

Thomas Karlsson

# Nordic Alcohol Policy in Europe

The Adaptation of Finland's, Sweden's and  
Norway's Alcohol Policies to a New Policy  
Framework, 1994–2013



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**ACADEMIC DISSERTATION**

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This doctoral thesis is a result of a lengthy, somewhat unstructured process that has its beginning in my desire to do comparative research involving the Nordic countries. What began in 2003 as an article comparing the Finnish and Swedish alcohol policies ended up ten years later in five more articles and in a dissertation including over 30 European countries. Needless to say, the work hasn't always been a walk in the park and sometimes it's even felt more like a walk on rusty nails. Nevertheless, when all is said and done, it has been worth every moment.

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Helsinki, 15 August 2014

Thomas

Dedicated to Erika & Alec





## Abstract

Thomas Karlsson, *Nordic Alcohol Policy in Europe. The Adaptation of Finland's, Sweden's and Norway's Alcohol Policies to a New Policy Framework, 1994–2013*. National Institute for Health and Welfare. Research 137. 3; 9 pages. Helsinki, Finland 2014.

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The purpose of this thesis is to study how and to which extent Finland, Sweden and Norway have adapted their alcohol policies to the framework imposed to them by the EU and the European Economic Area (EEA) since the mid-1990s. This is done by studying the underlying mechanisms that have influenced the formation of alcohol policy in the Nordic countries in that period. As a part of this analysis main differences in alcohol policies and alcohol consumption between the three countries are assessed and the phenomenon of cross-border trade with alcohol is discussed. The study examines also the development of Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish alcohol policies between 1994 and 2012 and compares the Nordic alcohol policies with other alcohol policies in Europe as the situation was in 2012. The time frame of the study spans from the mid-1990s to the end of 2013 and is divided into three phases.

Studying the role of the Europeanisation process on the formation of alcohol policies has a key role in the analysis. Besides alcohol policies, the analyses comprise the development of alcohol consumption and cross-border trade with alcohol. In addition, a quantitative scale constructed to measure the strictness of alcohol policies is utilised in the analyses. The results from the scale are used to substantiate the qualitative analysis and to test whether the stereotypical view of a strict Nordic alcohol policy is still true.

The results from the study clearly corroborate earlier findings on the significance of Europeanisation and the Single Market for the development of alcohol policies in the Nordic countries. Free movement of goods and unhindered competition have challenged the principle of disinterest and enabled private profit seeking in alcohol trade. The Single Market has also contributed to the increase in availability of alcohol and made it more difficult for the Nordic EU member states to maintain restrictive alcohol policies. All in all, alcohol policies in the Nordic countries are more liberal in 2013 than they were in 1994.

Norway, being outside the EU has, however, managed to maintain a stricter alcohol policy than Finland and Sweden. Norway has also been spared from several EU directives that have affected Finland and Sweden, the most remarkable being the abolishment of the travellers' import quotas for alcohol within the EU. Due to its position as a non-EU country Norway has been able to maintain high alcohol taxes without being subjected to a "race to the bottom" regarding alcohol taxes the same

way as Finland and Sweden. Finland distinguishes as the country that has liberalised its alcohol policy most during the study period. The changes in alcohol policies were not only induced by Europeanisation and the Single Market, but also by autonomous decision-making and political processes in the individual countries.

Furthermore, the study shows that alcohol policy measures are implemented more widely in Europe than before and that there is a slow process of convergence going on regarding alcohol policy in Europe. Despite this, alcohol policies in the Nordic countries are still by far the strictest in all of Europe.

From a Europeanisation perspective, the Nordic countries were clearly on the receiving end during the first two study phases (1994–2007), having more to adjust to rules from the EU and the Single Market than having success in uploading and shaping alcohol policy on the European and international field. During the third and final study phase (2008–2013), however, the Nordic countries have increasingly succeeded in contributing to shape the alcohol policy arena in the EU and also more widely through the WHO's global alcohol strategy.

The restrictive Nordic policy tradition on which the current alcohol policies in Finland, Sweden and Norway were built on has still quite a solid evidence base. Although the basis of the restrictive alcohol policy has crumbled somewhat during the past twenty years and the policies have become less effective, nothing prevents it from being the base for alcohol policy in the Nordic countries even in the long term. In the future, all that is needed for an effective and successful alcohol policy is a solid evidence base, enough political will and support from the general public.

**Keywords:** Alcohol policy, Alcohol consumption, Nordic countries, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Europeanisation, Single Market

## Tiivistelmä

Thomas Karlsson, Nordic Alcohol Policy in Europe. The Adaptation of Finland's, Sweden's and Norway's Alcohol Policies to a New Policy Framework, 1994–2013. [Pohjoismainen alkoholipolitiikka Euroopassa. Suomen, Ruotsin ja Norjan alkoholipolitiikan sopeutuminen uuteen poliittiseen viitekehykseen vuosina 1994–2013]. Terveiden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos. Tutkimus 137. 3; 9 sivua. Helsinki, Finland 2014.

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Tässä tutkimuksessa tarkastellaan miten ja missä määrin Suomi, Ruotsi ja Norja ovat sopeuttaneet alkoholipolitiikkaansa Euroopan unionin (EU) ja Euroopan talousalueen (ETA) määrittämiin puitteisiin 1990-luvun puolivälistä alkaen. Tämä tehdään tutkimalla alkoholipolitiikan kehitykseen vaikuttaneita taustamekanismeja ja niiden vaikutuksia alkoholipolitiikan muotoutumiseen Pohjoismaissa. Osana analyysia, tarkastellaan alkoholipolitiikan ja alkoholinkulutuksen välisiä eroja Suomessa, Ruotsissa ja Norjassa sekä pohditaan alkoholin rajakaupan ja matkustajatuonnin merkitystä Pohjoismaiselle alkoholipolitiikalle ja sen tulevaisuudelle. Lisäksi tutkimuksessa seurataan Pohjoismaisen alkoholipolitiikan kehitystä vuosien 1994 ja 2012 välillä sekä verrataan Suomen, Norjan ja Ruotsin alkoholipolitiikkaa muiden EU maiden alkoholipolitiikkoihin vuonna 2012. Tutkimus ulottuu vuodesta 1994 vuoden 2013 loppuun ja on jaettu kolmeen erilliseen tutkimusperiodiin.

Eurooppalaistumisprosessin merkitys alkoholipolitiikan muodostumisessa on keskeisessä asemassa tutkimuksen kysymyksenasettelussa. Alkoholipolitiikan lisäksi, tutkimuksessa keskitytään alkoholin kulutuksen ja alkoholin rajakaupan ja matkustajatuonnin analysointiin. Tutkimuksessa hyödynnetään myös alkoholipolitiikan tiukkuutta mittaavaa skaalaa, jota käytetään vahvistamaan laadullisen analyysin tuloksia. Skaalainstrumenttia hyödynnetään myös testattaessa pitääkö stereotyyppinen näkemys rajoittavasta Pohjoismaisesta alkoholipolitiikasta yhä paikkansa.

Tutkimuksen tulokset vahvistavat aikaisempia havaintoja eurooppalaistumisen ja sisämarkkinoiden merkityksestä alkoholipolitiikan muodostumiselle Pohjoismaissa. Tavaroiden vapaa liikkuvuus ja kilpailun esteettömyys EU:ssa ovat mahdollistaneet yhä laajemman yksityisen voitontavoittelun alkoholin vähittäismyynnissä. EU:n sisämarkkinoiden laajentumisen myötä alkoholin saatavuus on lisääntynyt ja Pohjoismaiden mahdollisuus ylläpitää rajoittavaa alkoholipolitiikkaa on vähentynyt. Kaiken kaikkiaan alkoholipolitiikka on Pohjoismaissa huomattavasti vapaampaa vuonna 2013 vuoteen 1994 verrattuna.

EU:n ulkopuolella Norja on onnistunut säilyttämään tiukemman alkoholipolitiikan kuin Suomi ja Ruotsi ja on samalla säästynyt useilta EU-direktiiveiltä, joista ehkä merkittävin on ollut alkoholin matkustajatuontikiintiöiden poistaminen EU:n sisäisessä liikenteessä. EU:n ulkopuolisesta asemasta johtuen, Norja on pystynyt säilyttämään korkean alkoholiverotuksen tason, eikä ole Suomen ja Ruotsin tavoin joutunut sopeuttamaan alkoholijuomien veroa kohti naapurimaiden alhaisempaa verotaso. Tutkimuksessa Suomi erottuu maana, joka on eniten muuttanut alkoholipolitiikkaansa sallivampaan suuntaan tutkimusjakson aikana. Kaikissa kolmessa maassa alkoholipolitiikan muutokset eivät ole vain johtuneet eurooppalaistumiskehityksestä ja sisämarkkinoista vaan muutokset ovat johtuneet myös maitten omista intresseistä ja poliittisista prosesseista.

Tutkimus osoittaa myös, että erilaiset alkoholipoliittiset toimenpiteet ovat levinneet Euroopan sisällä ja, että eri Euroopan maiden alkoholipolitiikassa on tapahtunut lähentymistä. Lähentymiskehityksestä huolimatta alkoholipolitiikka Pohjoismaissa on yhä Euroopan tiukinta.

Kahden ensimmäisen tutkimusperiodin (1994–2007) aikana Pohjoismaiden alkoholipolitiikka joutui enimmäkseen sopeutumaan EU:n ja Euroopan talousalueen sisämarkkinoiden sääntöihin ja direktiiveihin, eivätkä Pohjoismaat onnistuneet paljoakaan vaikuttamaan EU:n alkoholipolitiikkaa sivuvaan päätöksentekoon. Kolmannen ja viimeisen tutkimusperiodin (2008–2013) aikana Pohjoismaat ovat enenevässä määrin onnistuneet vaikuttamaan alkoholipolitiikan muotoutumiseen Euroopan tasolla ja laajemminkin Maailman terveysjärjestön, WHO:n maailmanlaajuisen alkoholistrategian kautta.

Pohjoismaiden rajoittavalle alkoholipolitiikkaperinteelle löytyy yhä vahvaa tutkimusnäyttöön perustuvaa tukea. Vaikka rajoittavan alkoholipolitiikan perusta on murentunut jonkin verran viimeisten kahdenkymmenen vuoden aikana, mikään ei estä että Suomen, Ruotsin ja Norjan alkoholipolitiikka tulevaisuudessakin perustuisi alkoholin saatavuuden säätelyyn ja korkeaan verotukseen, jotka tutkitusti ovat kustannustehokkaita alkoholipoliittisia keinoja. Jatkossa kaikki, mitä tarvitaan kustannustehokasta ja tuloksellista alkoholipolitiikkaa varten on vahva näyttöön perustuva todistusperusta, tarpeeksi poliittista tahtoa ja suuren yleisön tuki.

Avainsanat: Alkoholipolitiikka, alkoholin kulutus, Pohjoismaat, Suomi, Ruotsi, Norja, eurooppalaistuminen, sisämarkkinat

## Sammandrag

Thomas Karlsson, *Nordic Alcohol Policy in Europe. The Adaptation of Finland's, Sweden's and Norway's Alcohol Policies to a New Policy Framework, 1994–2013*. Institutet för hälsa och välfärd. [Nordisk alkoholpolitik i Europa. Hur Finlands, Sveriges och Norges alkoholpolitik anpassades till en ny politisk referensram åren 1994–2013]. Forskning 137. 3; 9 sidor. Helsingfors, Finland 2014. ISBN 978-952-302-306-2 (printed); ISBN 978-952-302-307-9 (nätpublikation)

Syftet med denna avhandling är att studera hur alkoholpolitiken i Finland, Sverige och Norge har förändrats och anpassats till följd av inträdet i den Europeiska unionen (EU) respektive det Europeiska ekonomiska samarbetsområdet i mitten av 1990-talet. Detta görs genom att granska de bakomliggande faktorerna som har påverkat utvecklingen. Som en del av analysen granskas skillnaderna i alkoholpolitik och alkoholkonsumtion i de tre länderna. Utöver detta begrundas alkoholinförselns betydelse för de nordiska ländernas alkoholpolitik och de nordiska länderna jämförs med övriga Europeiska länder. Undersökningen omfattar åren 1994 till 2013 och är uppdelad i tre skilda forskningsperioder.

Att utreda europeiseringsprocessens betydelse utgör en central del av analysen. Förutom alkoholpolitiken, och alkoholkonsumtionen granskar avhandlingen även införseln och gränshandeln med alkohol i de tre nordiska länderna. Utöver den kvalitativa analysen, tillämpas även en kvantitativ skala för att mäta hur strikt och omfattande alkoholpolitiken är, och för att testa om den stereotypiska synen om en sträng nordisk alkoholpolitik fortfarande håller streck.

Undersökningens slutsatser styrker tidigare forskningsresultat om europeiseringsprocessens och den inre marknadens betydelse för alkoholpolitikens utveckling i Norden. Varors fria rörlighet och frihandel inom EU har inneburit en utökning av privata vinstintressen i alkoholhandeln, och i takt med att EU:s inre marknad har utvidgats har svängrummet och möjligheterna att föra en restriktiv nordisk alkoholpolitik minskat. Överlag är alkoholpolitiken i de nordiska länderna mer liberal 2013 jämfört med situationen 1994.

Som icke-EU land har Norge lyckats bevara och driva en mer restriktiv politik än Finland och Sverige och har undkommit flera bestämmelser och direktiv som inverkat på politiken i Finland och Sverige. Den kanske mest markanta skillnaden länderna emellan berör införselkvoter av alkohol som slopades inom EU år 2004, men fortfarande existerar i Norge och möjliggör upprätthållande av en högre alkoholbeskattning. Finland å andra sidan utmärker sig som det land som liberaliserat sin alkoholpolitik mest. Alla alkoholpolitiska förändringar beror inte på europeiseringsprocessen och den inre marknaden utan också på ländernas egna intressen och interna politiska processer. Undersökningen visar också att

alkoholpolitiken i Europa blivit alltmer likartad och att alkoholpolitik i Norden fortfarande är striktast i hela Europa.

Under de två första forskningsperioderna (1994–2007) var det främst Norden som var tvungen att anpassa sig till den inre marknadens regler och de nordiska länderna hade lite inflytande över beslutsfattandet inom EU. Under den tredje och sista forskningsperioden (2008–2013) har de nordiska länderna i allt större grad kunnat påverka det alkoholpolitiska beslutsfattandet, både i Europa och även mer globalt tack vare WHO:s globala alkoholstrategi.

Det finns fortfarande en stark evidensbas för den restriktiva nordiska alkoholpolitiken. Trots att möjligheterna att bedriva en restriktiv politik försämrats under de senaste 20 åren, finns det ingenting som hindrar att alkoholpolitik i Norden även i framtiden baserar sig på begränsning av tillgänglighet och hög alkoholbeskattning. Allt som behövs för en kostnadseffektiv och framgångsrik alkoholpolitik är således evidensbaserad politik, politisk vilja hos beslutsfattarna och tillräckligt med stöd bland folket.

Nyckelord: Alkoholpolitik, alkoholkonsumtion, Norden, Finland, Sverige Norge, europeisering, inre marknad

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## List of original papers

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- II Karlsson, T. & Tigerstedt, C. (2004) Testing New Models in Finnish, Swedish and Norwegian Alcohol Policies. *Nordic Studies on Alcohol and Drugs* 21(English Supplement): 77–90.
- III Karlsson, T. (2008) Finlands, Norges och Sveriges alkoholpolitiska linjedragningar sedan ”ödesåret” 2004 (Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish Alcohol Policy After the Seminal Year of 2004). *Nordisk alkohol- & narkotikatidskrift* 25(3): 205–222.
- IV Karlsson, T., Österberg, E. & Tigerstedt, C. (2005) Developing Border Regions, Regulating Alcohol in the Nordic Countries. *Nordic Studies on Alcohol and Drugs* 22(English Supplement): 102–114.
- V Karlsson, T. & Österberg, E. (2009) The Nordic Borders are Not Alike. *Nordic Studies on Alcohol and Drugs* 26(2): 117–140.
- VI Karlsson, T. & Österberg, E. (2007) Scaling Alcohol Control Policies Across Europe. *Drugs: Education, Prevention and Policy* 14(6): 499–511.

## Abbreviations

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| ALICE RAP | Addiction and Lifestyles in Contemporary Europe Reframing Addictions Project |
| AMPHORA   | The European Alcohol Policy Research Alliance                                |
| ATVR      | The State Alcohol and Tobacco Company of Iceland                             |
| AVMS      | Audio Visual Media Services Directive  |
| BAC       | Blood Alcohol Concentration  |
| BtG       | Bridging the Gap   |
| CAN       | Swedish Council for Information on Alcohol and Other Drugs                   |
| CFSP      | Common Foreign and Security Policy   |
| CNAPA     | Committee on National Alcohol Policy and Action                              |
| DG SANCO  | Directorate-General for Health and Consumers                                 |
| ECJ       | European Court of Justice  |
| EEA       | European Economic Area   |
| EISAH     | European Information System on Alcohol and Health                            |
| EMU       | European Monetary Union  |
| EU        | European Union   |
| FCTC      | Framework Convention on Tobacco Control                                      |
| GISAH     | Global Information System on Alcohol and Health                              |
| MSSD      | Most Similar System Design   |
| NGO       | Non-Governmental Organisation  |
| OECD      | The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development                   |
| SIRUS     | Norwegian Institute for Alcohol and Drug Research                            |
| SoRAD     | Centre for Social Research on Alcohol and Drugs                              |
| THL       | National Institute for Health and Welfare                                    |
| WHO       | World Health Organization  |

# 1 Introduction

Although alcohol consumption levels have been descending in most of Europe since the mid-1970s, consumption of alcoholic beverages in the Nordic alcohol monopoly countries, Finland, Norway and Sweden has been on the increase for most of the same time period. Despite the general decrease in alcohol consumption worldwide, Europe still stands out as the continent with the highest proportion of drinkers and with the highest levels of alcohol consumption per capita (Global Status Report on Alcohol and Health 2011; Anderson & Møller & Galea 2012).

Europe also plays a significant role in the global production and trade of alcoholic beverages, with over a quarter of the world's alcohol and over a half of the world's wine production emanating from the continent. With regard to trade of alcohol, Europe's position is even more pivotal. Approximately 70 per cent of all alcohol exports and just under half of the world's alcohol imports involve countries in the European Union (EU) (Anderson & Møller & Galea 2012; Babor et al. 2010; Anderson & Baumberg 2006). In the Nordic alcohol monopoly countries, the economic importance of alcohol production and trade has not been as great as in the wine producing Mediterranean countries. Instead, alcohol in the Nordic countries has mainly been perceived as a societal and public health question, where the principle of disinterest has played a central role (Bruun et al. 1975; Tigerstedt 2001).

In addition to being an important economic, financial, agricultural and labour market question in Europe, alcohol is one of the most important risk factors for ill-health and premature death on our continent. After smoking and high blood pressure, alcohol is the largest risk factor for ill-health, surpassing high cholesterol levels and overweight in significance (Anderson & Baumberg 2006, 19).

Due to the long-term rise of alcohol consumption in Finland, Norway and Sweden, alcohol-related problems have become more common in these countries. In Finland, alcohol has become one of the worst health problems of the 21<sup>st</sup> century – just under 2 000 person's died of alcohol-related illnesses in 2012. Alcohol is a central cause of death for middle-aged men and women in Finland, reaping more lives every year than ischemic heart disease for men and breast cancer for women (Causes of Death in 2012). Also in Norway and Sweden, alcohol-related problems place a heavy burden on the society, although the overall level of harm, including alcohol-related deaths, is on a substantially more moderate level than in Finland due to lower alcohol consumption levels (Østhus 2012).

Alcohol consumption levels in the European countries are currently undergoing a process of convergence, with descending consumption in parts of Central and Southern Europe, stable consumption in most of Central Europe, and growing

figures in most of the Northern European countries (Tigerstedt et al. 2006; Anderson & Møller & Galea 2012). A similar trend of convergence can also be identified regarding alcohol policies, as alcohol policy measures in the Southern and Central European countries have become stricter, whereas the Nordic countries have been forced to liberalise their alcohol policy systems during the past couple decades. On the one hand, measures targeted at alcohol availability and taxes have decreased, whereas measures targeted at alcohol-related problems and demand of alcohol have become more prevalent (Österberg & Karlsson 2002). Although there still are considerable differences from one country to another, both alcohol consumption levels have converged and alcohol policies have become more homogenous in Europe during the second half of the twentieth century (Allamani et al. 2012; Karlsson & Lindeman & Österberg 2012).

This summary article begins with a presentation of the purpose of the study and the separate articles on which the dissertation is based (Chapter 1). This is followed by a methods and data section where the selection of countries, methods and research design as well as data, periodisation and the research questions are presented and explained (Chapter 2). In the subsequent chapter the theoretical framework of the dissertation is presented and key concepts regarding the adaptation of Nordic alcohol policies to a new policy environment are defined (Chapters 3.1–3.3). In this chapter, also the background and methodology for a scale to measure the strictness of alcohol policies is presented (Chapter 3.4). In the results section (Chapter 4), the main findings are first presented concerning the re-adaptation of the Nordic countries' alcohol policies to a new policy framework (Chapters 4.1–4.3). Secondly, the results from the quantitative comparison of Finland's, Sweden's and Norway's alcohol policies in 1994 and 2012 are presented and the Nordic alcohol policies in 2012 are positioned in a European context (Chapter 4.4). In the final section of the summary article, main findings of the dissertation are discussed and summarised (Chapter 5).

## 1.1 Purpose of the study and the original articles

The purpose of this thesis is first to study how and to which extent the Northern European countries of Finland, Sweden and Norway, hereafter referred to as the Nordic countries, have adapted their alcohol policies to the framework imposed to them by the EU and the European Economic Area (EEA) since the mid-1990s. This is done by studying the underlying mechanisms that have influenced the formation of alcohol policy in the Nordic countries in that period. As a part of this analysis main differences in alcohol policies and alcohol consumption between the three countries are assessed and the phenomenon of cross-border trade with alcohol is

discussed. The non-EU country Norway is then compared to Finland and Sweden in order to study in what respect, if at all, the development in the alcohol policy field differs from the development in the two EU-countries.

The second purpose of the study is to a) examine the development of the Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish alcohol policies between 1994 and 2012 and to b) compare the Nordic alcohol policies with other alcohol policies in Europe as the situation was in 2012. The instrument used for these two analyses is a quantitative scale constructed to measure the strictness of alcohol policies. The results from the alcohol policy scale are used to substantiate the qualitative analysis in the Nordic and European comparison and to test whether the stereotypical view of a strict Nordic alcohol policy is still true.

The analyses in the summary article are based on six articles, which hereafter are referred to by the following numbers:

- **Article 1.** Tigerstedt, C. & Karlsson, T. (2003) Svårt att kasta loss. Finlands och Sveriges alkoholpolitiska kursändringar efter år 1990 (A Painful Breakup. Course Changes in the Finnish and Swedish Alcohol Policy Since 1990). *Nordisk alkohol- och narkotikatidskrift* 20(6): 409–425.
- **Article 2.** Karlsson, T. & Tigerstedt, C. (2004) Testing New Models in Finnish, Swedish and Norwegian Alcohol Policies. *Nordic Studies on Alcohol and Drugs* 21(English Supplement): 77–90.
- **Article 3.** Karlsson, T. (2008) Finlands, Norges och Sveriges alkoholpolitiska linjedragningar sedan ”ödesåret” 2004 (Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish Alcohol Policy After the Seminal Year of 2004). *Nordisk alkohol- & narkotikatidskrift* 25(3): 205–222.
- **Article 4.** Karlsson, T., Österberg, E. & Tigerstedt, C. (2005) Developing Border Regions, Regulating Alcohol in the Nordic Countries. *Nordic Studies on Alcohol and Drugs* 22(English Supplement): 102–114.
- **Article 5.** Karlsson, T. & Österberg, E. (2009) The Nordic Borders are Not Alike. *Nordic Studies on Alcohol and Drugs* 26(2): 117–140.
- **Article 6.** Karlsson, T. & Österberg, E. (2007) Scaling Alcohol Control Policies Across Europe. *Drugs: Education, Prevention and Policy* 14(6): 499–511.

The first three articles concentrate on the reorientation of alcohol policy in the Nordic countries after their EU/EEA membership in the mid-1990s and on the reorganisation of alcohol policies since the travellers’ allowances for alcoholic beverages within the EU were abolished in 2004 (Articles 1–3). Articles four and five look closer at cross-border trade with alcoholic beverages as a peculiarity in the Nordic countries that put a strain on their alcohol policies (Articles 4–5). The final article concentrates on the strictness of alcohol policies in the EU/EEA countries,

and presents a method and model to score and rank countries according to how strict their formal alcohol policies are (Article 6).

## 2 Data and methods

### 2.1 Studying Finland, Sweden and Norway

The decision to include only three of the five Nordic countries was made because Finland, Sweden and Norway share a long history of strict alcohol control systems that during the past 10–15 years have gone through an extensive liberalisation process. Another unifying commonality for these countries, apart from their geographic proximity, is that they all have managed to retain their retail monopoly for off-premise alcohol sales, and they still have quite comprehensive alcohol control regulations, in comparison to all other European countries (Articles 2–3; Karlsson 2009).

Two of the studied countries, Finland and Sweden, became members of the EU in 1995, whereas Norway, after a negative vote in a public referendum, decided not to join the Union together with its neighbouring countries (Egeberg 2005; Juncos & Pérez-Solórzano Borrágán 2013). Due to this profound difference in their international status, Finland's and Sweden's actions in the field of alcohol policy during their EU-membership are in this study compared to the way Norway has organised its alcohol policy, outside the EU and as a member of the EEA.

Why then are not Denmark and Iceland included in the study? Much speaks for including them due to many similarities between the Nordic countries in welfare policies in general and high taxation on alcohol in particular. There were, however, several good reasons for leaving Denmark and Iceland outside the study that in the end overweighed. Denmark for one thing does not share the same history of restrictive alcohol policies as the studied countries (Thorsen 1990; Karlsson 2009), albeit its alcohol taxation, especially on spirits, has traditionally been on a high level (Karlsson & Österberg 2002). The fact that Denmark already since 1973 has been a member of the EU is another thing that differentiates it from the countries included in the study. Denmark is therefore excluded as a primary study subject in this dissertation. Indirectly, however, its role as a neighbouring country to Norway and Sweden, and an important source and transit country of cross-border trade with alcohol is commented upon in the articles (Articles 4–5).

Iceland on the other hand, could well have defended its place in this thesis as it, like Finland, Norway and Sweden, has a long tradition of strict alcohol policy as well as an alcohol retail monopoly company, ATVR (Cisneros Örnberg & Ólafsdóttir 2008). Iceland's relationship with the European Union is also similar to



Norway's, both being members of the EEA, but not of the EU. One of the main reasons for excluding Iceland was, however, not its alcohol policy orientation, but its isolated geographical position. Unlike its Nordic neighbours, Iceland, being a secluded island in the Atlantic Ocean, does not have any land borders with other countries. Therefore cross-border trade with alcoholic beverages is hardly an issue that puts a strain on the country's alcohol policy, which is the case in all the other countries in this study (Article 5; Rabinovich et al. 2009; Karlsson & Österberg 2009a).

The tradition of alcohol policy research in Finland, Norway and Sweden is strong, and several theses and comprehensive academic reports have been published on and around this topic. This is therefore by far not the first dissertation or academic study that focuses on alcohol policy in the Nordic countries from a comparative perspective. Most of the recent studies have concentrated on the historical development of alcohol policies and on the changes that happened to the Nordic alcohol policy systems during the formative years when the countries entered the EU and EEA in the middle of the 1990s (Sulkunen et al. 2000; Tigerstedt 2001; Ugland 2002; Warsell 2005; Österberg 2005; 2007), whereas some studies examine more recent events (Cisneros Örnberg & Olafsdottir 2008; Cisneros Örnberg 2009; Ugland 2011; 2013). What are, however, lacking altogether, are comparisons of the development in the Nordic alcohol monopoly countries after the turn of the millennium, and attempts to relate the Nordic countries' alcohol policies to those of other European countries. This dissertation is aiming to fill that knowledge void.

## 2.2 Methods and research design

In this summary article, alcohol consumption, contextual data from the alcohol field and basic characteristics on the alcohol policy systems in Finland, Norway and Sweden are analysed and compared. The comparison focuses on the countries' adaptation of their national alcohol policies to a new alcohol policy environment, which was imposed when the countries entered the EU and EEA in the mid-1990s (Tigerstedt 2001).

A Swedish political scientist, Anders Lidström, has studied different research approaches for comparative studies of local government systems. Lidström (1999) distinguishes between *inductive*, *deductive* and *ideal type based* analyses of local government systems. Inductive studies start out with empirical observations and move in the direction of theoretical generalisations. Studies based on deduction, on the other hand, start with a theory, from which hypotheses are generated and subjected to empirical testing (ibid., 99). The ideal type analyses of local government systems, which are associated with and developed by Max Weber

(1968), are according to Lidström best suited for studying potential and hypothetical systems, in order to show their advantages and disadvantages (*ibid.*, 109). Although the three research approaches were constructed for comparing local policy systems, they could well be applied to comparisons in other policy areas, alcohol policies being one of them.

The research approach used for comparison of the countries' alcohol policies and policy systems in this study is inspired by and clearly resemble the broad research approaches presented by Lidström (1999). Following the trichotomy between induction, deduction and ideal type analyses, this thesis has a clear inductive tendency, i.e. the hypotheses formed in the beginning do not emanate from any unequivocal theoretical standpoint. Neither is the objective of this study to develop a comprehensive theory to explain the developments in alcohol policies in the studied countries. The distinction between deductive and inductive approaches is, however, not all that clear and traces of both approaches can often be found in the same study, but at different stages of the process. For instance, in this study the deductive approach is used when the development of alcohol policy in the two EU countries, Finland and Sweden, are compared with the corresponding development in the non-EU country Norway, while the inductive approach is used when examining top-down and bottom-up processes of Europeanisation. Moreover, when future prospects for the Nordic alcohol policy model are discussed, the analyses even contain ideal type based analyses.

The study could also be described as following “a most similar systems design”, MSSD (Przeworski & Teune 1970). The three countries included are all very similar regards to their background characteristics, and resemble each other closely from a geographical, societal and historical perspective, as well as regards to the Nordic Welfare State Model (see also Kautto et al. 2001; Greve 2007). No systematic attempt to match the relevant control variables is, however, made, and in this respect the dissertation serves as a good example of a comparative study that applies a MSSD, but only implicitly (Anckar 2008, 390).

In addition to the qualitative comparison, a quantitative scale is used in order to measure the strictness of alcohol policies in Finland, Sweden and Norway in 1994 and 2012. The quantitative scale is based on a research tradition, which is presented in a separate article in this dissertation (Article 6). Moreover, the scale will ultimately be used to compare the three Nordic countries' alcohol policies against the rest of Europe ranking them according to the strictness of alcohol policies in 2012 (see chapter 4.4).

In the next subchapter, research questions are posed and certain assumptions or hypotheses are constructed. These are then tested using observations made in the individual articles. In the end, these empirical observations on alcohol policy development will result in more or less theoretical generalisations. Formally

speaking, the development of alcohol policy in Finland, Norway and Sweden can be perceived as the dependent variable, whereas the independent variables in the study consist of the underlying mechanisms that have affected the formation of alcohol policies in the three countries.

## 2.3 Data, periodisation and the research questions

In this study, the centre of attention is on scrutinising the Finnish, Norwegian, and Swedish alcohol policy systems with the focus set on governmental decision making in alcohol policy issues on a national and international level. The analysis is focused on official, state level alcohol policies and strategies, but also local alcohol policies and prevention efforts by NGOs are commented upon and their strategic relevance for alcohol policies is weighed in. Studying the role of the Europeanisation process on the formation of alcohol policies has a key role in the analysis. Besides *a) alcohol policies* (Articles 1–6), the analyses comprise the development of *b) alcohol consumption* (Articles 1–3), and *c) cross-border trade with alcohol* (Articles 4–5). In the results section, main trends of these three variables in the Nordic countries are summarised in Tables 3–5.

In addition to relevant research literature, the data used in the analyses consists of legislations and regulations, official documents, and contemporary debates in the field of alcohol research and alcohol policy research in particular. Other sources used in this study are alcohol-related statistics in the field of public health and social affairs as well as public reports, programmes and strategy documents within the public sector. In addition to written sources, interviews with key informants, mostly civil servants, but also other alcohol policy stakeholders, economic operators and social aspects organisations excluded, have been used. The data and materials used in each sub-study are more closely described in connection to the individual articles (Articles 1–6).

The time frame of the study spans from the mid-1990s to the end of 2013 and is divided into three different phases. The division is derived from the analyses made in the six original articles and enables a more detailed and accurate comparison of the countries and their alcohol policies over time.

The first of the three study phases is named “*An era of trial and errors*”, and begins when Finland, Norway and Sweden enter the EEA at the beginning of 1994. A year later, in 1995, Finland and Sweden become fully fledged members of the EU, whereas Norway decides otherwise. In the study, 1994 will also be used as a baseline measurement for the quantitative comparison of alcohol policies over time. The end of the study phase is characterised by completely different strategic

solutions in the three countries when they were preparing for the changes that were about to occur in 2004 (Articles 1–3).

The second phase called “*The decisive years*” begins when the Finnish and Swedish derogations on travellers’ allowances for alcohol were abolished in January 2004. The full-scale introduction of this essential Single Market principle of free movement of goods had a direct impact on alcohol policy formation in Finland and Sweden, and indirectly also in Norway. Therefore the introduction of free intra-EU trade in alcoholic beverages in the Nordic countries serves as a natural start for the second study phase (Articles 3–5).

Timing the end of this study period was, however, not as self-evident. The breaking point with the third phase has been timed to coincide with increased international activities in the field of alcohol policy and a societal process that affected most of the European countries in 2008, i.e. the economic crisis. The economic crisis emerged in the United States in 2007 and spread to Europe the following year and affected profoundly many European countries (Economic Crisis in Europe... 2009, 9–10). For instance in Finland, the economic crisis re-launched alcohol taxation as a method to raise more tax revenues and lower the level of alcohol consumption in the society (Karlsson et al. 2013).

The third and final phase, “*International alcohol policy and a renaissance of restrictions*” stretches from 2008 to 2013. This period is characterised by times of continued economic uncertainty caused by the Subprime and Eurozone crisis (Mody & Sandri 2011), Nordic activities in international alcohol policy matters (Article 3) and increased international activities in the field of alcohol policy, especially by the EU and WHO (Stenius 2009; Monteiro 2011). In furthering these proceedings the Nordic countries had a crucial if not a decisive role (Karlsson et al. 2010).

None of the original articles in the thesis deal with the entire duration of the third phase in the study. The years 2008–2013 are nonetheless included and analysed in this summary article the same way as the two previous study periods. In this third phase, the qualitative analysis is based to a great extent on data from implicit comparisons and policy studies focused on the development of alcohol consumption, alcohol policy and cross-border trade with alcohol in the Nordic countries and Europe (Cisneros Örnberg 2010; Ramstedt 2010; Rossow 2010; Karlsson 2009; 2011; Karlsson et al. 2010; 2013; Ugland 2010; 2011; 2013; Allamani et al. 2011; 2012).

