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**Prohibition of Alcoholic Beverages in the USA: The Rise and Fall of a "Noble Experiment"**

**A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Letters and English Language in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in Language and Culture**

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## **Dedication**

This research is dedicated to my parents Mr. and Mrs. Fareh.

To my family, friends, professors and to everyone who supported me while making this academic research.

Mohamed Abd El Madjed Fareh

I dedicate this work to my parents and brothers for the continuous encouragements throughout my studies.

To my friends for their support.

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## **Abstract**

Americans are known for their wide consumption of liquors. Social and moral illnesses spiked through American society because of drinking alcohol, especially during the 19th century and the beginnings of the 20th century. The issue instigated activists in America to establish movements voicing their demands to ban the intoxicating beverages. The passage of the 18th Amendment to the US Constitution in 1919 (taking effect in 1920 with the Volstead Act) was a profound attempt to contain the worrying situation. The research sheds light on the successfulness of the Prohibition law, the extent to which the set goals were achieved, its economic and cultural implications on the country. Alcohol consumption had initially decreased during the nationwide constitutional ban of drinks, but it would become a source of social tension with the dramatic rise of organized crime and corruption. The restrictions imposed on liquor trade incited smugglers to intensify their criminal activities in response to the federal government's decision. They bribed public officials to avoid legal accountability, achieving millions of dollars each year. Opponents of Prohibition claimed it was among the reasons leading up to the worst economic recession in US history, known as the Great Depression, which in turn would serve to repeal the Prohibition Amendment.

**Keywords:** Prohibition, 18th Amendment, Volstead Act, Great Depression, Repeal of Prohibition.

## المخلص

لظالما كان الأمريكيون مشهورين باستهلاكهم المفرط للمشروبات الكحولية. و مع إنتشار الأمراض والمشاكل الأخلاقية في المجتمع الأمريكي بسبب شرب الكحول، خاصة خلال القرن التاسع عشر ومطلع القرن العشرين، أقدم النشاط في أمريكا على إقامة حركات تعبر عن مطالبهم بحظر المشروبات المسكرة. كان إقرار التعديل الثامن عشر لدستور الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية سنة 1919(الذي دخل حيز التنفيذ مع قانون فولستيد سنة 1920) بمثابة محاولة عميقة لإحتواء الوضع المقلق.

يسلط البحث الضوء على مدى نجاح قانون الحظر و مدى تحقيق الأهداف الموضوعية وإنعكاساتها الإقتصادية والثقافية على الدولة. إنخفاض إستهلاك الكحول في البداية خلال الحظر الدستوري القانوني الوطني للمشروبات الكحولية ، لكنه كان مصدر توتر إجتماعي مع الإرتفاع الهائل للجريمة المنظمة والفساد. حرضت القيود المفروضة على تجارة الكحول المهربيين على تكثيف أنشطتهم الإجرامية عقب قرار الحكومة الفيدرالية من خلال رشوة المسؤولين العموميين لتجنب المتابعة القانونية، و قد حصلوا على ملايين الدولارات كل عام. يدعي معارضو الحظر أنه كان من بين الأسباب التي أدت إلى أسوأ ركود اقتصادي في تاريخ الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية والمعروف بإسم الكساد الكبير، والذي سيؤدي بدوره إلى إلغاء تعديل الحظر.

كلمات مفتاحية: الحظر، التعديل الثامن عشر، قانون فولستيد، الكساد الكبير، إلغاء الحظر.

### List of Abbreviations

AAPA	Association Against Prohibition Amendment
ASL	Anti-Saloon League
DNC	Democratic National Committee
IRA	Internal Revenue Act
IRS	Internal Revenue Service
MADD	Mothers Against Drunk Driving
NCADD	National Commission Against Drunk Driving
NCLOE	National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement
NYSFL	New York State Federation of Labor
PU	Prohibition Unit
RDD	Remove the Drunk Driver
US	United States
USA	United States of America
VA	Volstead Act
WCTU	Women's Christian Temperance Union
WLAA	World League Against Alcoholism
WWI	World War One

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## Introduction

Along its history, alcohol has always been readily available in the USA. Americans excessively consumed liquors in all occasions; regardless whether they were happy or sad, alcohol was present in their gatherings. People coming from the UK to America were already heavy drinkers who brought their drinking habits with them. Through time, liquors became an important commercial item providing high revenues for the federal government through taxations over this activity. These taxes caused many people to riot especially those whose livelihood was linked to alcohol trade. Politicians manipulated people's addiction to alcohol in order to gain elections supplying them with high quantities of drinks. The consumption of these intoxicating beverages sparked during the nineteenth century when people started to view it as a big problem. Drunkenness was the fundamental driver for many social and health issues; families were devastated, and the society witnessed the rise of different social diseases.

The consumption of alcoholic beverages has been a contentious topic in America since the Colonial Period. In May 1657, the General Court of Massachusetts made it illegal to sell strong liquors to Indians. Many associations were established in Virginia (1800) and New-York (1808). Within a decade, other temperance groups were formed in another eight states; some of which were statewide organizations. The claims temperance reformers served to minimize the consumption of alcohol among men and women. Temperance movements firstly emerged warning from alcohol consumption, then for moderation and later on demanding total abstinence from intoxicating beverages. Their activities had received tremendous support from people.

In general, social controls in both community and at home supported the idea that the abuse of alcohol was unacceptable. Drunkenness was condemned and punished. During the

first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Prohibition Law was adopted by many nations such as: Finland, Norway, Iceland and Canada.

Throughout time, the prohibition of alcoholic beverages in the United States has been a great concern of many researchers and academics. Thus, each one of them analyzed the issue of alcohol focusing on the factors that led to its prohibition of alcohol. The prohibition of alcoholic beverages was presented in a Master degree dissertation of Law in Murdoch University entitled *A Measure of Success: Examining Prohibition in 1920's USA*. It was presented by Michael Sweet who analyses the policy which was followed in order to ban alcoholic beverages. This latter was entrenched in 1919 by Congress into Constitution then the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment. Congressman Andrew Volstead promoted enacting legislation in the House of Representatives, then the National Prohibition Act became a law.

Sweet's study discusses theories and perceptions that serve to shape the debate over the prohibition of alcohol in order to measure its success, then the Act is examined according to its outcomes. In his dissertation, he assesses the anticipated increase in economic prosperity through statistics of the government revenue, business activity and wages. The last part scrutinizes the production and the supply of alcohol, drunkenness, crime rates and corruption. The success of the reform is noticed through the way it shapes the nation. The conclusion of the work shows that the reform started by the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the US Constitution was not defeated by any inherent impossibility but rather by the lack of skillful political will.

Benjamin Rush, one of the foremost physicians of the late 18th century, endorsed moderation rather than prohibition in his *Inquiry into the Effects of Ardent Spirits upon the Human Body and Mind* (1784). Rush argued that the excessive use of alcohol was harmful for physical and psychological state, labeling drunkenness as a disease. The claims of Rush and other temperance reformers served to minimize the consumption of alcohol among men and women.

The book entitled: *Alcohol and Health* edited by the US Department of Health and Human Services in 2000, with James D. Beard as an editor, was delivered to the Congress as a special report about alcohol and health. The authors of the book present new findings about alcohol abuse and alcoholism in which they demonstrate the different factors that lead to this issue. Additionally, they tackle the negative impact of alcohol consumption on health and its effect on the society. In the conclusion, the authors present the different legislative efforts to reduce alcohol abuse. Thus, different policies were followed by the United States in order to regulate the consumption of alcohol.

In Virginia Berridge's book entitled: *Temperance: Its History and Future Alcohol Policy*, published by Joseph Rowntree Foundation in 2005, she describes Temperance as a rigid moralistic movement. She says that the history of Temperance shows the cultural change that was achieved by media which helped to change the attitudes towards alcohol. The role of women and religion helped also in achieving the cultural change in the society. Virginia highlights the role of political parties that helped to influence the different policies that were made to regulate the issue of alcohol and Alcoholism.

The current study investigates the issue of alcohol prohibition in the US during the 1920's by the announcement of the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the US Constitution. It draws attention to the circumstances leading up to the ban of manufacturing and selling alcoholic beverages, which is a key element to grasp the motives for the US policymakers to take such a step. In addition, this research examines the unwanted effects of this prohibition on the American society, like the increase in the level of corruption and criminal groups which acted against the new situation. It also shows how these outcomes served to announce the 21<sup>st</sup> Amendment of the US Constitution repealing the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment. This plan has unexpectedly not been as successful as intended despite the benefits it had on the American society. The present dissertation is conducted in order to discover the reasons behind the fall

of the prohibition law in America, analyzing how such a Noble Experiment has not achieved its aims in the time when Americans needed to get out of the quagmire they have been in for approximately 100 years. Besides that, another concern is about the outcomes of ending the prohibition on the American society.

This study tries to answer the following question: why did the Prohibition Law not achieve the intended goals in the United States? How did the consumption of alcoholic beverages start to become a national concern in America? What are the unfavorable results of the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the US Constitution? and to what extent has it been successful? How did Americans react to the procedures taken to restrict the usage of drinks? What reasons have pushed the US to repeal the prohibition? What are the results of America's return to legalized manufacture and transportation of liquors?

This study is significant because it deals with a controversial topic in America. What alludes to the importance of the Prohibition law is that many other countries have gone into similar measures to restrict the usage of intoxicating beverages. The consumption of alcohol has reached alarming levels during the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the US. Liquors have been available everywhere in the US, and Americans have been drinking all day. Causing social illnesses and families to devastate, and constituting a serious impact on the society, alcoholism has led to a nationwide moral problem that needs to be treated. The Volstead Act (taking effect in 1920) enforced the application of the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment (1919) to the US Constitution initiating a brave and a crucial step to eliminate the misery of addiction.

The 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment backfired on the whole society. Although the Prohibition law has been a necessary procedure, it has not met the expectations of American officials to bring prosperity to America after years of social devastation. Surprisingly, such a noble experiment has indirectly drawn the society into chaos, insecurity of people and the widespread social problems related to organized crime. Bootleggers had sold alcohol through various illegal

ways and have established monopolies of alcoholic productions. Consequently, they had engaged into conflicts with the federal forces and other groups over the domination of the market and transportation of their beverages. Al Capone, for example, is probably the most infamous mobster during the prohibition era. These critical circumstances had constituted a serious threat to national security. With the ratification of the 21<sup>st</sup> Amendment to the US Constitution, the federal prohibition had been repealed giving local states the choice to maintain it as long as the law was respected.

Public opposition towards the federal ban of liquors was growing throughout that era. On February 20, 1933, Congress passed a resolution proposing the 21<sup>st</sup> Amendment to the constitution aiming at ending the prohibition of alcohol. While campaigning for presidential elections, the Democrat candidate Franklin D. Roosevelt used Prohibition as a central theme. On March 22nd, 1933, the US president FDR signed the Cullen-Harrison Act, which amended the Volstead Act, allowing Americans to manufacture and sell low-alcohol beer and wine, but it took effect on April 7th. The ratification was completed on December 5, 1933, repealing the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment which prohibited "the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors" after being operative for nearly 14 years (Smentkowski). Because of the increasing public opposition against Prohibition, the repeal was the solution to keep the society secure.

