but also those of the provinces and of law-abiding segments of the alcohol industry.

As criminal law in Canada is a federal matter, alcohol-related matters related to criminal law have also been a federal responsibility, although most of the burden of actual enforcement falls on the provinces. Where the provinces have found federal action too sluggish (e.g., concerning drinking-driving), they have found remedies in administrative law (i.e., within their jurisdiction), which went beyond the provisions of the criminal law. Since electronic broadcasting was also a matter of federal jurisdiction, the federal CRTC exercised control over advertising of alcoholic beverages on radio and television, although the provinces had concurrent jurisdiction (which Ontario exercised vigorously).

The federal government has special responsibilities for Aboriginal Canadians, including provision of health and social services. The high rates of alcohol problems, particularly in northern populations, meant a very substantial federal expenditure on services to ameliorate these problems. Yet for the whole period of our study this expenditure was little discussed or recognized.

Nevertheless, for the most part, the federal focus with regard to alcohol issues pertains to the management of data and revenue and commercial aspects rather than to prevention of drinking-related problems. Prior to the establishment of the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (CCSA) there was no specific federal agency that dealt primarily with alcohol or other drug issues (with a short-lived exception noted below). This, incidentally, is significantly different from the United States, which has at least four federal organizations with alcohol issues central to their mandate: the National Institute on Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse (NIAAA), the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP), the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT), and the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) (formerly the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms [BATF]). The first three are affiliated with the US Department of Health and Human Services and conduct in-house programs of research or intervention; they also fund large-scale basic science, applied research, or community-based prevention and treatment initiatives.

Canadian federal government involvement in the health side of alcohol issues came only in the wake of the LeDain Commission on Non-Medical

Use of Drugs in the 1970s, with the formation of the Non-Medical Use of Drugs Directorate in the federal Department of Health and Welfare. Within a few years, however, this was merged into a general health promotion effort, and the federal presence in the alcohol field diminished.

While the federal government in the 1980s showed some interest in health promotion measures concerning drinking-driving and other drinking-related problems, the emphasis in federal publicity campaigns was on supporting activities at the community level. Even with the advent of the CCSA in 1988, with a mandate that included alcohol, the level of federal involvement in responding to alcohol problems did not materially change.

In short, unlike at the provincial level, at the federal level alcohol matters were not the concern of a specific specialized agency. Alcohol issues were a very small part of the concerns of each of the federal ministries who had some jurisdiction.

Provincial Alcohol Control Systems

From the brief history of alcohol control in Canada provided above, it can be seen that alcohol matters have been dealt with primarily at the provincial level. As of the late 1980s each province had an alcohol monopoly that controlled the wholesaling of spirits and wine and (usually) beer as well as a licensing agency for restaurants, bars, and other private retailers (in some provinces integrated with the monopoly in a single agency). Specific provincial alcohol control agencies, as well as the provincial government more generally, played a leading role in all matters concerning the production, distribution, and sale of alcohol.

Provincial Alcoholism Treatment Commissions

Concomitant with the first substantial erosions of the post-prohibition control system after the Second World War came the growth of a societal response to alcohol problems that focused on treating alcoholism. The responsibility for dealing with problems arising from alcohol consumption also fell largely to the provinces (or to local jurisdictions within them). By the late 1970s each province had built some kind of funded treatment system for alcohol problems, usually loosely connected to the health care system, and the flag of a "public health approach" to alcohol issues had been primarily carried by provincial agencies originally set with the main task of providing treatment for alcoholism.

As Mäkelä et al. (1981, 65) wrote concerning this period in a number of societies, "the expansion of the treatment system may be seen as a kind of cultural alibi for the normalization of drinking and the relaxation of controls." In the Canadian context, the link was explicit and open: in province

after province, the provincial alcoholism treatment agency was set up as part of legislation that also loosened alcohol controls.

The original model for these had been the Addiction Research Foundation (ARF) of Ontario, founded in 1949 as the Alcoholism Research Foundation under the direction of David Archibald, a charismatic and well connected social worker (Room 1999). This was part of the solution to the "difficult political situation" posed by the defeat of the preceding premier in an election fought on the issue of liquor-by-the-drink (Archibald 1990, 1-2).

Most other provinces had followed the lead of Ontario in establishing a provincial agency to build an alcohol treatment system (later incorporating other drugs and, later still, gambling). In the decade and a half after the founding of ARF, a commission to establish and run a provincial alcoholism treatment system was set up in every Canadian province (Rush and Ogborne 1992, 256). Saskatchewan and Manitoba set up Alcoholism Commissions to build a provincial treatment system in direct connection with legalizing cocktail bars, cabarets, and liquor licences for restaurants (Gray 1982, 106-7). In the 1960s the responsibilities of these commissions were broadened to include other drugs besides alcohol. In Alberta and Manitoba these commissions still survive, having been given new leases on life by a succession of additions to the original mandate of alcoholism treatment - drugs, drinking-driving remediation, and (most recently) gambling.