The quantitative analysis, on the other hand, utilises the scaling method (Article 6) both in the Nordic and European comparisons. In the analyses, state of the art data and health indicators on alcohol, like the Global and European Information Systems on Alcohol and Health (GISAH & EISAH) as well as publications by the WHO and its regional office for Europe are used (Status Report on Alcohol and

Health 2013; Anderson & Møller & Galea 2012; Global Status Report on Alcohol and Health 2011; European Status Report on Alcohol and Health 2010).

In analysing the Nordic alcohol policies in this dissertation, the following four hypotheses or statements are posed and examined:

1. Since 1994, Finland and Sweden have lost a great deal of their national alcohol policy competence to the European Union and, hence, their alcohol policies are more liberal than 20 years ago.
2. As a non-EU country, Norway has greater authority over their alcohol policy, including cross-border trade with alcohol, and can maintain a stricter alcohol policy than Finland and Sweden.
3. The changes in alcohol policies are not only induced by Europeanisation and the Single Market, but also by autonomous decision-making and political processes in the individual countries.
4. Although the alcohol policy systems in the Nordic countries have been liberalised during the past couple of decades, they are still stricter than in most other European countries.

Statements 1–3 are predominantly dealt with in articles 1, 2 and 3. In these three articles, the adjustment of the Nordic alcohol policy systems to a new working environment is studied, and the development in the two EU-countries is compared with the developments in Norway. Articles 4 and 5, dealing with cross-border trade with alcohol in the Nordic countries, are primarily used to examine statement 2, but implicitly also statements 1 and 3, as cross-border trade with alcohol is used to study the impact Europeanisation and the Single Market have on the Nordic alcohol policies. Article 6, presenting the methodology and instrument to measure the strictness of alcohol policies, is used to scrutinise the fourth and final statement.

# 3 Alcohol policy in Europe – theoretical framework and key concepts

## 3.1 Alcohol policy as a study subject

According to Robin Room (1999), the term alcohol policy entered the English vocabulary fairly recently, in the late 1970s, more or less as an import from the Nordic languages. Alcohol policy has many dimensions and alcohol-related issues, even if not always recognised or labelled especially as such, are often handled with a wide horizontal and vertical dispersion by more or less all modern states (Room 1999). The state has several different tasks and interests concerning alcoholic beverages; for instance, the fiscal interest, the economic development interest, the interest to maintain public order and safety and the interest in maintaining the reproduction and health of the population (Mäkelä & Viikari 1977).

In *Alcohol Control Policies in Public Health Perspective* by Bruun et al. (1975, 12), the term alcohol control policies referred "to the legal, economic and physical factors which bear on the availability of alcohol to the individual". Bruun and his colleagues' definition of the term was deliberately narrow, and excluded health education, attitude change and informal social control completely.

A couple of decades later, Edwards et al. (1994) broadened the definition in their book *Alcohol Policy and the Public Good* and instead of *alcohol control policy* preferred to use the more general term *alcohol policy*. According to their definition, alcohol policy is a public health response dictated in part by national and historical circumstances, and includes amongst other things alcohol taxation, legislative controls of alcohol availability, alcohol education and information, media information campaigns and school-based education. Like Bruun et al. (1975) Edwards and his colleagues ruled out all kind of informal social alcohol control from the definition they used (Edwards et al. 1994, 1–2).

In the book *Alcohol, no ordinary commodity*, Thomas Babor and his colleagues (2003) further broadened the definition of alcohol policy used by Bruun et al. (1975) and Edwards et al. (1994). According to Babor et al., alcohol policy covers all public policies pertaining to the relation between alcohol, health, and social welfare. Alcohol policies were further classified by Babor et al. to *allocative* and *regulatory* policies, of which allocative policies are intended to give a net benefit for a certain group or organisation, in order to achieve some public objective, whereas regulatory

policies attempt to influence others through direct control of individuals or organisations. Examples of allocative policies are alcohol education in schools, and training of waiters in responsible beverages servicing, to name but a few. Regulatory policies on the other hand, include alcohol taxation, age limits for alcohol sales and limits for sales hours, as well as other limitations on sales and marketing of alcoholic beverages. Alcohol policy measures can be directed at drinking patterns, making them less hazardous, at the drinking environment, making alcohol less available, or at health services, making them more accessible (Babor et al. 2003, 7). The same definition of alcohol policy was also used in the second edition of *Alcohol, no ordinary commodity*, which was published in 2010 (Babor et al. 2010).

In this study, the definition of alcohol policy is similar to the one used by Babor et al. (2003; 2010), albeit a bit broader. Alcohol policy is defined as *public policies and measures that relate to alcoholic beverages, and have a bearing on health and social welfare issues*. In analysing alcohol policy, the focus is set on examining national and international strategies and policies that have an effect on the level of alcohol consumption and alcohol-related harm in the society. Social and health services and their preventive actions are included in the definition, but the service sector and substance abuse treatment will not be discussed at any length. Excluded from the definition, but implicitly included in the analyses through their presence in the alcohol policy field are private entrepreneurs, social aspects organisations and economic operators.

### 3.2 Nordic alcohol policy

The concept of *Nordic alcohol policy* (nordisk alkoholpolitik) can be regarded as a narrower concept and definition of alcohol policy, referring to the restrictive alcohol policy tradition found in the Northern European countries of Finland, Norway, Iceland and Sweden. All Nordic countries, with the exception of Denmark, have strong temperance traditions and a long tradition of restrictions and control on sales as well as production and consumption of alcoholic beverages (Tigerstedt et al. 2006; Österberg & Karlsson 2002). Ugland (2003) further notes that Nordic alcohol policy is based on specific social characteristics, cultural traditions and historical experiences of the Nordic countries and rooted in their nation building and welfare state projects. Nordic alcohol policy is also associated with strong social forces like the labour and temperance movements and various Low Church groups (ibid. 161).

For Finland and Norway this includes a period of prohibition in the 1910s, 1920s and 1930s. In Sweden prohibition was never instituted although it was supported by almost half of the population in the early 1920s (Johansson 2008, 217–218). Instead of prohibition, Sweden opted for a restrictive sales system of alcoholic beverages

under the auspices of local retail alcohol monopolies, also called the Bratt system named after its inventor Dr. Ivan Bratt (Nycander 1998). After negative votes in public referendums on prohibition in Norway in 1926 and in Finland in 1931, both countries adopted state controlled off-premise retail sales monopolies on alcoholic beverages that resembled the Swedish system established in the 1910s and the 1920s (Häikiö 2007; Hauge 1998). In 1955, also the Swedish monopoly system was transformed into a state governed alcohol monopoly (Holder 2008).

Another common denominator, and somewhat of an oddity in a European and international framework, is that Finland, Norway and Sweden have all managed to retain their off-premise monopolies on alcoholic beverages, despite their membership in the EU and EEA (Cisneros Örnberg & Olafsdottir 2008; Karlsson 2009). In addition to the restrictive supply side of alcoholic beverages, also alcohol demand reduction efforts, like education and persuasion, early intervention and treatment of alcohol problems, have been more extensive in the Nordic countries than in most other European countries (Österberg & Karlsson 2002).

Several studies have pointed to far-reaching changes in Nordic alcohol policy in recent decades (Holder et al. 1998; Sulkunen et al. 2000; Tigerstedt 2001; Ugland 2002; Warsell 2005). Tigerstedt (2001) argued that the Nordic alcohol policy field was dissolving already at the turn of the millennium, and Ugland (2002) described the changes in the late 1990s as a combination of policy recategorisation and integration. Both authors emphasised the influence of the EU and the Europeanisation process (Hellebö 2003, 10). There exists a seemingly broad consensus that Europeanisation and the creation of the Single Market have had a profound impact on the formation of Nordic alcohol policy during the past decades (Ugland 2002; Tigerstedt et al. 2006). There are, however, clear disagreements on how large and irrecoverable these changes in alcohol policy have been (Romanus 2001; Andréasson et al. 2002; Andréasson et al. 2007).

Today, according to an established understanding, the Nordic alcohol policy tradition lies on three major pillars. These are: 1) a radical restriction of private profit seeking, 2) restrictions on the physical availability of alcohol (retail alcohol monopoly etc.), and 3) high prices (taxes) on alcoholic beverages (Tigerstedt et al. 2006, 113). In this thesis Nordic alcohol policy refers to *a strict alcohol policy tradition trying to regulate alcohol consumption and alcohol related harm mainly by restricting physical and economic availability of alcoholic beverages*.

The development of these three pillars will be analysed in more detail and their current status are compared to the situation preceding 1994. Even before the alcohol policy changes occurring in the mid-1990s, there were differences in the way these cornerstones of Nordic alcohol policy were manifested in Finland, Sweden and Norway. In the following some country-specific peculiarities are presented and later used as a baseline for the qualitative analysis.



Before 1995, the Finnish alcohol policy system was characterised by a remarkably comprehensive alcohol monopoly that solely controlled the production, import, export and sale of alcoholic beverages between 1932 and 1995. In addition, the monopoly company (Alko) was responsible for the supervision and control of alcohol retail licenses, which made it the central supervisory alcohol policy authority in Finland (Article 1; Tigerstedt 2001).

What distinguishes Sweden prior to 1995 was a strong belief in the ideology of disinterestedness in alcohol handling and trade. Another stronghold of the Swedish alcohol policy was built around the so called total consumption model (Ledermann 1956; Bruun et al. 1975; Leifman 1996), which rested upon a holistic and universal view on the liquor question. The total consumption model and the all-inclusive view on alcohol policy in Sweden have contributed to highlight different aspects related to the alcohol problem. Together these two cornerstones have been widely accepted by both decision makers and the society as a whole as the founding guidelines of the Swedish alcohol policy system (Andréasson 2007, 11–20).

In Norway, the municipalities' role in alcohol policy has been more significant (Østhus 2005) and the physical and economic availability of alcoholic beverages considerably stricter than in Finland and Sweden. This was true especially regarding Norway's low number of on- and off-premise outlets as well as their extremely high alcohol prices. The fact that Norway before 1995 allowed sales of medium strength beer in ordinary grocery stores, whereas this was not the case in Sweden, could be considered the exception that proved the rule (Holder et al. 1998).

### **3.3 Alcohol policy, Europeanisation and the Single Market**

#### **3.3.1 Europeanisation and alcohol policy**

During the past couple of decades and especially since the turn of the millennium, Europeanisation has been a lively debated and researched phenomenon. In social research literature Europeanisation as a concept has received a multitude of meanings that vary considerably depending on the authors' point of view and the subject studied. Europeanisation has been widely used within different disciplines, but the views contained by the concept have not always been very clear, and the concept itself has been poorly and even confusingly defined (Mair 2004).

There are several competing definitions of Europeanisation. For instance, Olsen (2001; 2003) has identified five different meanings of the concept, whereas Harmsen

and Wilson (2000) ended up with eight different meanings of Europeanisation<sup>1</sup>. The majority of research literature refers, however, to Europeanisation simply as a process where national political systems are affected by “something European” (Vink 2003). In this study, the categorisation made by Kevin Featherstone (2003) has been utilised, according to which Europeanisation can be studied as 1) a historical process, 2) as a matter of cultural diffusion, 3) as a process of institutional adaptation, and 4) as the adaptation of policy and policy processes. In the following, points 3 and 4 will be dealt with in more detail.

According to Featherstone (2003) national changes due to European influence take place through institutional adaptation and by adaptation of policies and policy processes. Institutional adaptation refers to questions on how actors and institutions are affected by EU membership, whereas the adaptation of policy processes is mainly concerned with the influence of EU on national policies and on the integration of EU requirements in national policy processes (*ibid.*). From the perspective of Nordic alcohol policy, the Europeanisation process has been considered as particularly problematic as there is constant interaction between European and domestic policy processes and any problems have to be solved in interaction between the nation-state and the EU.

In alcohol policy research there is a specific tradition of scrutinising the connection between Europeanisation and the transition of alcohol policy that has been taking place especially in the Nordic countries (Sulkunen et al. 2000; Tigerstedt 2001; Tigerstedt et al. 2006; Ugland 2002, 2011; 2013). When analysing Swedish alcohol policy, Cisneros Örnberg (2009, 23) viewed Europeanisation as a “process in progress” and concentrated on analysing how Europeanisation has developed and what structures have been involved in the process. She also looked upon Europeanisation as a two-way interaction that included both top-down and bottom-up processes, and as an interaction between the nation-state and the EU.

According to Börzel & Panke (2013, 117), bottom-up Europeanisation “analyses how member states and other domestic authors shape EU policies, EU politics and European polity”, and the phenomenon to explain is the EU itself. For top-down Europeanisation, the opposite is the case, i.e. the focus is on studying how the EU shapes institutions, processes, and political outcomes in member states and third countries. In the top-down perspective “the phenomenon to be explained is whether and how states download EU policies and institutions, which subsequently give rise to domestic change”, i.e. how the EU induces domestic change in the member states’ policies, political processes or institutions or in third countries (*ibid.*, 116–117). There is also a third, integrated, approach to Europeanisation, which synthesises the

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<sup>1</sup> For a comprehensive review on Europeanisation as a concept, see Featherstone (2003), and Cisneros Örnberg (2009) regarding Europeanisation as a concept in connection with alcohol policy research.

advantages of both the top-down and bottom-up perspectives. The integrated approach analyses how member states shape the EU (uploading), how the EU feeds back into member states (downloading), and how the member states react in changing properties of the EU (ibid., 117; Börzel & Risse 2007).

In this study, Europeanisation is analysed predominantly as the adaptation of policy and policy processes (Featherstone 2003), and the focus is set on studying what the influence has been on the countries national alcohol policies. However, also the integrated approach to Europeanisation is applied as described by Börzel and Panke (2013). This is done by examining if and to what extent the Nordic countries have functioned as “uploaders” of their interests so that an EU policy, political process, or institution have reflected their interests in the alcohol policy field or whether they simply have been forced to “download” the EU’s and Commission’s views in alcohol policy matters.

### 3.3.2 Nordic countries and the Single Market

Whereas Europeanisation is an on-going process and a multifaceted concept, the Single European Market provides a more solid frame of reference. Originally named the Common Market, the Single European Market (hereafter the Single Market) could be described as an economic unit or trade bloc formed of nations with the intention to eliminate or markedly reduce trade barriers among its members (World Development Indicators 2012, 353).

The Single Market is one of the main building blocks of the EU with its origin in the very beginning of the economic unification process that started with the signing of the Treaty of Rome in 1957. The treaty established a customs union between six countries (Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and the Federal Republic of Germany), but it contained also plans for further economic integration in Europe. Amongst other things, the treaty established the principle of the free movement of goods, services, capital, and labour – hereafter called the four freedoms. Completed 35 years later, the Single Market can be perceived as an integrated market area without internal frontiers in which the four freedoms have the possibility to move unhindered (Egan 2013, 255–256).

The concept of the Single Market was codified in the Single European Act introduced in 1987 and completed five years later. On 1 January 1993 the Single Market came into force with almost all necessary legislation ratified by all member states as of then (EU-12). For the Nordic countries and their restrictive alcohol policies the creation of a customs union as well as the removal of physical and fiscal trade barriers could be regarded as the most significant events in the construction of the Single Market. The completion of the Single European Act in 1993 had a great

impact on the trade and transports of alcoholic beverages within the EU/EEA, and from a Nordic point of view this was perceived as a threat to the Nordic alcohol policy system as a whole (Ugland 2011, 9).

In order to maintain a restrictive alcohol policy, the Nordic countries managed to negotiate derogations for the travellers' allowances of alcohol when they joined the EU and EEA in the mid-1990s. Finland and Sweden along with Denmark negotiated a temporary derogation on maintaining travellers' allowances for alcoholic beverages until 2004, whereas the derogations for Norway and Iceland were permanent as they only were EEA and not EU members (Egeberg 2005). From a Single Market point of view, the Nordic countries' retail monopolies for alcoholic beverages were considered especially problematic (Hilson 2008, 200–201; see also Tigerstedt 2001).

In this thesis the Single Market concept is scrutinised from the point of view of restrictive alcohol policies. Special attention is put on clarifying what kind of an effect the Single European Act (1993) and the Single Market has had on the formation of the Nordic alcohol policies during the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is safe to assume that the effects will vary between the Nordic countries as the EU and the Single Market concept have been adapted to a different degree in Finland, Norway and Sweden.

On a general level Finland has been more positive towards EU cooperation than Sweden and Norway. This can be easily detected from the depth of integration to various forms of association to the EU and Finland being the only Nordic country included in the European Monetary Union (Table 1). From not being one of the frontrunners in the race towards a unified Europe, Finland has made a remarkable shift in focus during the past couple of decades. All the Nordic countries are, however, in various degrees part of the Single Market as of today. Finland and Sweden are fully fledged members of the Single Market as EU Member States, whereas Norway is included in the Single Market only through the EEA.

**Table 1.** Formal forms of Finland's, Sweden's and Norway's association to the EU

|                | <b>EU Member</b> | <b>Schengen</b> | <b>CFSP*</b> | <b>EMU**</b> | <b>EEA</b> |
|----------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| <b>Finland</b> | X                | X               | X            | X            |            |
| <b>Sweden</b>  | X                | X               | X            |              |            |
| <b>Norway</b>  |                  |                 |              |              | X          |

\* Common Foreign and Security Policy;

\*\* European Monetary Union

Source: Egeberg 2005

Assuming that a looser connection to the EU would allow greater leeway in making independent alcohol policy decisions, the non-EU country Norway should be able to rely more on the traditional alcohol policy weapons of high prices and strict physical availability than Finland or Sweden. However, one should also remember that all alcohol policy changes in these countries are not induced by the Europeanisation process or the Single Market, but also by the countries own political decisions making. In this thesis, the relationship between external and internal influences on the Nordic countries' alcohol policies is discussed.

### 3.4 How to measure the strictness of Nordic and European alcohol policies

#### 3.4.1 Background

Previously in this chapter, the theoretical framework of the dissertation was presented and key concepts defined. The rest of this chapter concentrates on presenting a method for quantifying and measuring the strictness of alcohol policies with the help of a scale (Article 6).

There is a long tradition in measuring and comparing alcohol policies with the help of quantitative scales. The original idea and first reports of a quantitative scale to measure alcohol policies can be traced already to the late 1970s (Smart 1977; Davies 1979). The earliest comprehensive attempt to scale and quantify alcohol policies was made by Davies and Walsh in their 1983 study *Alcohol Problems and Alcohol Control in Europe*, which was partly financed by the EC (Davies & Walsh 1983).

Since the early 1980s, several studies have been published measuring, quantifying and ranking alcohol policies. Most of the studies have been cross-sectional, concentrating on alcohol policies in Europe and constructed similarly to the Davies and Walsh scale (Anderson & Lehto 1995; Article 6; Karlsson & Lindeman & Österberg 2012). Only two studies (Karlsson & Österberg 2001; Young People and Alcohol in Europe 1994) have measured changes in alcohol policies over time.

All alcohol policy scales have not been based on the research tradition originating from Davies and Walsh (1983). Hilton and Johnstone (1988) constructed in the late 1980s a scale looking only at the presence or absence of specific alcohol-related measures in 22 countries. Another more recent attempt to measure the strictness of alcohol policies was made by Brand et al. (2007) in their article *Comparative Analysis of Alcohol Control Policies in 30 Countries* that was applied

to all 30 OECD member countries. Both these studies used cross-sectional data (Article 6).

It is important to point out that scales measuring the strictness and comprehensiveness of alcohol policies only measure formal alcohol policy and do not take into consideration informal control practises based on traditional habits and norms (Karlsson & Österberg 2001). However, the advantages and strengths of a quantitative scale are several and they clearly outweigh the weaknesses. The scale can be used to illustrate how different alcohol policy measures have evolved over time, and it gives the possibility to identify crucial turning points and changes in countries' alcohol policies. Alcohol policy scales are also easy instruments for comparing different countries with each other and for ranking countries according to how strict and comprehensive their alcohol policies are (Article 6).

As a quantitative scale summarises a large amount of data in a single figure, it is a strong tool in communicating with the public or politicians. At the same time, the scale is quite a simplistic tool, based on more or less hidden assumptions and more or less reliable data. Therefore, when ranking countries according to their alcohol policy extreme caution should be used and the shortcomings and flaws of using such an approach should be clearly stated. When measuring changes in formal alcohol policies in Finland, Norway and Sweden, an instrument based on an alcohol policy scale will be used (Article 6). The scale constructed for this purpose is derived from the quantitative scaling instrument developed in the European Alcohol Policy Research Alliance (AMPHORA) project (Karlsson & Lindeman & Österberg 2012, 24), and will also be a part of the Addiction and Lifestyles in Contemporary Europe Reframing Addictions Project (ALICE RAP).

### 3.4.2 Methodology

The alcohol policy scale used here contains a multitude of questions and answers on alcohol policies in order to ensure the inclusion of detailed information, covering data on the enforcement of different alcohol policy measures. For the scale, data on formal alcohol policy measures has been collected from 33 countries consisting of 28 EU member states, three candidate countries (Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia, Iceland and Turkey) and two EEA countries (Norway and Switzerland) (Karlsson & Lindeman & Österberg 2012).

The main data source for the alcohol policy scale has been the European Survey on Alcohol and Health, conducted by WHO/Europe. The latest data collection was conducted in 2012 with the help of a questionnaire filled in by WHO counterparts and experts in the field of alcohol policy and public health. The collected material

served as a follow up for the European Status Report on Alcohol and Health 2010 (Status Report on Alcohol and Health 2013).

The scale measures both the strictness and comprehensiveness of alcohol policies. The term strictness refers to how stringent the individual alcohol policy measures are. For instance, a legal age limit of 18 years is stricter than an age limit of 16 years, and a Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) limit of 0.05 percent for drunk driving is stricter than a 0.08 percent limit. In the scale a stricter measure is awarded more points than a more lenient one. The comprehensiveness aspect on the other hand measures the number of different alcohol policy options. A country implementing 40 different alcohol policy measures has therefore a more comprehensive alcohol policy than a country that only has 25 measures in its alcohol policy repertoire. The alcohol policies in the Nordic countries are so wide-ranging that there are no differences in how comprehensive their alcohol policies are. Therefore the analysis concentrates only on the strictness of alcohol policies, omitting the results on the comprehensiveness part.

Trying to operationalise alcohol policies has proven to be difficult as there is no objective way of turning formal alcohol policy measures into quantifiable figures. In addition, any way of determining the effectiveness and relative weight of different alcohol policy measures will be, at least to some degree, a matter of value judgement and thus a subjective decision (Karlsson & Österberg 2001). In the Bridging the Gap (BtG) study, the scoring mechanism and weights given to different policy measures were validated by asking 14 leading experts in the field of social alcohol research to review and comment on the weights for each subgroup of alcohol policy (Article 6). This kind of Delphi technique or expert panel approach has been used also when scaling other policy areas, like tobacco control policies (Joossens & Raw 2006; 2011; 2014).

In constructing the scale used here, the BtG scale and its weights for different alcohol policy measures were used as a starting point. In the AMPHORA scale these weights were adjusted and validated by referring to state of the art research on evidence-based practice in the field of alcohol policy (Anderson 2009, 94, Table 2; Babor et al. 2010, 243–248, Table 16.1). As physical and economic availability are judged to be the most powerful tools in controlling alcohol consumption, full points in these two subgroups (“control of production, retail sale and distribution of alcoholic beverages” & “alcohol taxation and price”) render half of the maximum score in the scale. A share of 15 percent each of the maximum score is rewarded to “control of age limits”, “control of drunk driving” and “control of advertising, marketing and sponsorship of alcoholic beverages” respectively, whereas the share of “public policy” is a mere five percent. The final scores and weights used in the alcohol policy scale are presented in Table 2 (see “European (2012)”).

**Table 2.** The scores and weights used in the comparison of the Nordic countries 1994/2012 and in the European alcohol policy scale from 2012.

| Subgroup of alcohol policy   | Nordic (1994/2012) |              | European (2012) |              |
|--|--------------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
|  | Points             | Share (%)    | Points          | Share (%)    |
| Control of production, retail sale and distribution of alcoholic beverages | 40                 | 27.2         | 40              | 25.0         |
| Age limits and personal control  | 24                 | 16.3         | 24              | 15.0         |
| Control of drunk driving   | 18                 | 12.2         | 24              | 15.0         |
| Control of advertising, marketing and sponsorship of alcoholic beverages   | 17                 | 11.6         | 24              | 15.0         |
| Public policy  | 8                  | 5.5          | 8               | 5.0          |
| Alcohol taxation and price   | 40                 | 27.2         | 40              | 25.0         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>147</b>         | <b>100.0</b> | <b>160</b>      | <b>100.0</b> |

Two versions of the scale are used in the analyses. The first version of the scale will be used to compare alcohol policies in Finland, Norway and Sweden between 1994 and 2012 (“Nordic (1994/2012)”), whereas the second version is used in determining whether alcohol policies in the Nordic countries are stricter than in most other European countries in 2012 (“European (2012)”).

The two scales are almost identical and only questions on policy measures that were extremely rare or did not exist at all in 1994 have been excluded from the first scale. These questions concern 1) alcohol ignition locks in motor vehicles, 2) health warning labels on alcoholic beverage containers and on alcohol advertisements and 3) alcohol advertising regulations on the Internet. The deletion of these questions has a bearing on the weights of different alcohol policy subgroups and on the total score. However, the differences between the two scales are minimal and should in no way hamper the analysis as the changes are identical for all three countries (Table 2; Appendix).





# 4 Results: Nordic alcohol policy in the 2000s – consumption, policy and cross-border trade

## 4.1 Adapting to a new alcohol policy framework: An era of trials and errors, 1994–2003

### 4.1.1 Europeanisation and the dismantling of the Nordic alcohol policies

In the mid-1990s the Nordic countries were faced with a series of challenges that threatened the existence of their restrictive alcohol policy systems. Vulnerable at this time was the key principle of restricting physical availability of alcohol through the means of a retail alcohol monopoly (Tigerstedt 2001). When negotiating the terms of their EU and EEA membership, the three countries became well aware of the fact that the monopoly system was in its fundament incompatible with the principles of the Single Market. It was not until 1997 and the European Court of Justice (ECJ) ruling in the Swedish Franzén case that alcohol monopolies were deemed not in conflict with relevant Single Market legislation and thus acceptable in the EU (Karlsson et al. 2010). Although the ECJ at this time gave clearance to the existence of the retail alcohol monopolies, the Nordic alcohol policy systems had already been heavily altered, reorganised and liberalised.

In Finland the changes that occurred in 1995 more or less paralysed the alcohol policy decision making for the rest of the decade (Koski 2012). The role of the alcohol monopoly as the most important societal and political alcohol policy actor was lost at this time and in this respect the hit on the Finnish alcohol policy system was far more severe than on the other Nordic countries. At the end of the decade alcohol policy issues had a low status in Finland as a political question and the networks and actors that were supposed to execute the policies on the regional and local level were more or less non-existent (Karlsson 2001; Warpenius 2002).

Also in Sweden the alcohol policy field was reorganised in the mid-1990s, albeit not in such a drastic and intrusive manner as the case was in Finland. Norway's alcohol policy system was re-modified even to a lesser extent, much because it did not become a fully-fledged member of the EU. However, through its membership in the EEA, most of the Single Market rules in the alcohol field applied also in Norway. An important principle of the Single Market that excluded Norway was the

abolishment of travellers' import quotas for alcoholic beverages. With the help of the quotas, the Norwegian alcohol market was more protected than the Finnish or Swedish equivalent even if the Swedes managed to negotiate a transition period for both countries lasting until the end of 2003. The fact that Norway has been able to keep its quotas for alcohol imports has enabled greater degrees of freedom when setting the levels of excise duties for alcoholic beverages.

In several policy areas, such as foreign and monetary policy, Finland has been more favourable towards European integration and international influences than Sweden and Norway (Raunio & Tiilikainen 2003; Egeberg 2005; see also Table 1). This was certainly the case with regard to the EU negotiations in the first half of the 1990s and the same can be clearly detected when looking at the national alcohol policy programmes and strategies developed after 1995. In its national alcohol strategies, Finland leaned heavily on the European Alcohol Action Plan put forth by the WHO/Europe (Esiteys kansalliseksi alkoholihjelmaksi 1995; Onks tietoo? 1997), whereas Sweden tried to develop their strategies based more on national than international starting points (Nationell handlingsplan 1995; OAS i framtiden 1998). In both countries, but especially in Finland, the action plans and programmes implemented in the 1990s were later generally regarded as failures (Article 1; Karlsson 2001; Leifman et al. 2004). Norway's alcohol strategies were not affected as greatly by the turmoil in the mid-1990s. The effects the changes had on the sales system and on the alcohol monopoly in Norway, were, however, very similar to those in Finland and Sweden (Karlsson 2001; Ugland 2002).

When looking at the economic resources that were invested to develop and build a new alcohol policy infrastructure, Finland stands out as the country making very modest investments until 2003. This is remarkable, keeping in mind that the infrastructure of the Finnish alcohol policy system was more or less dismantled at the time of the Finnish EU-membership. At most, the implementation of the Finnish alcohol action plan received 300 000 euros for a three year period (2000–2003), whereas the Swedish equivalent was granted a funding of over 75 million euros for a period of four years (2001–2005). Sweden's investments in alcohol policy, prevention efforts and the build of a new nationwide alcohol policy structure after the turn of the century were also markedly higher than in Norway that still relied on largely the same infrastructure and the same strategic priorities as it had prior to its EEA membership (Articles 1–2).

From 1994 to 2003, the Nordic countries were mostly on the receiving end regards to alcohol policy, which meant that they were “downloading” EU directives and adjusting their national policies in order to meet the requirements of the Single Market. Of the three countries, Norway's alcohol policy was least affected by the Europeanisation process. This is partly because of Norway's decision not to join the EU and partly because of the country's own strategic alcohol policy decisions at that

time. Finland and Sweden moved from a universal and centralised alcohol policy approach based on restrictions of the physical and economic availability of alcohol towards a more scattered and decentralised alcohol policy (Article 2).

While the restrictive alcohol policy tradition lost ground in the Nordic countries, alcohol issues became slowly but surely more visible on the European arena. In 1995, the first case of alcohol policy, i.e. the case of alcopops, was processed as a public health issue in the EU. As alcopops targeted very young consumers, there were rapid demands for action at the European level by interest groups and the European Parliament, and soon the issue was also raised within the Council (Tigerstedt et al. 2006). This process resulted in the WHO Declaration on Young People and Alcohol, which was presented in February 2001 at the WHO European ministerial conference in Stockholm (Österberg & Karlsson 2002). In the process leading to the declaration, the Nordic countries, and Sweden in particular, played a central role (Cisneros Örnberg 2009). The Nordic countries' activities at this time were also one of the first attempts to reverse the prevailing top-down process of Europeanisation on the alcohol policy field and, through the WHO, influence alcohol policy formation on the European level.

#### 4.1.2 Consumption, policy and cross-border trade, 1994–2003

In the following, the development of alcohol consumption, alcohol policy and cross-border trade in the Nordic countries during the first study phase, is scrutinised in more detail (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Predominant trends in alcohol consumption, alcohol policy and cross-border trade with alcohol in Finland, Sweden and Norway, 1994–2003

|                            | <b>Finland</b> | <b>Sweden</b> | <b>Norway</b> |
|----------------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| <b>Alcohol consumption</b> | increasing     | increasing    | increasing    |
| <b>Alcohol policy</b>      | liberal        | liberal       | liberal       |
| <b>Cross-border trade</b>  | increasing     | increasing    | increasing    |

In the mid-1990s Finland had by far the highest alcohol consumption followed by Sweden and Norway (Article 3). At that time there was also a strong belief that Europeanisation and a membership in the EU would assist in rapidly changing the Nordic heavy drinking culture into continental drinking habits based on a glass of

wine during meals. This was the case in Finland and Sweden but also to somewhat lesser extent in Norway (Simpura & Partanen 1997; Sulkunen 2000).

Generally speaking, the development in alcohol consumption, alcohol policy and cross-border trade with alcohol was quite similar in the three countries between 1994 and 2003, i.e. the level of total alcohol consumption was on the rise. Likewise, the countries' alcohol policy developed in the same direction, i.e. towards more liberal regulations, especially regarding alcohol taxation and physical availability of alcoholic beverages. This does not, however, mean that all changes during this period were towards a more liberal alcohol policy (Table 3).

In Sweden at the beginning of the 2000s, there were serious attempts to move the focus of alcohol policy from national to local level and these efforts were well financed and had the backing of the Swedish government and Parliament. At the same time, however, import quotas for alcoholic beverages were stepwise liberalised, which substantially increased the availability of inexpensive alcohol from Denmark and Germany (Paaso & Tigerstedt & Österberg 2002). Finland experienced a similar chain of events when the traveller import quotas were abolished altogether in 2004 and Estonia became a member of the EU in May the same year (see next chapter).

Cross-border trade of alcoholic beverages increased more or less throughout the 1990s, especially in Finland and Sweden (Table 3). The increase of imported alcohol can be seen as the most tangible example of Europeanisation in the alcohol policy field in the Nordic countries. Since the mid-1990s 50 to 80 percent of the unrecorded alcohol consumption in Finland and Sweden was brought or smuggled into the country by travellers. The increase in travellers' alcohol imports to Sweden was further fuelled in 1999 when the bridge over the Öresund strait opened and for the first time offered a land bound connection between Sweden and mainland Europe. In contrast to Finland, Sweden had to stepwise liberalise their import quotas between July 2000 and January 2004. This had a bearing on the amount of alcohol imported to the country and also on the share of unrecorded alcohol. In 2003, a third of all alcohol consumed in Sweden was estimated to be unrecorded, whereas the corresponding figure in Finland was only 18 percent. The overall consumption in Finland was, however, markedly higher than in Sweden or Norway (Yearbook of Alcohol and Drug Statistics 1997–2013; Trollidal & Boman & Gustafsson 2005; *Alkoholkonsumtionen i Sverige* 2011).

The development of cross-border trade and the composition of unrecorded alcohol consumption in Norway have interestingly differed from its two neighbouring countries. When Norway in 1994 turned down membership in the EU, it did not have to obey to all the Single Market principles. The abolishment for travellers' imports quotas of alcoholic beverages was one of these principles (Lavik & Nordlund 2009; Articles 4–5). This also explains why the share of travellers'

imports of alcohol in relation to the total alcohol consumption was not as large as in Finland and Sweden at the end of the 1990s. In Norway, most of the unrecorded alcohol consumption has traditionally been moonshine or home-made wine or beer. It was not until the very end of the 1990s when travellers' alcohol imports started to increase dramatically (Nordlund 2003).

The end result for both Finland and Sweden was that inexpensive alcohol became more easily available particularly in the Southern parts of the countries. Furthermore, these events serve as good examples of the impact of Europeanisation on national alcohol policy legislation and tax legislation in particular. In other words, it became painstakingly clear that decision making in the alcohol policy field was no longer a completely domestic issue (Articles 4–5). In this period (1994–2003), there was also a growing fear in Finland and Sweden that this would be the beginning of a “race to the bottom” with lower alcohol taxation as a result (Asplund & Friberg & Wilander 2007).