The 21st Amendment was the only amendment that was ratified by state conventions rather than state legislatures, and both methods are specified in Article V in the US constitution through which the ratification takes place. States were permitted to regulate the consumption of alcohol throughout their territories as long as they abided by the federal laws (Smentkowski). The 36<sup>th</sup> state to ratify the Amendment achieving the requisite three-fourths majority of states' approval was Utah. Conventions in Pennsylvania and Ohio came shortly after that to approve the repeal while some states preferred to keep statewide Prohibition.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Amendment ended the federal restrictions put on the manufacture, sale and transportation of liquors. However, it gave the authority to states which can decide whether they would go dry or remain wet. Before December 5th, the vote was unanimous because these states opposed the proposition: North and South Carolina, Georgia, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, and South Dakota. Mississippi kept Prohibition active until 1966 ("Five Interesting Facts About Prohibition's End In 1933").

This research sheds light on the question of prohibiting alcohol in the USA during the 1920s. When trying to examine that era, one cannot fully comprehend several issues without referring to the prime causes leading up to the ban of liquors. Till the current days, Prohibition remains a controversial topic. Aiming at gathering enough information to further understand the issue, this research uses the historical methodology which allows to study different events and phases of this problem went through before reaching the national prohibition in the 1920s. One reason is that the American society had known previous attempts to outlaw liquor trade led by temperance movements; the latter had a long history of activity against alcohol changing their policies over time after proving ineffectiveness. Therefore, a historical methodology is the most suitable for the research exploring the main historical stations of the issue.

The current work is organized through a general introduction, three balanced chapters, and a general conclusion. The first chapter gives a historical background for the topic, from the colonial America when alcohol was pervasive in the society. It also examines how and why alcohol started to become a source of fear over its destructive impacts on humans. The situation pushed various organizations, known as temperance movements, to lobby for the ban of liquors. The second chapter is about the period when the national prohibition of alcohol took effect. It studies the 18th Amendment to the US Constitution which marked the beginning of prohibition, as well as its enforcement and impacts on the nation. The third

chapter covers the success of anti-prohibition movements. It studies the reasons for the repeal of Prohibition by the enactment of the 21st Amendment of the US Constitution, and the effects of repealing Prohibition.



## Chapter One

### Roots of Prohibition

The production, sale, importation and consumption of liquors featured the colonial period in America. Ever since the first settlers coming from Britain landed in Plymouth, beer had become a part of social life. By the 1600s, Europeans traveling to North America were already boozers who brought their drinking habits. The region became known for the widespread use of beer over history. In *Brewing Battles: The History of American Beer*, Amy Mittelman mentions that Sam Adams and other American patriots drank while planning for revolutionary events. For example, the Boston Tea Party and the Midnight Ride of Paul Revere (qtd. in Leininger 2). Drunkenness was pervasive in the land mainly after the settlement of heavy drinkers.

#### 1. Alcohol in America during the Colonial Period

Colonial America had not known "liquor question". Drinking was not considered a public issue throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> and nearly all the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Back then, rum, as well as other alcoholic drinks, were highly valued and were by no means denounced or seen as a peril and problematic. However, they were perceived as healthy and used for medicinal purposes (Levine 110). At first, the society generally accepted alcohol as a part of cultural practices before it would later turn to be a source of concern.

Author Daniel Okrent, in his book: *Last Call: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition*, talks about the prevalence of drunkenness among the upper classes, including the founding fathers themselves. He notes that "Washington kept a still on his farm", and "Thomas Jefferson's fondness for drink extended beyond his renowned collection of wines to encompass rye whiskey made from his own crops" (8). Washington also supplied soldiers with a high regard for liquor. The author wrote "George Clinton, governor of New York from 1777 to 1795, once honoured the French ambassador with a dinner for 120 guests" (8) who consumed more than

200 bottles of intoxicating alcohol (8). Liquors were heavily consumed among the official sphere and served in formal meetings for political aims.

Aaron and Musto record that "The colonists brought with them from Europe a high regard for alcoholic beverages. Distilled and fermented liquors were considered important and invigorating foods" (131). They continue to argue that "People in all regions and of all classes drank heavily. Wine and sugar were consumed at breakfast; at 11:00 and 4:00 workers broke for their 'bitters'; cider and beer were drunk at lunch and toddies for supper and during the evening" (131). This denotes the proliferation of drinking culture among American families who would sometimes prefer beer to tea and water.

The high cost of imported beer pushed the colonists to brew it themselves, through the fermentation of peach juice and apple cider and rum which they imported from the West Indies. Drinking was an everyday habit for Virginians, and the jugs of alcohol were easily accessed in barbecues, on markets and especially during elections. By 1770, alcoholic drinks were served in every meal. People of all ages drank all day from the morning till night. Each American had an estimated 3.5 gallons of beer annually (Rorabaugh 17). The colonists heavily consumed alcohol in most of the occasions.

### **1.1. Liquor Trade: The Backbone of US Economy**

The trade of alcohol was officially recognized. Professor Krout explains that the taxes on alcohol trade was an important source of income for the colonists. By the 1630s, the colonial governments-imposed taxes on imported alcoholic beverages and other products. The revenues were used in several activities, including strengthening defense and education. The British government had been selling rum to North America for a while till the local production in the newly founded land boomed by the late 17th century, for they had accessed rum molasses of the Caribbeans. This latter would push the British crown to pass acts in order to limit America' importation of liquors to the UK only (qtd. in Aaron and Musto 131). The

government was in need to tax alcohol trade and collect the revenues to fund numerous projects.

Whiskey was an important and profitable drink during and after the revolutionary war in America. Because the raw materials were available, Americans brewed it themselves which helped the spark of this product throughout the country to be known as "The backbone of the US economy" (Kiger). This expression alludes that alcohol was significant to the economy. In many places, whiskey was also perceived to be safer than water which was repeatedly polluted.

After independence, drinking habits entirely changed as England refused to sell rum to former colonies, and Americans searched for other solutions. Consequently, the distillation of corn into "liquid assets" pushed whiskey to spread and substitute rum, and the growing production of this beverage made it readily available (Rorabaugh 17). The restrictions England put on the transportation of its alcohol to the colonies caused Americans to look for alternative ways to produce it.

The government needed resources to finance the debts of the newly independent nation. The US president George Washington approved Alexander Hamilton's plan. Taxes on different kinds of liquors were imposed to collect money for national benefit. However, a rebellion would ignite against the situation by Western Pennsylvania farmers in 1794 fearing the limitations this policy would bring on their livelihood, for the main product of trade between this newly settled area and the east was distilled whiskey. Reducing the taxes was a solution taken by the government to contain the increasing public tension and to avoid direct conflicts (Whitten 491-493). The government was in need of revenues resulted from taxations over liquor trade.

Because they were living from producing and selling alcohol, people opposed the government's taxation. When Thomas Jefferson took office, the federal government repealed

the excises on whiskey by 1802. In 1862, the Internal Revenue Act was established imposing fines on liquor in favor of military aims. Shortly after amending this law, fourth of the government' income resulted from the tax return. By 1875, the federal revenue coming from taxation over alcoholic beverages mounted to one-third (Sweet 36). Alcohol provided lucrative revenues for the federal government.

## **1.2. Alcohol and Elections**

George Washington used alcohol while campaigning for the elections of the Virginia House of Burgesses in 1758. Being aware that people are heavy drinkers, he distributed more than 150 gallons of alcoholic beverages to voters and eventually won the election (Niekrasz). Hence, alcohol was a powerful tool in the hands of politicians to win political fame. The day of elections was an occasion for gatherings and boozy parties when people can obtain different kinds of liquors for granted. Usually, the candidates would bring voters from far to parades with assured transportation and bottles of beer just to win their votes (Blakemore). People's addiction to liquors turned them easy targets to manipulate during elections.

## **1.3. Early Attempts to Control Alcoholism**

Aaron and Musto record that the early colonies tried different strategies to contain the worrying rise of drunkenness according to the conditions of each colony. However, there were common ones followed to limit the usage of ardents. Some of those mechanisms were: (1) People drink less in a shorter period of time, and taverns stay open for a limited duration. (2) Prohibitions put on serving certain people, like debtors and habitual drinkers. Another strategy was putting laws against some activities related to drinking, including gambling (132-133). These attempts were necessary to control the issue of alcohol consumption.

With the continuous waves of immigrants, the US witnessed a dramatic rise of

alcohol consumption in the nineteenth century. In his *Last Call*, Okrent states, "Americans drank 36 million gallons of the stuff; by 1890 annual consumption had exploded to 855 million gallons" demonstrating how drunk the society was (qtd. in Oshinsky). It was not until the 19th century that the concern and opposition towards alcoholism began to rise. The reason was that the alarming increase of drunkenness among Americans caused a serious devastation at many levels. By the early 1800s, a large portion of Americans started to fear the harm of alcohol on their life, families, society and the whole nation. They considered drinking as an immoral activity that should be eradicated.

## **2. Alcohol Consumption as a National Problem**

Considering it addicting and poisonous, public opinion about alcohol changed during the 150 years following the American Revolution. Drinking can make normal people violent and unrestrained leading to the collapse of families and societies (Olson and Gerstein 5). The writers explain that people who consume alcoholic beverages can be dangerous for themselves and for all people. For this reason and all the miserable consequences liquors led to, Americans began to become aware about the seriousness of the issue.

Alcohol causes people to behave abnormally, threatening the whole society. Heavy drinking among soldiers was a matter of major concern; this pattern would continue in the 19th century wherever the US army was found. In 1833 and 1834, Townsend, an American ornithologist, reported unpleasant and violent behaviors tied to drinking caused injuries and deaths. The federal and military officials had tried many times to legislate stringent laws against alcohol abuse in public and garrisons but failed to contain the issue. William Unrau dedicated a book talking about the failure of governmental efforts to stop drinking throughout a century (Frank et al. 348). The US continuously attempted to outlaw alcohol consumption; however, they did not succeed to permanently restrain alcohol usage.

After the industrialization of the United States, many new machines and technologies were introduced which flourished the economy. These machines needed qualified workers to manage. With the problem of drunkenness spreading between workers, "Americans stopped work at 11:00 a.m. to drink. A lot of work went undone" (Rorabaugh 17). Added to the low productivity, boozed employees would often engage in conflicts with colleagues. Therefore, employers endured serious losses in their businesses.

During the early 1800s, physicians and employers, who were concerned about the rising rate of drunkenness among workers, ignited the first steps towards temperance. They focused on warning Americans that alcohol destroys morals among drinkers. Standing on solid ground, temperance movements gained much support and were powerful enough to rapidly influence people's attitudes concerning booze addiction. By the 1850s, the number of those calling for a total prohibition of alcohol increased as many temperance supporters adopted the idea. Some political groups endorsed and popularized the question (Levine and Reinerman 462). To eliminate the high rate of crimes, for the society to rehabilitate from social and moral devastation, and to strengthen family bonds, Americans were advocating the ban of intoxicating liquors.