The establishment of alcoholism commissions also reflected a general movement in the United States and Canada, with support from well placed members of Alcoholics Anonymous (the burgeoning mutual-help movement in the field), to establish such commissions at the state or provincial level. By the time ARF was founded there were government alcoholism programs or agencies in 12 US states and the District of Columbia (Johnson 1973, 308), including all the New England states (Davis 1962).

In the early 1970s Ontario had diverged from the model by transferring the responsibility for the treatment system to the Ministry of Health. This left ARF with responsibility for running a large research-oriented treatment centre in Toronto (originally heavily hospital-based) to serve as a demonstration site for the rest of the system, and for community prevention efforts in the province, along with a very substantial and broad-ranging research capacity. In the course of the 1970s and 1980s the addiction treatment efforts in most other provinces had been reorganized into the general health or social services, so that by 1990 only Alberta and Manitoba had a free-standing specialized addiction agency with responsibility for treatment in the province and also a concern about prevention and policy. Elsewhere in Canada management of the alcohol and drug treatment system was eventually merged into the general health system, first in Quebec (in 1971) and Ontario, and in all other provinces by 1990. Although Ontario's ARF sur-

vived until 1998 as a separate entity, it was merged with mental health mandates when it became part of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (Room 1999).

As the era of separate agencies for alcohol and drug problems at the provincial level waned in the late 1980s, a small semi-governmental agency, the Canadian Centre for Substance Abuse, was set up at the federal level. Its role was to coordinate and assist rather than to direct, and in the mid-1990s its activities were further restricted by budget cuts. CCSA's attention to alcohol issues has in any case been limited, and, with the drastic cut in funding, its alcohol policy unit was disbanded. Although based at the provincial level, Ontario's ARF to some extent filled the vacuum in public health expertise on alcohol issues between the 1970s and 1990s at the federal level.

SCIENCE, PUBLIC HEALTH, AND ALCOHOL POLICY AGENDA

At the time when the provincial alcohol control systems were set up, in the wake of the First World War, there was a fairly substantial international research literature on alcohol control to draw upon. Among the studies readily available, for instance, were the reports of the US Committee of Fifty to Investigate the Liquor Problem (e.g., Wines and Koren 1899), Henry Carter's (1919) report on the experience with liquor control in the United Kingdom during the First World War, and Rowntree and Sherwell's (1906) international survey of alcohol taxation in the anglophone world. It remains for detailed investigation to determine the extent to which this literature was actually used in setting up the Canadian alcohol control systems.

By the time of the flurry of alcohol control changes in the 1940s and 1950s, which brought liquor-by-the-drink, this earlier literature was largely forgotten. The 751-page report of the Manitoba Liquor Enquiry Commission in 1955 drew heavily on the new scholarship about alcohol and alcoholism from the Yale Center of Alcohol Studies, bringing E.M. Jellinek to Winnipeg to consult with the commission (Gray 1982, 106). But little of this scholarship was directly relevant to the question of what would happen if the province allowed liquor-by-the-drink. As Gray complains, the conclusions of the commission were disconnected from the extensive display of scholarship that preceded them.

A pioneer study of the effects of a change in alcohol control policy was conducted in Saskatchewan in 1959 and 1961 (Dewar and Sommer 1962). As part of legislation permitting liquor-by-the-drink, the legislature requested that a scientific study be made of the effects of the new legislation. The whole adult population of a small town was surveyed before and after the local beer parlor was converted into a "beverage room," with food served, women admitted, and wine and spirits served as well as beer. The

authors did find some changes in the location of drinking, but the overall impression left by the report was that little had changed in the community's drinking behaviour. Since the change to liquor-by-the-drink came late in Saskatchewan, it is doubtful that the report had much influence on alcohol policies.

The provincial commissions gradually took on tasks other than building the treatment system. As early as 1955 the executive director of ARF became involved in discussions on the "need for a comprehensive research program that would survey all of the issues related to alcohol and provide a new direction for alcoholism programs" (Johnson 1973, 336) – discussions that pointed towards a broader alcohol policy approach than simply the provision of treatment. While the other provincial commissions appear mostly to have been circumspect about their relation to alcohol control policies, a somewhat different stance was evident among ARF management, social researchers, and community program staff. Throughout its history, ARF played a special role in promoting research and offering a resource for public health initiatives on alcohol policy issues in Canada. At the end of the 1960s, as its primary mission of building a treatment system was changing, ARF began to see its mandate as including consideration of the effects of alcohol availability controls and, thus, provided one resource for provincial and local public health initiatives focusing on alcohol policy agendas.

In 1960 ARF's director of research published an article pointing out the relations between alcohol taxes, level of alcohol consumption, and the rates of death from alcoholic cirrhosis (Seeley 1960). While ARF management soft-pedalled these findings at the time, by the late 1960s, when other ARF scientists put forward the idea that there was a fixed distribution of alcohol consumption – so that a rise in per capita consumption meant a rise in the proportion of very heavy drinkers – ARF management was ready to emphasize the research findings (Room 1990). With the publication of "Alcohol Control Policies in Public Health Perspective" in 1975 (Bruun et al. 1975) – an international report with heavy input by ARF researchers – ARF became identified internationally as well as nationally with what was sometimes called the "new public health perspective" on alcohol problems. While the new research tradition was initiated in Finland, where the social research group was in fact part of the government alcohol monopoly, ARF researchers introduced this new emphasis to North America.