## **4.2 Nordic alcohol policies at the cross-roads: The decisive years, 2004–2007**

### **4.2.1 Abolished import quotas, weak Nordic alliance and international activities**

The year 2004 can in many ways be seen as a start for a short but decisive period for the future development of alcohol policies in the Nordic countries (Bloomfield et al. 2010, 32–33). In January that year, Finland, Sweden and Denmark abandoned all quotas for travellers' imports of alcoholic beverages from other EU countries, which increased the availability of inexpensive alcohol especially in the southern parts of Finland and Sweden and indirectly also in the most densely populated area of Norway (Articles 4–5).

To counteract the possible increase in travellers' alcohol imports, the Danish and Finnish governments dramatically lowered their excise duties on alcoholic beverages in 2003 and 2004, which put immense pressure on Sweden to follow suit. The Swedish government was, however, not willing or able to reach a political consensus to lower their alcohol taxes at this time, although two exhaustive reports had strongly recommended it (Var går gränsen 2004; Gränslös utmaning 2005). The way Sweden reacted to the threat of inexpensive alcohol from abroad was therefore diametrically opposite to the path Finland and Denmark had chosen (Karlsson et al. 2010).

Norway on the other hand, was not directly affected by the 2004 abolishment of alcohol import quotas, as taxes and duties were not covered by the EEA agreement.

This is once again an example on how Norway's alcohol policy was spared from the "download" of EU regulations, which were imposed on Finland and Sweden. Subsequently, Norway was able to uphold their strict quotas for travellers' alcohol imports that, apart from the wine quota which was increased from two to three litres in June 2006, had remained unchanged since 1982 (Lavik & Nordlund 2009).

Another feature that distinguishes Norway from the other two countries is that customs authorities still perform random checks of passengers at the borders. For Finland and Sweden, random checks of passengers returning from other EU countries are no longer allowed due to the principle of free movement within the Single Market. Although people returning to Norway quite often bring more alcohol to the country than the import quotas allow, the random border-checks function as effective deterrence for medium and large scale smuggling of alcohol. In other words, the changes that occurred in 2004 had only an indirect effect on cross-border trade with alcohol and on the formation of Norwegian alcohol policy, whereas the effects on the Finnish and Swedish alcohol policy and cross-border trade were much more tangible (*ibid.*, 210; 219–220).

In Finland and Sweden, the abolishment of alcohol import quotas in 2004 was almost perceived as an infringement on their alcohol policy decision making and a general sentiment in these countries was that the Commission had more or less ignored the countries' argumentation in the case. To avoid this in the future and to ensure a stronger voice internationally, the Nordic Ministers of Health and Social Affairs agreed in October 2004 upon a Nordic alliance in alcohol policy matters (Article 3). The alliance was meant to deepen the cooperation between all five Nordic countries and to present a common position in alcohol policy questions vis-à-vis international communities like the EU and the WHO (Ugland 2013, 19). This cooperation, which also could be described as a joint Nordic demonstration of power, did not yield any immediate and concrete results. The most concrete effect of the deepened cooperation was probably improved communication and information exchange between the countries' state officials and civil servants. Parallel to this, alcohol policy issues were slowly but surely gaining importance on the EU level, and in furthering this process the Nordic countries had better success (Article 3, 217).

In October 2006, the EU Commission adopted a strategy to support Member States in reducing alcohol-related harm (COM(2006) 625). Although alcohol policy issues had been on the EU agenda before (Tigerstedt et al. 2006, 121–123), this was the first time a broad consensus was achieved on measures to tackle alcohol-related harm. The EU alcohol strategy serves as a good example of a European-level alcohol policy document, which in the EU was promoted by Finland and Sweden and outside the EU seconded and supported by Norway. Sweden had a vital role in getting the strategy approved, and it was hardly a coincidence that the strategy was

accepted during the Finnish EU presidency in 2006. Also during the Swedish EU presidencies in 2001 and 2009, alcohol was high on the Swedish policy agenda towards the EU (Karlsson 2011, 294–296; Ugland 2013, 19–20).

Whereas the EU alcohol strategy, which was focused on reducing alcohol-related harm especially among youth, attempted to lift alcohol issues on the European Union's political agenda, there was a parallel, yet more global alcohol policy process going on within the WHO. Also in this process the Nordic countries were actively trying to influence the outcome, which had begun with the WHO passing a resolution on alcohol (A58.26) in 2005 (Bull 2005). This resolution was followed by a failed attempt to reach consensus on a global alcohol strategy in 2007. Despite this setback, the work was continued by an expert committee meeting and a report which resulted in a strategy for the reduction of the harmful use of alcohol (A61.4) was accepted by the World Health Assembly in 2008 (Monteiro 2011).

From a Europeanisation perspective, the period between 1994 and 2007 was dominated by top-down processes, where the Nordic countries alcohol policies have had to adjust to rules and regulations that stem from the EU, the EEA and the Single Market (Ugland 2013, 22). Towards the end of the second study phase, however, the Nordic countries also partook in several bottom-up processes and through their concerted actions managed to influence alcohol policy both in the EU and the WHO.

#### **4.2.2 Consumption, policy and cross-border trade, 2004–2007**

In Finland, the events in 2004 resulted in a rapid increase of travellers' alcohol imports and a substantial increase in alcohol sales due to lower domestic alcohol prices (Table 4). The total alcohol consumption rose to an all-time high of 12.7 litres pure alcohol per capita (15+) in 2005 and again in 2007. The record high alcohol consumption in Finland during this time was also reflected in the adverse effects of alcohol that peaked in 2007 (Karlsson & Paaso & Hakkarainen 2012). Of all alcohol-related harms, the increase has been most significant among alcohol-related deaths. The number of persons dying of alcohol-related liver diseases increased in four years by almost 80 percent from 645 cases in 2003 to 1 145 cases in 2007 (Yearbook of Alcohol and Drug Statistics 2009 & 2011).



**Table 4.** Predominant trends in alcohol consumption, alcohol policy and cross-border trade with alcohol in Finland, Sweden and Norway, 2004–2007

|                            | <b>Finland</b> | <b>Sweden</b> | <b>Norway</b> |
|----------------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| <b>Alcohol consumption</b> | increasing     | decreasing    | increasing    |
| <b>Alcohol policy</b>      | liberal        | unchanged     | liberal       |
| <b>Cross-border trade</b>  | increasing     | decreasing    | increasing    |

In Sweden, however, the changes in the alcohol environment in 2004 resulted in much more subtle, and in some cases even opposite effects than in Finland. According to estimates made by the Swedish Council for Information on Alcohol and Other Drugs (CAN), the total alcohol consumption in Sweden rose from 10.0 litres per capita (15+) in 2003 to 10.6 litres in 2004. After this the consumption level began to decrease and in 2007 the total alcohol consumption was estimated to 9.8 litres (Leifman & Trollidal 2014, 43).

The significant increase in alcohol consumption in Sweden had already occurred during the turn of the millennium when the total alcohol consumption increased by almost 30 percent from 8.2 litres per capita (15+) in 1998 to the all-time high figure in 2004 (*ibid.* 43; Ramstedt & Gustafsson 2009, 166–167). According to Tryggvesson (2013), however, the increase in self-reported alcohol consumption was considerably lower, resulting in an increase of 15 percent between 1996/97 and 2004/05. Regardless of how significant the increase in fact was, the rising trend in consumption can at least partly be explained by the stepwise increases in travellers' import quotas that the EU had forced on Sweden since the beginning of July 2000 (Paaso & Tigerstedt & Österberg 2002). Remarkable and somewhat surprising was that the rise in alcohol consumption seemed to have had a relatively small, if any effect on the level of alcohol-related harms (Ramstedt & Leifman 2012).

The consumption of alcohol in Norway has been steadily increasing during most of the study period, the years 2004–2007 being no exception. Despite the increasing trend, alcohol consumption in Norway has been constantly lower than in Finland and Sweden, which is even reflected in constantly lower alcohol-related harm levels (Storvoll & Rossow 2011). According to the Norwegian Institute for Alcohol and Drug Research (SIRUS), the total alcohol consumption in Norway was estimated to approximately 8 litres per capita (15+) in 2003, which was about two litres less than in Sweden and 3.4 litres less than in Finland at that time. In 2007, the total alcohol consumption in Norway had risen to a level of 8.6 litres (Bryhni 2006; 2007). The availability of alcohol in Norway improved steadily from 2004 to 2007, and due to tax reductions in the beginning of the 2000s alcoholic beverages had even become more affordable during the first half of the decade (Skjælaaen 2011).

Because of Norway's status as a non-EU country, it is well established that the development of their alcohol policy has been more in the hands of national decision making than in Finland and Sweden (Articles 2–5). The abolishment of the alcohol import quotas had therefore only a marginal effect on the increase in alcohol consumption and related harms. Despite this, Europeanisation has continued to affect the formation of alcohol policy through the country's EEA status (Ugland 2011; 2013). For instance, in March 2002 the EFTA Court ruled that all beverages with the same alcohol strength must be treated equally (Case E-9/00). In the years to follow, this decision markedly increased the physical availability of light alcoholic beverages in Norway by introducing alcopop drinks containing up to 4.75 percent alcohol by volume as a part of the product assortment in ordinary grocery stores (Edland-Gryt 2012).

When examining the general development of alcohol policy and alcohol availability in particular, we can conclude that in Finland the means to control both physical and economic availability of alcoholic beverages deteriorated between 2004 and 2007 (Table 4). The most significant alcohol policy liberalisations in Finland were the substantial, on average 33 percent tax decrease of alcohol in 2004 and the abolishment of the travellers' alcohol import quotas within the EU. Although both of these processes were externally induced, the decision to dramatically cut alcohol taxes in March 2004 was ultimately a national decision (Article 3).

Also in Sweden, Europeanisation has influenced the formation of national alcohol policy through several top-down processes. During the years 2004 and 2007, Sweden did not make any major changes to their restrictive alcohol policy and most important, they did not cut their alcohol taxes (Ramstedt 2010, 420). In Sweden's case, however, the rules of the Single Market, and the rulings of the ECJ (C-170/07 & C-186/05) regarding imports of alcoholic beverages from other EU countries, forced the policy makers to change existing regulations in order for them to comply with EU directives. The two rulings by the ECJ from 2005 and 2007 serve as good reminders of how national alcohol policies in the Nordic countries, have become less autonomous and increasingly dependent on international legislation. Furthermore, the rulings could be seen as textbook examples of how national policies to a growing extent are susceptible to verdicts made by international courts like the ECJ (see Article 3).

Although alcohol policy decision making in Finland and Sweden had been limited due to external factors, the countries' alcohol policies are good examples of how differently EU member states may operate under similar circumstances. Sweden's actions at this time were more in line with the restrictive Nordic alcohol policy tradition based on a coherent and unified strategy, whereas the Finnish

alcohol policy seemed to have diverted remarkably from this tradition (Articles 2–3).

The Swedish policy making shows clear traces of so called path dependency (Pierson 2000), which manifests as a tendency to preserve the status quo even though previous circumstances would necessarily no longer apply (see also Storbjörk 2013). In this respect, the contrast to the Finnish situation is even more apparent as it seems that the Finnish alcohol policy making had more or less lost contacts with its past. Finland's alcohol policy could at this time be characterised as a dual track policy where alcohol taxation issues were handled by the Ministry of Finance separately from the Ministry formally responsible of alcohol policy, i.e. the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. There were no coordination between the two ministries and in the tug-of-war between public health and tax policy the Ministry of Finance always had the upper hand (Tigerstedt et al. 2006).

When comparing the two EU-countries alcohol policies with Norway's, we find that physical alcohol availability has improved at a more rapid pace in Norway than in Finland and Sweden. The increase in number of Norwegian monopoly stores and on-premise outlets has been fast (Skjælaen 2011, 73) and also the availability of inexpensive tax-free alcohol has improved. This occurred in July 2005 when the parliament granted arrival shops at Norwegian airports the right to sell tax-free alcohol to travellers arriving from abroad (Lov om omsetning av alkoholholdig drikk). With the exception of allowing alcopops to be sold in ordinary grocery stores, practically all other alcohol policy liberalisations during this time can be derived from purely national decisions. In this respect, Norway deviates from the two others, as the liberalisations made in the alcohol policy field have not primarily been induced by the Europeanisation process or other external factors (Articles 2–3).

Despite the liberalisations in alcohol availability, Norway's alcohol policy is still largely based on the traditional alcohol policy weapons of restricting alcohol availability and maintaining high alcohol taxation. This again depends mainly on the Norwegian status as a non-EU country, which has made it possible for the country to maintain its quotas for travellers' alcohol imports. Thus Norway's alcohol taxes have not been faced with the same kind of threat of "race to the bottom" regarding alcohol taxation, which has been the case both in Finland and Sweden. Paradoxically enough, it seems that in the case of Norway, its status as a non-EU country has protected their restrictive alcohol policy more than their internal alcohol policy decision making, which has repeatedly liberalised physical alcohol availability in the country (Articles 3–5).

### **4.3 Current status of Nordic alcohol policies: International alcohol policy and a renaissance of restrictions, 2008–2013**

#### **4.3.1 International alcohol policy: global initiatives, increased Nordic influence**

In 2008, which marks the beginning of the third phase in this study, the economic crisis hit Europe and the level of activities in the international alcohol policy field reached new heights. At this time the implementation of the EU alcohol strategy was well under way and the WHO and its member states had begun to draft a global strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol (Global Strategy to Reduce the Harmful Use of Alcohol 2010; Stenius 2009). The Nordic countries were in various degrees involved in the preparation of both strategies and their contribution in furthering them were of utter importance.

During the 2000s, the Nordic countries have actively tried to advance alcohol policy issues in Europe and amongst other things assigned national experts to the Commission and the WHO/Europe at various occasions. Of the three countries, Sweden has been the most proactive in the international alcohol policy field. In 2004, Sweden assigned a national expert to the Commission (DG SANCO) with the specific task to draft the EU alcohol strategy and to set up a structure for its implementation and monitoring. The Swedish expert worked there until 2007, after which she was transferred to WHO headquarters in Geneva to assist in the process leading up to the 2008 WHO alcohol resolution (A 61.4). The resolution recommended a worldwide consultation process with the aim to develop a global alcohol strategy in 2010 (Stenius 2009, 441; Monteiro 2011, 257–258).

Sweden's role in the international alcohol policy field was further accentuated in September 2009, when the Swedish Presidency of the EU hosted an Expert Conference on Alcohol and Health in Stockholm. The aim of the conference was to promote the alcohol issue in the EU and to boost the EU alcohol strategy that had been in operation for three years. In connection to the two day conference, Sweden together with the WHO and the Norwegian Ministry of Health hosted a Global Expert Meeting on Alcohol, Health and Social Development. The one day expert meeting had a more global focus than the adjacent conference and one of its main goals was to support the work done by the WHO to reduce harmful use of alcohol (Stenius 2009). From the perspective of Europeanisation, both conferences focused on influencing the agenda setting in the international alcohol policy field. They are also good examples on bottom-up processes in the formation of international alcohol policy initiated by the Nordic countries.

The Nordic activities on the international alcohol policy arena peaked in May 2010, when the WHO global alcohol strategy (A 63.13) was approved by the World Health Assembly. Although the strategy was not as binding as the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), it was nonetheless an ambitious attempt to increase national responses to alcohol problems on a global level (Monteiro 2011). In the work leading up to the WHO strategy, Sweden and Norway had a pivotal role in advancing its acceptance. Finland was also part of the common Nordic front, but had a more low-key profile. As a political question, lobbying for the strategy did not in Finland have the same weight or resources as in Sweden or Norway (see Article 2–3; Karlsson 2011).

In 2010, Norway was elected to the WHO Executive Board (2010–2013) and continued to advocate for priority to global and regional efforts to implement the global alcohol strategy (Norwegian WHO Strategy 2010, 34). In Europe, a regional alcohol action plan was approved in September 2011 (The European action plan to reduce the harmful use of alcohol 2012–2020). The plan provided an overview of alcohol-related harm in Europe and offered a list of policy options to reduce the problems. After its acceptance, the plan has been criticised by NGOs of being watered down by commercial interests (EUCAM 2011), but according to some assessments the plan could offer a real chance for concerted global action (Burns 2013, 403).

If the future of the WHO global alcohol strategy is somewhat unclear and ambiguous, a possible continuation for the EU alcohol strategy, which expired at the end of 2012, is even more uncertain. The Nordic countries have advocated a continuation for the strategy and there is a consensus amongst the EU Member States and the Commission about the validity of the strategy's main priorities. Also the main institutional structure for implementing the strategy have remained in place, i.e. 1) the European Alcohol and Health Forum (EAHF), 2) the Committee for National Alcohol Policy and Action (CNAPA), and 3) the Committee on Data Collection, Indicators and Definitions. Of these three institutions, especially CNAPA has provided an arena for the Nordic countries, including Norway, to influence the agenda setting and support a new alcohol strategy for the EU (Ugland 2013, 20–22).

It is, however, too early to say in which direction alcohol policy in the EU will evolve. Is there a new EU alcohol strategy on its way, or will the strategy be replaced by an action plan on youth and on binge drinking (CNAPA 2014)? With some certainty there will be a heated dispute between economic operators and public health lobbyists on who will have the right to set the alcohol policy agenda in the EU. The track record so far has been in favour of the alcohol industry (Gornall 2014). However, when being proactive and through concerted actions, the Nordic

countries could well play an important role in setting the agenda for the future EU alcohol policy (Karlsson 2011).

#### 4.3.2 Consumption, policy and cross-border trade, 2008–2013

In 2008, Finland had the highest alcohol consumption of the three Nordic countries, reaching a level of 12.5 litres 100 percent alcohol per capita (15+). Since then the consumption in Finland has been on a slight decrease ending at 11.4 litres in 2012 (Table 5). Despite the decrease in consumption, the Finnish alcohol consumption has been in a league of its own during the entire study period. In 2008, the annual per capita consumption in Finland was almost three litres higher than in Sweden and over four litres higher than in Norway. In 2012, the difference to Norway and Sweden had decreased to 2.3 litres, but still the consumption in Finland was 25 percent higher than in Sweden (Figure 1).

In Sweden, alcohol consumption was on its highest level already in 2004, when per capita alcohol consumption was estimated to be 10.6 litres. Since then there has been a steady decreasing trend and in 2008, alcohol consumption in Sweden was estimated to be 9.8 litres per capita. The decreasing trend in alcohol consumption was somewhat unexpected and continued throughout the last study phase and in 2012 the total per capita consumption figure landed at 9.1 litres, which stands for a 17 percent decrease from the peak figure in 2004 (Figure 1; Table 5).

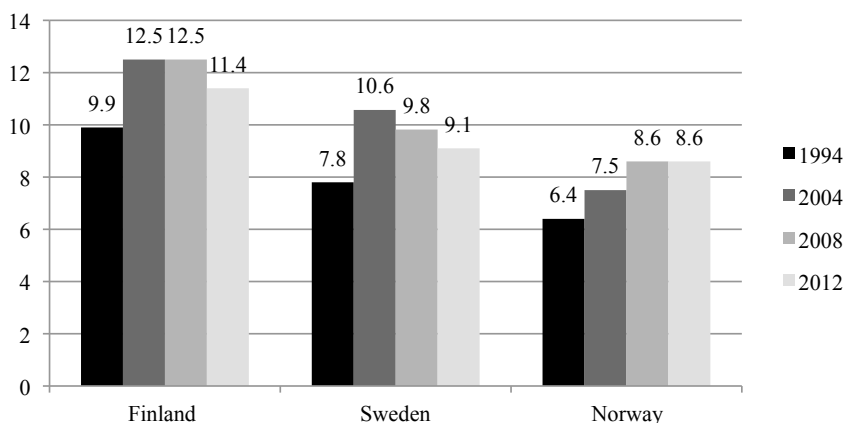
If alcohol consumption in Sweden has been on the decrease since 2004 and in Finland since 2007, the same trend cannot be detected in Norway. In 1994, Norway had clearly the lowest per capita alcohol consumption of the three at a level of 6.4 litres, but ever since consumption has been on a steady upward trend (Table 5). In 2008, the estimated per capita alcohol consumption had risen with two litres from 1994 and alcohol consumption in Norway was closing in on the Finnish and Swedish figures. The latest estimates from 2012<sup>2</sup>, puts Norway's alcohol consumption just below Sweden between 8.3 and 8.9 litres alcohol per capita (Figure 1).

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<sup>2</sup> The consumption figures are not completely comparable, and should be considered approximate. Main source are estimates made by the Finnish alcohol monopoly (Alko) in co-operation with THL, published for the ninth time in 2013. The countries included in this publication are Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden with state off-premise retail alcohol monopoly companies, as well as Denmark and the Faroe Islands (Information on the Nordic alcohol markets 2013). In Norway, the share of unregistered alcohol consumption was estimated to be between 25 and 30 percent of the total alcohol consumption (Edland-Gryt 2012). In Figure 1, its share of the Norwegian alcohol consumption in 2012 was calculated as 27.5 percent.

The increase in Norway's alcohol consumption supports the third hypothesis in the dissertation, according to which changes in alcohol policies are not only induced by Europeanisation and the Single Market, but also by the countries' own decision-making and political processes. Although Norway, as a non-EU country, has had greater authority over its alcohol policy than Finland and Sweden, alcohol has become more available and affordable in Norway during the study period (Article 3). Thus the changes in Norwegian alcohol policy have to a larger extent been caused by autonomous decision making compared to the situation in Finland and Sweden, where the external influences have been greater. In addition, the Norwegian economy has to a great extent been spared from the economic recession that hit Europe, which is clearly reflected in the low unemployment figures, high disposable income levels and a high gross domestic product (Statistical Yearbook of Norway 2013). This has undoubtedly had a bearing on the development of the alcohol consumption in Norway and explains at least partly the steady increasing trend in the consumption figures.

**Figure 1.** Total alcohol consumption in Finland, Sweden and Norway at the beginning of each study phase (1994, 2004, 2008) and the latest figure available (2012), measured in litres 100% alcohol per capita (15+).



\* Total alcohol consumption = Domestic alcohol sales + estimate of unrecorded alcohol consumption.

Sources: Article 3, Figure 1; Information on the Nordic alcohol markets 2003–2013; Edland-Gryt 2012; Leifman & Trollidal 2014.

Regarding cross-border trade, Norway, as a non EU-country, has still had the possibility to apply quotas to all travellers importing alcoholic beverages from abroad. Also in Norway, however, cross-border trade and travellers' alcohol imports have been newsworthy topics both in public debate and in media discussions. Cross-border trade has remained a popular bone of contention, causing heated debates between economic operators, researchers and public health officials. The debate has been especially lively in Finland and Sweden, where the volume of alcohol imports as well as the vested interests of the alcohol industry have been substantially higher than in Norway (Articles 4–5).

Since 2008, estimates on cross-border trade and the volume of travellers' alcohol imports in the Nordic countries show unchanged or decreasing trends (Table 5; Information on the Nordic Alcohol Market 2013, 25). These trends have been questioned and their accuracy challenged repeatedly by the alcohol industry, claiming that alcohol imports constitute a more significant problem than the official statistics show. According to the drinks industry, the official estimates are both unreliable and grossly underestimated. In fighting alcohol imports from abroad, the drinks industry's panacea is to lower domestic alcohol taxation. Due to the close link between the level of alcohol taxes and the volume of travellers' alcohol imports, economic operators, like the Brewers of Europe or the Federation of the Brewing and Soft Drinks Industry in Finland have strived to discredit the official statistics with commissioned research and carefully orchestrated media coverage (see Arnberg & Lord 2009; Toinen pirttuaika 2013).

**Table 5.** Predominant trends in alcohol consumption, alcohol policy and cross-border trade with alcohol in Finland, Sweden and Norway, 2008–2013

|                            | <b>Finland</b> | <b>Sweden</b> | <b>Norway</b> |
|----------------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| <b>Alcohol consumption</b> | decreasing     | decreasing    | increasing    |
| <b>Alcohol policy</b>      | restrictive    | unchanged     | unchanged     |
| <b>Cross-border trade</b>  | unchanged      | decreasing    | unchanged     |

Between 1994 and 2007, there was a clear shift towards less restrictions and greater availability of alcoholic beverages in the Nordic countries. Even after that there have been plans to liberalise alcohol sales by allowing retail sales of liqueurs from fruit wine farms in Finland and permitting farm wine sales and beer sales directly from microbreweries in Norway and Sweden. Although these attempts have had political backing, none of them have so far succeeded. If these attempts would succeed in the



future, the end result would jeopardise the existence of the entire Nordic alcohol monopoly system (Karlsson 2011).

Another common alcohol policy trend in the Nordic countries has been to integrate addictive substances and behaviours and dealing with them together. In Sweden, the Parliament decided in 2011 of a joint strategy to prevent problems and harm caused by the use of alcohol, narcotics, doping and tobacco, also called the ANDT-Strategy (Government proposition 2010/11:47). In Norway, the latest strategy is also from 2011 and comprises policies for alcohol, narcotics and doping, but excludes tobacco (St. Meld. 30 (2011–2012); Innst. 207 S (2012–2013)). Also in Finland the same trend can clearly be identified, but at least on a strategic level, different substances and addictions are so far dealt with separately (Valtioneuvoston periaatepäätös 2003; 2012). From a strategic and policy perspective, gambling is still mostly dealt with separately, although it has already been integrated with other “addictions” with regard to research and prevention, especially in Sweden (Holder et al. 2012; Folkhälsomyndigheten).

From 2008 onwards, a move towards more restrictive alcohol policy can be observed in Finland, whereas the situation in Sweden and Norway has remained more or less unchanged (Table 5). In order to countermeasure the increase in alcohol-related harms that occurred in the aftermath of the considerable tax reduction in 2004, Finland raised alcohol taxes for the first time during its EU membership in January 2008. In addition to minor restrictions in sales hours that were introduced already in 2007, also bulk discounts for alcoholic beverages were banned at this time and alcohol advertising was somewhat restricted (Article 3; Karlsson et al. 2010, 508–510). Between 2008 and 2014, Finland has made five moderate alcohol tax increases. Although collecting tax revenues has been an important motive for most of the tax raises, they have contributed to the decreasing trend in alcohol related-harms and revived alcohol tax increases as an effective measure in Finnish alcohol policy (Article 3; Karlsson et al. 2013).

In contrast to Finland, Norway and Sweden have held their alcohol taxation fairly stable throughout the study period. Alcohol taxation has, nevertheless, remained a much debated issue in Sweden and Norway, and as an alcohol policy tool, it still is an essential part of Nordic alcohol policy (Karlsson et al. 2010, 509–510). In 2008, Sweden adjusted alcohol taxation by increasing beer taxes and lowering wine taxes and in 2014 Sweden made a minor alcohol tax increase (Article 3; Heldmark 2014). In Norway, the level of alcohol taxation has broadly followed the Consumer Price Index and the tax levels have been adjusted annually in the Budget. In 2011, Norway performed also a small tax increase in order to collect more revenues and to inhibit the rise in alcohol consumption. However, due to the increase in real wages, alcohol has become more affordable in Norway and the

annual tax raises have not been enough to curb the increasing trend in alcohol consumption (Skjælaen 2011, 72–73).

Although the leeway to use alcohol taxation as a policy measure has been reduced, particularly in Finland and Sweden, high alcohol taxes are still an integral part of alcohol policy in the Nordic countries. In addition to restricting alcohol availability and increasing prices, attempts have been made to introduce new measures that would better work in the new alcohol policy environment (Article 3; Karlsson et al. 2010; Ramstedt 2010; Rossow 2010). In all three countries there have been extensive experiments with local community action projects that all have been evaluated (Holmila et al. 2009; Krogh & Baklien 2012; Kvillemo et al. 2008). In Sweden, the alcohol legislation from 1994 was renewed in 2011 (SFS 2010:1622), but most of the changes were technical and the basis of the legislation remained firm (Leimar & Ramstedt & Weibull 2013, 475). Also in Finland, a similar reform of the legislation has begun in 2012, but it is still unclear when the reformed alcohol legislation will come into force.

## 4.4 Positioning Nordic alcohol policies in Europe

### 4.4.1 The Nordic alcohol policies in 1994 and 2012

Having analysed each of the three phases, it is time to present the results from the quantitative comparison of the strictness of alcohol policies and investigate in what way Finland, Sweden and Norway have changed their alcohol policies between 1994 and 2012 (Österberg & Karlsson 2002; Status Report on Alcohol and Health 2013<sup>3</sup>). This is done with an altered version of the alcohol policy scale with a maximum score of 147. The results from this quantitative analysis are then reflected upon the results received from the qualitative analysis and used in corroborating or contradicting the first two assumptions of this study.

When looking at the general development of alcohol policies, all three countries seem to have liberalised their alcohol policies from 1994 to 2012. The total alcohol policy score for Finland decreased from 122 in 1994 to 109.5 in 2012 and for Sweden from 128.5 in 1994 to 112.5 in 2012. For Norway, the total score decreased from 122 points in 1994 with only half a point to 121.5 in 2012, awarding Norway the title of the having the strictest alcohol policy. To understand the dynamics behind the development of the total score, a closer look has to be taken at the changes that have occurred in the different subgroups of alcohol policies (Table 6).

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<sup>3</sup> Data collection was carried out in February–December 2012 and reflects the situation in each country as of 31 December 2011.

Regarding “control of production, retail sale and distribution of alcoholic beverages”, the development has been towards less regulation in all three countries (Table 6). This development is corroborated in several studies and serves as a good example of the effect the EU/EEA membership has had on the Nordic alcohol policies (Sulkunen et al. 2000; Tigerstedt 2001; Ugland 2002; Tigerstedt et al. 2006; Karlsson 2009; Karlsson et al. 2010; Karlsson et al. 2013). In Finland and Sweden, the changes have mainly concerned regulations on public drinking and on the density of sales outlets that were liberalised in the mid-1990s. In Norway, the changes have not been as notable as in Finland and Sweden.

**Table 6.** Strictness of alcohol policies in Finland, Norway and Sweden in 1994 and 2012\*

| Subgroup of alcohol policy   | Finland      |              | Sweden       |              | Norway       |              |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
|  | 1994         | 2012         | 1994         | 2012         | 1994         | 2012         |
| Control of production, retail sale and distribution of alcoholic beverages | 30.0         | 24.5         | 30.5         | 21.5         | 29.0         | 22.5         |
| Age limits and personal control  | 19.0         | 19.0         | 21.0         | 21.0         | 20.0         | 20.0         |
| Control of drunk driving   | 10.0         | 10.0         | 14.0         | 14.0         | 10.0         | 16.0         |
| Control of advertising, marketing and sponsorship of alcoholic beverages   | 15.0         | 10.0         | 15.0         | 10.0         | 15.0         | 15.0         |
| Public policy  | 8.0          | 6.0          | 8.0          | 8.0          | 8.0          | 8.0          |
| Alcohol taxation and price   | 40.0         | 40.0         | 40.0         | 38.0         | 40.0         | 40.0         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>122.0</b> | <b>109.5</b> | <b>128.5</b> | <b>112.5</b> | <b>122.0</b> | <b>121.5</b> |

\* Maximum score = 147 points.

When looking at the development of “age limits and personal control” there have not been any changes that have been detected by the alcohol policy scale. The same applies to the “control of drunk driving” for Finland and Sweden, but not for Norway. For Norway, the control of drunk driving has in fact become stricter during the past 15 years as Norway in 2001 lowered their BAC level from 0.05 percent to 0.02 percent. In 2006, Norway tightened their drink driving laws even further; introducing zero tolerance for professional drivers, making their policy on alcohol in traffic stricter in 2012 compared to the situation in 1994. These restrictions awarded Norway an extra six points in the scale.

A subgroup of alcohol policy that has been affected by the Europeanisation process is the “control of alcohol advertising, marketing and sponsorship of alcoholic beverages”. The greatest change can be detected in the Finnish score that decreased from 15 points in 1994 to 10 points in 2012. The Finnish score depicts a significant liberalisation in the regulation of alcohol advertising that occurred in 1995 when it became possible to advertise alcoholic beverages containing up to 22 percent alcohol by volume. This liberalisation of the Alcohol Act from 1994 was in fact initiated and actively driven by a majority of the Finnish MPs at the time (Karlsson & Österberg 2004).

Also the change in the Swedish score represents a factual change in alcohol policy. This change occurred after the Swedish Market Court in 2003 deemed prohibition against alcohol advertising in periodicals as a disproportionate restriction (case 2003:5) based on a ruling by the ECJ (case C-405/98). Since then advertisements for alcoholic beverages containing up to 15 percent alcohol by volume has been allowed in Swedish printed media (Cisneros Örnberg 2009, 58–59).

In Norway, alcohol advertising is banned, and although Norway, through their EEA membership, is a part of the Television without Frontiers Directive, they have managed to ban advertising of alcoholic products in television broadcasts that are particularly targeted at Norway. The pressure to allow alcohol advertising in AV media services broadcasted from abroad has, however, increased since the Audio Visual Media Service Directive (AVMS) came into force in 2007. The Commission has urged the Norwegian government to adopt the AVMS directive, but so far Norway has not budged (Ugland 2013, 17). Control of alcohol advertising is a good example on a regulative measure that has been affected by the Single Market and the Europeanisation process. At the same time this is also a good example on Norway’s determination and better possibilities than Finland and Sweden to defend their sovereignty in alcohol policy decision making.

The following subgroup, “public policy”, concentrates mainly on the alcohol policy infrastructure. In this subgroup Sweden and Norway receive the highest score both in 1994 and 2012, whereas the Finnish score in 2012 is reduced by two points due to the fact that earmarked funds for alcohol prevention did not exist anymore after 1995 (Karlsson 2009).

The last subgroup in the scale concerns “alcohol taxation and price” and all three countries receive the highest score in 1994. Regarding alcohol taxation, only Swedish beer tax in 2012 is so low that it does not receive the highest mark. Nevertheless, all three countries receive very high points for alcohol taxation even in 2012, despite the fact that they all have adjusted their alcohol taxes downwards several times during the study period. When comparing the level of alcohol taxation and alcohol prices in the Nordic countries, Norway has clearly the highest taxation level for all alcoholic beverages, followed by Finland and Sweden. Finland has

lower spirits taxes than Sweden, but the tax levels on wine and especially beer are clearly higher in Finland.

When looking at the final score of the three country comparison, the EU countries Finland and Sweden have substantially liberalised their alcohol policies, whereas alcohol policy in the EEA country Norway is as strict in 2012 as it was in 1994. The development clearly shows the effect the EU and the Single Market has had on alcohol policy in Finland and Sweden, whereas alcohol policy in Norway has been much more protected from external influences. All three countries have been forced to liberalise the physical availability of alcoholic beverages which, at least partly, is a development stemming from the Single Market and the Europeanisation process. In addition, Finland and Sweden have liberalised their regulations on alcohol advertising, which Norway has categorically refused to do, even if being pressured by the Commission (Ugland 2013; Cisneros Örnberg 2009; Tigerstedt et al. 2006). This further corroborates the conclusion that Norway, as a non-EU country has greater autonomy in alcohol policy issues than its neighbouring EU-countries in the East. Regarding public policy measures, Finland differ from Norway and Sweden in having less secured funds for alcohol prevention.

#### 4.4.2 Alcohol policy in Europe vs. the Nordic countries

In the following, alcohol policies in 30 European countries will be scrutinised with the help of a quantitative scale designed specifically for this purpose. In the analysis, the three Nordic countries' alcohol policies are compared with the rest of Europe and the alcohol policies are ranked according to their strictness in 2012, which is the latest year from which reliable and comparable data on the countries' alcohol policies is available (Status Report on Alcohol and Health 2013).