A new medical and scientific view of alcohol spread in North America in the late 18th century and the early 19th century. Liquors were looked upon as the reason for undesirable social conditions (crime, broken families ...) added to various health issues, and if people abstained from liquors, social and health devastations would lessen. More Americans began to advocate this view (qtd. in Levine 109). By the 19th century, the general view concerning alcohol consumption was that it was a source of severe illnesses. That was one of the reasons people demanded prohibition of these intoxicating liquors.

The Third Annual Report of the New York Society (1832) mentions that "Almost all cases of murder have occurred under the influence of alcohol", which demonstrates how

much alcohol is dangerous. The report also states, "Those guilty of burglary, larceny, counterfeiting, riots, etc. are almost uniformly ascertained to have destroyed their moral sensibilities and emboldened themselves for the violation of their countries laws by the inebriating cup" (qtd. in Levine 110). The report emphasizes the fact that intoxicating alcoholic beverages causes numerous social illnesses and disrespect for the law.

Concerned with the rising consumption of alcohol, Benjamin Rush, a prominent medical doctor and one of the founding fathers of the US, had devoted much of his efforts in raising public awareness against drunkenness rather than advocating prohibition. *An Inquiry into the Effects of Ardent Spirits upon the Human Body and Mind* was Rush's famous pamphlet in which his arguments on the issue were documented. At the beginning of the essay, he points out that "physicians have remarked that a number of new diseases have appeared among us" and that was caused by drinking alcohol (Katcher 273). The beginning of Rush's essay mentions many illnesses caused by drunkenness.

Then, Rush names lots of diseases and effects of heavy drinking, saying they were only a few of the produced disorders; among them: stomach discomfort, dropsy, obstruction of the liver, palsy, etc. Liquors also "destroy more lives than the sword", said Rush. He continues saying liquors "operate at all times and seasons upon human life" demonstrating to what extent alcohol is destructive to humans' health. Additionally, liquors are distressing and terrible to the morality of human beings, causing men to be "peevish and quarrelsome" and to "violate promises and engagements without shame or remorse". He also opposes drinking in very cold and very hot weather, as well as times of hard work (Katcher 275). The writer highlights that is dangerous on humans' lives on many levels.

Furthermore, Rush identifies three types of people most likely to get into trouble when using liquors for medicinal purposes, and he suggests tea instead. In the fourth edition of his pamphlet, Rush provides a catalog extending the dreadful effects of "acute drunkenness",

which he called "odious disease". He lists "simple water" as the main substitute beverage and extensively discusses and promotes cures for this issue. In his Inquiry, Rush explains the harm liquors constitute on humans' physical health, which are known for their high stimulation of the nervous system. He explains the chronic effects of ardent liquors saying they cause many acute diseases and yellow fevers, and he also points to the difficulties hard drinkers face when infected by these illnesses. Rush's Inquiry had become a central medical reference for temperance movements to argue against alcoholic beverages (Katcher 276-277). Rush continues to explain the different risks of alcohol.

The pamphlet is significant in the question because it contains valuable scientific explanations about the harms of alcoholic beverages on human's health. Moreover, Rush argues that the fundamental driver behind  $\frac{1}{3}$  of mental cases at the Pennsylvania Hospital was alcoholism, with the situation escalating by time (qtd. in Bynum 163). This rate of cases should be enough to understand that alcohol is a big danger. That is an alarming number of patients in just one hospital among numerous hospitals.

The sale of hard liquors under 15 gallons was banned, but it was repealed two years later (Rorabaugh 18). Although it was seen as normal, the destructive impacts of alcoholism raised the public opposition against liquor usage. 13 out of 40 states and territories have gone for legal prohibition following the peak of drunkenness in 1855 (Musto 78). Through time, more states joined the efforts to ban alcohol; they became aware that alcohol was destroying the whole nation.

### **3. Temperance in Alcohol Consumption in the United States of America as a Therapy**

#### **3.1. Temperance Movement's Origins**

Anti-alcoholic beverages movement, in the United States, is old as this phenomenon itself. Since the consumption of alcohol existed among Americans, there



were those who rejected this matter. In this regard, Levine and Reinerman say that it was not until the 20<sup>th</sup> century that the concern and opposition towards alcoholism in USA began to rise; by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, a large portion of Americans started to fear the harm of alcohol on their life, families, and on the whole nation. As such, many groups appeared trying to restrict alcohol consumption, known as: Temperance Movement. Its campaign was devoted to convince people that alcoholic drinks are dangerous and destructive (462). Due to the rising dangers of alcohol, temperance movements emerged lobbying against the Industry.

From the start, temperance ideology believed that alcohol was the main cause of nearly all social problems. By the 1850s, the number of those calling for putting an end to the alcohol consumption problem increased, and the temperance movement gained much support from people (462). At the beginning, anti-alcohol movement in the United States was weak. Over time, it became stronger due to people's support. As a result, the number of those calling for a total prohibition of alcohol increased.

Thornton, an American economist, states that over time, the movement to ban alcoholic beverages has gained experience, organization and strength. That was especially with the expansion and diversity of the groups supporting it and the increase in the number of its supporters. These circumstances allowed it to pass into a new stage, which was the period for alliance that happened during the second half of the nineteenth century (41). These alliances would strengthen their efforts to eliminate alcohol consumption.

Among the components of this reform movement, the Prohibition Party, its formation in 1869 and its first presidential campaign were the most visible manifestations of the temperance movement's politicization. It was the first political party to support alcohol prohibition. Women believed that temperance would benefit

them more, because intemperance was generally a male problem, specifically a husband one. By saving men from the scourge of alcohol consumption, the whole family and the entire community would be saved (41-44). With time and the joining of many to the ranks of the anti-alcohol movement in the United States, its bases of struggle expanded and allowed it an important tool to achieve its goal; because the support of public is a necessary condition for operating every social change inside of society.

### **3.2. Sources of Temperance Movement's Force**

What made the anti-alcohol movement strong, in United States of America, was the diversity of its components and the breadth of its struggle base; it included different groups in its ranks, each of which had its own sources of strength, material or intellectual ones. With regard to this diversity that characterized the temperance movement, Schrad states that, "Within the temperance movement, there was a remarkable diversity of viewpoints on alcohol, ranging from moderates to more radical absolutists who insisted on complete abstinence and harsh regulatory measures against alcohol (444). Despite the multiplicity of anti-alcoholic organizations in the United States, they have attempted to coordinate and integrate their activities in order to achieve their shared aim of eliminating alcohol from the American society.

### **3.3. The Development of Temperance Movements**

Scholars who studied the subject of the American experience with regard to the prohibition of alcoholic beverages differ in dividing the phases that this issue has gone through and its historical process. For example, Thornton goes to consider that the development of prohibitionism can be divided into three phases. As the first phase, the birth of Prohibition, spans the period from colonial times to the American Civil War (1861–1865). The second phase, the politicalization and growth of Prohibitionism, spans the period from the Civil War to around 1900. The last one, the adoption of National Prohibition, occurred during

the Progressive Era, roughly 1900-1920 (40). Between these stages, the issue of alcoholism was perceived and treated differently.



**Photo of: The National Prohibition Conference meets in Indianapolis in 1892**

"National Prohibition Convention, 1892." Library of Congress,

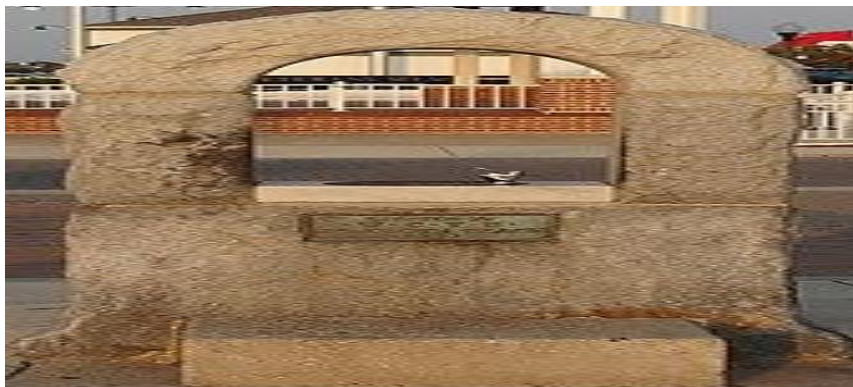
[www.loc.gov/item/2004677547/](http://www.loc.gov/item/2004677547/)

Thornton also, identifies the stages of alcohol probation. The first was the pledge of abstinence when debates raged about whether to use voluntary or coercive means to achieve temperance. The second stage saw a shift in strategy toward coercive means; at this point, temperance forces called for total abstinence from all alcoholic beverages, and this occurred when total-abstinence groups dominated other groups in the movement due to their superior organization (44-45). Calling for total abstinence from these drinks was a must. Various factors helped the temperance movement to gain more popularity becoming stronger. A major factor was the awareness of American citizens towards the danger of alcohol that had severely affected their lives on all levels.

### **3.4. The Anti-Saloon League as a Leader in the Anti-Alcohol Battle**

In the context of combating the phenomenon of alcohol consumption in the United States of America, the most prominent association acting in the fight against alcohol was the Anti-Saloon League. Saying that the league played a fundamental role in combating alcoholic beverages in the US does not mean that it was alone in the field.

According to Jackson, the Anti-Saloon League has not been alone in achieving the desired results. It has largely entered into the labors of preceding and contemporaneous temperance organizations, such as: the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) and the Prohibition Party. The Anti-Saloon League (ASL) has only complemented the efforts made by the different components of the temperance movement. It became the executive arm of the temperance feeling of the country that was established during a prior century (25). The ASL was among many organizations lobbied for Prohibition.



**Temperance Fountain**

**Established by the WCTU during the Prohibition era in Delawar**

"Woman's Christian Temperance Union Fountain." Wikipedia,  
[en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woman%27s\\_Christian\\_Temperance\\_Union\\_Fountain](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woman%27s_Christian_Temperance_Union_Fountain)

### **3.5. The Temperance Movement: from Soft to Hard Strategy**

Over time, it became clear that the methods and means followed by the advocates of banning alcoholic beverages in America, till that time, did not bring the results that they hoped for Americans. Due to the lack of acceptable progress regarding the treatment of

alcohol consumption, the Anti-Saloon League began to gradually abandon the awareness-raising methods for warning about the dangers of alcohol. Redirecting their focus from awareness to total abstinence from alcoholic beverages was a must for the efforts to control alcohol consumption.

Thornton says that by 1915, the League directed its focus towards using coercive method against alcohol consumption. The Progressive Era caused a general change in the American society on different levels. This Era and World War I provided a suitable opportunity to enact a national prohibition of alcohol in 1919 (52). Saying that the beginning of the Anti-Saloon League's shift from using soft methods to more use of hard ones, by 1915, does not mean that this trend is completely new among Temperantists. However, it was present among the anti-alcohol circles, but with little force. Levine and Reinerman explain that temperance movements changed their policies into calling for prohibition after the awareness campaigns did not influence people as required (462). The society was in need to endorse Prohibition because of many circumstances.