In the succeeding two decades a substantial international research tradition emerged. It focused on studies of the effects of alcohol controls, with ARF researchers making substantial contributions to it (Edwards et al. 1994). In the 1970s and 1980s several lines of research at ARF examined the implications of alcohol policies and provided an empirical rationale for a cautious approach to increasing access to alcohol. ARF researchers also played a role in several international studies focusing primarily on an alco-

hol policy agenda (Bruun et al. 1975; Mäkelä et al. 1981; Single, Morgan, and de Lint 1981; Edwards et al. 1994). In the 1970s senior researchers were the authors of policy recommendations to the Ontario government (ARF 1978), even though, then and later, their advice was either not heeded or only reluctantly sought when decisions were all but finalized. Also, at the community level the findings from national and international research were applied to an emerging emphasis on local and municipal policies focusing on such issues as serving practices, access to alcohol, control of drinking and driving, and snowmobiling incidents, to mention a few (e.g. Rylett, Douglas, Narbonne-Fortin, and Gliksman 1999). During the 1990s ARF produced a series of research-based "best advice" documents about alcohol policies (e.g., ARF 1993a; 1993b).

Other interests in the alcohol field, including the beverage industries and the Ontario liquor control authorities, regularly consulted with ARF about its positions on pending matters. There was both consultation and debate, the latter exemplified in the 1970s and early 1980s by disagreement between senior ARF research directors and Canadian brewers about the policy implications of research on per capita rates and aggregate levels of damage.

ARF's unique position as a research centre in the field in part reflected the lack of other strong research centres in Canada. Relatively small groups of people researching the psychological and biological aspects of alcohol could be found elsewhere, but with the exception of ARF, Canadian work in epidemiology or social research on alcohol was confined to individual university professors (sometimes themselves ex-ARF staff) and their students. In many instances funding arrangements and other contingencies facilitated, by default rather than design, an ad hoc approach where short-term projects were supported but long-term effort was highly uncommon. In general, in most other provinces sustained lines of research on alcohol issues did not emerge, research working groups were short-lived, and infrastructure that would encourage the emergence of centres for alcohol research was mostly absent.

In several other provinces, such as British Columbia (e.g., Cutler and Storm 1973), Alberta (Sommer 1965), Saskatchewan (Dewar and Sommer 1962), and Manitoba (Holloway 1964, 1966; Murray 1978) there were short-term periodic investigations of alcohol policy topics. For example, an extensive report from the Alberta commission examined the implications of the literature on availability of alcohol for alcohol policy (James 1994), and in Manitoba a study was commissioned to examine the impacts of proposed changes in access to alcohol (Michener, Pankhurst, and Leholtz 1981). However, it is doubtful that the research played much of a role in political decision making regarding detailed changes in alcohol controls, although it may have strengthened the position of the provincial monopolies as they increasingly came under threat of privatization.

In Quebec, in the early 1960s, the Quebec government created the Committee of Inquiry and Information on Alcoholism (Comité d'Étude et d'Information sur l'alcoolisme), which was merged into the Office of Prevention and Treatment of Alcoholism and Addiction (Office de la Prévention et du traitement de l'alcoolisme et des toxicomanies [OPTAT]) in 1966. OPTAT had a research function as part of its mandate and played a leading role in research development and dissemination as well as an advisory role in reporting to the government on alcohol policy development. However, OPTAT was dissolved in 1975, and alcohol research flagged until the beginning of the 1990s. In 1991 Quebec initiated a research infrastructure program that led to the creation of two research teams, grouping together academics working in partnership with practitioners whose primary focus was on prevention and treatment research. In addition, in the late 1990s the Comité permanent de luttres aux toxicomanies, an advisory committee to the minister of health and social services, played an active role in research dissemination by publishing research-based documents on selected topics.

THE ALCOHOL MARKET AND THE ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE INDUSTRIES

When considering alcohol policies in Canada, it is critical to consider the role and interests of the alcoholic beverage industry and related businesses, particularly when policy developments have the potential to affect the alcohol market.

The alcoholic beverage industries are a major economic force, as is indicated by their contribution to the gross domestic product (GDP)⁴ and to federal and provincial fiscal revenue. From 1988/89 to 1998/99, distilled spirits' contribution to the GDP grew from \$253.7 million (at 1981 prices) to \$590 million (at 1992 prices), an increase of about 132 percent; for beer the contribution went from \$664.7 million (at 1981 prices) to \$1,911 million (at 1992 prices), an increase of about 187 percent; and for wine it went from \$109 million (at 1992 prices) to \$154 million (at 1992 prices), an increase of about 41 percent. The commitment of alcoholic beverage producers – particularly brewers – to sponsor high-profile hockey, baseball, and football clubs, as well as their contributions to other sports (such as automobile racing) and musical events, are not included in these figures but enhances their positive public image among Canadians.