In the analysis, the results will be used in order to test whether the stereotypical view on a strict Nordic alcohol policy still holds up and whether Finland's, Norway's and Sweden's alcohol policies are still stricter in comparison with other European countries.

The results from the alcohol policy scale are presented in Table 7. The average score for the countries' alcohol policies was 71.2 points, whereas the median score was 64.8. In order to classify alcohol policies according to their strictness, the countries were divided into *strict*, *medium* and *liberal* alcohol policy countries. The division into these three categories was done by dividing the scores between maximum, 126.5 and minimum, 32.5 in three equally large parts. This division could be criticised as somewhat arbitrary. Its function is, however, primarily to categorise the countries into smaller groups, which makes the analysis as well as future monitoring of alcohol policy scores easier and more distinct. Over half of the

studied countries (15 countries) have a score below the 33<sup>rd</sup> percentile of the scores classifying them as liberal alcohol policy countries. The medium alcohol policy group consists of 10 countries below the 66<sup>th</sup> percentile, whereas only five countries are classified as having strict alcohol policy (Table 7).

When looking at the strictness of alcohol policy, the scores of the Nordic alcohol monopoly countries are in a league of their own. This is fairly consistent with other similar studies, but there are also clear differences when comparing these results to previous ones (Karlsson & Lindeman & Österberg 2012; Article 6; Brand et al. 2007; Karlsson & Österberg 2001).

**Table 7.** Classification of 30 European countries according to the strictness of alcohol policy in 2012

| Strict alcohol policy<br>(>95.3 points) |               | Medium alcohol policy<br>(63.9–95.2 points) |               | Liberal alcohol policy<br>(<63.8 points) |               |
|---|---------------|---|---------------|--|---------------|
| <i>Country</i>                          | <i>points</i> | <i>Country</i>                              | <i>points</i> | <i>Country</i>                           | <i>points</i> |
| Norway                                  | 126.5         | Ireland                                     | 90.5          | Denmark                                  | 63.5          |
| Sweden                                  | 118.5         | Lithuania                                   | 82.5          | Italy                                    | 63.5          |
| Iceland                                 | 117.0         | Latvia                                      | 82.0          | Greece                                   | 61.5          |
| Finland                                 | 115.5         | Poland                                      | 82.0          | Hungary                                  | 59.5          |
| France                                  | 95.5          | the UK                                      | 75.5          | Portugal                                 | 58.5          |
|   |               | Slovenia                                    | 74.0          | Cyprus                                   | 58.0          |
|   |               | Estonia                                     | 73.0          | Bulgaria                                 | 55.0          |
|   |               | Romania                                     | 71.5          | Spain                                    | 54.5          |
|   |               | Czech Rep.                                  | 70.0          | Slovakia                                 | 54.0          |
|   |               | Netherlands                                 | 66.0          | Belgium                                  | 53.5          |
|   |               |   |               | Switzerland                              | 53.0          |
|   |               |   |               | Malta                                    | 45.5          |
|   |               |   |               | Austria                                  | 44.0          |
|   |               |   |               | Germany                                  | 38.5          |
|   |               |   |               | Luxembourg                               | 32.5          |

The results from the quantitative analysis confirm that alcohol policies in the Nordic countries are still very strict despite considerable alcohol policy liberalisations during the past couple of decades. In the top is Norway with 126.5 points, followed by Sweden, Iceland and Finland, all with scores exceeding 100 points. A common denominator for the top four ranking countries is that the availability of alcoholic beverages is controlled with the help of an alcohol retail monopoly. In addition to this, the level of alcohol taxation in the Nordic countries is clearly the highest in

Europe (Article 3; Karlsson et al. 2010). The strict alcohol policy group is joined, but only just, by France with a score of 95.5. This is no surprise because since the 1990s France has introduced several alcohol policy restrictions for marketing and advertising of alcoholic beverages and also in other areas of alcohol policy (Craplet 2005).

The medium alcohol policy group is topped by Ireland with traditionally high alcohol taxes and also the UK score above the average score (71.2) due to its fairly high alcohol taxation and strict licensing rules. The medium alcohol policy group is otherwise a relatively heterogenic group, mostly containing former Eastern European countries characterised by low age limits and strict BAC limits in traffic (Karlsson & Lindeman & Österberg 2012).

The liberal alcohol policy group consists of 15 countries with the highest scoring country being Denmark with 63.5 points and with Luxembourg in last place, scoring only 32.5 points of the possible 160. The countries in this category belong evenly to the Central, Eastern and Southern parts of Europe, with the centre of gravity being in the Southern and Central Europe. Almost all the countries classified as liberal alcohol policy countries have a lower score than the average for each of the subgroups of alcohol policies (see Table 2). Their score is remarkably low on “control of advertising, marketing and sponsorship of alcoholic beverages”. The other subgroup that does not generate a lot of points is “control of production, retail sale and distribution of alcoholic beverages”. These low scores might at least partly be explained by the strong presence of the alcohol industry in Southern and Central Europe (Karlsson & Lindeman & Österberg 2012). The scores on “public policy”, “control of drunk driving” and “age limits and personal control” are on the other hand quite close to the European average (Table 7).

To sum up the quantitative analysis of the European alcohol policy comparison, the results reaffirm the Nordic countries position as the strictest alcohol policies in the whole of Europe.

## 5 Summary: Nordic alcohol policy in a European context

In this dissertation, the study of the underlying mechanisms affecting the formation of alcohol policies in Finland, Sweden and Norway between 1994 and 2013 have been in focus. In addition, the development of alcohol consumption and cross-border trade with alcohol have been scrutinised and the two EU-countries Finland and Sweden have been compared against the non-EU country Norway. Besides this, the Nordic countries' alcohol policies have been compared with other alcohol policies in Europe.

The results clearly corroborate earlier findings on the significance of Europeanisation and the Single Market for the development of alcohol policies in the Nordic countries. Free movement of goods and unhindered competition have challenged the principle of disinterest and enabled private profit seeking in alcohol trade. The Single Market has also contributed to the increase in availability of alcohol and made it more difficult for the Nordic EU member states to maintain high alcohol taxes. These findings strongly support the statement claiming that “since 1994, Finland and Sweden have lost a great deal of their national alcohol policy competence to the European Union and, hence, their alcohol policies are more liberal than 20 years ago”. Together with the findings from the alcohol policy scale the results show that the Nordic countries alcohol policies are more liberal in 2012 than in 1994.

The second hypothesis or statement scrutinised in this study was that Norway, being outside the EU “has [had] greater authority over their alcohol policy, including cross-border trade with alcohol, and [have managed to] maintain a stricter alcohol policy than Finland and Sweden”. This is also clearly supported by the results from both the qualitative and quantitative analyses. Norway has been spared from several EU directives that have affected Finland and Sweden, the most remarkable being the abolishment of the travellers' import quotas for alcohol within the EU.

The free movement of goods and unhindered competition, brought on by the Single Market, enabled private profit seeking in alcohol trade and has directly and indirectly increased the physical availability of alcohol. Due to its position as a non-EU country Norway has been able to maintain high alcohol taxes without being subjected to a “race to the bottom” regarding alcohol taxes the same way as Finland and Sweden. The conclusion that Norway has been able to retain more authority over its alcohol policy is further corroborated by the results from the alcohol policy scale showing that Norway in 2012 compared to 1994 has shifted place with



Sweden, thus becoming the country with the strictest alcohol policy among the 30 European countries studied here. By receiving the clearly lowest score in the three country comparison, Finland distinguishes as the country that has liberalised its alcohol policy most during the study period.

The third statement that was examined in this study was that “the changes in alcohol policies are not only induced by Europeanisation and the Single Market, but also by autonomous decision-making and political processes in the individual countries”. This development is present in all three countries. Although Norway’s alcohol policy has been the most independent of the three, it has throughout the study period made political decisions that have increased the availability of alcoholic beverages. Norway distinguishes itself also as the only country where alcohol consumption has been on the rise for almost the whole study period. In this development the country’s affluent economy has played a role and the fact that Norway, unlike Finland and Sweden, has not been affected by the economic downturn during the final study phase.

Also in Finland and Sweden, national decisions and on-going internal processes have affected alcohol policy and led to different developments and outcomes in alcohol consumption. Finland chose a completely different path than Sweden when it decided to substantially decrease alcohol taxes in 2004. This decision was clearly displayed as a rise in total alcohol consumption as well as in the high level of alcohol-related harm that followed. The five moderate alcohol tax increases that Finland has made since 2008 serve as good examples on how a country still can use alcohol taxation as an effective alcohol policy measure although not as freely as before 2004. Also the recent trend to integrate policies on addictive substances like alcohol, tobacco and illicit drugs is clearly a common Nordic phenomenon, although it has manifested itself quite differently in the three countries. All in all, these examples clearly show that although the preconditions of an independent Nordic alcohol policy have weakened during the past 20 years, there is still ample room for autonomy in alcohol policy making.

The fourth and final statement to be examined was that “although the alcohol policy systems in the Nordic countries have been liberalised during the past couple of decades, they are still stricter than in most other European countries”. This has been corroborated with the help of quantitative alcohol policy scales that show that Finland and Sweden, and regarding physical availability of alcohol also Norway, have substantially liberalised their alcohol policies during the study period. The European comparison also shows that alcohol policy measures are implemented more widely in Europe than before and that there is a slow process of convergence going on regarding alcohol policy in Europe. Despite this, the scores from the alcohol policy scale clearly show that alcohol policies in the Nordic countries are by far the strictest in all of Europe.

From a Europeanisation perspective, the Nordic countries were clearly on the receiving end during the first two study phases, having more to adjust to rules from the EU and the Single Market than having success in uploading and shaping alcohol policy on the European and international field. During the third and final study phase, however, the Nordic countries have increasingly succeeded in contributing to shape the alcohol policy arena in EU and also more widely through the WHO's global alcohol strategy. Whether the Nordic countries will succeed in uploading their views on alcohol policy in the international arena also in the future, is, however, too early to say. As an international actor it seems that a single Nordic country is far too weak by itself to make a difference. A worthwhile strategy could therefore be to work as a common Nordic front towards the EU and even more widely.

The three cornerstones of Nordic alcohol policy on which the current alcohol policies in Finland, Sweden and Norway were built on have still quite a solid evidence base. Although the basis has crumbled during the past twenty years and the policies have become less effective, nothing prevents it from being the base for Nordic alcohol policy even in the long term. In the future, all that is needed for an effective and successful alcohol policy is a solid evidence base, enough political will and support from the general public.



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## Appendix

**The alcohol policy scale to measure the strictness and comprehensiveness of alcohol policies 2012. Questions removed in the 1994/2012 comparison marked with strikethroughs.**

| Control of production, retail sale and distribution of alcoholic beverages |                          |                          |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Production</b> of alcoholic beverages:                                  | <b>Beer</b>              | <b>Wine</b>              | <b>Spirits</b>           |
| State monopoly   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Licence  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No licence   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Notes: Click here to enter text.</i>                                    |                          |                          |                          |

| Control of <b>off-premise</b> sales of alcoholic beverages: | <b>Beer</b>              | <b>Wine</b>              | <b>Spirits</b>           |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| State monopoly  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Licence   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No licence  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Notes: Click here to enter text.</i>                     |                          |                          |                          |

|  | <b>None</b>              | <b>For beer</b>          | <b>For wine</b>          | <b>For spirits</b>       |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Restrictions on <b>places</b> for off-premise sales of alcoholic beverages     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Restriction on <b>density</b> of off-premise outlets for alcoholic beverages   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Restrictions on <b>sales days</b> for off-premise sales of alcoholic beverages | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

|  |  |                          |                          |                          |
|--|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Restrictions on <b>sales hours</b> for off-premise sales of alcoholic beverages        | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Enforcement authority for the supervision of off-premise sales of alcoholic beverages: | Click here to enter text.  |                          |                          |                          |
| Control visits by enforcement authorities at off-premise sale outlets:                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Regular<br><input type="checkbox"/> Occasional<br><input type="checkbox"/> None, or only if violations reported |                          |                          |                          |
| <i>Notes: Click here to enter text.</i>  |  |                          |                          |                          |

|  |                          |                          |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Control of <b>on-premise</b> sales of alcoholic beverages: | <b>Beer</b>              | <b>Wine</b>              | <b>Spirits</b>           |
| State monopoly   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Licence  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No licence   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Notes: Click here to enter text.</i>                    |                          |                          |                          |

|   |                           |                          |                          |                          |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
|   | <b>None</b>               | <b>For beer</b>          | <b>For wine</b>          | <b>For spirits</b>       |
| Restrictions on <b>places</b> for on-premise sales of alcoholic beverages             | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Restriction on <b>density</b> of on-premise outlets for alcoholic beverages           | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Restrictions on <b>sales days</b> for on-premise sales of alcoholic beverages         | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Restrictions on <b>sales hours</b> for on-premise sales of alcoholic beverages        | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Enforcement authority for the supervision of on-premise sales of alcoholic beverages: | Click here to enter text. |                          |                          |                          |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Control visits by enforcement authorities at on-premise sale outlets: | <input type="checkbox"/> Regular<br><input type="checkbox"/> Occasional<br><input type="checkbox"/> None, or only if violations reported |
| <i>Notes: Click here to enter text.</i>                               |  |

|   | No, or only voluntary restrictions   | Regulated                | Total ban                |
|---|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Restrictions on sales of alcoholic beverages at <b>culture</b> events (opera, theatre, cinema, ballet etc.) or during public celebrations and festivities | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Restrictions on sales of alcoholic beverages at <b>sporting</b> events (football, hockey etc.)  | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Drinking allowed in <b>public places</b>  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, allowed everywhere<br><input type="checkbox"/> Partially prohibited<br><input type="checkbox"/> Prohibited |                          |                          |
| <i>Notes: Click here to enter text.</i>   |  |                          |                          |

= max 40 points.



| Age limits and personal control                            |   |      |         |
|--|---|------|---------|
|  | Beer  | Wine | Spirits |
| Legal age limits for <b>off-premise</b> sales of...        |   |      |         |
| Legal age limits for <b>on-premise</b> sales of...         |   |      |         |
| Restrictions to buy alcoholic beverages while intoxicated: | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> No |      |         |
| Notes: <a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>           |   |      |         |

= max 24 points.

| Control of drunk driving                         |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| BAC-level  | <input type="checkbox"/> 0.02 % or less<br><input type="checkbox"/> 0.05 % or less<br><input type="checkbox"/> 0.08 % or less |   |
| Existence of <b>several different</b> BAC limits | <input type="checkbox"/> No, same for all   |   |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, for aggravated drunk-driving  | = <a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a> |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, for inexperienced drivers   | = <a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a> |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, for professional drivers  | = <a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a> |
| <b>Enforcement</b> of existing BAC limits        |   |   |

|                      |         |               |  |
|----------------------|---------|---------------|--|
| On a scale from 0—10 | 2008* = | 2010** =<br>& | If changed, then what is the level of enforcement today? (2012)= |
|----------------------|---------|---------------|--|

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Random breath testing in use:                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> No   |
| Number of breathalyzer tests performed / year:               | <a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>   |
| Alcohol ignition locks:                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Not in use<br><input type="checkbox"/> Voluntary for some<br><input type="checkbox"/> Obligatory for some<br><input type="checkbox"/> Obligatory for all drivers |
| Alcohol ignition locks voluntary/obligatory, please specify: | <a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>   |
| <i>Notes: <a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a></i>      |   |

= ~~max 24 points.~~

= max 18 points.

| Control of advertising, marketing and sponsorship of alcoholic beverages* |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Restrictions on alcohol ads on:   | Beer                     |                          |                          | Wine                     |                          |                          | Spirits                  |                          |                          |
|   | Ban                      | Reg                      | No                       | Ban                      | Reg                      | No                       | Ban                      | Reg                      | No                       |
| Television & radio  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cinema  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Internet  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Print media   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Billboards  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

|   |   |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
|---|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Industry sponsorship of sporting events   | <input type="checkbox"/>                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other, please specify:  | Click here to enter text.                                   |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| Alcohol advertisements can <b>only</b> refer to actual characteristics of the product (name, ingredients, origin, vol. % etc.), nothing else. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> No |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| Health warning labels on advertisements:  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> No |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| Health warning labels on bottles/ other alcoholic beverages containers:   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> No |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| Enforcement authority for the supervision of alcohol advertising:   | Click here to enter text.                                   |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| <i>Notes: Click here to enter text.</i>   |   |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |

Ban = banned, Reg= regulated through statutory restrictions, No = no statutory restrictions (voluntary/self regulative included)

|   |           |             |   |
|---|-----------|-------------|---|
| <b>Enforcement of existing advertising restrictions</b> |           |             |   |
| On a scale from 0—10                                    | 2008* = 9 | 2010** = 10 | If changed, then what is the level of enforcement today? (2012) = |

= max 24 points.

= max 17 points.

Public policy

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Authorities dealing with alcohol administration and supervision            | <input type="checkbox"/> National level<br><input type="checkbox"/> Sub-national level<br><input type="checkbox"/> None |
| Public officials <b>specialized</b> in alcohol prevention                  | <input type="checkbox"/> National level<br><input type="checkbox"/> Sub-national level<br><input type="checkbox"/> None |
| Written national policy on alcohol   | <input type="checkbox"/> National level<br><input type="checkbox"/> Sub-national level<br><input type="checkbox"/> None |
| Public funds <b>earmarked</b> for alcohol prevention                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> No   |
| Are there any nation-wide awareness-raising activities on a regular basis? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> No   |
| <i>Notes: <a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a></i>                    |   |

= max 8 points.

| Alcohol taxation and price   |                          |                          |                          |   |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Excise duty on <b>spirits</b> ,<br>€ / liter of 100 %<br>alcohol         | € 0 - 9                  | € 9 - 11.50              | € 11.50 - 16             | € 16 - 35   | € 35 +                   |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Excise duty on<br><b>intermediate<br/>products</b> , € / liter of        | € 0 - 4                  | € 4 - 6                  | € 6 - 10                 | € 10 - 22   | € 22 +                   |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Excise duty on <b>wine</b> , €<br>/ liter of 100 % alcohol               | € 0 - 2.50               | € 2.50 - 4.50            | € 4.50 - 7               | € 7 - 18  | € 18 +                   |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Excise duty on <b>beer</b> , €<br>/ liter of 100 % alcohol               | € 0 - 2.50               | € 2.50 - 4.50            | € 4.50 - 7               | € 7 - 18  | € 18 +                   |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Comparative price<br/>level*** 2012</b> , for<br>alcoholic beverages: | EU 27 = 100              |                          |                          | Country in question<br>= Click here to<br>enter text. |                          |
| <i>Notes: Click here to enter text.</i>                                  |                          |                          |                          |   |                          |

\* From WHO Global Survey on Alcohol and Health 2008

\*\* From WHO European Survey on Alcohol and Health 2011

\*\*\* spirits, wine, beer. Eurostat, Statistics in Focus, *Statistics in focus 15/2013*, "Significant differences in price levels for food, beverages and tobacco across Europe in 2012":

[http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics\\_explained/index.php/Comparative\\_price\\_levels\\_for\\_food\\_beverages\\_and\\_tobacco](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Comparative_price_levels_for_food_beverages_and_tobacco)

= max 40 points.

~~Total = max 160 points.~~

Total = max 147 points.

## Original Publications



# **Svårt att kasta loss**

## **Finlands och Sveriges alkoholpolitiska**

### **kursändringar efter år 1990**

#### **Start**

Finlands och Sveriges sätt att reglera alkoholhandeln samt produktion och konsumtion av alkohol har en gemensam rot (Johansson 2000; Tigerstedt 2001a och b; se Frånberg 1985). Längre talades det därför om en nordisk alkoholpolitik. Den präglades av strävan att minimera profiten av alkoholhandel samt av en internationellt sett stram prispolitik och begränsad tillgång till alkoholdrycker. Gemensam var även den långlivade och inflytelserika nykterhetsrörelsen.

Gemensamma drag kan också spåras i nedmonteringen av detta helhetsmässiga system. Takten angavs av Europeiska Unionen (EU), som fr.o.m. 1995 krossade de finska och svenska alkoholmonopolens protektionistiska arbetssätt. Sedan dess svär varken Finland eller Sverige i den nordiska alkoholregleringens namn. Till historiens nyckel hör att nykterhetsrörelsen samtidigt bröt ihop. I detta läge har länderna förenats av den smärtsamma frågan om hur man skall gå till väga i en situation, där en traditionellt stark centraladminis-

tration utmanas av såväl internationella som lokala aktörer?

Gemensamt för Finland och Sverige är slutligen att länderna, då traditionsbrottet gav sig till känna i mitten av 1990-talet, gick in för att upprätta alkoholpolitiska handlingsplaner, som på ett likartat sätt betonat behovet av att stärka villkoren för alkoholprevention i allmänhet och en lokalt baserad alkoholpolitik i synnerhet.

En mera detaljerad analys av de senaste tio åren avslöjar dock att det finns klara skillnader mellan de alkoholpolitiska tänke- och handlingssätten i Finland och Sverige. I den här artikeln koncentrerar vi oss på två frågor. För det första jämför vi respektive lands statliga planeringsapparats sätt att reagera på de förväntade förändringarna. I det sammanhanget rekapitulerar vi inte händelserna i förhandlingarna om det Europeiska Ekonomiska Samarbetsområdet (EES) eller om EU-medlemskapet (se t.ex. Holder et al. 1998; Sulkunen et al. 2000; Ugland 2002; Österberg 2002a). Lika lite låter vi oss upptas av 1990-talets organisatoriska omvälvningar



inom nykterhets- och det alkoholpreventiva arbetet (se t.ex. Warpenius & Sutton 2000; Warpenius 2002a & b). Däremot kommenterar vi förvaltningens arbetssätt och den politiska status som givits de planer och dokument som förvaltningen framfött.

För det andra frågar vi oss vilken häst länderna beslutat att satsa på då de inte längre i samma mån haft möjlighet att falla tillbaka på alkoholpolitikens traditionella medel. Vilka nya handlingskoncept har utvecklats eller letar man alltså efter sådana?

## Skillnader

En jämförelse mellan de senaste årens planering av alkoholpolitik och alkoholprevention i Finland och Sverige fäster våra blickar vid några omständigheter, som gäller förvaltningens arbetspraxis:

- Den finska statsmaktens *planeringsdokument* har krympt ihop till anspråkslösa handlingar. Så har inte skett i Sverige. Det färskaste finska dokument som på ett djupsinnigt sätt dryftar alkoholpolitikens premisser har redan 14 år på nacken (Samhällsförändringen... 1989). Svenska staten har däremot stött och blött grunderna för sin alkoholpolitik i talrika och omfattande publikationer.

- Det *alkoholpolitiska beredningsarbetets politisk-administrativa status* har ändrats i Finland. Parlamentariska kommittéer har ersatts med tjänstemannadominerade arbetsgrupper, vars tillsättande närmast varit en intern angelägenhet för social- och hälsovårdsministeriet. I Sverige har kommittéarbetet inte upphört, men dess karaktär ser ut att ha ändrats i en mer operativ riktning.

- De finska *programdokumentens politisk-administrativa status* har varit oklar. Tillsvi vidare har programmen utgjort "förslag" till program som varken statsrådet eller riksdagen har behandlat. I Sverige har programmen förankrats i riksdags- eller regeringsbeslut.

- I Finland har programmets *ledningsgrupp* bestått av tjänstemän på högre mellannivå. I Sverige har man velat satsa på socialdepartementets och myndigheternas topptjänstemän.

- I Finland har *finansieringen* av handlingsprogrammen grundat sig dels på en modest sårfinansiering och dels på öppen konkurrens om såväl social- och hälsovårdsministeriets allmänna medel för hälsofrämjande som Penningautomatföreningens medel. I Sverige har programmen i regel åtnjutit betydande sårfinansiering.

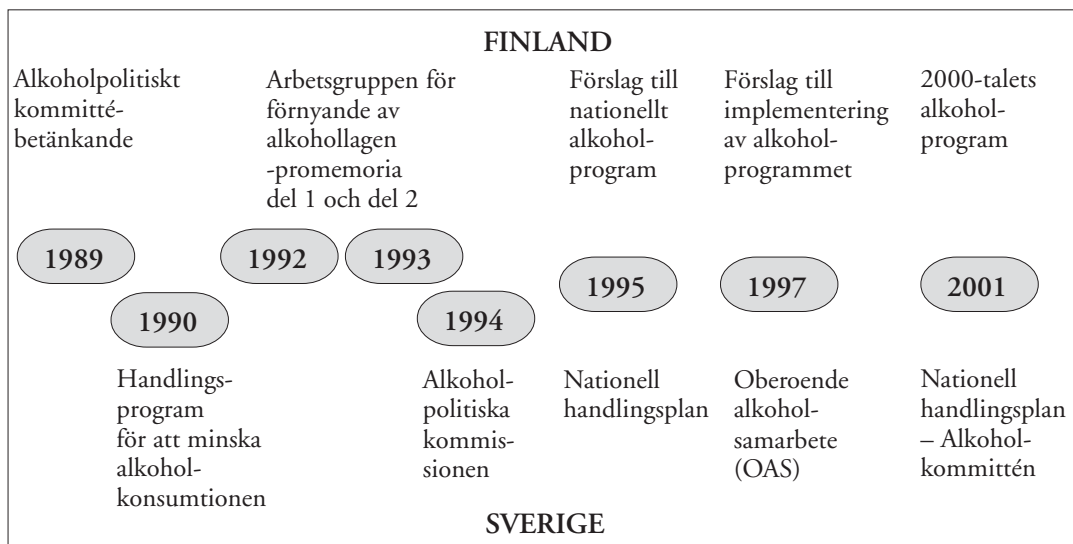
Härefter granskar vi dessa frågor först för Finlands och sedan för Sveriges del. Längs med texten kommenterar vi också de innehållsmässiga handlingskoncept som de nationella programmen valt att ställa sig bakom. Som bakgrund för allt detta har vi tabellfört ländernas viktigaste alkoholpolitiska dokument från 1989 framåt. Tabellen visar hur långt EU bestämt takten för det alkoholpolitiska beredningsarbetet. Statliga dokument, som motsvarar varandra, har uppstått i nästan exakt samma takt.

## Finland

Statsrådet tillsatte i april 1987 den tillsvidare sista finska alkoholkommittén. Ett år senare gjorde Europeiska Gemenskapen (EG) entré på den alkoholpolitiska scenen och i januari 1989 överräckte kommittén sitt betänkande *Samhällsförändringen och alkoholpolitiken* till statsrådet. Fastän betänkandet inte lyckades förutspå den europeiska integrationens effekter på regleringen av landets alkoholförhållanden, är detta dokument ifråga om omfattning och analytisk skärpa det färskaste alkoholpolitiska utredningsarbete som tillställts statsrådet. Målet med betänkandet var att reflektera över hur den samhälleliga alkoholfrågan ändrat karaktär och granska alkoholpolitikens grundläggande motiv (Simpura 1989).

Betänkandet föråldrades med ens då diskus-

**Tabell: Alkoholpolitiska kommittéer, arbetsgrupper och handlingsprogram i Finland och Sverige 1989–2001**



sionsarenan ockuperades av den europeiska integrationen. Kommittén föll i glömska, och det gjorde också hela kommittéväsendet för alkoholfrågornas del. Före EES- och EG-förhandlingarna hade det omfattande finska alkoholmonopolet Alko och dess förvaltningsråd lett alkoholpolitiken. Alkos öde underställdes EES-förhandlingarna, som inleddes år 1990. Förhandlingarna fördes i första hand av utrikesministeriet, i alkoholärenden axlades det praktiska beredningsansvaret av social- och hälsovårdsministeriet och i fråga om skatter av finansministeriet. Under dessa omständigheter tappade Alko plötsligt sitt mer än halvsekellånga initiativ över beredningen av alkoholpolitiken (Tigerstedt & Rosenqvist 1995; se Koski 1994, 425–426).

Stora principiella förändringar var att vänta. Social- och hälsovårdsministeriet beslöt emellertid att gå rent lagtekniskt tillväga. *Arbetsgruppen för förnyande av alkohollagen* tillsattes i mars 1992 och leddes av ministeriets högsta tjänsteman, kanslichef Heikki S. von Hertzen. Gruppen ansåg det inte nödvändigt att motivera sina förslag med en samhällsanalys eller en genomgång av utgångspunkterna för alkoholpolitiken. I stället levde den upp till

sitt namn och sitt uppdrag och nöjde sig med att lägga fram ett förslag till totalrevidering av alkohollagen så att lagen motsvarade EES- och EG-normerna.

Arbetsgruppen producerade under drygt två år två korta delbetänkanden. Det första skrevs direkt som en lagproposition (Alkoholilain... 1992). I sina betänkanden föreslog gruppen bland annat att hela den gamla alkohollagstiftningen upphävs, att monopolsystemet delas och att alkoholförvaltningen omorganiseras. Gruppens förslag förverkligades till stora delar då den nya alkohollagen trädde i kraft fr.o.m. 1995 (Alavaikko 1998 & 2000).

### Försök och misstag

Det var således under exceptionella förhållanden som alkoholsystemet passades in i EES- och EU-regelverken mellan åren 1990 och 1994, och Finland valde en beprövad finsk problemlösningssmodell – pragmatiskt tjänstemannaarbete. Men vad skulle man ta sig till år 1995 då landet anslutit sig till EU, den nya alkohollagen trätt i kraft och social- och hälsovårdsministeriet fortfarande hade huvudansvaret för alkoholpolitiken – utan Alkos bas-

tanta stöd?

Ministeriet beslöt att förlita sig på ett gammalt organ, som påfördes rejält med extra ansvar. Delegationen för rusmedels- och nykterhetsärenden (härefter: Delegationen) hade levt ett stilla liv i årtal. När nu Alko-epoken var till ända och nykterhetsarbetet och det preventiva arbetet samtidigt genomgick en fullständig omorganisering, trädde denna delegation fram som en central aktör i det alkoholpolitiska beredningsarbetet.

Delegationen för rusmedels- och nykterhetsärenden är en parlamentarisk delegation. Formellt hör den till statsförvaltningens så kallade rådgivande och assisterande organ. Den består av riksdagsledamöter, representanter för den offentliga förvaltningen och alkoholnäringsarna samt av olika sakkunnigmedlemmar. Enligt förordningen (1017/1991) om Delegationen för rusmedels- och nykterhetsärenden ankommer det på Delegationen att följa och behandla frågor, som gäller den allmänna planeringen och utvecklingen av rusmedelspolitiken. Delegationen kan låta utföra utredningar och kunskapsammansättningar, starta forsknings- och utvecklingsprojekt, *ta initiativ och lämna förslag* samt utfärda utlåtanden om ärenden som hör till dess område. Delegationens politiska mandat är således rätt svagt. I egenskap av rådgivande organ hör Delegationen inte till den egentliga hierarkiska statsapparaten, vilket också innebär att den saknar administrativ beslutanderätt (se Mäenpää 2000; Temmes 2001).

Så fort den nya alkohollagen trätt i kraft 1.1.1995 fick Delegationen sitt elddop då social- och hälsovårdsministeriet ålade den att utarbeta ett förslag till nationell alkoholpolitisk strategi. Förslaget skulle uppgöras i form av ett treårigt program. Detta var något nytt. För det gamla Alko, som förfogade över omfattande resurser och verkade som ett permanent alkoholförvaltningsorgan, var tidsbestämda alkoholprogram ett okänt begrepp.

Idén att göra upp ett program var långt en im-

portvara. Som modell stod den handlingsplan inom alkoholområdet som Världshälsoorganisationens Europakontor (WHO-EURO) antog 1992 (European... 1993). Delegationen för rusmedels- och nykterhetsärenden fick nu i uppdrag att framlägga ett förslag till hur detta program skulle tillämpas och verkställas i Finland. Sedan dess har den nationella alkoholpolitiska strategin, åtminstone på papperet, utstakats just med hjälp av nationella alkoholprogram. (Se Karlsson & Törrönen 2002.)

Förslaget till nationellt alkoholprogram för åren 1996–1999 var klart i november 1995. Det var ett svar på ”den förändring i alkoholkulturen som härrör från den europeiska integrationsutvecklingen och ett steg från ett centraliserat alkoholpolitiskt system till en decentraliserad handlingsmodell” (Esitys... 1995). I sitt förslag konstaterade Delegationen att ”det är särskilt viktigt att (...) man omgående måste kunna svara på de förändringar som alkoholförvaltningen genomgår” (ibid., 21). För att få politisk tyngd bakom sitt krav yrkade Delegationen på att alkoholpolitiken i framtiden underställs statsrådets behandling.

Så skedde också, till en början. Med utgångspunkt i en kort promemoria uppgjord av social- och hälsovårdsministeriet i mars 1996 uttalade statsrådet sin allmänna syn på hur alkoholpolitiken skall skötas (Ajankohtaisia ... 1996). Samtidigt gav regeringen ministeriet i uppgift att med stöd av Delegationens ovan nämnda förslag planera åtgärder i syfte att verkställa alkoholprogrammet. Ministeriet förpassade i sin tur ärendet till startrutan, dvs. till Delegationen. Detta var ett märkligt arrangemang: Delegationen var medveten om sin svaga roll och bad om hjälp, med påföljden att dess roll – men inte dess mandat – stärktes ytterligare i planeringen och genomförandet av den nationella alkoholpolitiken.

Delegationens nya förslag till implementering av det nationella alkoholprogrammet för

åren 1997–2000 (Onks tietoo? 1997) gavs till social- och hälsovårdsministeriet i mars 1997. Nu verkade arbets- och ansvarsfördelningsfrågorna trassla till sig ytterligare. Enligt programförslaget skulle nämligen själva beredningsorganet, dvs. Delegationen, verka också som ledningsgrupp för verkställandet av programmet. Utöver detta gavs ledningsgruppen obegränsade mängder ansvar. Den skulle svara för ”koordning av aktiviteter, uppföljning, stöd, utvärdering och rapportering” (Onks tietoo? 1997, 7). Av etiska och effektivitetsskäl är det allmän kutym att dylika uppgifter fördelas strikt på olika organ.

Innehållsmässigt tog programmet sikte på att lösgöra sig strategiskt från den gamla Alko-dominerade politiken. Därför ställde man som yttersta mål att förskjuta tyngdpunkten i alkoholpolitiken och det alkoholpreventiva arbetet från nationell till lokal nivå. Då den gamla alkoholpolitiska strukturen rämnade, undrade man var och hur politiken nu skulle utspela sig. I detta läge lade sig programmet till med en för den finska alkoholregleringen helt ny och samtidigt särdeles diffus terminologi, där uttryck som nätverksbygge, medborgarperspektiv, närsamhällsprojekt, egenansvar och en öppen alkoholpolitisk debatt intog en nyckelposition (se Heinonen 1997). Allt detta skulle bindas samman i något som kallades en ”vidsträckt” (*laaja-alainen*) alkoholpolitik (Tigerstedt 1999; Karlsson 2001).