Those seeking to ban alcoholic beverages from the lives of Americans have not been able to achieve tangible results on the ground, despite some small and narrow successes, many supporters of this cause have despaired. What made the position of the anti-alcoholic movement and its supporters more fragile was the outbreak of the Civil War in the United States. Witnessing this situation, supporters of the anti-alcohol movement found themselves facing a challenge that compelled them to either change their plans or withdraw from the battle field against alcohol, and all the risks it posed to society as a whole. In this regard, Aaron and Musto say that, "By 1855, the approach of the American Civil War (1861–1865) had fragmented and regionalized the temperance movement; following this, new styles of organization and agitation were employed" (6). The American Civil War played a significant role in changing the structure and policies of temperance movements.

From what has been said above, it becomes clear that the intellectual and organizational diversity that characterized the anti-alcohol movement in the United States provided it with many alternatives. Because of that, the movement was able to move from the strategy of using soft methods towards using the hard methods after the first ones proved their inability to achieve the desired goal, which was the abandonment of alcohol consumption among the American people.

Concerning what gave impetus to the process of shifting the anti-alcohol movement strategy in its battle against alcohol, Schrad mentions that, "In 1913, the Hobson Resolution, a proposed Constitutional Amendment to Prohibition, cemented the shift in institutional venues for considering prohibition as a national policy option. Despite falling short of the required two-thirds majority, the debate on the resolution not only brought statutory prohibition to the attention of the American public, but it also started the shift of institutional venues for alcohol control policymaking from the states to the national level (445-446). In addition to the factors of force that the movement had, such as the diversity of the groups belonging to it and the multiplicity of their intellectual approaches, success in achieving the desired results requires the availability of a specific political and social climate that helps to achieve the goal of each activity.

### **3.6. The Saloon as an Enemy for the Temperance Movement**

The temperance movement focused its war over alcoholic drinks on the Saloon, and it did not direct its war against consumers of these drinks because they are considered victims of this scourge. Hence, one of the most persistent goals for the temperance movement was to assist the families in their struggle against the saloon. This goal was accomplished by combating the vicious cycle that was identified. Drinking made parents irresponsible and slack and children growing up without discipline; as a result, they were apt to inherit both a craving for alcohol and a defiant attitude toward society. As adult offenders, they would pass

along the same disabilities to their children (Aaron and Musto 4). The writers emphasize on the severe dangers that saloons constituted on families.

The issue of alcoholic beverages is very complex, and the parties associated with it have intertwined overlapping relationships with each other in terms of goals and interests. In order to succeed in achieving its goal, which is to eradicate the scourge of drinking alcohol from the American society, the anti-alcohol movement worked to identify the party to whom most of its efforts would be directed. That was in order not to scatter its forces, and here the movement directed its war against what embodies this scourge and provides it to people, which is the: saloon.

About this war against the Saloon, Thornton reports that the saloon was a natural target for Prohibition forces. However, its reputation was tainted by its association with widespread corruption, criminal activity, vote-buying and monopoly power. Prohibition forces focused on this crime-ridden industry that had the potential to corrupt both the country's political leadership and the lives of poor immigrants. Prohibition's political success can also be attributed to the fact that it attacked the saloon and did not include any injunction against alcohol consumers, and only the manufacturers and distributors of the products were legally bound. This strategy eliminated the personal-liberty argument, did not alienate the general public, and, most importantly, increased the alcohol industry's isolation (54-56). Because of its impacts, saloons were targeted by temperance movements.

Therefore, due to the anti-alcohol movement's growing strength, the increasing number of its supporters and its acquisition of experience regarding the methods and means used to reach its goal, its call for enforced abstinence was growing, using its power very effectively to obtain the desired results. When the conditions became favorable and allowed the movement to make more efforts and exercise more pressure, it was the eve of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; the temperance movement had morphed into the prohibition movement. At the end,

after robust efforts made over decades by different generations to realize the goal of banning alcoholic beverages in America, those efforts resulted with opening the door to concretise this goal by adopting it into the American Constitution in 1920 through its Eighteenth Amendment.



## **Chapter Two**

### **The National Prohibition of Alcohol in the United States**

All the social movements that arise in order to change the prevailing conditions are always linked in their activity to a specific intellectual background, which is considered as their moral and motivating force. That is what applies to the anti-alcohol movement in the United States of America.

Levine reports that the temperance movement rightly claimed Benjamin Rush as its founder. His writings on the relationship between intemperance and alcoholic beverages was important for the project of temperance movements. Also, his descriptions of the individual and social consequences of the use of alcohol, as well as his recommendation of total abstinence, formed part of the essential core of temperance ideology throughout the 19th century. In 1891, a historian explained that, "Dr. Rush laid out nearly all the fundamental lines of argument along which the present temperance movement is pressed" (08). The writer's publications contributed to the efforts made by advocates of Prohibitionism.

The movement grew slowly in the early years of the century. By the mid-1830s, over half a million people had pledged themselves not to drink any alcohol, and the temperance movement had become firmly committed to the necessity for total abstinence from all alcoholic beverages (08). The nineteenth century witnessed a rise in people's awareness about the dangers of alcohol and the necessity to abstain from these intoxicating beverages.

Those who were concerned with the social and economic affairs of their society have become aware of the dangers posed by the phenomenon of alcoholism seen widely among their compatriots. Levine also claims that during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, America was notable for the amount of alcoholic beverages consumed, the universality of their use and the high esteem they were accorded. Alcohol was food, medicine and social lubricant (02). This highlights the extent of value and appreciation of these alcoholic

beverages for Americans. Also, physicians prescribed alcohol as a medicament for their patients in many cases.

Americans became more aware of the dangers of consuming alcohol, which threatens their lives on all levels, whether in terms of physical, psychological and even mental health. It also poses threats to the social cohesion of the American society, especially with regard to family disintegration which has become afflicting the entity of the American society. The twenties and thirties of the nineteenth century were characterized by the rise of voices calling for the ban of alcoholic beverages. In this context, the prohibition movement began in the early 1800s based on noble values such as: boosting savings and improving family life. At this time, alcohol use was soaring in the US; some estimates by alcohol opponents put consumption at three times what it is today. In this regard, Berke and Saul say that by 1830, Americans over the age 15 consumed, in average, 7 gallons of alcohol per year. This was the highest consumption rate recorded in the US history, leading to severe consequences (1). Addiction to alcohol caused numerous problems that urged activists to lobby against it.

The anti-alcohol movement in the United States was seeking to eliminate the dangers of the alcohol industry and all its related disadvantages and problems. However, this requirement remained far from being adopted by the federal authority until the United States entered the midst of World War I; only then advocates of banning alcoholic beverages became able to secure the requirement to enact legislation in this regard. That is the goal which was achieved by the Congress approval of the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which prohibited the manufacture, transport and selling alcoholic drinks.

What increases the risk of drinking alcoholic beverages is that when it occurred during the underage. Drinking is destructive to adolescents' brains and physical growth. Through time, it causes many problems, including memory issues ("Alcohol and Adolescent Development"). Alcohol is destructive for the mental and physical health of all humans.

However, the problem becomes more dangerous during childhood or among teenagers.

In order to explain how the prohibition of alcoholic drinks occurred in the United States of America, it is significant to answer the following questions: First, how did the approval of the Eighteenth Amendment to the American constitution and its provisions declare prohibition of alcoholic beverages ? Second, what are the manifestations and effects of Prohibitionism on Americans' lives ?

## **2.1. Prohibition and WWI**

WWI was not the only factor for the enactment of the 18th amendment. The call for prohibition has already gained tremendous support and became strong after a century-long campaigns by temperance movements. However, the war was a golden opportunity for prohibitionists to promote their activities; they integrated patriotism into the question to give it another influential dimension. Levine and Reinerman state that "World War I had provided the necessary context for rallying popular support to pass prohibition" (464). They considered the war to be significant for convincing people about prohibition.

### **2.1.1. Anti-German Sentiments**

Back then, anti-German sentiments were growing among Americans, and the advocates of prohibition took advantage of the rising opposition towards Nazism to act in favor of boycotting German-Americans who owned most of the breweries. The Anti-Saloon League and other prohibition activists urged citizens to stop purchasing liquors from these breweries, for the budget spent there would support the Nazi regime. This argument proved successful, and Americans considered it unpatriotic to consume their alcohol (Prohibition). According to Rorabaugh, "Prohibition was finally adopted ... because of World War I. German-American brewers lost their political effectiveness amid anti-German hysteria" (18). These sentiments increased through time.

The war played an important role in igniting the demand for prohibition through the

manipulation of anti-German sentiments to incite public opinion against intoxicating liquors. Prohibitionists also claimed that "the heavily German beer industry was sapping American will to fight" (Levine and Reinerman 463). Prohibitionists manipulated people's feeling of patriotism attempting to legislate a national ban of liquors.

### **2.1.2. Food Security**

The war caused global food insecurity and millions to suffer from famine. Keeping sufficient deposits of grain for making food highly concerned the Woodrow Wilson's government. WWI left Europeans in a dire need of food. To gain their support, the US sent grain supplies to feed them and also for the American soldiers there after the US entered the war in 1917. This problem helped the dries to give further support for their concern. Grain was an essential component in the distillation of alcoholic beverages, and prohibitionists advocated the ban of liquors to save enough grain and food. The US president and his cabinet understood the seriousness of the issue and passed a wartime prohibition of alcohol to keep grain sufficiently available (Burnham 55). This contemporary prohibition paved the way for the national ban that took place in December.

The writer also states that "federal laws greatly restricted the production and sale of alcoholic beverages, mostly, beginning in 1917, in the guise of war legislation." He further highlighted that the production of distilled beverages " (55) had been forbidden for more than three months when Congress passed the Eighteenth Amendment late in 1917" (55). Anti-alcohol movements took advantage of these circumstances to put pressure on the government to extend this law into a permanent ban of liquor.

## **2.2. The 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment of US Constitution: Prohibition Begins**

December 18, 1917 represents a remarkable event in American history. Following more than a century of intensive pressure from temperance movements and other activists, the country went into a very critical era. Back then, the Congress passed the 18th Amendment and

was ratified after one year, January 16, 1919. The states went dry on midnight January 17, 1920 with the passage of the Volstead Act. This act enforced the application of the 18th Amendment. A national prohibition of alcohol began when "the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors", wordings of the 18th Amendment to the US constitution, was officially banned.



**New York City Deputy Police Commissioner John A. Leach, right, watching agents pour liquor into sewer following a raid during the height of prohibition**

"New York City Deputy Police Commissioner John A. Leach, right, watching agents pour liquor into sewer following a raid during the height of prohibition." Library of Congress, [www.loc.gov/item/99405169/](http://www.loc.gov/item/99405169/).

Throughout the past decades, there has always been heated debates on whether the prohibition was successful or not given all the events happening after the law took effect. Although the majority of states approved the 18th amendment, it did not last so long and was repealed when the Congress passed the 21st Amendment February 20, 1933 and ratified December 5, 1933 ending the national prohibition of intoxicating liquors. For the first time in American history, a constitutional amendment came to repeal another one.