However, after years of expansion in the alcohol market, the alcohol industries faced a decrease in alcohol consumption beginning in the early 1980s. Nevertheless, by the mid-1990s the per-adult rate of consumption of all alcoholic combined began to increase.⁵

Although wine, beer, and spirits were all affected, the most noteworthy recent trend has been a decline in the official sales of spirits, with the per-

adult sales rate in 1995 being less than 50 percent of what it was in 1975. As is noted in Chapter 7, part of this decline was offset, particularly in the early 1990s, by extensive smuggling and other forms of "unrecorded" consumption, much of which involved distilled spirits. Hence, protecting and expanding their market remains a major issue for the brewers, the distillers, and the wine industry, and, as we see in the next chapters, they have been actively involved in alcohol policies in order to protect their business interests.

Since the provincial liquor boards largely manage wholesale and importing functions, the primary Canadian industry players were those who produced and bottled spirits, wine, and beer. Canadian grape growers also obviously had strong interests. Others with interests at the production level included suppliers of bottles and cans as well as barley and other grain growers. As is seen in Chapter 6, various commercial interests outside Canada, particularly American brewers and the European and American wine industries, also had an interest in staking a position in the Canadian market.

At the retail level the primary interest groups, as on-premise sellers of alcohol, were owners of restaurants and taverns. Retail storeowners, and particularly small-scale retailers, have also had strong desires to take over some or all of the retailing of alcoholic beverages in bottles or cans for off-premise consumption. In Quebec groceries have had a strong "foot in the door" since the end of the 1970s, and in a few other provinces some retailers were able to sell beer (e.g., Newfoundland and, after 1993, Alberta). The case studies presented in subsequent chapters indicate that, despite a common interest in developing and protecting their business, these actors often display divergent interests with regard to alcohol policies.

Historically and throughout the period of our study, largely, Canada's brewing, spirits, and wine industries were organized separately from each other, although occasionally there was some minor cross-ownership (e.g., wineries owned by brewers) (Single 1982). The beer and spirits industries were organized on a national basis with international connections. The Brewers Association of Canada (BAC) was established in 1943, and the Association of Canadian Distillers (ACD) in 1947, the latter at the suggestion of the provincial liquor control commissioners (ACD 2000). Set up as trade associations, the BAC and ACD engage in lobbying the provincial and the federal government on alcohol policies. By contrast, until the late 1980s, the much smaller but more diverse wine-growing industry was organized largely separately in its two main centres, Ontario and British Columbia, represented by provincial associations (the Wine Council of Ontario and the British Columbia Wine Council, respectively).

Until the late 1980s the Canadian alcohol control system set up at repeal ensured a relatively orderly and protected Canadian market for alcoholic beverages. Indeed, it might be referred to as a series of protected markets: each individual province had its own rules that tended to favour local

production over outside production. Thus, there was not an internal free market in alcoholic beverages; that is, the provinces imposed restrictions on interprovincial trade. The beverage producers generally accepted the fragmented system with the extra costs it entailed since it also provided them with powerful market protection.

Brewing Industry

Through a variety of pricing and access control measures, the brewers were largely protected from large-scale foreign competition in their home market. Molson and Labatt dominate the Canadian beer market, each with a market share of about 45 percent (Guzik 2002). The most concrete expression of their oligopoly is the government-licensed Brewers Retail System in Ontario, which is 99 percent jointly owned by these two brewers and through which almost all the package beer in the province is sold. In Ontario, the largest market, the pricing and distribution structures for beer have not changed in radical ways, although there have been large changes in some smaller provinces.

As is described in Chapter 6, essentially, this lack of change reflects a series of successful defensive actions by Canadian governments on behalf of the big Canadian brewers over two decades. These defensive actions were taken at both the federal and the provincial levels, and by governments representing all the major parties. Helping to make this possible, undoubtedly, was the brewers' success in portraying their products as national icons and symbols, exemplified most recently in "the rant," the wildly successful Molson "I Am Canadian" advertising campaign (Peterson 2000). Linking their products and companies to sports, music, and other forms of popular culture also blurred boundaries between selling beer and promoting Canadian culture.

However, government regulations had also considerably impaired the beer industry's efficiency. Provincial preferences for local breweries meant that every province except Prince Edward Island had at least one brewery; altogether there were thirty-nine Canadian breweries in 1987 (Spears 1987). While the average Canadian brewery in 1987 brewed 0.5 million hectolitres per year, American breweries, which ranged up to 15 million hectolitres in size, had considerable economies of scale. To compete with the American breweries, the Canadian breweries have concentrated their plants since 1985. In 2002 Molson had six and Labatt had eight breweries, each in six provinces. The industry is thus approaching the reduction to eleven plants, something that was projected in a submission to the federal government in 1985 (Brewers Association of Canada 1985).

Meanwhile, the Canadian brewers, like other brewers from Europe, Mexico and elsewhere, gradually established "premium imports" into the us market as some American beer-drinkers developed a taste for what was

advertised as the exotic.⁶ In 1993–94, CDN\$207 million of Canadian beer was exported to the United States, while only CDN\$16 million of US beer was exported to Canada (see Table 6–1 in Chapter 6). Given the difference in population, this meant that the imports in each country had roughly the same proportion of the national beer market.