Verkställandet av programmet haltade dock betänkligt. Informationen om programmet var knapp såväl till medborgare som till myndigheter. I egenskap av ledningsgrupp för alkoholprogrammet gjorde Delegationen nästan ingenting. Också social- och hälsovårdsministeriet visade ett lamt intresse och programmet åtnjöt ingen särfinansiering. Inte heller de instanser som utpekats som programmets operativa aktörer (Forsknings- och utvecklingscentralen för social- och hälsovården [Stakes], Folkhälsoinstitutet, Centralen

för hälsofrämjande och länsstyrelserna) förband sig att genomföra planerna. (Karlsson 2001.) Denna brist på hängivenhet kan delvis förklaras av att programmet bereddes *innan* EG-domstolen i oktober 1997 gav sitt utslag i det så kallade Franzén-målet, dvs. i en situation där detaljhandelsmonopolens framtid i Finland och Sverige stod på spel (Ugland 2002). Det anemiska genomförandet av programmet inföll emellertid genast *efter* att domen fallit och då det var klart att länderna åtminstone inte var tvungna att överge en av hörnstenarna i regleringen av tillgången till alkohol.

En allvarligare brist var dock att genomförandet av programmet till stor del byggde på ett aktörsnätverk som vid denna tidpunkt inte existerade. Det fanns varken ett lokalt nätverk av kontaktpersoner inom alkoholpreventionsområdet eller ett etablerat kontaktnät mellan de aktörer som nämns specifikt i alkoholprogrammet (Karlsson 2001). Fältet var splittrat. I detta avseende stod programledningen inför en otacksam uppgift. Att programmet misslyckades kan därför tolkas som ett uttryck för det nog så kaotiska tillstånd som den alkoholpolitiska förvaltningen och det alkoholpreventiva arbetet befann sig i under den senare hälften av 1990-talet (ibid., 77; Warpenius 2002b & 2002a, 43–44).

### **Ett nytt försök**

Det nuvarande alkoholprogrammet, *2000-talets alkoholprogram. Samarbete och ansvar* (2001–2003), är en direkt fortsättning på sin misslyckade föregångare. Formellt är det inte fråga om ett nytt program. Social- och hälsovårdsministeriet förutsatte nämligen i sitt uppdrag från maj 2000 att Delegationen ”uppdaterar” det föregående programmet i enlighet med de riktlinjer som dras upp i det andra europeiska alkoholprogrammet (2000–2005), vilket WHO-EURO antog hösten 1999 (European... 2000).

Uppdraget bygger på två intressanta val. Trots att det allmänt ansågs att det första nationella programmet (1997–2000) misslyckades, nöjde sig ministeriet med att ”uppdatera” det i stället för att göra en allvarlig omvärdering. Det nya programmets bakgrundstext har inskränkts till ett minimum och saknar därför basuppgifter om alkoholkonsumtion, dryckesvanor och alkoholrelaterade skador. Den invecklade situationen på alkoholpreventionsfältet nämns bara i förbigående. Det andra valet gällde programmets strategiska förebild, som kom att bli WHO-EURO:s ovan nämnda andra alkoholprogram snarare än en analys av alkoholläget och dess reglering som skulle ha framsprungit ur en finländsk och nordisk verklighet.

2000-talets alkoholprogram kan också ses som ett nytt försök att strategiskt slå sig fri från det gamla alkoholpolitiska systemet (se Tigerstedt 2002). Programmet nobbade ännu tydligare än sin föregångare strävandena att förvalta alkoholärendena som ett enhetligt politiskt problemkomplex: ”Länge har alkoholfrågan varit en viktig allmän samhällelig fråga, men efterhand har den förlorat i tyngd. (...). Från att ha utgjort en stor helhetsfråga har alkoholfrågan långsamt spjälkts upp i en mängd tekniska särfrågor (...). [H]elhetsfrågan existerar inte längre utan lösningar [på särfrågorna] måste sökas bit för bit på de håll där det allmänna har reella påverkningsmöjligheter” (2000-luvun... 2001, 9). ”Bit för bit”-tänkandet materialiserades i tio mycket olikartade mål<sup>1</sup>, som verkstälts med varierande framgång (Karlsson & Tigerstedt 2003).

Programmet omfattade inte heller sin föregångares förvisning om att medborgarorganisationerna och närsamhället kommer att borga för ett nytt alkoholpolitiskt uppsving. Man litade visserligen alltjämt på de nya nätverkens styrka, men i stället för organisationer betonade man den offentliga sektorns – framför allt den offentliga serviceproduktionens – möjligheter och strategiska ställning.

Programmets viktigaste arbetsredskap har bestått av möten, som ordnats för olika aktörsgrupper. Under två års tid har åtta möten undanstökats. Under en för- eller eftermiddag har olika teman behandlats ”bit för bit”, dvs. hälsovård, bastrygghet och boende, lokal alkoholprevention, frivilligorganisationer, mini-interventioner etc. De inbjudna deltagarna, till antalet mellan 10 och 25, har varit viktiga sakkunniga på respektive område. Mötenas verksamhetsmässiga syfte har emellertid förblivit oklart. Deltagarna har varken fattat några beslut eller formulerat rekommendationer. Snarare har mötena påmint om kvalificerat informationsutbyte utan operativa mål.

Alkoholprogrammet har också utsett Keuru i Mellersta Finland till pilotkommun, där en lokal ledningsgrupp koordinerar verkställandet av programmet. Också här har resultaten förblivit rätt anspråkslösa (Povelainen 2003).

I motsats till sin föregångare satte 2000-talets alkoholprogram stor tillit till den offentliga sektorns möjligheter att förebygga alkoholproblem genom att erbjuda social- och hälso-tjänster. Detta låg i linje med tron på att traditionell primärprevention – t.ex. i form av höga priser och begränsad tillgänglighet – börjar ge vika för en politik, som inte fokuserar på drickandet i sig, eller ens på moderat drickande, utan uttryckligen på att minimera de skador drickandet kan medföra (jfr European... 2000).

Programmet är ministeriecentrerat. Bara två av ledningsgruppens nio medlemmar jobbar varken för ministeriet eller för institutioner som sorterar under ministeriet. Följaktligen heter programmet officiellt ”SHM [Social- och hälsovårdsministeriet] Alkoholprogrammet”. Ledningsgruppen har haft till sitt förfogande en avlönad koordinator och sedermera även en assistent (sammanlagt 1,3 personarbetsår 2002).

2000-talets alkoholprogram är det första finska program som åtnjuter särskilda medel. Resurserna har dock varit ytterst anspråkslösa,

ca 300 000 euro under tre år. Dessutom har programmet kunnat konkurrera om allmänna hälsofrämjande medel, som ministeriet förvaltar. Det är värt att notera att detaljhandelsmonopolet Alkos andel av finansieringen är jämförelsevis stor; Alko har bland annat betalat lejonparten av koordinators och assistentens lönekostnader.

Ledningsgruppen har varit programmets enda administrativa organ. En och samma ministeriedominerad grupp har ansvarat såväl för den strategiska linjedragningen som för det operativa verkställandet. Gruppens verksamhet har emellertid främst koncentrerat sig på strategi. Däremot har gruppen inte varit det rätta organet att handha den operativa ledningen.

Ett mycket märkligt drag i alkoholprogrammet är att dess ledningsgrupp mitt under programperioden sommaren 2002 ändrade väsentligt på programmets uppgifter och uppställde nya mål. Mål nummer ett blev att aktivt påverka det skattepolitiska beslut som skulle föregripa slopandet av resenärernas kvoter för import av alkoholdrycker från andra EU-länder fr.o.m. 1.1.2004 (riksdagen fattade beslutet 3.12.2003). Detta vittnar om ledningsgruppens vilja att vara en central aktör i den nationella alkoholpolitiken. Det förefaller också som om uppgiften att påverka skatterna skulle ha legat närmare ledningsgruppens kompetens (Holmila & Karlsson 2003) än mången annan uppgift. Under normala förhållanden skulle beredningen av dylika frågor höra till ministerietjänstemännens normala arbetsuppgifter, inte till ett särskilt handlingsprogram.

## Sverige

När Sverige hade vaknat till insikt om det hot Europeiska Gemenskapen utgjorde för det nationella alkoholsystemet, publicerade socialstyrelsen i januari 1990 ett förslag till program

kallat *Handlingsprogram för att minska alkoholkonsumtionen*. Programmets avsikt var att strama åt alkoholkontrollen. Tanken var att programmet skulle behandlas i riksdagen för att markera att det fortfarande är möjligt att fatta nationella beslut i social- och hälsofrågor. Det har hävdats att detta blev Sveriges sista samlade försök att försvara sitt alkoholsystem utifrån traditionella, nationella utgångspunkter (se Olsson 1991 & 2000; Tryggvesson & Olsson 2002, 28).

Emellertid förföll socialstyrelsens förslag, eftersom den svenska regeringen ansåg att det inte skulle ha erhållit tillräckligt med politiskt stöd i riksdagen. Förskjutningar i den allmänna opinionen kan också ha spelat in (Olsson 2000, 229–230).

Inför EG:s alkoholpolitiska utmaning nöjde sig Sverige inte med att tillsätta en pragmatisk och teknisk arbetsgrupp. I december 1991 grundade regeringen i stället en parlamentarisk kommission, som skulle ”utvärdera den hittillsvarande alkoholpolitiken och lägga fram förslag till en strategi för framtiden – bl.a. i ett EG-perspektiv” (Svensk alkoholpolitik ... 1994, 3).

Kommissionens betänkande, *Svensk alkoholpolitik – en strategi för framtiden*, utkom i mars 1994. Omständligheten och upprepningarna i detta sexdelade mammutverk på över 1300 sidor är sövande. Det väsentliga är dock att kommissionen tog sig för att argumentera för vilket slag av politik den svenska regeringen var redo att ställa sig bakom i det nya läget. Betänkandet redogör med mikroskopisk noggrannhet för alkoholsystemets historia och dess ideologisk-politiska bevekelsegrunder. I efterhand kan man notera att kommissionen misslyckades i att skapa en ny strategi. I någon mån beredde man sig nog på en situation där priserna måste sänkas och tillgängligheten öka. I detta syfte riktade man blickarna mot vård och behandling av riskkonsumenter och missbrukare samt mot allmän service och sekundärprevention. Vikti-

gare än så var att betänkandet lyckades motivera för regeringen att det är nödvändigt att upprätta ett nationellt handlingsprogram och att ordna med frikostig finansiering.

### Ett partiellt misstag

Som en direkt fortsättning på detta betänkande utsåg regeringen i juni 1994 Folkhälsoinstitutet att ”leda och samordna ett förstärkt alkohol- och drogförebyggande arbete” (Nationell... 1995, 7). Uppdraget grundade sig på ett enigt riksdagsbeslut. När slutdokumentet – *Nationell handlingsplan för alkohol- och drogförebyggande insatser* (1995–1999) – blev färdigt i juni 1995, tillställdes det regeringen. Regeringen behandlade inte programmet dess mera utan beviljade Folkhälsoinstitutet pengar och uppmanade det att agera.

Programmet försågs med en ledningsgrupp, som bestod av de högsta cheferna för olika ämbetsverk. I det nya läget hade gruppen uppenbara svårigheter att orientera sig, vilket ledde till att det operativa verkställandet av programmet blev lidande. Regeringen beviljade år 1995 74 miljoner kronor till programmet. Pengarna delades ut åt såväl små som stora lokala och regionala projekt utan någon striktare helhetsplan (Arvidsson 2000; se Visst är det möjligt 1997).

Programmet har rentav kallats för Sveriges ”nya nationella alkoholpolitik” (Strid & Lindberg & Holder 2000, 239 ff.). Karaktäriseringen skjuter över målet, men det som åtminstone stämmer är att programmet uppfann den lokala nivån på nytt – och försökte politisera den. ”En nationell plan måste (...) främst handla om förstärkta insatser på lokal nivå”, stod det i programmet. I bakgrunden låg ett öppet erkännande av de statliga åtgärdernas otillräcklighet: ”Staten varken kan eller bör ge direktiv för detta lokala arbete”. Man ansåg det viktigt att verksamheten växer fram ur ”en lokal vilja till handling”, att de konkreta problemen ges en egen lokal definition – i

kommunerna, i bostadsområden, på arbetsplatser, i skolor och i hem. (Nationell... 1995, 7–8.) ”Orsaken” till strategiförändringen tillskrevs EU-medlemskapet, som kringskar det nationella beslutsfattandet samtidigt som det lämnar svängrum åt regional och lokal verksamhet.

Handlingsplanen var ingen succé. Önskan om en bred aktivering av den lokala nivån blev inte långt mer än ett slag i luften och någon kontinuitet i detta arbete lyckades man inte åstadkomma. Det fanns mycket som bidrog till detta. Då pengar fanns att tillgå, delades de ut på ett osystematiskt sätt. Sedan krympte resurserna plötsligt (1996: 15 miljoner kronor) och strax därpå var kistan tom (1997: inte ett öre). Sverige hade drabbats av en fiskal kris. Också Folkhälsoinstitutets allsmåttiga roll i prioriteringen av verksamheten och beviljandet av medel hade rönt kritik.

Sålunda är det inte den nationella handlingsplanen 1995–1999 man först kommer att tänka på då man erinrar sig svensk alkoholpolitik under 1990-talets andra hälft. En betydligt synligare, direkt ”avgörande roll” (Tryggvesson & Olsson 2002, 25) kom att spelas av en monumental kampanj mot illegal alkohol – eller svartsprit<sup>2</sup>, som det hette. Kampanjen riktade sig mot illegal framställning, smuggling och distribution av alkohol. Kampanjen planerades och genomfördes av *Oberoende Alkoholsamarbetet* (OAS).

### Ett oanständigt äktenskap?

Samarbetsorganet *Oberoende Alkoholsamarbetet* var inte en del av den nationella handlingsplanen (trots att organet formellt utgick från de betoningar som gjordes i planen, se OAS ... 1998, 10). Tvärtom, uppkomsten av OAS underlättades av att handlingsplanen slokade under den svenska budgetkrisens svåra år 1996 och 1997. Var skulle man då finna pengar för att förebygga alkoholkonsumtion och alkoholskador?

Svaret var lika enkelt som omstritt – hos alkoholkapitalet. Vid socialdepartementet resonerade man som så: Varför skulle inte de som tjänar på alkohol kunna delta i finansieringen av alkoholens avigsidor?

Startskottet för OAS avlossades i oktober 1996. Socialminister Margot Wallström hade inbjudit representanter för alkoholproducenter, restaurangföretag, livsmedelshandlare, försäkringsbolag och myndigheter till möte. På invitationslistan fanns också en gäst från Québec (Kanada) som berättade om organisationen *Éduc'alcools informationsverksamhet* om alkoholens risker. I denna verksamhet samarbetade representanter för delstaten Québecs alkoholmonopol, utskänkingssektorn och alkoholproducenterna. I januari 1997 fattades ett regeringsbeslut om att bilda OAS som en särskild kommitté inom regeringskansliet med statssekreteraren i socialdepartementet som ordförande.

OAS bestod av en exceptionell koalition. Bland medlemmarna noter man utöver Socialdepartementet Svenska Bryggareföreningen, Sprit- och Vinleverantörernas Förening, Sveriges Hotell- och Restaurangföretagare, Livsmedelshandlarenförbundet (SSLF), Försäkringsförbundet, Centralförbundet för Alkohol- och Narkotikaupplysning (CAN), Alkoholinspektionen, Rikspolisstyrelsen, Systembolaget, Generaltullstyrelsen, Finansdepartementet, Folkhälsoinstitutet, Vägverket och Kooperativa förbundet. Det långsiktiga målet var att befästa samarbetet mellan dessa parter.

En av drivkrafterna i samarbetet var internationaliseringen av alkoholhandeln. Statsmakten och myndigheterna ville skapa goda samarbetsrelationer med de nya näringsidkare som följde i den nya alkohollagens (1995) kölvatten. Den offentliga sektorns välvilliga inställning till näringslivets deltagande i OAS och dess stöd för parollen om måttligt drickande åstadkom å andra sidan en historisk brytning, då alkoholpolitikens veteran – nyk-

terhetsrörelsen – lämnade sig utanför OAS. Det förefaller också som om OAS-parterna avsiktligt skulle ha gett nykterhetsrörelsen på båten, eftersom de var rädda för att rörelsen skulle hindra ett effektivt och flexibelt samarbete.

OAS skulle också vara ett svar på ett principiellt problem. Handlingsplanen 1995–1999 hade ställt som mål ”att bygga upp ett långsiktigt förebyggande arbete som så långt som möjligt kan kompensera den försvagade nationella alkoholpolitiken” (Nationell... 1995, 12). Information och opinionsbildning hade fastställts som en dylik kompensatorisk arbetsform. Detta arbete skulle OAS koncentrera sig på. OAS’ allmänna mål gick ut på att verka för måttfulla och återhållsamma alkoholvanor, att propagera för punktnykterhet och att motverka illegal alkoholhantering (OAS... 1998, 9–10, 82). Förhoppningen var att OAS skulle bli en dynamisk alkoholpolitisk injektionsspruta, som saknade barlasten från det förgångna. Samarbetsorganet skulle utveckla en ny typ av samarbete i en ny koalition och med hjälp av nya mediecentrerade arbetsgrepp. I praktiken kom man dock att använda nästan alla resurser till att bekämpa illegal alkohol (Leifman et al. 2003).

I direktiven för OAS betonades också att det är viktigt att mobilisera lokala krafter för att förstärka informationsarbetet. Planerna gav uttryck för något slag av informationsstyrning, som skulle vara social och regionalt differentierad. Tanken var att det material som används i informationsarbetet ”bryts ner på undergrupper (män, kvinnor, unga, gamla osv.) och på regioner” (OAS ... 1998, 85). I praktiken förverkligades informationsstyrningen oftast utan någon differentiering, dvs. i form av mediekampanjer som riktades till stora befolkningsgrupper eller till hela folket.

OAS utmärkte sig framför allt i bekämpandet av illegala alkoholdrycker. Bakom detta enskilda mål var det möjligt att passa in såväl statens och myndigheternas folkhälso- och



ordningsintressen som alkoholnäringarnas intressen. I detta syfte startades en omfattande mediekampanj, som OAS stödde med ca 15 miljoner kronor per år under perioden 1998–2000 (Leifman et al. 2003). Verksamheten, som inleddes år 1998, var mycket synlig och medialt effektiv. Med raketfart lyftes illegal alkohol upp på den politiska agendan. När kampanjen var i sin aktivaste fas konstaterade socialministern: ”Samhällets främsta alkoholpolitiska uppgift nu är att få till en motoffensiv mot svartspriten” (se Tryggvesson & Olsson 2002, 35).

Kampanjens lysande start följdes av ett magplask. Den ursprungliga avsikten var att skapa en fast organisation för samarbetet. År 1999 behandlade riksdagen en lagproposition (OAS... 1998), som innehöll ett detaljerat förslag till organisationsmodell för OAS. Till mångas häpnad började problemen nu hopa sig. Riksdagen antog nämligen inte lagpropositionen. Motiveringen var att regeringen och näringslivet inte kan vara likställda medlemmar i OAS. Å andra sidan var branschorganisationerna intresserade av OAS och dess finansiering endast på villkor att regeringen (och inte vilken myndighet som helst) deltog i arbetet.

En mindre oväntad påle i OAS' kött var nykterhetsrörelsen, som hade följt samarbetet från åskådarplats. Dess kritik gällde inte främst OAS' verksamhet mot illegal sprit; samarbetet med alkoholkapitalet var redan i sig en tillräckligt försvarande omständighet. Regeringen gjorde sig helt enkelt skyldig till knäfall för branschorganisationerna. År 1999 satte nykterhetsrörelserna igång en massiv lobbingsverksamhet gentemot riksdagsledamöterna. Alla ledamöter fick ett exemplar av skriften ”Staten och alkoholbranschen”, där kritiken av regeringens svansande för branschen fördes vidare.

OAS' sista separata kampanj genomfördes i juni 2000. Men då hade det alkoholpolitiska beredningsarbetet redan gått in i en helt ny fas.

## Ett seriöst försök

Den tändande gnistan till det pågående svenska alkoholprogrammet var en dramatisk konflikt mellan EU och Sverige. I motsats till Finland, som redan 1996 avtalade med EU att resenärernas importbegränsningar i EU försvinner gradvis och upphör slutgiltigt 1.1.2004, förhandlade Sverige fram en undantagsregel fram till 30.6.2000. I god tid före det skulle Sverige avtala om vad som där efter skulle ske.

Den svenska regeringen skyndade långsamt. I januari 2000 föreslog socialminister Lars Engqvist för kommissionen att Sverige beviljas undantag till 1.1.2006. EU:s reaktion på förslaget kom som en kallduch för Sverige. Fritz Bolkestein, kommissionär med ansvar för EU:s inre marknad, vägrade blankt att förlänga undantagsordningen. I det läget skiftade Sverige strategi och lyckades i mars 2000 träffa ett avtal, enligt vilket importbegränsningarna avskaffas helt vid samma tidpunkt som i Finland. (Ugland 2002, 142–143.) Skillnaden jämfört med Finland var den att Sverige var tvunget att släppa på sina importbegränsningar i snabbare takt än Finland (Österberg 2002b, 236).

Den svenska regeringen insåg nu problemets allvar. Den beslöt omedelbart, i april 2000, att föreslå en sänkning av skatterna på alkoholdrycker. Eftersom ärendet var politiskt ömtåligt, tillställde regeringen – i motsats till normal praxis – sitt förslag till det ledande regeringspartiets (socialdemokraterna) riksdagsgrupp för behandling.

De socialdemokratiska riksdagsledamöterna protesterade. De ansåg att det inte går för sig att överge skatteinstrumentet utan att presentera kompensatoriska alkoholpolitiska verktyg. Situationen var så tillvida läglig att socialdepartementet samtidigt var i färd med att förnya den nationella handlingsplanen för alkohol- och drogförebyggande insatser (1995–1999). Socialdemokraterna grep nu

tag i denna möjlighet. De förutsatte att den handlingsplan som var under beredning presenteras för dem innan de går med på att besluta om en sänkning av alkoholskatterna. Regeringen tolkade saken så att villkoret för att en riksdagsmajoritet ställer sig bakom en skattesänkning är att det föreligger ett trovärdigt handlingsprogram.

Detta unika händelseförlopp garanterade att det nuvarande handlingsprogrammet förlänades en stark politisk status. På förslag av regeringen antog riksdagen ett femårigt program (Att förebygga ... 2001), *Nationell handlingsplan för att förebygga alkoholskador*, som försågs med en ny organisationsmodell (se Andréasson et al. 2001, 97–98). För genomförandet av handlingsplanen svarar Alkoholkommittén. Den består för det första av över- eller generaldirektörerna för 15 berörda ämbetsverk och myndigheter, som ansvarar för handlingsplanens strategi. Statssekreterare Ewa Persson-Göransson från socialdepartementet är ordförande för kommittén. För det andra förfogar Alkoholkommittén över ett operativt kansli med fem heltidsanställda och en deltidsanställd (80 %). Kansliet leds av Håkan Wrede, som också representerar handlingsplanen i offentligheten.

Handlingsplanen åtnjuter utmärkta ekonomiska resurser. Staten beviljade ca 500 miljoner kronor till planen för en period på tre år. För kommunala samordnare reserverades 150 miljoner kronor, förutsatt att kommunerna bidrar med 50 procent av finansieringen. Hundra miljoner kronor går till kommunerna för att stödja barn till alkoholister och nittio miljoner kronor till den kommunala öppenvården. Landstingen och länen, särskilt deras samordnare, tilldelas 50 miljoner kronor.

Det nya i handlingsplanen är dess resoluta satsning på kommunala samordnare. Målet är att Sveriges alla 289 kommuner avlönar en samordnare till hälften med egna och till hälften med statliga medel. Hittills har drygt 200 kommuner gjort detta. Stockholm ensamt

har en samordnare för var och en av stadens 18 stadsdelar. Samordnarnas verksamhet grundar sig oftast på ett mandat givet av kommunstyrelsen eller kommunfullmäktige. Alla samordnare kan delta i en 10 poängs utbildning på distans arrangerad av Örebro universitet. Liknande utbildning har också startats i Göteborg och Umeå. Vidare erbjuder Alkoholkommittén tillsammans med aktionsplanen Mobilisering mot narkotika (MoB) en femdagars kurs för kommunala samordnare. Hittills har ett nittiotal personer genomgått kursen. Kommittén har också tillsatt 20 samordnare på länsnivå för att stödja arbetet i kommunerna. Slutligen har sex kommuner försetts med extra resurser för att fungera som försökskommuner.

Mycket tyder på att handlingsplanen tar sikte på att systematiskt etablera en yrkeskår av rusmedelsarbetare. Denna iakttagelse får stöd för det första av att samordnarna har organiserat sig i en egen förening. För det andra har organisationerna på det alkoholpreventiva fältet – speciellt nykterhetsorganisationerna – tilldelats en tämligen svag roll i planen. På detta sätt har man försökt undvika svagheter som den förra handlingsplanen led av då den smått slumpmässigt försåg organisationer med pengar. Trots att den nuvarande planen är inriktad på lokal verksamhet, är den till sin politiska karaktär först och främst ett nationellt företag.

## Åtskils?

Vi har berättat hur Finland och Sverige under 1990-talet lösgjorde sig från en seglivad alkoholpolitisk regleringsmodell, som sprang fram ur en gemensam rot. Jämförelsen mellan länderna har visat att de reagerade rätt olika på samma slag av utmaningar. Skillnaderna kan sammanfattas i följande punkter:

1. I 1990-talets brytningsskede förhöll sig Finland mera välvilligt än Sverige till *interna-*

*tionella impulser* i omorienteringen av den nationella alkoholpolitiken. I EES- och EU-förhandlingarna uppfattade statsmakten anpassningen till den europeiska integrationen närmast som en teknisk-juridisk uppgift. Man brydde sig inte om att för sig själv eller för sina medborgare motivera för- och nackdelarna med den politik som förts dittills. WHO-EURO:s alkoholprogram har på ett avgörande sätt inverkat på de nya linjedragningar som gjorts i de två nationella alkoholprogrammen. De våldsamma förändringarna på det alkoholpolitiska fältet skulle ha förutsatt djupare reflexion över politikens rättfärdigande och självförståelse. Det som sker när alkoholpolitiken sällan motiveras och när motiveringarna tunnans ut är att det tidigare goda *institutionella minnet* förklenas och förvrängs.

Sverige har försökt förebygga denna minnesförlust. Såväl före som efter EU-medlemskapet har statsmakten kontinuerligt genomlyst sin alkoholpolitik och dess svenska etos.

2. *Kommitté- och utredningsväsendet* har försvagats mera i Finland än i Sverige. Förr i tiden tillsatte statsrådet eller social- och hälsoministeriet i Finland omfattande alkoholkommittéer, som avgav sina betänkanden till statsrådet. Den alkoholpolitiska planering som Finland idkat sedan 1990-talet är ett mönsterexempel på hur kommittéväsendet ersätts med snabbare och tematiskt snävare tjänstemannagrupper, som producerar t.ex. ett tidsbestämt handlingsprogram.

I Sverige respekteras kommittéer alltjämt, men tyngdpunkten i dem verkar förskjutas från beredande till verkställande verksamhet. I Sverige genomförs det femåriga alkoholprogrammet av Alkoholkommittén, som också har till uppgift att producera material som motiverar alkoholpolitiken.

3. I det gamla Alko-centrerade systemet åtnjöt alkoholpolitiken ända till slut statsmännens särskilda beskydd. Efter 1995 har det allmännas ansvar påförts Delegationen för rusmedels- och nykterhetsärenden. Delegation-

ens *politiska status* som rådgivande och assisterande organ i statsförvaltningen är svag. Delegationen fattar inte bindande beslut utan lägger endast fram förslag. Förslagen till alkoholprogram har aldrig avancerat längre än till just förslag. För narkotikafrågor förfogar statsmakten över ett särskilt organ med ansvar för strategisk beredning och uppföljning. Ett motsvarande organ för alkoholpolitik och -prevention saknas.

I Sverige har man ordnat det på annat sätt. Där verkar en särskild ledningsgrupp för alkoholprogrammet och den ansvarar för den valda politiska strategin. Alkoholkommittén, återigen, svarar för det operativa verkställandet av strategin. Om den svenska modellen tillämpades på Finland, skulle social- och hälsovårdsministeriets högsta tjänsteman, dvs. kanslichefen, vara ordförande för alkoholprogrammets ledningsgrupp. Gruppens medlemmar skulle bestå av Folkhälsoinstitutets (KTL) och Forsknings- och utvecklingscentralens för social- och hälsovården (Stakes) generaldirektörer, av överdirektörerna för berörda ämbetsverk, ministerier och organisationer – såsom inrikesministeriet, justitieministeriet och undervisningsstyrelsen – samt av verksamhetsledarna för Centret för hälsofrämjande, Kriminalvårdsföreningen och Trafikskyddet. Den operativa verksamheten skulle ledas av ett regeringsråd eller en konsultativ tjänsteman vid social- och hälsovårdsministeriet. Under sig skulle han eller hon ha en heltidsanställd koordinator och två heltidsanställda projektarbetare.

4. De svenska och finska *handlingskoncepten* har delvis skilt sig från varandra. Det alkoholprogram som pågår i Sverige kan uppfattas som en målmedveten satsning på inrättandet av en ny profession, ”preventionssamordnare”. Det återstår att se hur denna satsning faller ut. Redan nu kan man ana sig till att de personer som utbildas till koordinators för kommunernas och kommunförbundens alkoholärenden småningom kommer att påfö-

ras ett och annat som skall förebyggas. Däröfver vittnar svenska statens planer för det drogbe-kämpande arbetet och för befrämjandet av folkhälsan i allmänhet. Det är en öppen fråga hur alkoholfrågorna kommer att klara sig i konkurrensen med andra problem som skall förebyggas.

Det är intressant att denna professionscen-trerade strategi kan innebära en distansering från ett genuint svenskt särdrag, dvs. den långa tradition som baserar sig på folkrörelser. De nykterhetsorganisationer som finns kvar, och kanske medborgarorganisationerna mer generellt, är nu beroende av denna strategiska huvudfärd.

För Finlands del kan man inte tala om en liknande strategisk målmedvetenhet i alko-holpolitiken och det alkoholpreventiva arbe-tet. För att uppnå något mera beständigt måste alkoholfrågorna skötas av handlingsdugliga organ, som har ett tillräckligt omfattande mandat. Det räcker inte att de nationella social- och hälsoprogrammen erkänner att alko-holkonsumtion är förknippad med omfattande och mångskiftande problem.

5. Vår genomgång visar att de länge närbe-släktade alkoholpolitiska systemen i Sverige och Finland *bröt på rätt olika sätt* med sin tradi-tion då de ställdes inför uppgiften att an-passas till det nya alkoholpolitiska fältet med dess nya politiska handlingsrepertoar. Länderna faller inte längre tillbaka på nordiskt sam-arbete, som tidigare var en självklar del av de helhetsmässiga alkoholmonopolens och nyk-terhetsorganisationernas rutiner. Även "det nordiska alkoholsystemet", som var Alkos ledstjärna ända fram till år 1994, är ett minne blott. Just nu förefaller det som om länderna skulle vara på väg åt var sitt håll.

## Slutkommentar

Vår infallsvinkel har varit starkt fixerad vid administrativa manövrer speciellt i den statli-

ga planeringen av alkoholpolitik. Om man inte håller denna radikala avgränsning i min-net, framstår vår analys av skillnaderna mellan länderna lätt som ytlig och missvisande. Reg-lering av alkohol handlar ju inte bara om reg-lering av alkohol.

Det vore t.ex. ett misstag att förklara Fin-lands och Sveriges olika sätt att möta EES/EG/EU:s alkoholpolitiska utmaning med att kärnan i det finska alkoholsystemet, alkohol-monopolet Alko, var så monumentalt och mångförgrenat. Att man i Finland med ens insåg att denna koloss knappast stod att rädda kan visserligen i någon mån ha påverkat den välvilja landets tjänstemän och politiker visa-de mot att avveckla det Alko-centrerade syste-met (Alavaikko 1998).

Minst lika viktigt är det att inse att alkohol-halten i Finlands agerande i EES/EG/EU-för-handlingarna knappast var särskilt hög. De finska förhandlingarna följde helt enkelt ett his-torisk-politiskt beprövat spår, där varken den allmänna opinionen i landet eller den expert-baserade diskussionen spelade någon framträ-dande roll i beslutsfattandet. I stället valde Finland, igen, att inte sticka upp sin näsa och gav godvilligt avkall på en säregen och segli-vad samhällelig institution – för att se vad som händer. Självfallet fanns det också kom-mersiella krafter, som utnyttjade det unika ögonblicket för egna intressen (Alavaikko & Österberg 1999).

Men inte heller denna konfliktskygga, små-tigande finska demokrati torde ha varit speci-ellt avgörande. Avgörande för Finland var dels att alkoholfrågan var en icke-fråga i konkur-rensen med speciellt jordbruksfrågan och dels att den säkerhetspolitiska nyorienteringen överskuggade allt annat. Dessa argument gäl-ler för tiden fram till EU-medlemskapet.

Avgörande för det alkoholpolitiska ageran-det efter 1995 är att samtidigt som Finland lät sig omslutas av EU vände landet ryggen mot det övriga Norden, inte bara i alkoholfrågor utan överlag. När det gäller sättet att gestalta

dryckesbeteende och alkoholproblem var detta ett stort val. Efter Norden – WHO-EURO och EU! I Sverige har det nordiska engagemanget naturligt nog också blivit svagare, men där har reaktionen snarare varit: Efter Norden – Sverige!

Att säga att Sverige uppvisade egensinnighet och Finland lade sig platt är ointressant om man inte beaktar att olikheterna i beteendemönstren är sammanflätade med grundläggande skillnader i den samhällsliga dynamiken länderna emellan.

### Tack

I vår materialinsamling för denna artikel ingick intervjuer med Sven Andréasson, Gunborg Brännström, Gert Knutsson, Jorma Niemelä, Börje Olsson och Robin Room. Vi tackar dem för värdefulla uppgifter.

### NOTER

<sup>1</sup> Målen sträcker sig allt från att förstärka det alkoholpreventiva arbetets organisation och förbättra den allmänna missbrukarvården till att öka det lokala beslutsfattandet vid beviljande av tillstånd för alkoholförsäljning och skapa alkoholfria fritidsmiljöer särskilt för barn och ungdomar (2000-luvun... 2001, 34–39).

<sup>2</sup> Termen svartsprit var en innovation av OAS. Den lanserades 1999 i pressen i samband med kampanjen (Tryggvesson & Olsson 2002, 31) och slog rot i svenskt vardagspråk.

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## Summary

Christoffer Tigerstedt & Thomas Karlsson: *Troublesome break: Redirecting alcohol policy in Finland and Sweden from 1990 onwards*

For a century Finnish and Swedish regulation of alcohol production and trade was a concern of the state, aiming to minimise private profit from alcohol sales. In the 1990's both national and local alcohol policy were reshaped in both countries. This was due to influences from international trade and reorganisations in managing the nation state.

The focus of this article is, first, on how the central public administrations in Finland and Sweden reacted to the new situation. New administrative practices and the political status of new policy documents are of particular interest. Second, the text analyses the guiding principles behind the activities set out in recent alcohol policy programmes in each country.