### **2.2.1. Passage of the Prohibition Amendment**

On August 1, 1917, the Senate passed a resolution containing the language of the

Amendment to be presented to the states for ratification. Then, the House of Representatives passed a revised resolution on December 17, 1917. Both Houses of Congress had voted the required two-thirds majority to send to the states for ratification. After that, a constitutional amendment prohibiting the manufacture, sale, transportation, import or export of intoxicating liquors was officially proposed by the Congress to the States in December 18, 1917 (Levine and Reinerman 463). The general need for prohibition of liquors pushed the majority of Congress members to vote for the project.

On January 16th, 1919, Nebraska became the thirty-sixth state to ratify the Eighteenth Amendment (Mississippi was the first State which ratified the Amendment in January 7, 1918), which was to go into effect in one year. In October 1919, Congress overrode President Wilson's veto to pass a strict enforcement act of prohibition. This act became known by the name of its sponsor, Andrew Volstead of Minnesota, chair of the House Judiciary Committee. The VA defined as "intoxicating liquor" any beverage containing more than 0.5 percent alcohol. At midnight on January 16, 1920, the Eighteenth Amendment took effect (463). The Act was intended to provide a constitutional application of Prohibition.

The Eighteenth Amendment, ratified on January 16, 1919, was the result of long years of advocacy by the temperance movement which was formed by several associations such as: the Anti-Saloon League (ASL) and the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). Following its adoption, the Congress, on October 28, 1919, enacted a legislation called the Volstead Act, which provided guidelines for federal enforcement of prohibition. It was championed by representative Andrew Volstead of Minnesota, the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee. The passage of the Volstead Act established federal enforcement of the nationwide prohibition of alcohol. According to Levine, the following factors contributed to the Temperance Movement's success in its effort to end the manufacture and trade in alcoholic beverages:

- Prohibition was successful in part because it convinced many middle-class Americans that banning alcohol would solve or significantly reduce the country's major social problems.
- The Anti-Saloon League, a prototype of the modern political pressure organization, led the twentieth-century prohibition campaign. The ASL paid organizers, backed candidates of either party who would vote as they wished. It received significant support from businessmen, particularly the corporate elite. Its intervention in the battle anti-alcohol was decisive (Levine 2). The ASL is considered as a modern political pressure organization that lobbied for the prohibition campaign.

### **2.2.2. Enforcement of Prohibition**

Through the VA, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) of the Treasury Department was commissioned with enforcing the 18th amendment. Thus, the IRS established Prohibition Unit (PU) which was concerned with issues of corruption. In 1929, the responsibility shifted to the Department of Justice, and the Unit became known as the Bureau of Prohibition. The successfulness of the law enforcement varied between states according to "the sympathies of citizens" towards Prohibition ("How was Prohibition enforced?"). Attempting to enforce the application of the 18th amendment, federal agencies were formed assigning thousands of agents throughout the country.

While the ASL had succeeded in passing the prohibition, the organization faced the burden of administering and enforcing it. To attain this goal, the 18th Amendment required the enforcement of a nationwide prohibition statute. To assure its execution, the Act called for tight control of firms and sectors that would nevertheless lawfully deal with alcohol. Despite this description, the Act was enacted by Congress and sent to President Woodrow Wilson for assent. Wilson vetoed the law, but Congress overrode it and began making plans to carry out the Volstead Act on a nationwide basis (Slack 10-12). When the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the

American Constitution adopted the principle of alcohol prohibition, the VA provided the guidelines for enforcing its provisions. Both of them were a victory for the American Society, for ASL and other anti-alcohol forces.

Without a mass movement organized around the idea that alcohol was a destructive substance, the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment and the National Prohibition would not have been enacted. However, the presence of that movement, as well as the public support it received, was insufficient to pass a constitutional amendment. The Eighteenth Amendment was ratified in part because no significant elements of the corporate elite opposed it, and a number of important corporations and individuals supported it. Wealthy businessmen supported prohibition because they believed it would reduce crime and other social problems, as well as make workers more efficient and productive. Prohibition appeared to be a good deal (Levine 28 ). Support for national prohibition of alcoholic beverages grew over time.

#### **2.2.2.1. Difficulties with Enforcement of Prohibition**

Various factors made the application of Volsteadism not achievable during the 1920s. One of them is the growing number of immigrants from different regions. Many politicians, particularly from the Democratic Party, were reluctant to endorse Prohibition, for they did not want to lose popularity and political fame which can eliminate their chances to win elections (Slack 6). Politicians were always working to increase their popularity among people who would support them in elections. Their fear to lose the immigrants' support caused them to not endorse Prohibition.

In addition, another reason was the tight interests between the federal government and breweries and distilleries for over 40 years prior to nationally ban liquors. The industry was bringing lucrative revenues for the nation since heavy taxes were levied on liquor trade. After WWI, the government needed huge budget for the reconstruction of its damaged properties in Europe, as well as assisting its allies, and the taxations over alcoholic drinks were needed



because they constituted 20-41 percent of the nation's tax incomes. Distilleries and breweries manipulated the national dependence on the industry and inserted patriotism to the issue trying to influence the efforts of enforcing prohibition (6). The heavy receipts from alcohol activities contributed in preventing the Volstead Act to be successfully applied throughout the whole nation.

Historian Albert Bushnell Hart highlights that not all states legislated state liquor laws prohibiting alcohol traffic to the same level or at the same time. For that reason, it had always been challenging for the government to control liquor trade since bootleggers found ways to turn around the law smuggling intoxicating alcohol between states. Therefore, the government's efforts to enforce Prohibition were constantly weakened by the unlawful activities of criminals (1164). The enforcement of the Volstead Act was not effective amid these circumstances.

When Prohibition took effect restricting liquor trade, the government did not offer alternatives compensating distillers and brewers because Prohibition influenced their work. According to Bushnell Hart, "In the United States no provision ever has been made for indemnifying either manufacturers or dealers when a prohibition act affected their business" (1165). The historian explained that the lack of any provision that would assist those who lost their jobs, due to Prohibitionism, managing their lives affected the application of Prohibition. Because of that, public opposition towards the government and the VA blocked the efforts of maintaining a national ban of liquors throughout America.

Other difficulties had to do with the qualification and salaries of enforcement agents. Most agents were both underpaid and unsatisfactorily qualified for enduring the responsibility of applying the law. This in itself limited the effectiveness of the procedures with cases of misconduct which turned people against the Act ("Problems with Prohibition"). Lacking proper training and qualification, many of those appointed to enforce Prohibition could not do

their job.

Some observers talk about certain weaknesses of the Volstead Act that prevented its realization on the ground. Historian Thomas Pegram argues, "Surprisingly strict in some features and unexpectantly lenient in others, the Volstead Act presented a flawed blueprint for the enforcement of national prohibition" (qtd. in "Problems with Enforcement"). The 18th amendment and the Volstead Act did not prohibit manufacturing alcohol at homes. Thus, home production of certain kinds of drinks proliferated, causing bootleggers to grow, making Prohibition weak and the enforcement unattainable.

### **2.3. Effects of Alcohol Prohibition**

Americans continued drinking during the Prohibition since the 18th Amendment outlawed only the "manufacture, sale or transportation of intoxicating liquors", not home production and consumption. When the prohibition had begun, some observers were suspicious about it and expected "the noble experiment" not to be very successful. They thought that they would be no difference than previous efforts along the 19th century which failed to permanently force a nationwide ban on alcohol. In 1928, the US President Herbert Hoover described Prohibition as "a great social and economic experiment, noble in motive and far-reaching in purpose" (qtd. in "Unintended Consequences of Prohibition"). Advocates of liquor ban considered the project to be noble in purpose.

Even the crime associated with illegal sale can be exaggerated. Crimes became an influential part of the battle against Prohibition, but social historians have shown widespread political corruption, gang warfare and the existence of crime syndicates in the cities of America's north prior to 1910. The activity of the 1920s represented not something new but continuity in the consolidation of these forces, albeit augmented by the possibility of illicit gains in alcohol. It would be naive to think that crime in the 1920s grew only because of the opportunities that Prohibition presented.

Political support for Prohibition in the United States remained fairly strong during the 1920s on a national level, Herbert Hoover was elected President in 1928 on a platform of keeping Prohibition (Tyrrell 1406). The presidency of Hoover was important for Prohibitionism. However, Prohibition suffered because of the failure of its advocates to make a convincing case for the health risks of alcohol use, as opposed to alcohol abuse; this circumstance helped the argument of moderation, through the Repeal Movement, to succeed (Tyrrell 1408). Banning alcohol was significant on different levels.

### **2.3.1. Failure of Prohibition**

The implementation of the Eighteenth Amendment of the American constitution, which prohibits the manufacturing, transportation and sale of alcoholic beverages, had led to several results and effects. The expected negative economic result of Prohibition for society is new criminal marketing opportunities; increased substance use risk by releasing producers from regulation and the obligation to abide by legally set minimum safety standards, and a trend towards more highly concentrated products. The anticipated negative economic outcomes for government are a decrease in taxation and excise receipts whilst government spending on enforcement increases as government resources are diverted towards particular types of enforcement (Sweet 26). Opponents of Prohibition claimed that it would have unwanted impacts on the society.

The Prohibition era saw a surge in criminal activities. Because of the federal restrictions over alcohol, bootlegging, which was the illegal production and transportation of liquors, sparked throughout the country. Speakeasies boomed around the US where alcohol was sold, breaching the new law. This gave rise to organized crime as the mafia expanded its control over the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages causing a real threat to national security. "The resulting increase of crime is only too obvious" (Horgan 229). Unexpectedly, criminal activities witnessed an alarming increase under the federal prohibition of alcohol.

By time, mobsters became stronger, achieving tremendous profits from these activities. The black market of smuggling alcohol achieved millions of dollars each year. For example, Al Capone's "enterprise would be so successful that it would eventually begin to bring in 100 million dollars a year" (Horgan 229). Criminals had increased their benefits through sneaking high regards of alcohol. Additionally, smugglers brought liquor from neighboring countries, but that was not enough in front of the high demand by Americans. People started to produce and consume homemade alcohol, and many turned their properties into producing alcohol. Home production of liquors became so pervasive that the government did not interfere to stop (229). Americans found many ways to produce and sell liquors breaching the law.

Criminal groups were bribing some police officers through different ways in order to facilitate their work. Corruption between officials extended to dramatic levels covering judges and politicians as well. Moreover, the closure of saloons, distilleries, breweries and other alcohol-related activities caused thousands to lose their jobs increasing unemployment which would in turn result in certain social problems. Prohibition was also condemned for the spread of different immoral activities which had a devastating impact on the whole society ("The Unintended Consequences Of Prohibition"). Prohibition exposed numerous officials who had an avaricious hunger for money on the expense of their dignity.