Wine Industry

Prior to 1988 the Canadian wine industries were also highly protected by their provinces, with their form of production and sale highly structured by various market interventions, which had begun in Ontario in 1916 with government action to ensure maintaining a market in grapes during provincial prohibition (Harling 1994). Until 1988 provincial rules required that 85 percent of the wine had to be made from Ontario grapes, which were primarily of inferior quality for winemaking. In Quebec the wine industry, mainly a rebottling industry using wine from elsewhere, has been protected by the restriction imposed on grocery stores to sell only wine bottled in Quebec. However, much of the protective structure for Canadian wineries was dismantled in the wake of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade decision of 1987–88 and the inception of the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement of 1989 (discussed in detail in chapter 6).

The long-term result of the new market situation has been a further consolidation of the Canadian wine industry, both within and across provinces, and a diversification into other alcoholic beverages (wine coolers, ciders, spiked lemonades, whisky liqueurs, pepper vodkas, and fruit wines), which it often finds more profitable than wine (Lazarus 2000). Two large wineries have emerged as dominant in the production of Canadian wine: Vincor and Andrés (Madill et al. 2003). Vincor accounts for about 25 percent of all wine, both domestic and imported sold in Canada, making it the fourth largest wine company in North America, while Andrés is about one-third this size (2002 figures). In the early 2000s the four leading firms accounted for close to 90 percent of total domestic wine production. The geographic concentration remains strong: about 85 percent of industry shipments are from Ontario, Quebec, and British Columbia (Food Bureau 2000). At the same time, “boutique wineries” with small production have also proliferated. In Ontario major assets for all wineries with an Ontario base have been found in the systems of retail stores they have been allowed to operate – stores that sell only products with their own label. These systems give these Ontario wineries greater access to the market than is enjoyed by other wineries.

Distilled Spirits Industry

The main actors in the Canadian spirits industry are the multinational corporations Joseph E. Seagram and Sons, Hiram Walker and Sons, and Corby

Distilleries. In 2001 these corporations were effectively controlled by two British-based multinationals, UDV and Diageo. Along with three smaller, or subsidiary, firms, they form the Association of Canadian Distillers (2000). Spirits distillation in Canada is highly concentrated: Seagram has one distillery in Manitoba, and Hiram Walker and Corby have one plant in Ontario and one in Quebec. This is a considerable consolidation of the industry compared with the situation described by Single (1982) for 1979: at that time there were forty private firms and five provincial monopolies producing spirits, although Seagram and Hiram-Walker already controlled 52 percent of the market.

The consolidation of the Canadian spirits industry probably owes at least as much to changing Canadian drinking patterns as to international pressures. Between 1981 and 1992 sales of legal domestic spirits dropped by 46 percent (by volume), and they have continued to drop modestly ever since. Employment in the distilling industry fell by 20 percent between 1983 and 1989 (Industry, Science and Technology Canada 1992). Particularly in view of the shrinking domestic market, the United States is an important export market for Canadian spirits (see Chapter 6, Table 6.1), outweighing exports of American spirits to Canada by more than twenty to one.

THE PUBLIC AS CONSUMERS AND AS A POLITICAL CONSTITUENCY

Members of the public have several roles in the policy experience – as advocates for policy change or supporters of the status quo, as foci or victims in policy initiatives, and as consumers of alcoholic beverages. Alcohol policies directly or indirectly affect the public, for example, through expanding or restricting opportunities to drink or to display drinking-related behaviour, offering constraints on drinking-related harm, or having an impact on the quality of life in neighbourhoods or communities. Even if members of the public rarely directly participate in debates on alcohol policies, their behaviours, opinions, and preferences are often displayed by those actively involved in the policy process.

We turn first to the public as consumers and then offer remarks about their views on policy debates and deliberations. It should be noted that these distinctions are not fully discrete: aggregate alcohol consumption patterns and levels are a significant factor in policy stability and change. For example, a rising interest in wine or a declining preference for spirits has policy implications for international trade, control of smuggling, spirits taxation agenda, and marketing techniques; and these, in turn, have implications for public health and safety.

Alcohol Consumption

Most adult Canadians drink, and, in a typical week, the majority of these drink relatively small amounts. While the estimated level of drinkers varies

Table 2.1
Proportion of self-reported drinkers, Canada, 1949-95

Year	Percentage reporting drinking			
	Overall	Ages 18 - 29	Ages 30 - 49	Ages 50 +
1949	65	67	70	56
1958	65	70	68	57
1969	67	73	74	56
1975	76	84	79	61
1980	74	83	79	61
1985	82	90	86	70
1990	79	87	81	71
1995	73	77	78	65

Source: Edwards and Hughes, 1995.

Note: In 1958 and earlier years, adults were those twenty-one years and over. In 1959 and later, adults are those eighteen years and older. Drinkers are defined as those who indicated that they drank alcohol in the past twelve months.