The results of the study show that

- in reshaping alcohol policy Finland has been more favourable to international influences than Sweden. This was true with regard to the EU negotiations in the first half of the 1990's, but is also clearly reflected in national alcohol policy programmes developed after the introduction of the new alcohol legislations (1995). In the latter case Finland has leaned heavily on the European Alcohol Action Plan put forth by the World Health Organization, Regional Office for Europe.
- the size of government report on alcohol policy have shrunk in Finland. After 1989 the justifications of national policy have not been thoroughly stated. In this case, Sweden has acted very differently.
- in Finland parliamentary based state committees have been replaced by working groups run by state officials. In Sweden committees are still appreciated, but in addition to their preparatory tasks they are given an operative mandate.
- in Finland alcohol policy is given only modest political status within the state administration. In Sweden alcohol policy issues are usually submitted to the government and/or the parliament.
- for the moment Sweden is resolutely opting for an alcohol policy strategy based on professionalised "prevention coordinators". In Finland the strategy is still under consideration.

The reaction to the break from a long-standing alcohol policy tradition has taken somewhat different routes in Finland and Sweden. Neither of the countries draws on the "Nordic alcohol policy" anymore. Rather they are choosing different policy practices.

*Key words:* alcohol policy, administration, Sweden, Finland, alcohol prevention

## Yhteenveto

Christoffer Tigerstedt & Thomas Karlsson: *Vaivalloinen irtiotto. Suomen ja Ruotsin alkoholipoliittiset kurssinmuutokset vuoden 1990 jälkeen*

Vuosisadan ajan Suomen ja Ruotsin valtio huolehti alkoholijuomien tuotannon ja kaupan säätelystä. Pyrkimyksenä oli alkoholin myynnin yksityisen voitontavoittelun minimointi. 1990-luvulla sekä kansallista että paikallista alkoholipoliittikkaa muovattiin uudelleen kummassakin maassa. Tähän vaikuttivat kansainvälisessä kaupassa ja kansallisvaltion ohjauksikäytännöissä tapahtuneet uudelleenjärjestelyt.

Artikkeli pohtii ensinnäkin miten Suomen ja Ruotsin keskushallinnot reagoivat uuteen tilanteeseen. Keskiössä ovat uudet hallinnolliset käytännöt ja uusien julkisen vallan asiakirjojen poliittinen arvovalta. Toiseksi artikkeli tarkastelee molempien maiden viime vuosien alkoholipoliittisten ohjelmien toiminta-ajatuksia.

Tulokset osoittavat, että

- muuttaessaan alkoholipoliittikkaansa Suomi on ollut suopeampi kansainvälisille vaikutteille kuin Ruotsi. Tämä pätee 1990-luvun alkupuoliskolla käytyihin EU-neuvotteluihin, mutta se heijastuu myös maiden uuden alkoholilainsäädännön voimaantulon (1995) jälkeen rakennettuihin kansallisiin alkoholiohjelmiin. Jälkimmäisessä tapauksessa Suomi on tukeutunut voimakkaasti Maailman terveysjärjestön (WHO) Euroopan aluetoimiston perustamaan Euroopan Alkoholiohjelmaan.
- Suomessa julkisen vallan alkoholipoliittiset asiakirjojen koko on kutistunut. Vuoden 1989 jälkeen kansallista politiikkaa ei ole perusteltu syvällisesti. Tältä osin Ruotsi on toiminut hyvin eri tavalla.
- Suomessa parlamentaariset komiteat on korvattu virkamiesvetoisilla työryhmillä. Ruotsissa komiteoita kunnioitetaan edelleen, mutta valmistelevien tehtäviensä lisäksi niillä saattaa myös olla operatiivinen mandaatti.
- Suomen valtionhallinnossa alkoholipoliittikka nauttii suhteellisen vaatimatonta poliittista arvovaltaa. Ruotsissa alkoholipoliittiset kysymykset alistetaan yleensä hallituksen ja/tai eduskunnan käsittelyyn.
- Ruotsi on tällä hetkellä määrätietoisesti kehittämässä ammattimaisiin "ehkäisevän päihdetyön koordinaattoreihin" perustuvaa alkoholipoliittista strategiaa. Suomesa strategia on vielä haussa.

Irtiotto pitkään jatkuneesta alkoholipoliittisesta perinteestä on kulkenut osittain eri polkuja Suomessa ja Ruotsissa. Kumpikaan maa ei enää nojautu "pohjoismaiseen alkoholipoliittikkaan". Pikemmin ne etsivät toisentyypisiä politiikkavaihtoehtoja.





# Testing new models in Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish alcohol policies

## Introduction

Major changes in recent Nordic alcohol policy have been extensively documented (Holder et al. 1998; Sulkunen et al. 2000; Tigerstedt 2001; Ugland 2002). These texts have analysed the collision between a powerful and protective Nordic alcohol policy model, on the one hand, and the free trade policy endorsed by the European Union (EU) and the agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA), on the other.

It is our impression, however, that the wide scope of the ongoing transformation in Finland, Norway and Sweden is only partly covered in this research literature. Until now, little has been said about important choices that have been made after the principal shift in the mid-1990s. For example, new policy concepts and operational models have been tried out. Some of them are already disqualified, others seem to be more durable (Tigerstedt & Karlsson 2003).

In this text we describe strategic prioritisations and organisational solutions in the alcohol policy field in each of the three countries. To begin with we take a look at Finland and Swe-

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## ABSTRACT

T. Karlsson, C. Tigerstedt:  
Testing new models in  
Finnish, Norwegian and  
Swedish alcohol policies.

In the last ten years major changes have taken place in Nordic alcohol policy. Until now, however, research has said little about the important policy choices that have been made in the new situation. In this text we describe strategic prioritisations and organisational solutions in the alcohol policy field in Finland, Norway and Sweden. First, we take a look at Finland and Sweden, two EU countries acting quite differently at the current time. We examine the new policy strategies which the countries have decided to invest in at a moment when measures affecting prices on alcohol and availability have become significantly weaker. Next we look at organisational solutions that have been implemented in order to handle the new situation. Adding Norway, a non-EU country, to this analysis allows us to comment on whether Finland's and Sweden's membership in

the EU has brought about more extensive changes than in Norway. As an appetizer, we offer a perspective on how the displacement of the alcohol field is reflected in everyday terminology in each country.

■ KEY WORDS

alcohol policy, alcohol programme, public administration, Finland, Norway, Sweden.

den, two EU countries acting quite differently for the moment. In this section we examine new policy strategies which the countries have decided to invest in at a time when measures affecting prices on alcohol and availability have become significantly weaker. Next we look at the organisational solutions that have been implemented in order to handle the new situation. Adding Norway, a non-EU country, to this analysis allows us to comment on whether Finland's and Sweden's membership of the EU has brought about more extensive changes than in Norway.

As an appetizer we serve a perspective on how the displacement of the alcohol field is reflected in everyday terminology in each country.

### Wobbling terminology

One way of summarising the radical changes is to claim that a shift is taking place in the key terminology of the policy field. This observation is based in our reading of recent official documents on alcohol policy and prevention, supplemented with Internet searches of alcohol policy and related terms. In short, the traditional terms *alkoholpolitiikka* (Finnish), *alkoholpolitikk* (Norwegian) and *alkoholpolitik* (Swedish) – approximately equivalent to the English expressions “alcohol policy” or “alcohol politics” – are changing semantically.

For an Anglo-Saxon audience it is important to note that the term and the very idea of “alcohol policy” are of Nordic origin (Room 1999, 10). Alcohol policy signifies a control discourse based firstly on a broad and administratively integrated concern of the negative effects of alcohol consumption on social and health problems. Secondly, alcohol policy builds on a broad governmental engagement in the sales and consumption of alcohol. That is, alcohol policy has been connected to strong governmental and institutional interests.

The term alcohol policy came into English in the late 1970s and 1980s, “more or less as an import from the Nordic languages” (ibid. 11) and, it should be added, as a fairly diluted version of the Nordic original. Contrary to Finland, Norway and Sweden, in English-speaking countries alcohol policy is a term used by a dedicated expertise rather than an everyday expression employed by the man in the street. In the political discourse applied by the European Union the term is only occasionally operative. We may now ask whether the term, due to

social transformation, is losing hold in the cultural region from which it originated.

As high taxes and the restricted availability of alcohol have been challenged or slackened in Finland, Norway and Sweden, two things seem to happen. Firstly, the meaning of “alcohol policy” shrinks and tends to become less robust. Presently the term seems to focus more on specific contexts and situations. Accordingly, in Sweden one fresh definition of alcohol policy covers the so called four alcohol-free zones: alcohol should not be present at all during adolescence, in motor vehicle operation, at workplaces and during pregnancy. Secondly, since the 1990s the traditional term *alkoholpolitik* is paralleled by complementing and competing terms. Ultimately, these new terms lean on a different view of how people can and should be governed.

These shifts can be noticed in all three countries studied. However, the three languages – Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish – demonstrate some peculiarities. In *Finland* professionals and volunteers have largely adopted the diffuse term *ehkäisevä päihdetyö*, which might be unidiomatically translated into preventive substance work (cf. social work). Compared to the customary term alcohol policy, “preventive substance work” brings with it several new nuances: the distinction between alcohol and other substances is removed, and the image of prevention is more local in character and less oriented towards the regulation of (national) economic markets.

In *Sweden* the term *alkoholpolitik* is still very dominating, but the adjectives *alkoholförebyggande* (alcohol preventive), *drogförebyggande* (drug preventive), as well as the combination *alkohol- och drogförebyggande* (alcohol and drug pre-

ventive) are mushrooming. In addition, two completely new terms have been introduced lately. The historical paradox is that this time both terms are more or less direct imports from the Anglo-Saxon world. The first one, *alkoholpolicy* (alcohol policy), might actually be termed “Swenglish” and refers to a concrete policy approach, an action plan, or the like. The second one, *alkoholprevention* (alcohol prevention), is associated with preventive activities limited in time and space (for example, the STAD community action project in Stockholm, see Wallin 2004).

In *Norway*, as in Sweden, the term *alkoholpolitikk* is still strongly preferred. However, since the early 1990s Norwegians have increasingly put alcohol and drugs under the same roof, thus using the term *rusmiddelpolitikk* (substance policy/politics, or alcohol and drug policy/politics). Correspondingly, the adjective *rusmiddelforebyggende* (substance preventive, or alcohol and drug preventive) is widely used in brochures, journals and official documents, either replacing or completing the traditional term *alkoholpolitikk*.

Such terminological wobbling shows that the new reality we are confronted with in regulating alcohol consumption and alcohol-related harm is hard to capture using conventional nation- and state-oriented vocabulary.

## Finland and Sweden

In the further analysis it seems convenient first to single out the two EU member states Finland and Sweden. This may be justified in two ways. Firstly, Finland and Sweden are directly subordinated to EU regulations, while Norway is not. Consequently, some recent EU events have played a deci-

sive role in moulding the alcohol policy system in Finland and Sweden. For example, there was the EC legal issue in 1997, the so called Franzén case, concerning the legality of the retail monopoly in Sweden (with consequences for the rest of the EU, read: Finland) (Ugland 2002, 128–130). Another major example was the abolition 1 January 2004 of restrictions on travellers' imports of alcoholic beverages for personal use within the EU (Österberg & Karlsson 2002a, 62–63). Also the enlargement of the EU especially in the Baltic Sea region affects Finland and Sweden differently compared to Norway. We ask, therefore, what are the Finnish and Swedish responses to this new operational environment.

Secondly, separating Norway from Finland and Sweden allows us to discuss in some detail to what extent changes in Finland and Sweden may be attributed to their EU membership. What if Norwegian alcohol policies behave more or less in the same way as its Finnish and Swedish counterparts? Would this be due to European economic integration put into effect by the European Economic Area agreement (EEA) – the stripped-down economic alternative to EU membership – signed by the Norwegian state? Or has Norway, by staying outside the EU, succeeded in maintaining autonomy in its alcohol political decision-making?

### ■ Strategic prioritisations

Finland has been more favourable than Sweden towards international demands concerning the re-orientation of their national alcohol policies. In the EU-negotiations in the early 1990s Finland saw the adjustment of its alcohol policy system to the

challenges posed by the European integration mainly as a technical and judicial task (Alkoholilain ... 1992; Alkoholilain ...1993). During the process of re-organising the Finnish alcohol policy system the state made no attempts at trying to argue either on behalf of or against the old alcohol policy system. When the justification for the reigning alcohol policy had worn thin, the institutional memory of the alcohol policy system, which previously had been strong, also became distorted and withered away. The major changes that occurred in the alcohol policy field in the mid-1990s should have deserved a more profound reflection over the justification and self-consciousness of the whole alcohol policy system. This was, however, never done and the effect of this neglect has become painfully apparent during the past decade (Tigerstedt & Karlsson 2003).

Sweden on the other hand has tried to prevent this “amnesia” from happening. Both before and after becoming a member of the EU, the Swedish state has continuously, almost exhaustively, reflected upon the justification of its alcohol policy and its national ethos (e.g. Alkoholpolitiska kommissionen ... 1994; OAS i framtiden 1998).

In the mid-1990s Finland slimmed down its previously comprehensive alcohol policy system to better fit European standards, whereas Sweden tried to retain the sovereignty of its alcohol policy system and even made attempts to raise the priority of alcohol policy issues on the EU agenda. A concrete example of this is the European Comparative Alcohol Study (ECAS) (cf. e.g. Norström 2002; Österberg & Karlsson 2002b), which started as a Swedish initiative. Another initiative primarily instigated by Sweden was the WHO European

Ministerial Conference on Young People and Alcohol in Stockholm in February 2001, which can be seen as part of a process that resulted in the adoption of the European Council Recommendation on adolescent drinking (Council Recommendation 2001/458/EC).

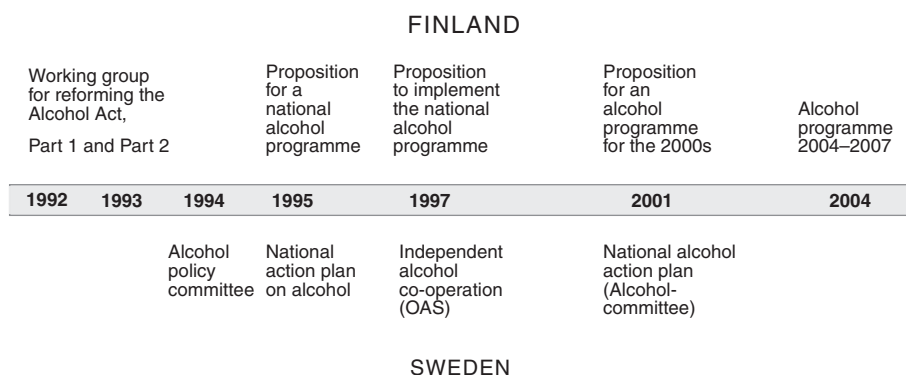
Finland has not been as active as Sweden in trying to influence the formation of alcohol policies on the international arena. Instead Finland has been quite receptive to international influences in the alcohol policy field. This has especially been true in the case of the World Health Organization, and in particular its European office (WHO-EURO), which has played a significant role in the formation of Finnish alcohol policy ever since 1995. WHO:s European alcohol action plans have served as models for the first two national alcohol programmes that, at least formally, have steered the formation of the national alcohol strategy. In Finland these fixed-term national alcohol programmes have, more or less, all advocated a shift in the focus of alcohol policies from the national to the local level (Tigerstedt & Karlsson 2003).

A trend of decentralisation of power and

responsibilities is also present in Sweden, and even there periodic alcohol action plans are used in order to implement the goals of national alcohol policy strategies. A clear shift in focus can be detected in the 1995 national action plan for alcohol and drugs (Nationell ... 1995) that strongly emphasised the importance of alcohol policies on the local level.

The main reason for this change in focus can be credited to the countries' EU-membership in 1995. This also becomes apparent when looking at the timetable in which alcohol policy documents have been prepared in both countries. In Figure 1 we can clearly see how the EU-membership has influenced the appearance of alcohol policy documents. Corresponding official documents in Finland and Sweden have emerged almost simultaneously (Figure 1).

After joining the EU, a general conception in both Finland and Sweden was that the conditions for a national alcohol policy based on restricting alcohol availability and maintaining high alcohol taxes were severely restricted, whereas more possibilities and opportunities were created for the development of regional and local al-



**Figure 1.** Alcohol policy committees, working groups and alcohol action plans and programmes in Finland and Sweden, 1992–2004



cohol policy activities. Both countries have also put more emphasis on promoting situational sobriety, for instance promoting abstinence for women during pregnancies or total abstinence in motor vehicle operation.

Since the mid-1990s Sweden also began to develop and evaluate local prevention measures, as for instance responsible beverage serving (RBS) efforts and also other community mobilisation measures. A good example of an extensive community action project performed in Sweden is the STAD project, which has been implemented and evaluated in Stockholm since 1996 (cf. e.g. Wallin 2004).

In 1997 a close co-operation called the Independent Alcohol co-operation (OAS), was started in the alcohol policy field between public sector authorities, insurance agencies and the alcohol industry. The temperance movement was not included nor did they want to be a part of this coalition. The co-operation was, however, plagued with conflicts and stranded prematurely, already in autumn 2000. The main legacy of the co-operation was an active media campaign targeting illegal alcohol that was carried out in the late 1990s. Since 2001 the so called Alcohol committee has been responsible for implementing the Swedish alcohol strategy outlined in the 2001 Alcohol action plan. The Alcohol action plan has, besides active information and education campaigns on different alcohol-related issues, been focused on professionalising alcohol prevention especially on the municipal level (Tigerstedt & Karlsson 2003).

In Finland the emphasis since the mid-1990s up until 2004 has mainly been on promoting the importance of general so-

cial and health care services in the prevention of alcohol problems rather than alcohol-specific measures. The new Alcohol programme published in April 2004 (Alkoholiohjelman ... 2004) does, however, more directly focus on the prevention as well as reduction of alcohol-related problems. The programme emphasises the importance of co-operation and voluntary partnerships between the public sector, NGOs and industry organisations in the alcohol field. The local level is still the focus of prevention, and the programme also includes a large quasi-experimental research project for the development and evaluation of local alcohol prevention measures in two Finnish regions (Local Alcohol Policy "PAKKA"-project). The programme is not as rigidly steered as the Swedish alcohol action plan nor does it have nearly the same financial resources. Despite this, the programme can be perceived as the first serious attempt the Finnish government has made in tackling alcohol problems since 1995.

Finally, it should be noted that neither Finland nor Sweden anymore relies on the long tradition of Nordic co-operation that prior to 1995 was perceived as an integral part of national policy-making in the alcohol policy field.

#### ■ Organisational and administrative solutions in the alcohol policy field

The organisational and administrative changes that have occurred in the alcohol policy field in Finland during the past ten years have been extensive. In 1995 the alcohol monopolies on production, import, export, and wholesale were abolished, leaving only the monopoly on off-premise retail sales of alcoholic beverages intact

(Holder et al. 1998). At this time also the alcohol monopoly's (Alko) vast tasks and responsibilities in the field of alcohol policy were dismantled and its position as the main alcohol policy authority was lost. Due to Alko's sovereign position in the Finnish alcohol administration prior to 1995, there were no clearly designated successors to take over its alcohol policy responsibilities at this time (Karlsson & Törrönen 2002). Instead these tasks were transferred, in what in hindsight seems to have been quite random, to less experienced, politically weak or newly established public sector agencies, and to NGO's in the public health field.

In Sweden the administrative changes have not been as radical. This is because no alcohol policy actor has been as dominant as the Finnish alcohol monopoly previously was. However, also in Sweden the alcohol monopolies, except for the retail monopoly, were abolished and many tasks in the alcohol policy administration were redistributed.

Despite these somewhat unequal starting points, both countries have shown a tendency to change their administrative focus from the national to the local level. The ways the countries have tried to get about this change in focus, however, differ significantly from each other (Tigerstedt & Karlsson 2003).

For instance, in Sweden the alcohol action plan that is currently steering the alcohol policy can be perceived as a serious effort in educating and creating a new profession of local level "prevention workers" (cf. social workers) within the public health field. If, and to what extent this effort will be a success, however, is too early to predict. Much depends on how alcohol

prevention succeeds in competing with other prevention tasks in the local public health field that in the future undoubtedly will be added on these co called prevention co-ordinators agenda (e.g. drugs, obesity).

In Finland, on the other hand, the alcohol policy experts in charge have been characterised by a firm belief in the strength of network building. Networks are built horizontally, vertically and between professions. In this respect the development in Finland resembles that in Sweden, at least on the surface. What is altogether lacking, however, from the Finnish activities is the strong ambition that exists in Sweden to educate prevention workers with the ultimate goal of formalizing local alcohol prevention as a profession. Examples of attempts to educate and support the contact persons of the Finnish network of prevention have been mainly concentrated on a web portal being set up to support them in their work as well as giving them the possibility to attend occasional expert seminars in the field of alcohol policy and prevention (Warpenius 2002).

Also regarding the political importance of alcohol issues, the situation in Finland is significantly different from that in Sweden. In Sweden alcohol-related questions have throughout the past decade had a fairly high political status. Action plans are regularly adopted by the parliament and/or the government. By contrast, alcohol issues in Finnish politics have been of second-class importance. A good example of this is the low status the national alcohol programmes have had in the state machinery until recently. Between 1995 and 2003, the national programmes were only propositions for programmes and they were never properly processed or adopted by

the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health or by the government (cf. e.g. Figure 1; Tigerstedt & Karlsson 2003, 411). In this respect the new Alcohol programme (2004–2007) is a clear exception, as it is initiated and confirmed by the government.

#### ■ Economic resources

Sweden has during the past ten years invested substantially more money on the implementation of its alcohol action plans compared to Finland. For instance, in 2001 Sweden invested over 75 million euro on the implementation of its alcohol action plan over a four year period, whereas the corresponding figure for the Finnish equivalent was only 0,3 million euro for a three year period (Tigerstedt & Karlsson 2003).

In 2003 the Finnish government granted a sum of EUR 1 million for the implementation of the new Alcohol programme 2004–2007. To ensure a successful implementation of the programme the government has also promised some additional financing for actions directed to furthering the goals of the programme. Although it now seems that the Finnish government is determined to increase its financing of the national alcohol programmes, the financing is still, compared to the corresponding Swedish action plans, on a very modest level.

Based on our comparison of the two countries, we can conclude that after becoming members of the EU, Finland and Sweden have chosen different paths in reorganising their previously closely related alcohol policy systems.

## Norway

#### ■ Does the non-EU status matter?

In the negotiations about EU membership, Norway even more than Sweden defended

its sovereignty concerning national alcohol policy arrangements. One could therefore expect that Norway's decision to stay outside the EU would have decelerated the liberal trend that had occurred some years earlier in Finland and Sweden (Sulkunen et al. 2000).

It turns out, however, that Norway – without any formal pressure from EU bodies – has slackened its alcohol policies in a surprisingly similar way to Finland and Sweden. The only exception is that the Norwegian liberalisations have occurred somewhat later and less gradually. For almost 20 years (1980–1997) the amount of alcohol monopoly stores increased by roughly one store per year. Since 1998 the speed has been on average 10 additional stores per year. Contrary to Finland and Sweden, self-service stores for alcohol sales were firmly rejected in Norway up to the late 1990s. The first self-service stores, introduced in 1999, were a genuine surprise for many consumers, but five years later almost half of Norway's 200 liquor stores work according to this principle. Also opening hours have been considerably extended during the last few years.

While Norway does not belong to the EU, it has not been affected by (the gradual adjustment to) the abolishment of restrictions on travellers' imports of alcohol for personal use from one EU country to another. Free trade in this domain came into force 1 January 2004. Nevertheless, Norway's very high prices on alcoholic beverages are certainly sensitive particularly to the somewhat lower prices in neighbouring Sweden. In order to meet expanding border trade Norway lowered its taxes on spirits in 2001 and 2002 all in all by 25 per cent.

Through its membership in the EEA Norway has also been forced to defend the sovereignty of its alcohol policy against international influences, and in some cases not so successfully. For instance, for years Norway has been struggling to defend its strict bans on alcohol advertising (see Karlsson 2001). Moreover, Norway was forced to surrender and allow sales of alcopops in ordinary grocery stores since 1 October 2003 which may, in turn, be a precedent for Finland and Sweden. In this context, it should be noted that both through the government and NGOs Norway has played an active role on the international alcohol policy arena.

Consequently, the overall situation with regard to the gradual liberalisation of the Norwegian alcohol policy shows many similarities with the Finnish and Swedish ones. Next question is, then, whether Norway has also felt a strong need to reorganise its policy administration and to search for new policy concepts during the last ten years. Our impression is that this is indeed the case.

#### ■ Strategic prioritisations and organisational solutions

Several Norwegian governmental documents correspond to the Finnish and Swedish ones presented in Figure 1 (see Figure 2). In 1994 an alcohol commission was appointed “due to increasing international relations, among others Norway’s inclusion in the EEA and its possible membership in the EU” (NOU 1995). Although heavily concerned with the changing international conditions, the commission report might be called a scholarly apologia of traditional alcohol policy. However, already in 1996 new policy practices were

announced in a Parliamentary proposition. After years of quiet waters in the Norwegian alcohol sales system at the national level, this document suggests that the distribution network should be improved, the amount of retail shops raised and opening hours extended (Om lov ... 1996). In subsequent years all these intentions and more, have been carried out.

Gradually, the role of local communities also seems to be subject to a redefinition. This includes a paradox, because local alcohol policies based on municipal referendums used to be a major pillar in Norwegian alcohol control up to the 1950s and 1960s. As voters favoured liberal solutions in subsequent decades, this arrangement lost its “temperance effect”, and in 1989 it was abolished (Andersen 2000, 161–162; Nordlund 1998). In 2001 local alcohol policies are resolutely backed up in a Government strategy followed by an action plan. However, now the context is different. Referendums, abolished a decade earlier, are ‘replaced’ by knowledge and professional skills. A new phase is started: “As a professional field alcohol and drug prevention is a new phenomenon and a considerable part of prevention is still in an experimental stage” (Regjeringens... 2002, 17). According to the action plan this tendency should be promoted.

How, then, should these strategic considerations be put into practice? Two primary channels have figured when discussing the operative responsibility of alcohol policy measures. First, similar to Finland and Sweden the slackened Norwegian alcohol policy system is complemented with alcohol (and drug) action plans, released by each government separately. With the rapidly alternating Norwegian governments,

| 1995   | 1996  | 1998   | 2001   | 2002   |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| Alcohol policy in motion? NOU 1995:24 – committee report | Parliamentary proposition Ot prp nr 7 (1996–1997) | Action plan for reduction of alcohol and drug use St prp nr 58 (1998–2000) | Government strategy for work against alcohol and drug problems 2002–2005 | Government action plan against alcohol and drug problems 2003–2005 |
|  |   | Council for alcohol and drug policy  |  |  |

**Figure 2.** Alcohol policy committees, working groups and alcohol action plans and programmes in Norway, 1995–2002

this practice has produced three action plans in five years.

Second, in recent years the Norwegian regional “Competence centres for alcohol and drug issues” are assigned a key role in the emerging strategy based on professional skills. This is noteworthy because these seven regional centres, established since the early 1990s, were primarily aimed at working with the treatment of alcohol and drug problems. Nevertheless, since the late 1990s the Competence centres have gradually been endowed with a whole range of preventive tasks. These tasks include:

- supervision of pupils and students in schools and the education of personnel in the prevention field
- production of educational material
- funding preventive measures in the municipalities
- supporting municipalities in their efforts to achieve their political alcohol and drug goals
- advising the government in the development of national alcohol and drug policy.

Moreover, presently the Competence centres are more strictly tied to the Norwegian Directorate of Social and Health (*Sosial- og helsedirektoratet*). This suggests that the originally regional and substantially different centres are being profiled as centrally directed national instruments

with a varied regional mandate. In principle, this solution should enable the National Directorate to conduct a centralised distribution of financial resources within the alcohol policy field.

We can now summarise our findings concerning strategic prioritisations, organisational solutions and economic resources in all three countries in Table 1.

## Discussion

The *Finnish Alcohol programme 2004–2007* is the first serious attempt since 1995 to back up alcohol matters on a national scale. In particular, it is authorised by the government, it is better prepared than its predecessors, and – albeit abstract – it contains a vision of large-scale co-operation between sectors, administrative levels, industry organisations and NGOs. Considering the acute external pressure brought about by the year 2004, this make-over is easy to understand. But strictly speaking the Finnish government woke up very late, only half a year before it had to decide how to tackle the fact that, first, the EU would abolish national derogations on travellers’ rights to bring in alcohol for personal use 1 January 2004, and, second, Estonia would join the EU on 1st May 2004.

If Finland acted with a sleepy head, on the surface *Sweden* seems to have been

**Table 1.** Characteristics of the present alcohol policy field in Finland, Sweden, and Norway

|  | Finland  | Sweden   | Norway  |
|--|--|--|---|
| <b>Strategic solutions</b>                           | Internationally reactive<br>Local prevention<br>Governing by networks and partnerships<br>Situational sobriety   | Internationally active<br>Local prevention<br>Governing by professionalisation and education<br>Situational sobriety   | Internationally active<br>Local prevention<br>Governing by professionalisation and education<br>Situational sobriety  |
| <b>Organisational &amp; administrative solutions</b> | National alcohol programme 2004–2007 (adopted by government)<br><br>Local contact persons (network building)<br>Web portal by state authorities (Stakes) | National alcohol action plan 2001–2005 (adopted by government and parliament)<br><br>Alcohol committee<br>Local prevention coordinators<br>Monthly e-mail newsletter by Alcohol committee<br>Professionalisation | National action plan for alcohol and drug problems 2003–2005 (adopted by government and parliament)<br><br>Regional competence centres<br>National bulletin by Competence centres (AproposRus)<br>Professionalisation |
| <b>Economic resources</b>                            | Poor   | Excellent  | Good  |

more far-sighted. In 2000 Sweden realised that something robust had to be done in order to prevent the situation that the country was to face in 2004. This offered Sweden some time to initiate the creation of a professional nationwide organisation three years before the major alcohol policy changes. It is true, however, that Sweden also acted under acute external pressure. This was because the Swedish government, still in the beginning of 2000, stubbornly believed that it would manage to prolong its derogations from the EU free trade practice beyond 2004. Not only did the EU Commission reject this requirement, it also forced Sweden to extend personal import quotas at a more rapid pace than originally planned.

In terms of protecting fiscal borders and thereby defending national autonomous decision-making *Norway*, being outside the EU, has had more leeway. Thus, Norway's action plans have followed internal

timetables and considerations. However, it should not be forgotten that price reductions on alcohol in neighbouring countries (Denmark, Finland and Sweden) will result in increased private import and smuggling, which will probably lead to problems with customs control in Norway. The conclusion is, therefore, that in alcohol policy Norway's status as a non-EU country works only as a partial buffer against EU and other commercial influences.

Sometimes far-reaching, viable decisions are stimulated by compelling situations. Is this the case now in Finland and Sweden?

What is new in Finland is that the fresh Alcohol programme is backed up by the government. On paper the programme makes a serious attempt to commit public, voluntary and market agencies within partnerships crossing horizontal sectors and hierarchical levels. This cooperative model indicates a strikingly loose organi-

sational structure, implying that the government takes the shape of an utterly dispersed network. This may be seen as a continuation and strengthening of the previous, much poorer, alcohol programmes in Finland (1997–2000 and 2001–2003).

In the Swedish case the introduction of prevention workers, including formal education, is purposely planned as an organisational structure to operate for years to come. It is easy to imagine that this professional structure may persist in one form or another in subsequent government programmes.

In Norway the new administrative model for national alcohol policy is only now under construction. The financially relatively well-equipped action plan (2003–2005) is still in its initial phase and the coordinating role of the newly established Norwegian Directorate of Social and Health Care has been subjected to intense discussion. Shortly the position of the regional Competence centres will also be clearer.

Finally we note that researchers have been conspicuously indifferent to the often fumbling attempts to reorganise national alcohol policy since the mid-1990s. However, the fact that alcohol policy has become more fragmented and lost most of its national aura does not necessarily mean that the prevailing plans, organisational models and financial solutions would not be interesting when pondering how alcohol consumption and related problems will be governed in the years to come.

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# Finlands, Norges och Sveriges alkoholpolitiska linjedragningar sedan ”ödesåret” 2004

## Inledning

Villkoren för att bedriva en nationellt självstyrd alkoholpolitik har under det senaste decenniet förändrats väsentligt i de nordiska alkoholmonopolländerna Finland, Norge och Sverige (Tigerstedt 2001a; Ugland 2002). I enlighet med EU:s krav på varors fria rörlighet har Finland och Sverige varit tvungna att gradvis liberalisera och till slut slopa sina strikta gränser för skattefri införsel av alkohol, medan Norge, som ett icke-EU-land, lyckats bevara sina införselkvoter. Helt immunt mot externa influenser har inte heller Norge varit och även där har gränshandeln med alkohol påverkats av den förbättrade rörligheten av varor i ett allt mer enat Europa (Karlsson et al. 2005).

Samtidigt som det alkoholpolitiska beslutsfattandet i Norden fått mindre svängrum, har alkoholkonsumtionen ökat. I en situation där konsumtionen varit på uppgång och de traditionella alkoholpolitiska vapnen nedrustats, verkar Finland, Norge och Sverige, trots likheter, ha valt något olika strategier och tillvägagångssätt för att omorientera sig i den nya alkoholpolitiska verksamhetsmiljön. Tidigare studier (Tigerstedt & Karlsson 2003; Karlsson & Tigerstedt 2004) har visat att skillnaderna i de tre ländernas alkoholpolitiska tänke- och handlingsätt ökat sedan 1990-talets

## ABSTRACT

T. Karlsson: Finnish, Norwegian, and Swedish alcohol policy after the seminal year of 2004

### ■ AIM

To assess how Finland, Norway and Sweden reorganised their alcohol policies after the travellers import quotas for alcoholic beverages were abolished in 2004.

### ■ DATA & METHODS

Alcohol taxation, alcohol programs and other alcohol policy changes, as well as common alcohol policy initiatives by the Nordic Alcohol monopoly countries are examined. In addition to relevant research literature, the main sources used are public reports and documents as well as interviews with nine key informants in the field of alcohol policy.

### ■ RESULTS

Finland is characterized as the country with the highest alcohol consumption and an alcohol policy that is different from the policies in Norway and Sweden. Typical for Norway, apart from an increased availability of alcoholic beverages, is an active engagement in international alcohol policy issues, whereas Sweden is characterized by big administrative alcohol policy changes, and by the rulings of the EC-court in alcohol policy matters.

### ■ CONCLUSIONS

Alcohol policy in Finland has not been as prioritized as in Norway and Sweden, and there has not been an active political support for restrictive social alcohol policy in Finland. Despite clear

similarities, the differences in Finland's, Norway's and Sweden's alcohol policies have increased since 2004, and it has become increasingly difficult to talk about a common Nordic alcohol policy.

■ KEY WORDS

Alcohol monopolies, alcohol policy Nordic countries, EU, Finland, Norway, Sweden

mitt. Karlsson & Tigerstedt (2004) noterade som de främsta skillnaderna att Finland varit snarare reaktiv än aktiv i förhållande till de internationella utmaningarna, och valt att arbeta med mindre ekonomiska resurser och en mindre professioniserad alkoholpolitisk apparat. Skillnaderna i ländernas agerande beror delvis på externa faktorer. Norge har t.ex. haft större handlingsfrihet i sin alkoholpolitik än Finland och Sverige eftersom landet inte tillhör EU. Men skillnaderna mellan länderna har också avspeglat reella olikheter i ländernas förhållningssätt till de alkoholpolitiska sakfrågorna.