Rorabaugh records that many "Prohibition agents" were "corrupt and incompetent" making the 18th amendment "impossible to enforce"; he states that "In Chicago, where Al Capone was making an estimated \$200 million a year, at least 400 policemen were "on the take" (18). The writer highlighted that criminals, like Capone, made millions of dollars. What contributed to these illegal earnings are those corrupt agents who were supposed to enforce the application of the 18th Amendment.

The outcomes of prohibition were the opposite of prohibitionists' expectations.

Companies were expected to grow and achieve higher profits because of the federal restrictions imposed on many businesses. Producers of grape juice and soft drink saw that the prohibition would increase the demand on their products, and landowners waited to benefit from more rents. Also, the trade of clothing and household stuff was expected to refresh, and heads of theaters hoped that more visitors would come for entertainment. Surprisingly, that did not happen as intended. Because Americans habitually consumed alcoholic beverages while eating, restaurants endured tremendous losses for the absence of liquor. Entertainment industries declined and so did theaters' revenues, for people were busy looking for alcohol drinks ("Economics of Prohibition"). Various businesses lost tremendous revenues during alcohol prohibition.

Furthermore, the prohibition directly affected the income sources of the country. Before going dry, many states' revenues relied mainly on taxations over liquors. 75% of New York's budget came from taxes over alcoholic beverages, and this huge revenue was lost when the nationwide ban on alcohol went into effect. Prohibition cost the federal government over \$300 million to enforce and lost \$11 billion of tax returns. Thus, the government was not able to operate amid this financial deficit ("Unintended Consequences"). The shutdown of many alcohol production companies caused severe losses in the government's income sources. Levine described Prohibition as "an enormous financial drain in lost tax revenues (3); this was expected especially that alcohol was making huge money for the states.

Due to the massive illicit traffic of alcohol under Prohibition, law breaches and crimes against the federal regulations grew. Compared to the volume of federal prosecutions in 1914, Liquor prosecutions multiplied by seven during the first few years of Prohibition and amounted to nearly eight times by 1930. Federal courts were flooded by liquor prosecutions affecting their efficiency and making it difficult to perform the ascribed duty as needed, and thus gradually losing their dignity and reputation. Over one-third of citizens sentenced for one

year in federal prisons were charged with low respect for the law (Horgan 230). The judicial branch treated plenty of cases linked to law breaches and organized crime during the federal ban of intoxicating liquors.

### **2.3.2. Success of Prohibition**

According to Thomas N. Carver, Prohibition was one of the factors for the prosperity of any country saying it is "necessary to secure the maximum economy of manpower." For that reason, many countries, including the US, Germany and Austria, welcomed the idea. Additionally, he argues that "savings deposits multiplied two and a half times from 1914 to 1924, while the number of depositors increased more than three and a half times" which led many laborers to enter the capitalist class leading to the growth of labor banks to keep the money. Correspondingly, the number of stockholders in different working fields was high (69-72). Therefore, Prohibition increased the social class of many workers through saving money usually spent on liquors.

Bartlett C. Jones had written about Prohibition dealing with its economic implications. He sheds light on Prohibition proponents' argument that the national ban of alcohol brought further prosperity to America. A number of businessmen, economists, writers and activists supported this argument; a businessman considered that 'prohibition is business' showing how important it was. Irving Fisher, a famous American economist who had significant contributions to the field, argues that Prohibition was "the greatest economic experiment in history and one of the most successful" (qtd. in Jones 78). Many observers claimed that the results of liquor ban benefited the whole nation.

Samuel Growther, in his *Prohibition and Prosperity*, reports that the era between 1919 and 1928 witnessed a considerable increase in the nation's income, from \$66 billion to \$89 billion. This economic growth is seen to be the result of Prohibition. Growther also says, "It

would seem that Prohibition is fundamental to our prosperity-that it is the greatest blow which has ever struck poverty" (qtd. in Jones 78), which means Prohibition was an essential cause leading to prosperity.

Moreover, Irving Fisher also argues that "With the coming of Prohibition, wages suddenly rose from their old level, which they had kept without much change for over a quarter of a century, to a new level where it now is, a quarter higher than the old". It means that Prohibition played an important role in the enhancement of citizens' livelihood raising their wages. Additionally, the research secretary of the World League Against Alcoholism (WLAA) confirms that through providing important statistics about the period 1918-1924 showing that Prohibition was a prime cause for the real estate business boom (qtd. in Jones 78-79). The saved money had solved many social hardships in people's lives.

Advocates of Prohibition claim that it had significantly decreased alcohol consumption. Simultaneously, Americans' real wages were strengthened as "Breweries and saloons have given place to something more valuable", which enabled them to save much money. Irving Fisher talks about "\$2 billion that was saved merely by transferring our energies from alcohol production to something possessing real value." As such, the economy of the US flourished; the living conditions and family purchasing power were better solving many social problems. Similarly, Paul H. Nystrom from Colombia emphasizes this argument saying that "the savings from alcoholic consumption ... had been an increase in earnings and income of not less than \$3 billion to \$4 billion per year. This margin added to normal savings and consumption means a much improved standard of living" (qtd. in Jones 79-80). Hence, Prohibition was vital for the US economy according to its supporters.

The closure of breweries and distilleries is seen to be resulted in "an immediate influx of vital strength into the whole economic structure." After Prohibition took effect, "Trade which

had been good became better; the entire standard of living of the American people was stepped up to a distinctly higher level" demonstrating how beneficial it was for the people and the whole nation. The trade of butter and leafy vegetables and fruits flourished, and the consumption of milk had mounted from six tenths of a gallon per capita between 1917 and 1920 to 11.75 gallons per capita annually between 1920 and 1925. Not wasting money on liquors, Americans were able to enhance the quality of their diets to become more nourishing which would result in a better public health (Pickett 98-99). The restrictions put on alcohol activities benefited many families at different scales.



## Chapter Three

### The Success of Anti-Prohibition Movement

Researchers point out that there are striking similarities between the conditions for setting the policy of banning alcoholic beverages in America and the conditions for the adoption of the policy to lift the ban on these drinks. Early explanations tend to focus on the role of specific individuals in changing the policy. There are researchers who go to focus in their interpretations on the cultural and social factors of the people, and there are scholars who stress the influence of organized interest groups in achieving Prohibition.

Once the wartime patriotic fervor of the prohibition era had subsided, self-interested brewers, distillers, liberals, defenders of the rights and independence of the states and others opposed the decision; they had a common enemy: the ban on alcoholic beverages. As early as 1919, it was the time of anti-ban coalitions, such as the Association Against the Prohibition Amendment (AAPA). Calls to ban alcoholic beverages, and the success of its advocates in passing the Prohibition law to ban these drinks in the United States required the availability of appropriate context, factors and conditions. Similarly, the call for repeal required the availability of an appropriate context, factors and conditions that help it to succeed in achieving its goal.

Like WWI opened a window for policy change, Schrad mentions that the stock market crash in late 1929 led to the collapse of the national economy and the beginning of the Great Depression. The Great Depression would signal the eventual downfall of National Prohibition by introducing new social and economic concerns into the alcohol debate, and that were increasingly propagated by various policy advocates, and vigorously debated in the media. In addition to concerns about increases in crime and abuses of states' rights, in the midst of an economic depression, a compelling economic argument has been made. It was that the return

of alcohol industry would provide a respectable source of government tax revenue and produce much-needed jobs nationwide (455). Both WWI and the Depression played a role in providing fertile ground for introducing the 18<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Amendments respectively.

### **1.1. Unpopularity of Prohibition and Calls for Repeal**

Over time, Prohibition was gradually losing popularity. People were seeing it as useless, for they were not satisfied with what had been achieved by the new law. The rise of law breaches, crime rates, corruption and smuggling characterized the era of Prohibition. All of these unexpected events had contributed to turning the public opinion against the situation.

In 1917, Otto E. Schulz of Milwaukee addressed his friend William J. Cary, a Representative from Wisconsin, with a letter expressing that he was not in favor of banning alcohol; instead, he saw it as a good income-source for the country. Schulz said that he would "Vote against prohibition amendment because beer is a harmless beverage and pays our Government nearly two hundred million dollars revenue annually" (Schulz). Anti-Prohibition sentiments started even before it took place.

Official referendums before and since Prohibition about the national ban of liquors, as well as unofficial straw votes, demonstrated that there had been a shift in positions towards the federal attempt to ban alcohol. Through comparing those referendums with each other and analyzing the results, observers noticed the shift in public sentiments regarding the issue. "On the basis of state referendums, therefore, there has apparently been a shift from a wet vote of 43.7 percent before 1920 to a wet vote of 59.8 percent since 1920" (Gebhart 172). Americans were increasingly opposing the ban of alcohol.

Although Herbert Hoover, who was a dry, referred to Prohibition as a Noble Experiment and claimed presidency in 1928, a "sense of exasperation about prohibition was growing". Public opposition turned Volsteadism impossible to achieve leading the dry days of America

to end after the ratification of the 21<sup>st</sup> amendment by Congress in 1933 (Rorabaugh 18). Amid the enraged public opinion, Prohibition could not be fully established.



**The 1932 Democratic National Convention called for complete repeal of the 18th Amendment, giving "wet" forces in Congress a major boost**

"Blaine Act: Election of 1932 and effect on Prohibition repeal." Wikipedia, [en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blaine\\_Act](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blaine_Act).

### **1.1.1. Association Against the Prohibition Amendment**

Labor Unions were among the first opponents of Prohibition even before 1919, and public opposition towards the project remained fragmented for a long time. The AAPA, established in 1918 and incorporated December 31, 1920 lobbying against Volsteadism and the 18th amendment, boosted the call for repeal. The organization gained the support of many former prohibitionists and wealthy people on their side, strengthening and accelerating the repeal process (Levine and Reinerman 464). The joining of these people to the organization increased its weight in the efforts to dismiss Prohibition.

The support of those in power and wealthy people to AAPA made it further influential. Its members increased, reportedly from 100.000 in 1921 to 457.000 in 1922 and 726.000 in 1926, as people were seeing the dramatic events during Prohibition; this denotes the growing public discontent with Prohibition. By 1928, the association incited public opinion towards

further opposition of the Prohibition amendment, publishing several pamphlets to campaign for the cause (Hanson). The AAPA had a significant role in the repeal of Prohibition.

Among the publications: "Scandals of Prohibition" which documented crimes and corruption in five cities, "The Cost of Prohibition and Your Income Tax" estimating the revenues lost because of Prohibition, "Canadian Liquor Crossing the Border" which reported that only 10% of alcohol smuggled to America was intercepted, "Reforming America with a Shotgun: A Study of Prohibition Killings" which recorded the murders committed while enforcing Prohibition, "Measuring the Liquor Trade" arguing that alcoholism and alcohol-related deaths increased during Prohibition and "Prohibition Enforcement: Its Effects on Courts and Prisons" documenting that federal courts were flooded by cases that pushed for plea bargaining making sentences softer to drop some load out of courts and jails (Hanson). The reports of the association were vital to show the inability of maintaining federal restrictions over liquor traffic.