Table 2.2
Per-adult (aged 15+) consumption of alcoholic beverages (in litres of absolute alcohol), based on official sales, Canada and three provinces, 1965-2000

Year*	Canada	Alberta	Ontario	Quebec
1965	7.7	7.6	8.6	7.1
1970	8.7	9.3	9.3	8.1
1975	11.0	11.6	11.3	10.0
1980	11.0	10.4	11.6	9.6
1985	10.0	11.4	10.4	9.0
1990	8.9	9.6	9.3	8.1
1995	7.4	8.2	7.4	6.9
2000	7.7	8.7	7.7	7.6

Source: Statistics Canada, 1967 to 2002. Publication No. 63-202, *The Control and Sale of Alcohol in Canada*. (Rounded figures.)

Note:

* These data are for fiscal years running from 1 April to 31 March (e.g., 1965 is for fiscal year 1965-66).

by type of poll, it seems that about three-quarters of adults are drinkers. Gallup data indicates that the number of drinkers was 65 percent in 1958, rose to a peak at 82 percent in 1985, and then dropped to 73 percent in 1995 (Table 2.1). The prevalence of drinkers is consistently higher among those under age fifty than it is among those aged fifty and over.

Based on official sales data, the trend in prevalence of any drinking is roughly parallel to the trend in per-adult consumption. Both increased in the 1960s and 1970s, and declined from the mid-1980s (Table 2.2). Per-adult rates, based on official sales, increased until about 1980 then

Table 2.3

Per-adult (aged 15+) consumption of beer, wine and spirits (litres of absolute alcohol), based on official sales, Alberta, Ontario and Quebec, 1965–2000

Year*	Beer			Wine			Spirits		
	AL	ON	PQ	AB	ON	PQ	AB	ON	PQ
1965	4.5	5.1	5.2	0.6	0.5	0.4	2.5	3.0	1.5
1970	5.0	5.3	5.4	1.0	0.7	0.7	3.3	3.3	2.0
1975	5.2	5.9	6.2	1.1	0.9	1.1	5.3	4.5	2.7
1980	5.3	5.5	5.9	1.2	1.3	1.5	6.3	4.4	2.2
1985	4.8	5.3	5.3	1.6	1.5	1.7	5.0	3.6	2.0
1990	4.6	5.3	5.0	1.1	1.1	1.7	3.9	2.9	1.4
1995	4.4	4.3	4.6	1.0	1.1	1.4	2.9	2.0	0.9
2000	4.4	4.2	4.7	1.2	1.3	1.9	3.0	2.2	1.0

Source: Statistics Canada, 1967 to 2002 (multiple years), Publication No. 63–202, *The Control and Sale of Alcohol in Canada*. (Rounded figures.)

Note:

* These data are for fiscal years running from 1 April to 31 March (e.g., 1965 is for fiscal year 1965–66).

declined for fifteen years and increased in recent years. Although the pattern was somewhat similar in the three provinces of Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec, the level of per-adult consumption was typically somewhat higher in Alberta and somewhat lower in Quebec (Table 2.3).⁷ On a per-drinker basis, excluding abstainers from the base, consumption increased from 11.7 litres in 1965 to 14.9 litres in 1980. By 1995 it had decreased almost one-third, to 10.1 litres (Table 2.4)

When the rates by beverage type and jurisdiction are examined over time, several patterns emerge (Tables 2.3 and 2.4). Although all three beverage groups were affected, as previously noted, the most noteworthy recent trend has been a decline in the official sales of spirits, with the per-adult rate in 1995 being less than 50 percent of what it was in 1975. As is noted in Chapter 7, part of this decline was offset, particularly in the early 1990s, by extensive smuggling and other forms of “unrecorded” consumption, much of which involved distilled spirits.

Although wine still represents only about 18 percent of absolute alcohol sold in Canada, the percentage increase in wine sales was particularly dramatic in the 1970s and 1980s, during a time when the per-adult rate of sales for wine tripled (Table 2.4). In this period, too, table wine became predominant over fortified wines, which had earlier accounted for much of the wine consumption. At the provincial level Ontario and Quebec typically sold more beer on a per-adult basis than did Alberta, and, for most years examined in Table 2.3, Quebec sold more wine than the rest of Canada. From about 1975 onward Alberta had a higher per-adult rate of spirits sales than did either Quebec or Ontario. Canadians still drink more beer than spirits

Table 2.4
Per-adult (aged 15+) consumption of alcoholic beverages (in litres of absolute alcohol),
based on official sales, Canada, 1965–2000

Year*	Beer	Wine	Spirits	All	% of Drinkers**	Estimated Per-drinker Consumption
1965	4.8	0.5	2.4	7.7	66	11.7
1970	5.0	0.7	2.9	8.7	70	12.4
1975	5.8	1.0	4.2	11.0	76	14.5
1980	5.5	1.4	4.1	11.0	74	14.9
1985	5.1	1.6	3.3	10.0	82	12.2
1990	5.0	1.3	2.6	8.9	79	11.3
1995	4.3	1.1	1.9	7.4	73	10.1
2000	4.3	1.4	2.1	7.7	77***	10.0

Sources: Statistics Canada, 1962 to 2002 (multiple years), Publication No. 63–202, *The Control and Sale of Alcohol in Canada*. (Rounded figures.)