Med *alkoholpolitik* avses i denna artikel strategier och politiska beslut som rör förhållandet mellan alkohol, hälsa och social välfärd (Babor et al. 2003, 6–8). Termen *nordisk alkoholpolitik* igen syftar på det restriktiva sättet som kännetecknat alkoholmonopolländerna i deras reglering av alkoholhandeln samt produktion och konsumtion av alkoholdrycker (Tigerstedt & Karlsson 2003, 409). Enligt vedertagen uppfattning har den nordiska alkoholpolitiska traditionen vilat på tre hörnstenar: 1) kraftig begränsning av det privata vinstintresset, 2) kraftig begränsning av den fysiska tillgängligheten och 3) höga priser (skatter) (Tigerstedt 2001b, 496–497).

I artikeln undersöks vilka förändringar som inträffat i Finlands, Norges och Sveriges alkoholpolitik efter 2004. Hypotesen är att skillnaderna i ländernas alkoholpolitik ökat ytterligare sedan införselgränserna slopades år 2004 och att speciellt Finlands alkoholpolitiska agerande avvikit från de två övriga monopolländernas.

Artikeln koncentrerar sig på den offentliga sektorns alkoholpolitiska linjedragningar och inkluderar varken tredje sektorns eller alkoholindustrins insatser. Teman som tas upp är *alkoholskatter, tillgänglighets- och efterfrågebegränsande åtgärder* samt *handlingsplaner och alkoholprogrammen*. Eftersom möjligheterna att bedriva en självständig nationell alkoholpolitik har minskat diskuteras även vilka gemensamma alkoholpolitiska insatser de nordiska länderna enats om. Som bakgrund kartläggs hur tillgängligheten till alkohol utvecklats fram till 2004 och hur alkoholkonsumtionen utvecklats mellan åren 1994–2006. I övrigt avgränsas artikeln till tiden efter 2004.

Förutom relevant forskningslitteratur, har jag som källmaterial använt offentliga utredningar och andra offentliga dokument från åren 2000–2008, såsom lagberedningar, alkoholpolitiska handlingsplaner samt utredningar och rapporter (Alkoholprogrammet 2004–2007; Alkoholbranschens idrottsponsring 2003; Gränslös utmaning 2005; Opptrappningsplanen för rusfeltet 2007; Regeringens proposition 2005/06:30; Regeringsprogrammet... 2007; Regeringens handlingsplan... 2003–2005 & 2006–2008; Statsrådets principbeslut... 2003; Var går gränsen? 2004).

I tillägg till de skriftliga källorna har intervjuer med nio alkoholpolitiska nyckelpersoner i Sverige och Norge utnyttjats<sup>1</sup>. Intervjuerna som var semistrukturerade genomfördes i Oslo och Stockholm i maj-juni 2006 och koncentrerade sig på att röna ut ländernas alkoholpolitiska vägval. Bland intervjupersonerna fanns forskare, folkhälsolobbyister och ledande tjänstemän inom social- och hälsovårdssektorn. De transkriberade intervjuerna används som källmaterial, men några citat eller direkta hänvisningar till intervjuerna görs inte.

## Bakgrund

### ■ Tillgängligheten ökar

I Finland är tillgängligheten till alkoholdrycker bättre än i grannländerna Norge och Sverige (Tabell 1). Samtliga Alko-butiker har redan länge fungerat enligt självbetjäningsprincipen, öppettiderna är längre och antalet detaljhandelsställen betydligt fler än i Norge och Sverige (Cisneros Örnberg & Ólafsdóttir 2007).

I Finland ökade antalet utskänkningsställen med fulla rättigheter med 70 procent från 1994 till 2003 och antalet gästplatser nästan tredubblades. Antalet monopolbutiker ökade från 248 år 1994 till 314 år 2003. I tillägg till butiksnätverket erbjuder Alko sina tjänster via ett utlämningsnätverk på över 130 ställen i glest bebyggda områden. (Rusmedelsstatistisk årsbok 2000; Statistisk årsbok om alkohol och narkotika 2007.) Antalet ställen som säljer svaga alkoholdrycker har hållits oförändrat, vilket främst beror på en minskning i antalet livsmedelsaffärer till följd av en centralisering av livsmedelshandeln (Finnish Grocery Trade... 2007, 15–17). Däremot har dryckessortimentet

**Tabell 1.** Tillgänglighet till alkohol i Finland, Norge och Sverige 2003

| Finland  | Norge   | Sverige                                    |
|--|---|--|
| Alko:  | Vinmonopolet:                                   | Systembolaget:                             |
| öppet/vecka: <b>54 timmar</b>                      | öppet/vecka: 43 timmar                          | öppet/vecka: 45 timmar                     |
| butiker/100 000 inv.: <b>6,0</b>                   | butiker/100 000 inv.: 4,1                       | butiker/100 000 inv.: 4,7                  |
| (+ 22 % sedan 1994)                                | (+ 64 % sedan 1994)                             | (+ 9 % sedan 1994)                         |
| utskänkningsställen/<br>100 000 inv.: 97           | utskänkningsställen<br>100 000 inv.: <b>114</b> | utskänkningsställen/<br>100 000 inv.: 97   |
| (+ 64 % sedan 1994)                                | (+ 211 % sedan 1994)                            | (+ 67 % sedan 1994)                        |
| detaljhandelslicenser/<br>100 000 inv.: <b>132</b> | detaljhandelslicenser/<br>100 000 inv.: 94      | detaljhandelslicenser/<br>100 000 inv.: 98 |
| (+ 5 % sedan 1994)                                 | (- 13 % sedan 1994)                             | (- 33 % sedan 1993)                        |

Källa: Nordic alcohol statistics 1993–2004

i detaljhandeln utökats. Innan 1995 fick man endast sälja mellanöl i livsmedelsbutikerna, medan det numera är tillåtet att sälja även andra svaga alkoholdrycker tillverkade genom jäsnings, såsom t.ex. cider och long drinks. Dessutom kan dessa drycker numera inhandlas även på kiosker och bensinstationer.

Utmärkande för Norge är den sena men snabba ökningen i tillgängligheten. Antalet utskänkningsställen med fulla rättigheter mer än fördubblades från 2 333 ställen år 1994 till 5 198 ställen år 2003. Något överraskande hade Norge mest utskänkningsställen per invånare 2003 och hade även utökat sitt monopolnätverk från 110 butiker år 1994 till 188 butiker år 2003. Även utbudet av dryckessorter har vuxit i Norge efter att Stortinget sedan januari 2003 tillåtit försäljning av alkohol i livsmedelsbutiker, med hänvisning till regelverket för den gemensamma marknaden (Innst.O.nr.22 2002–2003). Monopolbutiker med självbetjäning infördes på prov 1999 och 2004 fungerade 64 procent av butiks nätverket enligt självbetjäningssprincipen. Till skillnad från Alko och Systembolaget har Vinmonopolet inga utlämningsställen, men idkar försäljning via internet och posten, något som varken Systembolaget eller Alko gör.

Även i Sverige har tillgängligheten till alkoholdrycker förbättrats. Från 1994 till 2003 steg antalet restauranger med fulla rättigheter med 69 procent. Likaså har detaljhandeln med alkohol vuxit fastän inte i samma utsträckning som i Finland och Norge. Systembolaget utökade sitt butiks nätverk från 375 butiker år 1994 till 426 butiker år 2003 av vilka ca 40 procent fungerade enligt självbetjäningssprincipen. (Alkoholstatistik 2005, 2006.) Utöver

dessa upprätthålls ca 550 utlämningsställen runt om i Sverige. Såsom i Finland har antalet övriga detaljhandelsställen för alkohol (folköl) minskat beroende på en centralisering av butiksstrukturen (Livsmedelsförsäljningsstatistik... 2007, 18).

#### ■ Totalkonsumtionen på uppgång

Sedan de stora alkoholpolitiska omvälvningarna i mitten av 1990-talet (se t.ex. Sulkunen et al. 2000) har alkoholkonsumtionen i Finland, Norge och Sverige stigit nästan kontinuerligt (Figur 1). I Sverige ökade alkoholkonsumtionen med 25 procent från 1994 till 2003 (Kühlhorn et al. 2000; Boman mfl. 2006). Som högst var konsumtionen i Sverige 2004 (10,5 liter), men har sedan dess sjunkit något och 2006 konsumerade svenskarna 9,7 liter ren alkohol per person över 15 år (Alkoholkonsumtionen i Sverige ... 2007).

I Finland har ökningen i alkoholkonsumtionen varit något blygsammare, men den ligger fortfarande på en klart högre nivå än i Sverige. Konsumtionen steg med 15 procent mellan åren 1994–2003 till 11,4 liter ren alkohol per person över 15 år. Den högsta nivån, 12,7 liter, nådde konsumtionen år 2005. Trots att konsumtionen sjönk något 2006, ökade alkoholkonsumtionen från 2003 till 2006 med 10 procent (12,5 liter) (Statistisk årsbok om alkohol och narkotika 2006). I Norge har totalkonsumtionen stigit från ca 6,4 liter år 1994 till 8,0 liter 2003 och 8,6 liter år 2006, dvs. en ökning med 34 procent från 1994 till 2006 (Bryhni 2007). I Norge konsumerade man 2003 ungefär lika mycket som man gjorde i Sverige 1994, medan konsumtionen i Sverige 2006 var lika hög som i Finland för drygt tio år sedan. I Finland har konsumtionen år 2006 redan

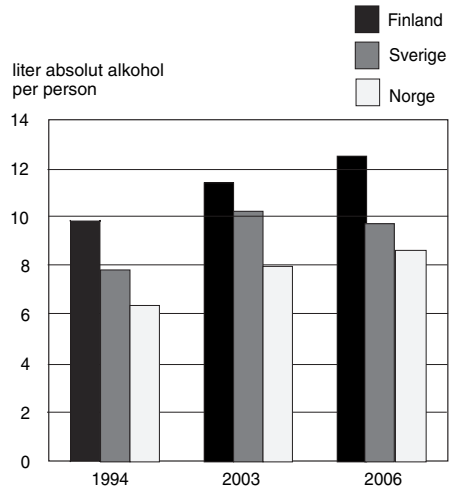
stigit till samma nivå som i Danmark och Frankrike (Tigerstedt & Österberg 2007).

I en europeisk jämförelse har den oregistrerade alkoholkonsumtionen i de nordiska länderna varit på en hög nivå (Leifman 2001). I Sverige uppskattades dess andel av total konsumtionen till 31 procent år 2006, efter att året innan ha utgjort hela 36 procent (Alkoholkonsumtionen 2006). I Norge har den oregistrerade konsumtionens andel redan länge varit hög och uppskattades år 2006 vara mellan 25 och 30 procent av total konsumtionen (Bryhni 2007). I Finland har den oregistrerade konsumtionens andel varit på en betydligt lägre nivå än i grannländerna, men även där har den stått för 18 procent av total konsumtionen (Statistisk årsbok om alkohol... 2007).

Varifrån kommer då den oregistrerade alkoholen? Är det fråga om hemtillverkning, smuggling eller resandeförsel och vilka skillnader finns det länderna emellan?

Den oregistrerade alkoholkonsumtionen i Sverige har dominerats av resandeförseln, som ökade med hela 51 procent från 2001 till 2004. Därefter minskade införseln något och dess andel av total konsumtionen sjönk till 29 procent år 2006. Hemtillverkningens andel av total konsumtionen var endast ca 2 procent. Över hälften av all starksprit som konsumerades i Sverige var införskaffad i utlandet. Speciellt stor var införseln i södra Sverige, där alkohol från Danmark och Tyskland strömmade in, antingen över Öresundsbron eller via färjtrafiken i Helsingborg. (Alkoholkonsumtionen 2006.)

I Norges fall har inte privatimporten utan hemtillverkningen av brännvin och vin traditionellt stått för lejonparten av den oregistrerade konsumtionen. Privat-



**Figur 1.** Estimerad total konsumtion\* i Finland, Sverige och Norge\*\* mätt i liter absolut alkohol per person över 15 år, 1994, 2003 och 2006

\* Total konsumtion: registrerad konsumtion + estimerad införsel, smuggling och hemtillverkning.

\*\* Total konsumtionen i Norge: reg. kons. 6,46 (75%) + oreg. kons. 2,15 (25%) = 8,61 liter (Bryhni 2007).

importen började växa ordentligt i slutet av 1990-talet (Karlsson et al. 2005, 112; Særvgifter og grenshandel 2003, 47–48) och tillväxten har karakteriserats som "dramatisk" (Nordlund 2003, 30). Tack vare sina strikta införselgränser har Norge dock inte råkat ut för en störtvåg av billig alkohol. Förutom den livliga gränshandeln med Sverige importeras en betydande del av den oregistrerade alkoholen fortfarande skattefritt. År 2004 stod den skattefria alkoholförseln och gränshandeln med Sverige för 2/3 av den oregistrerade alkoholkonsumtionen. Smuggelspriten inberäknad skulle alkoholförselns andel ha varit ännu större. (Horverak 2006, 26–27.)

I Finland har privatinförseln redan länge stått för en betydande del av den oregistrerade konsumtionen. År 2003 beräknades införseln stå för dryga hälften av all



oregistrerad alkoholkonsumtion, medan dess andel år 2006 beräknades till 75 procent. Smugglingen inberäknad är siffran närmare 80 procent. Största delen av privatinförseln härstammar från Estland och från färjorna som trafikerar mellan Tallinn och Helsingfors. En annan betydande införselkanal är färjorna som trafikerar mellan Finland och Sverige och som på grund av Ålands skatteundantag fortfarande kan sälja skattefri alkohol ombord (Karlsson 1999).

När det gäller utvecklingen av tillgängligheten och alkoholkonsumtionen så är likheterna mellan länderna påfallande, trots att även skillnader förekommer. Tillgängligheten till alkoholdrycker verkar vara bäst i Finland, vilket även återspeglas i den höga alkoholkonsumtionen. Konsumtionsstrukturen i länderna präglas av en hög oregistrerad alkoholkonsumtion, vars andel i Finland dock är betydligt lägre än i Sverige och Norge.

## Nordisk alkoholpolitik från 2004

Under de senaste åren har alkoholpolitik varit ett livligt politiskt debattämne i de tre länderna, vilket bland annat mångfalden av producerade dokument och betänkanden bevisar. En helt annan fråga är dock hur ländernas alkoholpolitik skiljer sig från varandra. Är kanske Sveriges alkoholskattepolitik närmare besläktad med Finlands än med Norges? På vilket sätt avviker å andra sidan de senaste tillgänglighets- och efterfrågebegränsande åtgärderna i Finland från de i Norge och Sverige? Avviker Finlands och Sveriges alkoholpolitiska handlingsplaner väsentligt från Norges? Ifall klyftorna länderna emellan har vuxit efter 2004, så vad har

länderna längre gemensamt?

### ■ Alkoholskatter

Tidigare forskning visar att höga alkoholskatter tillhör de mest effektiva åtgärderna för att stävja en stigande alkoholkonsumtion (Bruun et al. 1975; Edwards et al. 1994; Babor et al. 2003). Samtidigt har dock möjligheterna att använda skattevapnet minskat (Tigerstedt et al. 2006). Vilken är alkoholskatternas roll i ländernas alkoholpolitik i dag?

I Finland var sänkningen av alkoholskatten i mars 2004 ämnad att motverka införseln av alkoholdrycker från Estland. Beslutet att sänka skatten hade starka finanspolitiska, polisiära och sysselsättningspolitiska förtecken och fattades utanför alkoholprogrammet och vid sidan av den övriga alkoholpolitiken. Genom beslutet ville regeringen behålla så mycket som möjligt av alkoholskattebasen inom landets gränser och hindra uppkomsten av en illegal spritmarknad i södra Finland. Alkoholindustrins, dagligvaruhandelns samt hotell- och restaurangbranschens roll som sysselsättare vägdes också in när beslutet fattades. De sociala och hälsorelaterade motiven var klart sekundära. (Karlsson et al. 2005)

Trots att regeringen i sitt principbeslut 2003 enades om en gemensam alkoholpolitisk linje, kan man ifrågasätta om det existerar en enhetlig alkoholpolitik i Finland, eftersom det alkoholpolitiska beslutsfattandet verkar vara uppdelat på två separata spår (Tigerstedt 2005). Det ena spåret består av skattepolitiken och leds av finansministeriet, medan det andra spåret, dit bland annat alkoholprogrammet hör, styrs av sociala och folkhälso-politiska mål och leds av social- och häl-

sovårdsministeriet. Någon koordinerad syn på alkoholpolitiken förekommer inte ministerierna emellan, och oftast har finansministeriets syn på skattefrågor varit avgörande på bekostnad av social- och folkhälsopolitiken (Karlsson & Tigerstedt 2004). Skattesänkingsbeslutet år 2004 var ett exempel på detta.

Om trycket att sänka alkoholskatterna i Finland inför år 2004 var stort, så kan det samma sägas om Sverige. Medan alkoholskattesänkningen i Finland bereddes av en inofficiell tjänstemannagrupp ledd av finansministeriet, inleddes i Sverige ett omfattande utredningsarbete lett av en parlamentarisk utredningsman med egen stab. I Finland publicerades aldrig några offentliga beredningsdokument, medan den svenska utredningen publicerade två digra rapporter (Var går gränsen? 2004; Gränslös utmaning 2005). Beredningarna i länderna kom dock fram till samma slutsats, dvs. att alkoholskatterna bör sänkas för att stävja en ökad införsel av alkohol.

I Finland godkände riksdagen alkoholskattesänkningen i december 2003 med en överväldigande 2/3 majoritet. Förslaget stöddes över partigränserna och enighet rådde om att beslutet var ett nödvändigt ont. I Sverige däremot väckte frågan stor politisk debatt, och trots att regeringen var redo att sänka skatterna, var samarbetspartierna inte av samma åsikt. Även hos regeringspartiet socialdemokraterna förekom kritiska röster gentemot en skattesänkning och till slut gav regeringen vika och förslaget om sänkta skatter gick i stöpet.

Trots regimskiftet i Sverige 2006 har den borgerliga koalitionsregeringen inte vidtagit några radikala åtgärder för att sänka alkoholskatterna. År 2008 genomfördes en liten höjning av ölskatten och en mindre

sänkning av vinskatten. Med dessa åtgärder förberedde sig regeringen för EG-domstolens dom i fallet där kommissionen anklagade Sverige för skattediskriminering av vin till fördel av inhemskt producerad öl (C-167/05). I mars 2008 föll domen något överraskande emot generaladvokatens beslutsförslag, till Sveriges fördel.

I Finland har den borgerliga regeringen de senaste åren talat för en åtstramning av alkoholpolitiken och höjda alkoholskatter (Regeringsprogrammet... 2007, 61) och i budgeten för 2008 ingick en 10 procents höjning på öl- och vinskatten och en 15 procents ökning på spritskatten. Trots att denna skattehöjnings effekter på alkoholpriserna och -konsumtionen var marginal, kommer skatteintäkterna enligt försiktiga beräkningar att stiga med minst 40 miljoner euro per år. Den finska regeringen signalerade också att en ny höjning kunde komma ifråga 2009 om konsumtionen och skadorna fortsätter att öka.

I motsats till Finland och Sverige, påverkades Norge endast indirekt av att kvoterna för resandeförsel av alkohol slopades inom EU. Sänkta alkoholskatter debatterades flitigt, men en sänkning av alkoholskatterna lik den i Finland var aldrig ens uppe på den politiska agendan. I juli 2006 höjdes den skattefria kvoten för vin i Norge från 2 till 3 liter, så att reglerna bättre skulle motsvara de packningsstorlekar (bag-in-box) som förs in i landet. Någon större effekt på införselmängderna hade förändringen inte, eftersom den bara befäste gängse praxis vid tullkontrollerna. Utöver kvothöjningen gjordes en 1,9 procents inflationsjustering på öl- och vinskatterna i januari 2007.

Sammanfattningsvis är alkoholskattenivån i monopolländerna fortfarande bland

de högsta i Europa, med Norge och Island i topp, medan Sverige har den högsta spritskatten och Finland återfinns bland dem som har de högsta öl- och vinskattorna i EU (Anderson & Baumberg 2006, 386). Spritskatten i Finland är dock betydligt lägre än i de övriga nordiska monopolländerna och på samma nivå som i Storbritannien och något lägre än i Irland. Den minskande alkoholförseln under de senaste två åren och de ökade alkoholskadorna i Finland har gett upphov till en smärre renässans för skattevapnet. Alla tre länder har justerat sina alkoholskatter med varierande inverkan på alkoholpriserna (Tabell 2).

Trycket på skattehöjningar har under de senaste åren inte varit lika stort i Norge och Sverige som i Finland, där konsumtionen och skadorna efter skattesänkningen år 2004 ökat till en helt ny nivå. Trots att den nationella alkoholpolitikens svängrum krympt och användbarheten av skattevapnet naggats i kanterna, bevisar utvecklingen de senaste åren att alkoholskatter fortfarande kan användas som ett alkoholpolitiskt vapen, om den politiska viljan finns. Den sociala och folkhälso-mässiga argumenteringen i den finska alkoholskattepolitiken framstår dock som relativt svag i jämförelse med Norge och Sverige.

### ■ Tillgänglighets- och efterfrågebegränsande åtgärder

Ökningen i alkoholkonsumtionen och alkoholskadorna som inträffade i Finland efter 2004 fick regeringen och riksdagen att i november 2005 tillsätta en alkoholpolitisk ministergrupp med uppgift att bereda åtgärder för att minska alkoholskadorna. Ministergruppen hade en stram tidtabell och presenterade i mars 2006 ett alkoholpolitiskt åtgärdsprogram som innehöll bland annat följande åtgärder:

- detaljförsäljning av alkoholdrycker får starta tidigast kl. 9 i stället för kl. 7,
- mängdrabatterna förbjuds vid försäljning av öl,
- alkoholreklam får visas i TV endast efter kl. 21 och alkoholreklam i biografier förbjuds i samband med föreställningar som är tillåtna för minderåriga,
- alkoholförpackningar och -flaskor förses med varningstexter om att alkohol kan orsaka fosterskador,
- övervakningen av förbudet att sälja alkoholdrycker åt minderåriga och berusade effektiviseras. (Alkoholförhållandena i EU-Finland 2006, 28)

Lagpaketet bestod av en disparat blandning av åtgärder, som mestadels förutsatte små justeringar i alkohollagen. Trots vetskapen om att de enskilda åtgärderna ensamma för sig var otillräckliga för att sänka totalkonsumtionen, var förslaget ett sätt för regeringen att markera en politisk

**Tabell 2.** Alkoholskatter som alkoholpolitiskt vapen i Finland, Norge och Sverige

| Finland  | Norge  | Sverige                                      |
|--|--|--|
| Stor skattesänkning 2004 (- 33%)                           | Skatterna oförändrade 2003–2006  | Skatterna oförändrade 1998–2007              |
| 2008: Alkoholskatterna höjs. En eventuell ny höjning 2009. | 2007: Alkoholskatterna inflationsjusteras, skattefria kvoten för vin höjs från 2 till 3 liter. | 2008: Ölskatten höjs och vinskatten sjunker. |

vilja i alkoholfrågorna. Tillsammans med skattehöjningarna (se ovan) antogs det att lagändringarna kunde ha en inverkan på konsumtionsutvecklingen och om inte annat så dämpa en ökning i totalkonsumtionen. Någon radikal alkoholpolitisk reform är det dock inte fråga om.

Förslaget om att senarelägga detaljförsäljningen till kl. 9 trädde i kraft i april 2007, och de sista lagändringarna stadfästes i maj samma år. Begränsningarna i alkoholkonsumtion i TV och på bio samt förbudet mot mängdrabatt av alkoholdrycker trädde i kraft i januari 2008. Då förbjöds även reklam för nedsatta alkoholpriser utanför butiker och reklam för s.k. happy-hour priser utanför utskänkningsställen.

Varningstexter om att alkohol kan vara skadlig för hälsan och speciellt för fostret skulle införas på alkoholf flaskorna i januari 2009. Som väntat godkände EU-kommissionen dock inte den föreslagna ordalydelsen, som byggde på en allmän hälsovarning. Efter kommissionens ställningstagande meddelade omsorgsminister Risikko att hon vill dra tillbaka lagen om varningstexter helt och hållet, och i april 2008 röstade riksdagen ner lagen om varningstexter (RP 38/2008 rd). Som orsak för helomvändningen nämnde ministern kommissionens negativa hållning och att hon inte själv tror texterna har någon effekt. (Helsingin Sanomat 16.1.2008) Kommissionens uttalande i frågan är ett gott exempel på hur det nationella självbestämmandet i alkoholpolitiken decimerats under EU-medlemskapet. Ministerns agerande pekar för sin del på bristande kontinuitet i regeringens alkoholpolitiska beslutsfattande och enligt Montonen (2008) på en kraftig lobbyverksamhet från alkoholindustrins sida.

Trots de ovan nämnda inskränkningarna i tillgängligheten är tillgången till alkoholdrycker i Finland fortfarande den bästa bland de tre monopolländerna. Som ovan visats ökade antalet Alko-butiker och utskänkningsställen från 2003 till 2007 med ytterligare ca 10 procent. Däremot fortsatte minskningen av antalet detaljhandelslicenser för svaga alkoholdrycker med 10 procent, vilket visat sig vara något av en nordisk trend.

De senaste årens alkoholpolitik i Finland har framförallt präglats av de sänkta alkoholskatterna och de därpå följande något kompenseringarna i lagstiftningen, som knappast är tillräckliga för att neutralisera den effekt som händelserna 2004 hade för alkoholkonsumtionen och alkoholrelaterade skadorna i Finland. De alkoholpolitiska förändringarna i Sverige har däremot under senare år präglats av EG-domstolens beslut i det så kallade Rosengren-målet (C-170/07) och i kommissionens mål (C-186/05) mot det svenska förbudet för privatpersoner att importera alkoholdrycker till landet. I sitt domslut från 5 juni 2007 slog EG-domstolen fast, stick i stäv med generaladvokatens förslag, att det svenska förbudet mot privatimport av alkohol utgör en handelsrestriktion enligt EG-fördragets artikel 28. Domen var prejudicerande även för kommissionens mål som föll den 4 oktober 2007. Domsluten är goda exempel på hur den gemensamma marknaden och speciellt EG-domstolen begränsar den nationella alkoholpolitikens svängrum. Följaktligen är näthandel med alkohol lagligt, förutsatt att svensk alkoholskatt betalas. Regelverket för näthandel är dock oklart och förtydligande regler väntas träda ikraft under år 2008. De alkoholpolitiska reformerna i

Sverige har således varit frampressade av ett yttre tryck från EG-domstolen och mött ett klart socialpolitiskt motstånd.

Tillgängligheten till alkohol i Sverige har hållits tämligen oförändrad sedan början av 2004. Antalet detaljhandelslicenser för folköl minskade med ett par procentenheter från 2003 till 2006, medan antalet utskänkningsställen från 2003 till 2005 ökade med 6 procent. Antalet Systembolag minskade mellan 2003 och 2006 från 426 till 411 butiker, av vilka 61 procent fungerade enligt självbetjäningsprincipen (Muhonen et al. 2007, 14).

Utvecklingen i alkoholpolitiken i Norge påminner mer om utvecklingen i Sverige och skiljer sig från den turbulenta situationen i Finland. Orsaken till detta är att varken Sverige eller Norge gjorde några större alkoholpolitiska reformer inför år 2004, medan Finland, som sänkte sina alkoholskatter stort, har tampats med stigande alkoholkonsumtion och förvärrade alkoholskador (Österberg 2005).

Trots att det inte skett några större alkoholpolitiska reformer i Norge har den offentliga debatten kring alkoholpolitiken fortsatt varit livlig. I juni 2007 föreslog det s.k. Særvgiftsutvalget att den skattefria handeln med alkohol och tobak skulle avskaffas och alkoholskatterna höjas med 10 procent (En vurdering av særvgiftene 2007). Fastän majoriteten av utskottets medlemmar stödde förslaget, dementerade regeringen planerna på att slopa den skattefria handeln redan innan rapporten publicerats. Om det politiska läget inte märkbart förändras och om alkoholinförselein inte ökar är förslaget om en alkoholskattehöjning dock mer realistiskt.

Av de tre monopolländerna har tillgången till alkoholdrycker i Norge ökat kraf-

tigast under de senaste åren. Landet har det mest utbredda utskänkningsnätverket, vars alkoholpolitiska betydelse dock inte bör överskattas eftersom största delen av alkoholkonsumtionen i de nordiska länderna kanaliseras via detaljhandeln. En utbyggnad av monopolnätverket har varit ett kontinuerligt diskussionsämne och krav på att utöka nätverket till alla norska kommuner har inte varit ovanliga. Tidigare kunde Social- och hälsodepartementet sätta en övre gräns för antalet monopolbutiker i landet, men 2005 upphävdes denna bestämmelse.

För att möta dessa krav, lanserade Vinmonopolet i augusti 2007 ett filialkoncept, som gick ut på att små, högst 25 m<sup>2</sup> stora butiker öppnas på områden som saknar ett Vinmonopol. Filialerna har ett bassortiment och är öppna 10–12 timmar i veckan. År 2007 fanns det redan långt över 200 Vinmonopol i Norge av vilka 94 procent fungerade enligt självbetjäningsprincipen (Muhonen et al. 2007, 14). Enligt planerna skall 70–90 nya butiker och filialer grundas de kommande åren (Vinmonopolets filialkoncept 2007), vilket innebär en avsevärd ökning i tillgången till alkoholdrycker. Samtidigt har även antalet utskänkningsställen ökat något, medan antalet detaljhandelslicenser, precis som i Finland och Sverige, minskat.

#### ■ Handlingsplaner och alkoholprogram

År 2004 utmålades av många forskare, tjänstemän och politiker som ett ödesår för den restriktiva nordiska alkoholpolitiken och Finland, Sverige och Norge reagerade olika på den nya situationen. Gemensamt för alla tre länder var dock att man med hjälp av alkoholpolitiska eller rusmedelpolitiska handlingsplaner och -program

försökte ta itu med de utmaningar länderna stod inför. På vilket sätt försöker länderna med hjälp av sina handlingsplaner komplettera eller ersätta den försvagade nordiska alkoholpolitiken?

I Finland är huvudmålet för alkoholprogrammet (2004–2007 & 2008–2011), som är förankrat i statsrådets principbeslut från 2003, att förebygga och begränsa alkohols skadeverkningar. Målet skall uppnås genom att minska alkoholens skadliga inverkan på barns och ungas välbefinnande, minska riskbruk av alkohol och dess skadeverkningar, samt sänka den totala alkoholkonsumtionen. (Alkoholprogrammet 2004–2007.) Alkoholprogrammets roll i alkoholpolitiken har främst varit att bilda nätverk, stödja pågående verksamhet och medverka i opinionsbildningen. Trots att alkoholprogrammet inte alltid hör samman i det alkoholpolitiska beslutsfattandet, har det inte varit helt betydelselöst. Programmet har åtnjutit den högsta politiska ledningens stöd (Regeringsprogrammet... 2007, 61) och haft en viss, om än begränsad, funktion beträffande resursfördelningen.

Riktlinjerna för den svenska alkoholpolitiken utstakas i den nationella handlingsplanen för att förebygga alkoholskador. I handlingsplanen som gällde för åren 2001–2005 (Regeringens proposition 2000/2001:20) presenterades alkoholpolitiska åtgärder avsedda att stimulera utvecklingen av förebyggande insatser på kommunal nivå som skulle kompensera för en försvagning av det s.k. prisinstrumentet. För genomförandet av handlingsplanen ansvarade Alkoholkommittén. Den svenska handlingsplanen var välfinansierad; under åren 2001–2005 erhöll planen över 1 mrd SEK. En ny handlingsplan för

åren 2006–2010, godkändes av regeringen i november 2005 och trots att alkohol- och narkotikafrågor till en början behandlades i samma handlingsplan, valde riksdagen att skilja på dem när den godkände planen i februari 2006. Den nya planen poängterar vikten av ett långsiktigt förebyggande arbete på lokal nivå. Andra prioriterade områden är barn till föräldrar med missbruksproblem, unga vuxna och insatser inom arbetslivet (Regeringens proposition 2005/06:30).

I januari 2008 lades det centrala alkoholpolitiska organet Alkoholkommittén ner och dess uppgifter överfördes till Socialstyrelsen och Folkhälsoinstitutet. Hur dessa lyckas med att överta Alkoholkommitténs uppgifter är i skrivande stund för tidigt att säga. I oktober 2007 beslöt regeringen också att inrätta en samordningsfunktion inom regeringskansliet för alkohol-, narkotika-, dopnings- och tobaksförebyggande politik. Samtidigt inrättades ett rådgivande organ åt regeringen i alkohol- och drogfrågor, med särskild uppgift att informera regeringen om policyrelevanta forsknings- och utredningsresultat.

En långsiktig planering och stabil grund har kännetecknat den svenska alkoholpolitiken under de senaste årtiondena. Detta kan delvis tillskrivas socialdemokraternas långa regeringsmakt (1994–2006) och det faktum att ett och samma parti suttit på alla centrala ministerposter. Hela förklaringen är detta dock inte, eftersom även den borgerliga koalitionsregeringen (2006–) har stått för en tämligen traditionell och konservativ alkoholpolitik. Några större försök till radikala kursändringar av alkoholpolitiken har inte gjorts och även finansieringen av den svenska alkoholpo-

litiken har varit tryggad, om också inte på samma nivå som i början av årtiondet. För åren 2008–2010 har 260 miljoner SEK/år reserverats för finansiering av olika alkoholpolitiska åtgärder.

De generella riktlinjerna för alkoholpolitiken i Norge utstakas i Regjeringens handlingsplan mot rusmiddelproblemer (2006–2008) och i Opptreppningsplanen for rusfeltet (St.prp. nr. 1 (2007–2008)), som lades fram i budgetförslaget i oktober 2007. I Norge har narkotika och alkohol redan flera år behandlats i en och samma handlingsplan till skillnad från Finland och Sverige. Trots att handlingsplanerna har en styrande funktion vad gäller resursallokering, har planerna saknat den operativa karaktär som den svenska handlingsplanen haft. De norska planerna visionerar om frihet från alkohol- och drogproblem, med huvudmålsättning att minska de sociala och hälsomässiga problem som orsakas av alkohol- och drogbruk. I Opptreppningsplanen accentueras folkhälsoperspektivets betydelse, förbättrad tillgänglighet till social- och hälsoservice, bättre samordning samt kvalitetskontroll i prevention och behandling. I

planen prioriteras bland annat minskning av totalkonsumtionen, stärkt upplysning och preventionsarbete i arbetslivet samt internationellt samarbete.

I alla tre länder har handlingsplanerna som central målsättning att sänka totalkonsumtionen för att minska alkoholens skadeverkningar. Totalkonsumtionsmodellen har en bred retorisk acceptans i monopolländerna, likaså verkar handlingsplanernas formella status vara hög eftersom alla planer godkännts antingen av regeringen eller av riksdagen (Tabell 3).