### **1.1.2. The Great Depression and Prohibition**

This national recession increased unemployment and seriously affected the purchasing power of Americans. Levine and Reinerman highlights that tension towards the governmental policies and mass violations of federal laws, called "lawlessness", widely grew throughout America causing loss of order, and "the threat of revolt and revolution was in the air in the early 1930s". They further reported how the Great Depression, causing various social problems resulting from losing jobs and the sharp decline in living standards, pushed people to engage in crimes and activists to rally for demonstrations expressing the public anger which turned into an incitement of insurrection. Levine and Reinerman record that unemployed citizens rioted due to food deficiency. The rioters used arms and stole considerable deposits of food. The participants gathered in front of the White House

expressing their demands (465). These marches threatened the national security by causing loss of order.

The Great Depression provided a suitable atmosphere for repeal. The severe downturn that flooded the country from 1929 increased the demand for repealing the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment. Anti-Prohibition activists claimed that alcohol consumption was an important source of income that may help to mitigate the economic hardships serving to confront the Depression, and the Prohibition was further worsening the impacts of the Depression. The elite and many employers who once were in favor of Prohibition changed their stance towards the cause during the Depression; they, at the beginning, thought the ban of alcohol would "increase worker discipline and productivity and reduce other social problems" (465). Because Prohibition failed in many regards, many employers and officials became opponents after being supporters.

Munger and Schaller argues that Prohibition lost much support during the Depression because the government needed resources for the new economic project: "With the Depression growing worse and an increasing need for revenue to finance the incoming Roosevelt administration's "New Deal" economic stimulus programs, all political will to maintain Prohibition had disappeared" (141). For the New Deal required huge budget to realize it, repeal was seen a suitable solution for prosperous economy.

### **1.1.3. Wickersham Commission**

In 1929, the US president Herbert Hoover, who strongly opposed repeal, appointed the National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement (NCLOE), known as Wickersham Commission. The committee's report was delivered to Congress concluding that the enforcement of the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment could not take place amid all the circumstances, from organized crime that made enormous revenues to "police misconduct" while applying the

Prohibition law to the growing corruption and other hard times during that era (141). This outcome alludes that many reasons were blocking the application of Prohibition.

The commission did not recommend repealing the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment, but rather it did recommend revising the amendment extensively. Congress, however, amended the Volstead Act and did "nothing substantive in response to the Commission report" (141). Based on close observations of Prohibition enforcement and after evaluating the process, the commission recommended policy revision for the Volstead Act to be more successful.

After evaluating Prohibition from different dimensions, the commission had some conclusions and recommendations about the issue. First, before enacting the Bureau of Prohibition Act, prohibition agents were not organized as they should be. Second, the commission concluded that the enforcement was inadequate, and thus it would not be able to achieve its objectives. Third, in case the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment was to be modified, the commission's members consented that it should be as follows: Section 1. The Congress shall have power to regulate or to prohibit the manufacture, traffic in or transportation of intoxicating liquors within, the importation thereof into and the exportation thereof from the United States and all territory subject to the jurisdiction thereof for beverage purposes (Wickersham Commission Report). These suggestions were significant for the issue.

In addition, it concluded that cooperating the efforts between all states were highly significant for the enforcement of the National Prohibition Act and its provisions. Cooperation would enable state governments of stronger control and easier management of certain judicial issues linked to law breaches during Prohibition. Catching bootleggers, for example, would be more successful if there was enough collaboration among official institutions of all counties (Wickersham Commission Report). The reports of NCLOE were necessary in the process of evaluating liquor ban enforcement.

In this context, the commission also recommended the government to increase the number of Prohibition agents and investigators, as well as supplying all enforcement organisations with the necessary equipment for better functioning on the ground. Members of the commission sometimes had different views over certain issues, and personal opinions were to be reported on "separate on supplemental reports" (Wickersham Commission Report). The NCLOE provided its conclusions and recommendations for the application of Prohibition to be more effective in the United States.

#### **1.1.4. Why Repeal ?**

Anti-Prohibitionists claimed that through outlawing or modifying the Prohibition amendment, some problems would be solved easily. One of them was bringing back huge revenues by taxing liquor traffic to enrich the federal treasury, which could help to rehabilitate the downing economy. John J. Raskob, chairman of the Democratic National Committee (DNC), argued that "revenues from liquor taxation might be sufficient to obviate the necessity of a federal income tax." Through its chairman, the DNC concluded that ending Prohibition would assist the government to cover the financial deficit. Also, thousands of people would return to work in the breweries and distilleries eliminating the rate of unemployment which meant better living standards. Rep. Dyer claimed that a reopening of the breweries would provide direct and indirect employment for 1,000,000 men, besides bringing an increase of \$1,000,000 in revenues of the federal, state and local governments (Granger). Unemployment rate was expected to decrease if the government would reopen breweries.

In addition, the return of alcohol consumption would flourish the stock market of many products related to the manufacture of alcohol increasing the gross domestic product of the whole nation, leading to a better economical state. In a Labor Day address, Senator Wagner called for modifying the Volstead Act to meet the federal financial deficit. Moreover, Representative Beck claimed that the deficit could be eliminated "if Congress would declare

light wines and malted liquors non-intoxicating in fact and impose a heavy tax upon these luxuries" (Granger). Proponents of repeal claimed considered that many modifications should be introduced to the Prohibition amendment so that to drive the country out of the financial deficit which influenced the whole nation.

Otto H. Kahn, New York banker supported these claims that: "By repealing an experiment which, however rightfully intentioned, has failed with lamentable consequence, we should raise vast revenues for the government, we should greatly help agriculture, we should substantially decrease unemployment." Kahn emphasized the importance of the return of alcohol consumption to the economy, including agriculture. Furthermore, John Sullivan, president of the New York State Federation of Labor (NYSFL), estimated that besides employing 1,500,000 workers, and the modification of the VA could provide the federal government \$400,000,000 a year (Granger). In addition to providing lucrative revenues, NYSFL, through its president, argued that agriculture would benefit as well.

## **2. Passage of the 21<sup>st</sup> Amendment : Prohibition Ends**

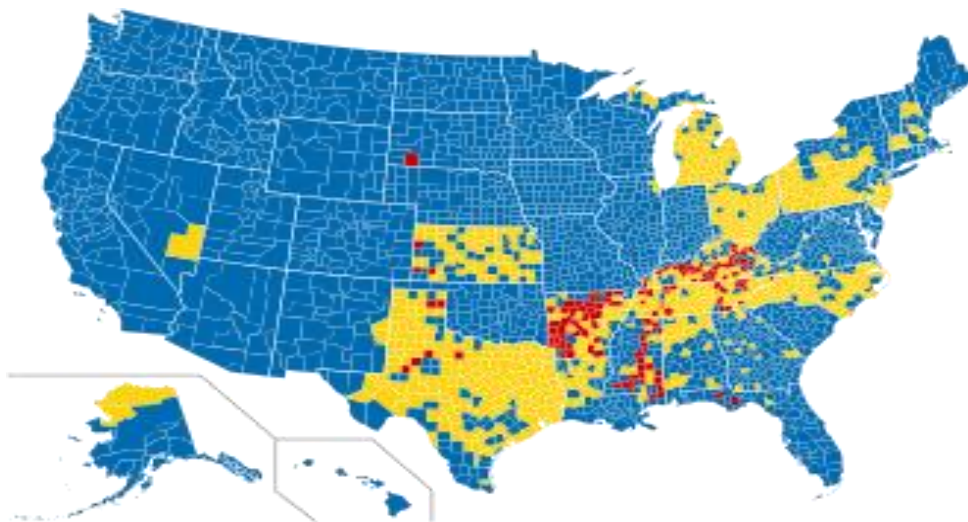
After nearly 14 years under a nationwide constitutional ban of liquors, a repeal resolution took effect in 1933 with the ratification of the 21<sup>st</sup> Amendment. As early as the 1930s, anti-Prohibition sentiments peaked to the extent that both Democratic and Republican parties endorsed repeal through their conventions in 1932. The land-slide victory of Franklin Roosevelt in elections boosted the efforts of the repeal force. In a lame-duck session, the Congress approved the 21<sup>st</sup> Amendment by the requisite two-thirds votes. By a 63–23 vote, the Senate gave its approval on February 16, 1933, and the House voted for the Amendment February 20, 1933, by a 289–121 margin (Dinan and Heckelman 638). The majority of both the Senate and the House voted for repeal.

Before the resolution passed for ratification on February 1933 officially taking effect, Franklin Roosevelt signed the Beer and Wine Revenue Act on March 1933 allowing the sale



of alcoholic beverages which contained less than 3.2 % of alcohol "nullifying much of the Prohibition amendment". The government taxed this activity by \$5 on each barrel and directed that into the federal Treasury (Munger and Schaller 141). The Act paved the way for enacting the 21<sup>st</sup> Amendment.

Because rural areas strongly advocated Prohibition and represented the majority of state legislatures in that time which could influence the results of vote, Congress gave state conventions the authority to ratify the amendment as an unprecedented step in America. Article V of the Constitution allows the Congress to ratify amendments either by three-fourths of state legislatures or by three-fourths of state conventions. Between April and November 1922, 39 states selected their delegates in these conversations. Another eight states: Kansas, Georgia, Nebraska, North Dakota, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, and South Dakota, did not vote on choosing delegates or hold conventions (Dinan and Heckelman 638). After three-fourths of state conventions approved repeal, the enactment of an amendment ending Prohibition could take place.



#### **USA in Post-Repeal era:**

**Map showing dry (red), wet (blue), and mixed (yellow) counties in the United States as of March 2012**

### 3. The United States after Repeal

Through the Cullen-Harrison Act, in March 16, 1933, raised the minimum standard from 0.5 to 3.2 percent alcohol by volume. US president Roosevelt signed the “Beer Bill” on March 22. By April 7<sup>th</sup>, when the new law went into effect, the Budweiser Clydesdales made their debut; they began a nationwide marketing tour, including the delivery of a commemorative case of beer to the White House (Berke and Saul 09). The Act boosted the procedures to stop the ban of liquors.

Since the ratification of the 21<sup>st</sup> Amendment to the American constitution (which became effective in December 5, 1933), the issue of alcoholic beverages became no longer a matter of concern to the federal authorities in the United States. Schrad mentions, “Following the ratification of the Twenty-First Amendment, control over alcohol policy was returned to the states, depoliticizing the issue of liquor control ” (455). The Amendment caused alcohol to spread more in the country.

The return of the Americans to the traditions of making and trading in alcoholic beverages had severe effects on individuals and society on all social, health and economic levels. For example, the United States has a serious substance abuse problem. Substance misuse is defined as the use of alcohol in a way, situation, amount, or frequency that could hurt the user or those around them. The accumulated costs to the individual, family, and community are staggering and arise as a result of many direct and indirect effects. Among that: compromised physical and mental health, increased spread of infectious disease, loss of productivity, and reduplication. The most devastating consequences are seen in the tens of thousands of lives lost each year as a result of substance abuse. Alcohol misuse accounts for 88,000 deaths in the United States (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and Office of the Surgeon General). The repeal of Prohibition caused many social illnesses to spark throughout the nation.