Notes:

* Alcohol sales data are for fiscal years running from 1 April to 31 March (e.g., 1965 is for fiscal 1965–66). Data for prevalence of drinkers is for calendar years.

** Edwards and Hughes (1995, Canadian Gallup Polls, interpolating for years without Gallup data.

*** Prevalence for 2000 is an estimate based on linear extrapolation of 72.3 percent prevalence of drinkers in 1994 and 79.3 percent in 2004, based on national surveys (Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, 2004)

or wine, although wine consumption is most common in Quebec and British Columbia and is on the increase in most provinces.

Table 2.2 shows that per-adult consumption rates increased from the mid-1960s, levelled off, declined from around 1980, and then increased in recent years. The percentage of adults who reported that they drank at all has followed a similar pattern, although the peak was somewhat later. Using these data in combination, as in Table 2.4, we see that the *per drinker* consumption rate went from 11.7 litres of absolute alcohol in 1965 to about fifteen litres in 1980s and down to about ten litres in 1995 and 2000.

Canadian consumption rates are higher than those of Norway but substantially lower than those of many countries. The per-adult rate of consumption among Canadians is currently similar to the US rate. However, given the lower rate of abstention in Canada, on a per-drinker basis Canadian rates are considerably lower than American rates.

Attitudes toward Drinking

In order to provide a glimpse into public attitudes by Canadians about drinking, the findings from three surveys are summarized below. One study, conducted about two decades ago in Durham Region, Ontario, asked respondents (1) how acceptable it is to drink in different situations and (2) how, when, and how much males and females of different ages should drink

(Gillies 1978). Respondents were also asked about alcohol policies and about their own drinking and any related problems. Most of those interviewed ($n = 1,000$) expressed conservative opinions: they did not approve of drunkenness, drinking and driving, drinking while looking after children, or drinking by sixteen-year-olds. Although many thought that it was sometimes all right to "drink enough to feel the effects but not to get drunk," this behaviour was only considered acceptable at parties. Only 9 percent felt that it was all right for certain people to get drunk occasionally. Over 80 percent felt that sixteen-year-olds should abstain completely. Most also felt that "something should be done" (by the police, relatives, or social service agencies) about such problems as alcohol-related wife abuse, public drunkenness, over-spending on alcohol by heads of families, and drinking by bus drivers.

An Ontario survey from the early 1990s (Paglia 1994, 28) showed a majority of drinkers felt that alcohol had improved their lives in at least one way: it helped them to relax. However, most (66 percent) also felt that alcohol had done them as much harm as good, and 10 percent felt that alcohol had done them more harm than good. This survey also showed that most respondents (85 percent) believed that both men and women could drink at least occasionally without risking their health and that many believed that having two to three drinks a day would not pose health risks for either a man or a woman.

A national survey conducted in 1996 included questions about the definition of moderate drinking and the belief that it can be good for one's health. Fifty-seven percent of respondents believed that moderate drinking has health benefits. Forty-seven percent defined moderate drinking as having less than one drink a day, and twelve percent defined it as having one or more drinks a day. Belief in the health benefits of moderate drinking was more common among men, those age forty-five or older, residents of Ontario and Quebec, more frequent drinkers, and those with ischaemic heart disease. Those who believed in the health benefits of at least one drink a day were more often males, older persons, and frequent, heavy drinkers (Ogborne and Smart 2001).

Public Opinion on Alcohol Policies

During the period of our study, Canadians were not very active in alcohol policy issues; on balance, their role was not highly vocal, persistent, or organized. There are no strong articulated interests of consumer groups, although wine columnists and some others advocate for easier access to alcohol from time to time (e.g., in connection with proposals for sales through private venues) or for Sunday openings. There are no national pressure groups with a broad public health and safety mandate that are

active on a number of policy issues. As is noted in subsequent chapters, there is considerable variation by province as to the level of policy activism, the form it takes, and the issues.

During the past two decades there have been three alcohol issues that have attracted public health interests at the national level, but most have only done so for relatively brief periods of time. These include: fetal alcohol effects and warning labels (Chapter 15), the proposal to allow spirits advertising on television (Chapter 16), and the fallout from the Daviault case, in which extreme intoxication was judged to be an acceptable defence in a sexual assault case (Chapter 18). The one issue with persistent and sustained public interest is drinking and driving, and it also has a number of local, provincial, and national groups that are active in raising awareness and fostering interventions.

However, when governments have signalled an intention to move too quickly and precipitously on alcohol distribution arrangements, such as when they proposed introduction of beverage alcohol into corner stores in Ontario in the mid-1980s, there was a strong negative reaction from a number of quarters (i.e., educators, law enforcement personnel, clergy, and public health officials), which likely contributed to the proposal being shelved. Thus, while the Canadian public may not be highly organized in a persistent and sustained way around an intervention agenda, its opinions are cautious and supportive, for various reasons, of a public health agenda.