A research has shown an unprecedented increase in mortality among middle-aged Americans between 1999 and 2014 that was largely driven by alcohol. No other cause of death had a larger negative impact on American population such as the abuse of alcohol (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and Office of the Surgeon General). Since alcohol consumption returned as before Prohibition, America has witnessed the rise of devastating social problem: substance abuse.

There are also disastrous consequences for Americans, individuals and society. For instance, the great losses caused by traffic accidents that fall under the influence of alcohol abuse. Slack describes the situation and the measures that have been taken in this context. He says that many state governments have reintroduced and renewed strategies established during the Progressive Era to combat the rise in drunk driving. Taxes on liquor, for example, have boosted the price of alcohol, resulting in a drop in alcohol consumption. Various local organizations, such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and Remove the Drunk Driver (RDD) have been established to promote alcohol awareness and the dangers of driving while inebriated (22). The society needed such organizations to increase awareness among Americans.

The National Minimum Drinking-Age Act established a twenty-one-year-old legal age for purchasing and possessing alcohol, with the goal of reducing alcohol use and increasing penalties for driving while drunk. All of these factors have come together as a continuation of Temperance ideology. In recent history, the most significant act would be the passage of the 1984 National Drinking Age Act. Some scholars have referred to these memoranda as the passage of the temperance ideology (22-23). Many organizations, like MADD and RDD, arose warning Americans from all the dangers alcohol poses on their lives, especially after witnessing a remarkable number of people die each year because of alcohol consumption.

One of the troubles caused by drinking alcoholic beverages for the American people is the huge number of traffic accidents caused by drunk driving. Drunk driving is one aspect of a bigger problem involving alcohol-related deaths and injuries. In the United States, an estimated 95,000 people died from alcohol-related causes in 2019, making it the third highest cause of preventable fatalities. Drunk driving is involved in 10,142 of these deaths, or 28% of all crashes. A report in 1983 called for raising the drinking age to 21 and tougher enforcement of drunk driving laws. The US president Ronald Reagan established the National Commission Against Drunk Driving (NCADD) in 1982, which issued several important recommendations that would become the cornerstones of the United States' approach to preventing drunk driving (Griffin 03-04). The government took many procedures to contain the worrying situation caused by drunk driving.

Liquor consumption is responsible for leaving thousands of casualties due to accidents while driving under the effect of intoxicating alcoholic beverages. The same pattern is repeated throughout America each year. Due to the huge number of deaths caused by alcohol consumption, the NCADD was established in order to fight drunk driving in the United States. This latter aimed to enforce drunk driving laws and to raise the legal age of drinking.

These destructive impacts of alcoholism denote how dangerous alcohol can be. The solution is to stop consuming drinks in order to gradually rehabilitate after years of devastation on different scales reaching alarming levels. Alcohol consumption is the main cause of other social issues as well as accidents in American society. Laslett indicates, the consumption of alcoholic beverages affects individuals, and in the same time, it also affects men and women, adults and young people as well. It is a problem that affects the entire community. The phenomenon of alcohol consumption has negative effects on the family, especially on children (8). Alcohol constitutes a real threat on humans' health.

The writer continues to explain that “Drinking is linked to a range of negative effects in families from modelling of poor drinking behaviours, family arguments and ruined family occasions and relationships to child injuries and ongoing child neglect ” (8). Drinking can demolish family bonds and cause many problems. The devastating effects of drinking alcohol for the entire family are evident when one or both of the parents are heavy drinkers, and this creates an unhealthy home environment. Therefore, alcoholic parents abandon their roles, do not assume their responsibilities and evade parental duties.

Greenfeld states that among the problems caused by drinking alcoholic beverages in the United States, is the crime which committed under the influence of alcoholic beverages that witnessed significant exacerbation among Americans (4). Drunkenness can lead to dangerous crime. This is only one of the problems produced by drinking alcoholic beverages in the United States. When they are under alcohol effect, drinkers become very dangerous since they are unable to control their behaviors with people around them. One can expect a drinker to do anything unlawful and commit crimes, and they can even hurt themselves without feeling it.

Schrad says that a number of elements of the Eighteenth Amendment and the Volstead Act condemned the American experience to prohibition. First, contrary to what many people think, Prohibition did not prohibit the consumption of alcohol, but rather the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating alcoholic beverages” which created a general ambivalence toward the law among the public who did not consider the occasional indulgence of alcohol is a crime. Second, enforcement was relegated not explicitly to the federal government or the states, but to both simultaneously. The latter resulted in unequal enforcement, and provided incentives for evasion and corruption of law enforcement agencies. Accordingly, it is time to reconsider whether America’s Noble Experiment was

really such a failure after all or not (450). Several issues concerning the VA and the 18th Amendment themselves caused the enforcement to be challenging.

Seeing of all the serious consequences of adopting the Repeal Amendment by the federal government of the United States of America, there are those who oppose this policy and who are still nostalgic for the policy that was applied under the Eighteenth Amendment. Slack (25) argues that Prohibition failed to completely eliminate alcohol from the United States. In some ways, Prohibition's more realistic goals of limiting alcohol's place in society succeeded and helped to usher in a new era of understanding alcohol and its problems. Those ideas will continue to affect how vices such as alcohol are viewed, consumed and tolerated.

## Conclusion

Alcohol consumption in America is a deeply rooted phenomenon in society. Alcoholic beverages were a part of American's life since the colonial period; the time when Europeans traveling to America brought their alcoholic drinking habits to their new country which would later become known as the United States of America. Being available anywhere and anytime especially after the Civil War (1861-1865), drinking alcoholic beverages became a big problem for the nation. Colonials were found that they used to import alcohol from Britain and other countries as well, and liquor trade was widely spread.

Through time, Americans became more conscious about the negative impacts of alcohol use, including health-related, economic-related and social-related posing risks on individuals and the whole nation. In this context, temperance movements emerged against alcohol consumption. At the beginning, they called for moderation in alcohol consumption. Many associations of different affiliations were among these movements that sought to ban drinking alcohol in the United States. For example, the Christian Women's Organization and the Anti-Saloon League. Temperance movements had gone through several stages in its development. They went from calling for moderation in drinking alcohol to calling for banning it completely from the American society. This shift occurred when the movements' leadership turned to the Anti-Saloon Society.

Persuasion methods did not bring significant results in terms of reducing the harmful effects of drinking alcohols that affected people all ages. As a result, the anti-alcohol forces, particularly those led by the Anti-Saloon Association, changed their policies from raising awareness and calling for moderation to calling for its abolition. They suggested to apply coercive measures, such as enacting a law prohibiting the manufacture and trade of alcohol.

The conflict that took place to pass a law prohibiting the consumption of alcoholic beverages was debatable between supporters and opponents. The result was in favor of the

forces who were looking for the appropriate means to put an end to alcohol consumption, and it was achieved by the ratification of the 18th Amendment of the American constitution in January, 16<sup>th</sup>,1919. This latter was followed by the Volstead Act which defined the implementation procedures for the prohibition of alcoholic beverages in the United States.

The Eighteenth Amendment succeeded in achieving many positive and desired results on many levels. At the Health level, alcohol consumption dramatically declined during Prohibition. In addition to that, admissions to state mental hospitals for alcoholic psychosis declined too. In the same vain, the Crime Level declined and arrests for public drunkenness and disorderly conduct decreased.

Although organized crime had flourished under the policy of the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment, Prohibition was not responsible for its appearance. At the Economic Level, and along with other economic effects, the enforcement of Prohibition caused an increase in resource costs. During the 1920s, the annual budget of the Bureau of Prohibition went from \$4.4 million to \$13.4 million. The prohibition also, caused the shutdown of over 200 distilleries. Furthermore, Prohibition was a major blow to the industry.

When Prohibition blocked the industry, many entrepreneurs stepped forward to fill the gap for the thirsty nation. Some of those who had been in the industry, such as brewers, had to reinvent themselves to stay in business. Others took advantage of the numerous loopholes in the Volstead Act or simply turned to illegal alcohol to meet the steady demand. Soft drinks first gained popularity in the 1800s, but with the coming of Prohibition sales skyrocketed. Law-abiding Americans quenched their thirst with these beverages, while those breaking the law used them as mixers to mask the taste of low-quality alcohol.

Considering it a failure, public opposition to Prohibitionism was gradually growing for the general atmosphere during the federal ban of liquors did not please Americans. The call for repeal of the eighteenth amendment required the availability of appropriate context,



factors and conditions that help in achieving its goal. In this regard, the stock market crash in late 1929 led to the collapse of the national economy and it came as a persuasive argument for politicians that the government needs new sources of revenue. In the midst of this atmosphere, a compelling economic argument had been made. The legal alcohol industry would provide a source of government tax revenue and produce much-needed jobs.

After a long political conflict, the anti-Prohibition activists succeeded in passing the 21<sup>st</sup> Amendment, which allowed the return of industry and commerce to America. The law was ratified in December 5, 1933. The repeal of the alcohol prohibition generated several results. After the ratification of the twenty-first amendment of the American constitution, alcoholic drinks became available anywhere, at any time and for anyone who wanted to obtain some. Among the issues related to the consumption of alcoholic beverages, this phenomenon is not restricted to adults only, but it affects even those who have not yet reached the legal age. There are a total of 10.8 million underage drinkers in the United States today. Alcohol-related deaths were high, including traffic accidents and dangerous diseases.

Other problems caused by drinking alcoholic beverages in the United States and increasing its impact on the American society is the crime. The issue of crimes committed under the influence of alcoholic beverages is witnessing a significant exacerbation among Americans. In this regard, a lot of violent crimes occur each year in which victims perceive the offender to have been drinking at the time of the offense.

The study shows that the American experience with liquor control was a Noble Experiment. The society was demolished from different dimensions because of drunkenness, and the issue was becoming worse through time. Health complexities, breaking families, making people unrestrained, crime spread ... are few of what alcoholism did to American society. For businesses, drunk employees were less productive and could not operate sensitive machines as required. Addiction peaked during the nineteenth and the early twentieth

centuries, and so did all those social diseases suffocating the whole country at different scales. Few solutions were available in the hands of US policy-makers to resuscitate the nation, and using the power of the constitution was indispensable for the efforts made to contain the situation.

Throughout the dissertation, it becomes clear that it was compulsory to do something concerning the issue. However, there was no *suitable time* for introducing the Prohibition amendment. Drunkenness was so prevalent in the US, and alcohol consumption dominated people's lives. Despite the years spent to raise awareness about the destructive impacts alcoholism had, consumption of liquors was sparking.

In addition, the research gives insights to understand why Prohibition did not achieve its intended goals. The same people who advocated the enactment of a constitutional amendment banning alcohol were drunk as well, just like a large portion of the society. Additionally, the same government who wanted to prohibit alcoholic beverages was strongly dependent on revenues from liquor trade to finance its programs. Therefore, it was no surprise the enforcement of Volsteadism was difficult to achieve and could not take place, as the National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement reported, and even nearly impossible amid the enraged public opinion over the government especially when America witnessed the severe downturn of economy by the 1930s, leading to the repeal of Prohibition.

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