A series of surveys conducted among Canadian populations, a number of them in Ontario, suggest strong support for a number of policy measures, including curtailing alcohol advertising, having warning labels on bottles, keeping alcoholic beverages out of corner stores, modest density levels with regard to number of alcohol outlets, and increased server intervention (e.g., Room, Graves, Giesbrecht, and Greenfield 1995; Giesbrecht and Greenfield, 1999; Giesbrecht and Kavanagh 1999; Anglin, Kavanagh, and Giesbrecht 2001; Giesbrecht, Ialomiteanu, Room, and Anglin 2001). Although there has been some gradual erosion since the late 1980s in the level of support (Giesbrecht, Ialomiteanu, Room, and Anglin 2001), it still remains high, and it is highest among females, middle-aged and older adults, and lighter drinkers.

It is possible, therefore, to come to very different policy conclusions, depending on whether one looks at media accounts and the pronouncements from liquor boards and alcohol specialists or findings from surveys of public opinion. The former often suggest that there is rising and seemingly boundless demand for greater access and wider distribution of alcoholic beverages, while the latter suggest acceptance of the status quo, combined with concern with greater and easier access to alcohol as well as with the implications of these changes for families, neighbourhoods, and communities. This disjunction is partly an artifact of the orientation of different inter-

est groups and context; for example, the more vocal consumer, who is also likely a regular drinker, may be seen as the typical referent for liquor boards and alcohol producers and distributors, even if the views of this population segment are not representative of all adults.

CONCLUSION

Around 1990 a structure for alcohol markets in Canada, inherited from the post-Prohibition settlements of the 1920s, was still in place in every Canadian province, though with some erosions. In every province, also, there was a substantial provision for treatment of alcohol problems. This was somewhat separate from the general health system, but it was funded with provincial health funds. The production of spirits and beer was highly concentrated in a few firms, while wine production, a much smaller industry, was more dispersed. Canadian research-related alcohol policy was important internationally, but much of it came from a single large institution in one province. Until 1980 the rate of drinking had increased among the general public, as had the level of drinking among drinkers, but both subsequently declined. Campaigns against drinking-driving occurred in most provinces, but few other alcohol issues drew sustained attention from the public or the media. The primary buttresses for the status quo in alcohol control policies were the general conservatism of the Canadian public concerning alcohol issues and the vested interests of beverage industries (and others) in the existing control system. Except for drinking and driving, there was little in the way of interprovincial public health advocacy for alcohol policy measures to reduce the rates of alcohol-related problems.

NOTES

- 1 On 24 July 2002 the British Columbia government announced a gradual privatization of the government liquor stores in British Columbia, to be implemented over a period of several years (Consumer's Association of Canada – BC 2003). However, by October 2003, after negotiation with the liquor store employees' union, the government reversed itself, agreeing "to retain the liquor distribution system," while the union agreed to show enough flexibility "to enhance retail services with longer hours of operation" (Government of British Columbia 2003).
- 2 For a detailed account of Canada's experience with alcohol over several centuries, see Heron (2003).
- 3 Off-premise sales refers to alcohol purchased and taken away to be consumed at home; on-premise sales refers to restaurant, bar, and tavern sales of alcohol.

- 4 GDP is defined as the total market value of all goods and services produced within the political boundaries of an economy during a given period of time (usually one year).
- 5 Between fiscal years 1997–98 and 2001–02, the per-adult consumption rate increased from 7.3 to 7.7 litres of absolute alcohol (Statistics Canada 2002).
- 6 Through much of this period there was a complex series of cross-ownership and cross-licensing agreements between Canadian brewers and their American, Australian, Japanese, and other counterparts. In the course of the 1990s the brewing industry further consolidated globally into a series of multinationals (Jernigan 1997), a trend that also affected the Canadian beer industry. In 1995 Labatt Breweries of Canada became a wholly owned subsidiary of a Belgian-based multinational brewer, Interbrew, after its ownership was put in play by a bid by a Canadian financial company, Onex, in partnership with a South American brewer (Summerfield 1995; Chilton 1995). Meanwhile, the other major brewer, Molson Canada, moved in the opposite direction. In the early 1990s Molson was a conglomerate that included a chemicals business and home remodelling store chains, with considerable cross-ownership with breweries in the United States and elsewhere. The Miller Brewing Company in the United States, a subsidiary of Phillip Morris, had bought 20 percent of Molson in 1993 (Summerfield 1997). In the mid-1990s, reversing thirty years of diversification, Molson divested itself of non-brewing businesses. In June 1998 it bought back a 50 percent ownership stake in itself from Foster's Brewing Group (Summerfield 1998), returning to its original status as a Canadian brewing firm, with substantial ownership by the Molson family. However, in July 2004 a merger was announced (CBC 2004) between Molson and Coors, a US brewer in the same size range, although this merger had still not been consummated as of September 2004 (MSNBC 2004). Alongside the two giant brewers, small Canadian brewers have tended to increase in number but with little gain in market share.
- 7 It is common practice in alcohol research to use alcohol sales data to estimate the annual average amount of pure alcohol consumed by people aged fifteen or older. In Canada these estimates have typically assumed that beer has 5 percent alcohol, wine 13 percent, and spirits 40 percent. Per-adult consumption estimates are most useful for large jurisdictions without heavy tourism or home production and for examining trends over time. By age fifteen about 60 percent of Canadians have had a drink in the past twelve months and therefore can be considered consumers.

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