Innehållsmässigt påminner handlingsplanerna åtminstone ytligt om varandra. Barn och unga är en prioriterad målgrupp, likaså är punktnykerhet ett återkommande tema i alla planer. Alkoholpolitikens strukturer har också en central roll. I Norge och Sverige har man satsat på samordning och uppbyggnad av en lokalt förankrad alkoholpolitik, medan man i Finland satsat på frivilligt nätverksbygge och partnerskap. (Karlsson & Tigerstedt 2004.) Som enda land prioriterar Norge internationellt samarbete i sin handlingsplan. Eftersom landet inte har talan i EU, men via sitt EES-medlemskap är bundet vid de

**Tabell 3.** Alkoholpolitiska handlingsplan och -program i Finland, Norge och Sverige

| Finland   | Norge   | Sverige   |
|---|---|---|
| Mandat: Regeringen  | Mandat: Riksdagen   | Mandat: Riksdagen   |
| Målsättning: Lägre totalkonsumtion, mindre skador   | Målsättning: Lägre totalkonsumtion, mindre skador   | Målsättning: Lägre totalkonsumtion, mindre skador   |
| Prioriterade områden:<br>– barn & unga<br>– punktnykerhet<br>– riskbruk av alkohol<br>– nätverksbygge, lokal förankring | Prioriterade områden:<br>– barn & unga<br>– punktnykerhet<br>– behandling & tidig identifikation<br>– information & upplysning<br>– samordning<br>– internationellt samarbete | Prioriterade områden:<br>– barn & unga<br>– punktnykerhet<br>– behandling<br>– riskgrupper<br>– strukturbygge, lokal prevention |
| Finansiering: Nöjaktig  | Finansiering: God   | Finansiering: Utmärkt   |

flesta beslut som berör den gemensamma marknaden, har Norge varit mycket aktivt i att lyfta upp alkoholfrågor på den internationella agendan, speciellt inom EU och WHO.

Finansieringen av handlingsplanerna och alkoholpolitiken i de tre länderna kan inte mekaniskt jämföras eftersom finansieringskanalerna och -strukturerna varierar stort. Trots skillnader och sjunkande finansiering, utmärker sig Sverige som det land som gett mest resurser till alkoholpolitiska åtgärder under 2000-talet. Även i Norge har handlingsplanerna varit väl finansierade och i fortsättningen ser det ut som om alkoholpolitiken får ännu mer pengar. I Finland finansieras merparten av de alkoholpolitiska åtgärderna via andra kanaler och trots att finansieringen i Finland förbättrats, är den fortfarande på en lägre nivå än i Norge och Sverige. Finansieringsläget korrelerar också med alkoholfrågornas politiska status i Finland, som inte prioriterats lika högt som i de övriga monopolländerna.

## Diskussion och sammanfattning

Efter att kvoterna för resandeförsel av alkohol avskaffades inom EU, lyftes alkoholpolitiska sakfrågor upp på Nordiska rådets och ministerrådets agenda. Under finansministermötet i maj 2004 enades de nordiska ministrarna om en gemensam hållning i fråga om alkoholbeskattning och i oktober samma år formulerade social- och hälsoministrarna ett uttalande om en gemensam nordisk ståndpunkt om alkoholpolitik. De mest ambitiösa målsättningarna i uttalandet var riktade gentemot EU och strävade efter att:

a) halvera de indikativa nivåerna för resandeförsel av alkohol till en nivå av 5 liter för spritdrycker, 10 liter för starkvin, 45 liter för vin och 55 liter för öl och betrakta dessa mängder som maximigränser,

b) stöda finansministrarnas beslut att arbeta för att

- avskaffa nollskattesatsen på vin
- höja minimiskatterna på alkohol i EU
- höja skatten på alkohol
- främja lanseringen av en alkoholstrategi i EU
- hålla fast vid regelverket som innebär att endast de varor som en privatperson själv transporterar skall anses som privatinförsel. (Uttalelse fra Nordisk ministerråd 18.10.2004.)

Av dessa målsättningar lyckades länderna bäst med främjandet av en alkoholstrategi i EU, då kommissionen i oktober 2006 antog ett meddelande om att minska de alkoholrelaterade skadorna i EU (KOM (2006, 625). Vad gäller privatinförsel av alkoholdrycker från andra EU-länder har EG-domstolens divergerande domslut varken raserat eller cementerat nuvarande praxis. Sämre har det gått med kraven för en höjning av minimiskatten för alkohol i EU samt halveringen av de indikativa införselkvoterna, som varken fått gehör hos kommissionen eller hos övriga medlemsländer. Att försöka införa gränshinder inom EU, någonting som rubbar själva kärnan i unionsbygget, var med facit i hand ingen lyckad strategi. Däremot var försöket att höja minimiskattenivåerna på alkohol inom EU mer realistiskt och att det misslyckades visar bara hur svårt det är att driva igenom även små alkoholpolitiska reformer i EU (Tigerstedt et al. 2006).



När det gäller WHO enades ministrarna om att stödja, följa upp och bidra till det arbete och den kunskapsbildning som pågår inom WHO och dess Europakontor. Särskilt betonades vikten av att få alkohol med som en självständig resolution på Världshälsoförsamlingen (WHA). Som en klar framgång bör därför räknas de europeiska och globala ramverken för alkoholpolitik som godkändes på WHA (A58/26) i maj 2005 (Bull 2005) respektive i maj 2008 (A61/13).

Den nordiska alkoholpolitiska fronten kan främst beskrivas som en politisk viljeyttring gentemot EU. Länderna enades om att främja högre alkoholskatter och striktare kvoter för alkoholinförslut inom EU, utan att nå några framgångar. Några försök att likrikta ländernas alkoholpolitik gjordes inte, men däremot poängterades vikten av en självständig alkoholpolitik gentemot EU. Man kan dock fråga sig hur effektiv och trovärdig en front utåt är om alkoholpolitiken i enskilda länder avviker sinsemellan?

På dryga tio år har den alkoholpolitiska verksamhetsmiljön i Finland, Norge och Sverige förändrats rejält. Tillgängligheten till alkohol har förbättrats, alkoholkonsumtionen stigit och alkoholskadorna ökat. Samtidigt har alkoholen blivit en alltmer synlig och integrerad del av vardagen. Trots att Norge valde att stanna utanför EU, har utvecklingen där följt samma mönster som i Finland och Sverige. I vissa avseenden har tillgängligheten i Norge ökat t.o.m. snabbare, vilket är ett gott exempel på hur landet, utan direkt inblandning från EU eller andra yttre faktorer, liberaliserat sin alkoholpolitik.

I alla tre länder råder bred konsensus och acceptans om alkoholpolitikens mål-

sättningar, dvs. att sänka totalkonsumtionen och minska på de alkoholrelaterade skadorna. Även verksamhetsformerna som används för att administrera alkoholpolitiken är i mångt och mycket de samma, dvs. alkoholpolitiska handlingsplan och program.

Trots tydliga likheter finns det även skillnader, speciellt i fråga om hur handlingsplanerna är utformade och hur olika åtgärder finansieras. I detta hänseende utmärker sig Sverige som det land som satsat mest resurser på att bygga upp en ny alkoholpolitisk struktur, medan Norge ännu i stor utsträckning förlitar sig på traditionell nordisk alkoholpolitik med höga alkoholskatter och stränga införselgränser.

Endast Finland sänkte alkoholskatterna när införselgränserna för alkohol inom EU slopades. Att sänka skatterna i Finland och lämna dem orörda i Sverige var i allra högsta grad politiska beslut, medan Norge, som fortfarande kan upprätthålla sina införselkvoter, inte på samma sätt ställdes mot väggen. Att samtliga länder 2007 och 2008 justerat sina alkoholskattenivåer, visar att skatter fortfarande kan användas som alkoholpolitiska vapen, om dock inte i samma utsträckning som förr.

Av de tre monopolländerna utmärker sig Finland med den högsta alkoholkonsumtionen och den minst konsekventa och svagaste alkoholpolitiken sett ur social- och folkhälsosynvinkel. För att få bukt med konsumtions- och skadeökningen som präglade Finland efter alkoholskattesänkningen 2004, lade regeringen fram ett åtgärdspaket som främst bestod av smärre justeringar i alkohollagstiftningen. Varningstexter på alkoholförpackningar och förbud mot mängdrabatt av alkoholdrycker var några av förslagen som god-

kändes. Senare har dock varningstexterna stött på patrull i EU-kommissionen och i april 2008 röstade riksdagen ner förslaget om varningstexter redan innan lagen trätt ikraft.

I motsats till den turbulenta situationen i Finland har alkoholpolitiken i Norge präglats av livlig debatt men relativt få förändringar. Utmärkande för Norge, utöver den utökade tillgängligheten på alkohol, har varit ett aktivt internationellt engagemang, som delvis beror på att landet inte är medlem av EU. Beskrivande för alkoholpolitiken i Sverige har varit de stora strukturella och administrativa förändringarna, vars verkningar ännu är oklara, samt EG-domstolens agerande, som är ett gott exempel på hur EU-medlemskapet inskränkt den alkoholpolitiska självbestämmanderätten, i ett land där en restriktiv alkoholpolitik har ett brett politiskt och folkligt stöd.

Sammanfattningsvis kan man säga att länderna, trots avsevärda likheter i de alkoholpolitiska systemen, reagerat olika

på "ödesåret" 2004, och att skillnaderna i monopolländernas alkoholpolitiska lösningar ökat. Den politiska retoriken och huvudinstrumenten, monopolen och skatteinstrumentet, samt en aktivering av den lokala nivån, är några exempel på likheter i de tre länderna. Å andra sidan har det blivit allt svårare att tala om en gemensam nordisk alkoholpolitik. I motsats till Norge och Sverige har alkoholpolitiken i Finland haft en prägel av en andra rangens fråga och det har saknats ett aktivt politiskt stöd för en restriktiv politik. Speciellt sårbar har den finska alkoholpolitiken varit när trycket från EU och omvärlden ökat. Alkoholskattesänkningen år 2004 och avsaknaden av resoluta motåtgärder efter att alkoholkonsumtionen och de alkoholrelaterade skadorna ökat, kan ses som tecken på att alkoholpolitiken i Finland gått sina egna vägar.

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## NOT

- 1) Jag vill tacka mina intervjupersoner Bernt Bull, Sven-Olov Carlsson, Øyvind Horverak, Inger Gran, Jens Guslund, Susanne Kuritzén, Håkan Leifman, Lilly Sofie Ottesen och Stig Erik Sørheim för all värdefull information.

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# Developing border regions, regulating alcohol in the Nordic countries

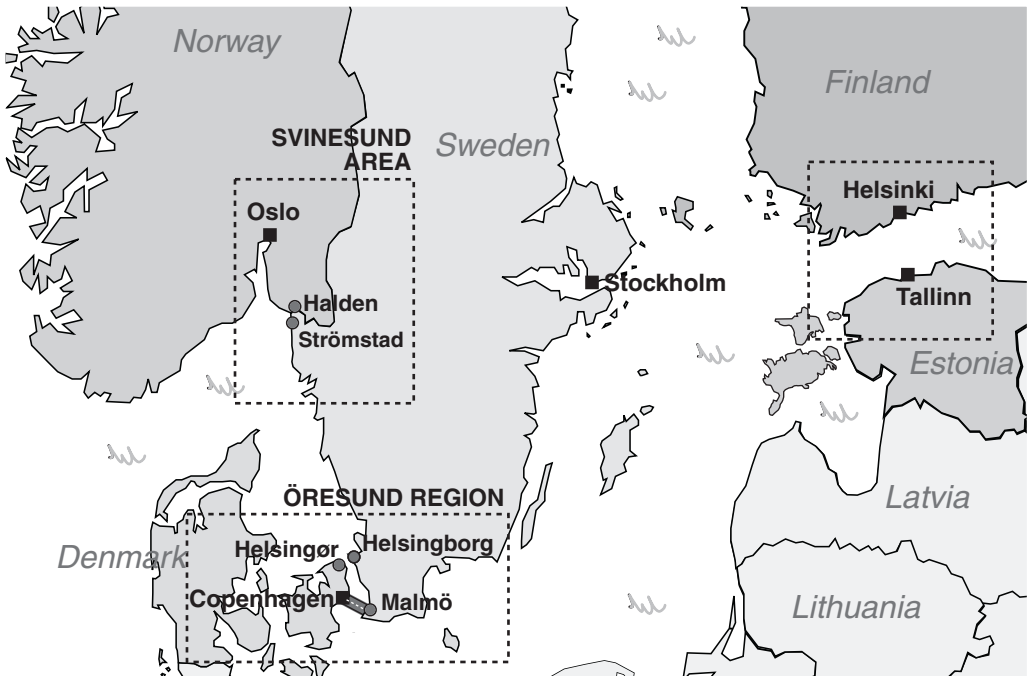
## Alcohol as a cross border issue

In the last decade or so there has been a decided shift in Nordic alcohol policy towards questions of cross-border trade and cross-country price differences. This refocusing is the result of ongoing efforts in the European Union to create a common market without fiscal barriers, which have led to a slow but sure erosion of Danish, Finnish and Swedish exemptions to Union rules on the import of alcohol for personal use.

Denmark had a foretaste of increasing cross-border trade in the 1970s and especially in the 1980s (Bygvrå 1990). In 1991 and 1992, Denmark cut its taxes on beer and wine in an attempt to forestall the growth of cross-border trade that was expected to follow with the opening of the European single market in 1993. Sweden followed suit and lowered its taxes on beer in 1997 and on wine in 2001, which in turn had a knock-on effect in Norway where prices of hard liquor were slashed in 2002 and 2003. This was followed by major tax cuts on spirits in Denmark in 2003, and on spirits, wine and beer in Finland in 2004, when the Danish, Finnish and Swedish exemptions to EU import regulations expired. In January 2005 Denmark also lowered its taxes on wine and beer. In this new situation Sweden has not changed its taxes.

It is hardly surprising then that since Sweden's anxious reassessment of its alcohol policy, the country has turned its attention to the border issue. In January 2004 the Swedish government charged MP Kent Härstedt with the task of "monitoring developments mainly in southern Sweden with





Map. Three key border regions in the Nordic countries.

a view to proposing measures that may be required to address the problems caused by the increased import and resale of alcohol (SOU 2004, 3). The titles of the Alcohol Import Commission's reports are telling: "Where is the border limit?" (SOU 2004:86) and "A challenge without boundaries – alcohol policy in the present day" (SOU 2005:25). The reports leave no doubt whatsoever about the situation in Sweden today: the country's southern border leaks like a sieve. Consequently it is recommended that taxes on spirits be slashed by 40 per cent, on wine and beer by 30 per cent.

What is surprising is that the border issue is addressed simply and purely in *alcohol* terms: in one way or another, the flood of drink-thirsty tourists and money-thirsty smugglers has to be stopped. Yet in the

past ten years unprecedented investment has been ploughed into opening up the floodgates, into the projects of integrating the Danish and southern Swedish markets and cutting journey times between greater Copenhagen and Skåne in Sweden. The Swedish alcohol reports make no mention at all of these huge infrastructure projects – and yet the whole Swedish alcohol policy dilemma, including the proposed tax cuts, would be much easier to grasp and understand against this background.

Major changes are also taking place in other border regions that are interesting from an alcohol policy point of view. Increasing numbers of Norwegians are now crossing the border in the region of Østfold-Västra Götaland, where Strömstad on the Swedish side is the major trading centre. Here, too, there is increasing business activ-

ity and work is underway to develop better transport links. A slightly similar situation is going on between Helsinki and Tallinn.

Our intention here is to show that the new economic and transport infrastructures primarily in the Öresund region but also in the Østfold-Strömstad area and between Helsinki and Tallinn are fundamentally changing the conditions for the flow of people and goods in the most heavily populated regions in Norway, southern Sweden, Denmark and Finland. We begin by defining the scope of debate on alcohol and border trade. We then move on to describe what is happening in the three borders regions between Sweden and Denmark, Norway and Sweden, and Finland and Estonia. Finally, we address the questions of why the economic and transport policy aspects have received so little attention in the Swedish alcohol policy debate; how Norway has responded to the border dilemma; and what arguments lay behind the Finnish decision to lower alcohol taxes in 2004.

## The two dimensions of integration

When the EC, alcohol and the Nordic countries was first raised a topic of debate in the late 1980s (Tigerstedt 1990), we learned that each year 12 million Danes crossed the border into Germany mainly for reasons of consumption (Bygvrå 1990). Nothing comparable was seen anywhere else in the Nordic countries. Fifteen years on, in 2004, the annual numbers crossing the Swedish and Danish border stand at 28 million.

Since the early 1990s the debate on the future of alcohol policy in the Nordic countries has continued unabated. True,

it is increasingly tinged now by the new EU environment, but it seems that one important aspect of the creation of a common market has been completely ignored. In order to understand this we make a distinction between two dimensions in the implementation of the common market. The first deals with principles and procedures, the second with practical territorial and infrastructure solutions.

In the wake of the European Economic Agreement (EEA) agreement and EU membership there were growing calls that the Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish systems for the production and sale of alcohol be *brought in line with the EU's legal and political framework*. The single market concept implied that all national barriers to the free movement of goods, services, capital and people were to be removed (Österberg & Karlsson 2002; Ugland 2002). All signatories and members were to meet a set of legal and political requirements that can be summarised in two well-known processes:

- First of all, the alcohol policy system in Finland, Norway and Sweden was to be brought in line with the Treaty of Rome and the EEA agreement as well as with legal interpretations of these instruments. The most visible outcomes of this process were the discontinuation of national monopolies on the production, import, export and wholesale of alcohol and the legal decision that the retail monopolies were compatible with EU rules.
- Secondly, following their EU membership in 1995, Finland and Sweden were also bound by the EU's single market rules that had entered into force on 1 January 1993. The single market did

away with all fiscal boundaries between member states, and new regulations were imposed among other things regarding the import of alcohol for personal use. However Denmark, Finland and Sweden were all granted temporary exemptions to these rules as far as alcohol was concerned. These exemptions expired on 31 December 2003.

The other dimension has to do with *transport and economic solutions enforcing the single market in certain border regions*. At the same time as Finland, Norway and Sweden were conducting talks on the EEA Agreement and EU membership, the first plans were floated for a bridge connecting Denmark and Sweden. The declared purpose of the bridge was to create out of Själland and the south of Sweden a single economic market area and to open a land link between Sweden and continental Europe. This would involve building the necessary infrastructure, speeding up transport links, improving logistics, facilitating new business and creating a more flexible labour market (Palludan & Persson 2003.)

These two dimensions of integration are by no means mutually independent, but on the contrary simultaneous and very much parallel. They are part and parcel of a more sweeping process of economic globalisation and Europeanisation. Our treatment of the issue here excludes the question of how far the process of political and legal adaptation to EU rules, on the one hand, and developments in border regions, on the other, tie in with each other. In any event the escalation of economic integration and regional development can be seen as *a textbook example of how the EU gradually takes away the chances of in-*

*dividual member states independently to run and maintain their own welfare policy systems.*

Discussions on the future of alcohol regulation have very much been dominated by the legal and political dimension. This also applies to the current debate on the private import of alcohol. However the only relevant issue here is not just that consumers now are *legally allowed* to bring in as much alcohol as they please. It is equally important to recognise that the major ongoing infrastructure changes mean consumers now *can* import as much alcohol as they please, on a daily basis.

## The Öresund region

Home to 3.6 million people, the Öresund region is the wealthiest and most densely populated area in the Nordic countries. It comprises the Swedish province of Skåne, which has a population of 1.2 million spread across 33 municipalities; and the part of Denmark that lies east of Östra Bält, i.e. Själland, Lolland, Falster and Bornholm, which has a population of 2.4 million.

On the Danish side of the border, the main regional centre is Copenhagen and surroundings, where the population numbers 1.7 million; on the Swedish side the main population centre is the Malmö-Lund region, which has 0.5 million inhabitants. Other major cities in the Öresund region are the twin towns of Helsingborg-Helsingør, which lie on opposite shores of the sound at its narrowest point, with 120,000 and 60,000 inhabitants, respectively; and Kristianstad (pop. 75,000) in eastern Skåne; and Roskilde (pop. 50,000) southwest of Copenhagen.

Själland and Skåne/Blekinge share a

long common history during which borders have shifted on a number of occasions. However the current project to develop this into a single Danish-Swedish business region connected with fixed and fast transport links, is a surprisingly recent concept. It was not until the early 1990s that the first serious plans were drafted. Founded in 1993, the Öresund Committee is the first public sector body set up for purposes of promoting cross-border cooperation; indeed its foundation can be considered to mark the beginning of this regional development project (<http://www.oresundskomiteen.dk>; Matthiessen, 2004, 35). Cooperation has continued to expand and deepen over the past decade, and various economic, scientific, cultural and administrative regional projects have been launched. Most of these projects are based on networks within one and the same branch. A good example is the University of Öresund, which was founded in 1997 and now consists of a network of 14 universities in Skåne and Själland.

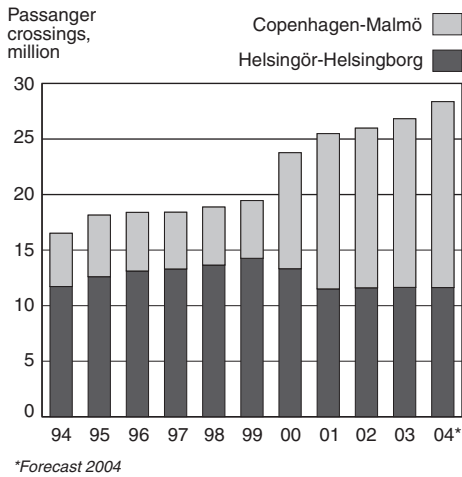
Denmark and Sweden signed an agreement on the building of a fixed link across the Öresund in March 1991. This agreement was an important catalyst for the regional development. The final agreement to build the bridge between Malmö and Copenhagen was signed in 1994, and when Sweden one year later joined the EU, plans to develop a common border region gained significant momentum (Palludan & Persson 2003).

The Öresund region accounts for more than one-quarter of Denmark's and Sweden's combined GDP. Indeed the development project has been driven first and foremost by economic motives. The underlying idea has been to promote the move-

ment of people and goods between the two countries and in this way to strengthen the region's productivity, growth and competitiveness in Europe. The vision has been to facilitate movement between the two countries across the bridge and to integrate Copenhagen and Malmö-Lund into one metropolitan region (Matthiessen 2004, 31).

The Öresund bridge was opened in July 2000 and since then has played a key role in the region's economic, physical and psychological integration. The fixed connection is unique because it geographically ties together two countries that previously have had no common land border. In contrast to the Eurotunnel that connects Britain and France, the Öresund bridge accommodates motor vehicles, which makes for much more flexible border crossings, independently of timetables.

On both sides of the sound, but especially in Skåne, work is continuing to build better and faster road and rail links. The next step in this process is to build what has been dubbed the City Tunnel in Malmö; work on this project got under way in March 2005. Due to be completed by 2011, the tunnel will improve the rail network in the Malmö region and cut journey times between Skåne and Själland (<http://www.citytunneln.se/>). At the same time studies are continuing on the feasibility of a so-called European corridor (<http://www.europakorridoren.se/>) – a rail network that would link the Stockholm and Gothenburg regions with Öresund and continental Europe, with a terminus in Hamburg. High-speed trains, according to early plans, would cover the distance from Stockholm to Copenhagen in just 2 hours 35 minutes.



Source: Öresundsbro Konsortiet, *Ship Pax*, 2004.

**Figure 1.** Passenger traffic across the Öresund

Even now, there is considerable traffic across the Öresund. In 2004 the number of passenger crossings rose to 28 million. The bridge accounted for 16.7 million or 60 per cent of the total, ferries for the remaining 40 per cent (Figure 1). Since 1999 the number of passenger crossings between Helsingborg and Helsingør has dropped by 18 per cent, while traffic between Malmö and Copenhagen has more than trebled. The growth of traffic flows could have been even greater had it not been for the high bridge tolls (Westlund & Bygvrå 2002). A one-way crossing by car costs around 30 euros, but tariffs for commuters are significantly lower. For example, a book of 50 tickets brings down the price of a crossing to around 7 euros. A single train crossing over the Öresund costs about 8 euros (Bygvrå & Westlund 2004).

In spite of the relatively high costs, some 7,000–8,000 persons cross the Öresund every day, primarily on business or for work or study reasons. In 2004 it was

estimated that 5,500 persons who lived in Skåne earned their living on the Danish side of the border, while the number of Danes working full-time on the Swedish side in 2002 was estimated at 1,155 persons (Matthiessen 2004).

While most of the commuter traffic heads from Sweden to Denmark and back, the main flows of removal between the two countries run in the opposite direction. People in Denmark are drawn to Skåne by its lower costs of living and particularly by its much lower costs of housing. Furthermore, Sweden has a lower rate of income tax than Denmark (Matthiessen 2004, 37). In 2004 some 3,200 persons moved from the Danish side of the Öresund to Skåne, while 1,600 persons moved the other way (<http://www.oresundskomiteen.dk/>).

For people in Sweden, the chief motive for crossing the Öresund is shopping. Duties on certain products such as beer, wine and spirits differ widely between the two countries and therefore these are the most attractive buys for Swedes. Clothes and certain foods are also cheaper in Denmark. Sweden has no such products that would have special appeal among Danish consumers (Bygvrå & Westlund 2004, 48; Matthiessen 2004, 37).

Bygvrå & Westlund (2004, 49) estimate that in 2001, Danish residents of the Öresund region spent 82 million euros in Sweden, while spending by Swedish consumers in Denmark amounted to 418 million euros. Average annual spending by border-shopping Danes in Sweden amounted to 40 euros, while the corresponding figure for Swedes in Denmark was over 150 euros. People from Helsingborg were in a class of their own: in 2001 they spent more than 500 euros across the border in Denmark,

which is explained by the geographic proximity of Helsingør. Since 2001, shopping by Swedish consumers has more than likely increased in pace with the growth in travel.

However it is not so much shopping trips as other cross-border traffic that has been increasing in recent years. More and more now, travel across the Öresund bridge and via Kastrup airport consists of business, services, culture and transit traffic. Indeed the question we need to ask is not *whether* the Öresund region will be integrated as part of a common border-crossing region in the future, but rather *at what pace* this is going to happen and *what level* the integration will reach (Matthiessen 2004, 36–37).

## The Svinesund area

By far the liveliest border region between Norway and Sweden lies in Østfold fylke and Västra Götaland, some 150 km north-northwest of Gothenburg and 100 km southsoutheast of Oslo. The municipalities on either side of the border are small: Halden in Norway has a population of 27,500, Strömstad in Sweden a population of 11,200. The immediate border region is also taken to include the Norwegian municipalities of Fredrikstad, Moss, Aremark, Sarpsborg, Hvaler, Rygge and Råde. On the Swedish side there is also Tanum, the “Uddevalla region” (which includes Uddevalla, Munkedal, Sotenäs, Lysekil) and “Dalsland” (Färgelanda, Mellerud, Åmål, Dals-Ed and Bengtsfors). Together, these regions are home to almost 400,000 people, two-thirds of whom are Norwegians. From a border traffic point of view we also need to count in Oslo and Akershus, which have a combined population of more than one million.

Organised cooperation in the border region got under way in 1980. The vision of a dynamic economic area in the region strengthened noticeably during the 1990s with the support of the Nordic Council of Ministers and the EU programme for regional development and cohesion (Interreg). The aim is to “encourage residents (...) to disregard the psychological, practical and formal borders that separate the two countries in the region” and to look upon the region’s resources as common and shared. From a Norwegian perspective Østfold is “a perfect vantage-point from which to operate in two important marketplaces: particularly in the Nordic region but also in the rest of Europe” (<http://ostfold.no>). The border region is described as “Norway’s gateway to the continent”, with the E6 serving as the main transport route (<http://www.granskommitten.org>). From a Swedish point of view, it appears that Strömstad and northern Bohuslän are rapidly being integrated as part of an expansive Oslofjord region.

It is only during the past ten years or so that traffic flows in the region have reached considerable proportions; serious investment in the transport infrastructure has started even more recently than that. The new bridge across the Svinesund was inaugurated in June 2005 to mark the centenary of the peaceful dissolution of the Swedish-Norwegian union. The bridge connects Halden in Norway with Strömstad in Sweden. Another factor that has greatly facilitated road traffic in the region is the recent upgrading of the E6 motorway in Strömstad.

Even before these recent investments, cross-border traffic had reached considerable proportions. In 2003, some five mil-

lion vehicles crossed the border in one or the other direction, which translates into a daily average of 14,000 vehicles. This figure has doubled since 1995. The traffic flow is quite evenly spread out across the year, although it does tend to increase during Easter week, in the summer months and over the Christmas holidays. (Ericsson 2004.)

The reason and explanation for the border trade in this case lies in the strong purchasing power of Norwegian consumers as well as in Norway's much higher price levels compared to Sweden. Norwegians spend over one-third more on perishables than Swedes; on leisure goods they spend more than twice as much as Swedish consumers. Price differences are the highest in food. In 2002 a typical border-shopping basket of food cost 70 per cent more in Norway than in Sweden. This difference is further magnified by local price levels in Strömstad, which are lower than the national average in Sweden (Handelsutredning 2002). Best buys for Norwegian travellers have included tobacco and alcohol, meat and other foods as well as sweets and soft drinks (Ericsson 2004; Lavik 2004).

It is estimated that Norwegian border-shoppers in the Svinesund area – people who cross the border with the specific intent of shopping – annually spend more than 250 million euro in Sweden. Swedish consumers, on the other hand, spend just 12 million euro in Norway (Handelsutredning 2002; Ericsson 2004). Border-shopping, then, is clearly a rather popular amusement in Norway. A recent study (Lavik 2004) showed that an estimated 80 per cent of the residents of Østfold fylke had been shopping across the Swedish border during the past three months, and on average they had done this every other week.

Overall, the value of retail trade in Strömstad has more than trebled during the period from 1997 to 2003. In the process, the town has become a “fully-fledged trade centre as well as being a major tourist destination” (Ericsson 2004, 21). Nordby Shopping Center, which opened in 2004, has made Strömstad even more attractive to shoppers and investors, particularly those from Norway.

## Helsinki-Tallinn

Helsinki lies 80 km north of Tallinn. The cities are separated by the Gulf of Finland, and sea travel accounts for the majority of trips to and from Estonia. The fastest vessels cross the Gulf of Finland in less than two hours, bigger ferries take four hours to make the crossing. In Finland the Helsinki metropolitan region has a population of one million, while Tallinn and environs are home to 400,000 people. In Finland more than three million people live within reach of a daytrip to Tallinn.

There are no major economic integration projects under way between Finland and Estonia. For instance, there are no plans to build a tunnel to link the two capitals. Nonetheless Finnish consumers are now finding it much easier and much more attractive to go shopping in Tallinn. Finnish chains have recently opened a number of outlets in the city, offering virtually the same product mix in an almost identical setting as back home in Finland. Finnish businesses are also investing in Estonian hotels and spas targeted in large part to Finnish customers.

Travel across the Gulf of Finland has become much faster and cheaper in the past ten years, and the options available have also increased enormously. In the high sea-

**Table:** Basic data on the three border regions

|  | Öresund region   |          |         | Svinesund area   |          |         | Helsinki-Tallinn  |          |         |
|--|--|----------|---------|--|----------|---------|---|----------|---------|
| No. of border crossings (million)                                      | Year   | Vehicles | Persons | Year   | Vehicles | Persons | Year  | Vehicles | Persons |
|  | 1995   | 2.1      | 18.2    | 1995   | 2.7      | n.a.    | 1995  | 0.11     | 4.0     |
|  | 2003   | 6.2      | 26.8    | 2003   | 5.1      | n.a.    | 2003  | 0.27     | 5.7     |
|  | 2004   | n.a.     | 28.0    | 2004   | n.a.     | n.a.    | 2004  | 0.44     | 6.0     |
| Population in border region  | In Sweden: 1.2 million<br>In Denmark: 2.4 million  |          |         | In Norway: 0.25 million<br>In Sweden: 0.14 million   |          |         | In Finland: 1 million<br>In Estonia: 0.4 million  |          |         |
| Price differences for alcohol (in Finland before the tax cuts in 2004) | Spirits in Denmark cost 40–60% of what they cost in Sweden.<br><br>Wine in Denmark costs about 40–80% of what it costs in Sweden.<br><br>Beer in Denmark costs about 40% of what it costs in Sweden. |          |         | Spirits in Sweden cost around 80% of what they cost in Norway.<br><br>Wine in Sweden costs about 60% of what it costs in Norway.<br><br>Beer in Sweden costs about 50% of what it costs in Norway. |          |         | Spirits in Estonia cost about 25% of what they cost in Finland.<br><br>Wine in Estonia costs about 40–70% of what it costs in Finland.<br><br>Beer in Estonia costs about 30–40% of what it costs in Finland. |          |         |
| Border trade in euro   | Consumers from Sweden: 418 million<br>Consumers from Denmark: 82 million (data for 2001)   |          |         | Consumers from Norway: 250 million<br>Consumers from Sweden: 12 million (data for 2000)  |          |         | Consumers from Finland: n.a.  |          |         |
| Best buys  | For Swedes: Alcohol, clothes, foods  |          |         | For Norwegians: Tobacco, meat, alcohol, sweets, soft drinks  |          |         | For Finns: Alcohol, tobacco and other consumer goods  |          |         |

son there are six shipping companies that operate on the Helsinki-Tallinn-Helsinki route, operating 15 vessels with something like 40 departures a day. In June 2005, a return ticket on a fast ferry cost 40–70 euro.

The number of travellers increased throughout the 1990s, but since then this growth has tapered off somewhat. In 1990, one year before the collapse of the Soviet Union, some 300,000 travellers arrived in Finland from Estonia. Three years later, the figure topped one million and another two years later, in 1995, when the import quota for alcohol were raised, it broke the two million mark. The three-million mark was reached in 1999. It is estimated that 2.5 million of the three million passengers crossing the Gulf are Finnish nationals (Österberg 2003). In the early 2000s the number of returning passengers has been

between 2.5 and 3 million. In 2004 an increase of six per cent was recorded.

The single most important motive for Finnish travel to Tallinn is tourism, although business and work are another major reason. Routine shopping of perishables, on the other hand, is really out of the question because the crossing takes too much time and the goods usually have to be brought back in carrier bags or shopping trolleys. The number of cars carried on the bigger ferries has increased, however, and in 2004 climbed to 220,000. Yet this is still no more than some 700 cars a day.

All types of consumer goods are considerably cheaper in Estonia than they are in Finland. However the main attractions for Finnish buyers are alcohol, mainly spirits, and tobacco. Estonians are attracted to Finland by the country's higher wage level.



## Economic integration and alcohol policy

All three border regions discussed in this article are undergoing a similar, intensive development process that has steadily gathered momentum in the past ten years. The new land connection between Denmark and Sweden is nothing short of revolutionary. On the other hand there are also some marked differences between these border regions. For example, crossing the border from Sweden to Denmark via the Öresund bridge is much faster and easier than the 80 km ferry crossing from Helsinki to Tallinn. Population numbers also differ widely between the three regions. Furthermore, there are differences in terms of economic integration on each side of the respective borders. And Norway of course remains outside the EU.

These differences are also reflected in trade of alcohol. We want to conclude with a few words on this aspect.

### ■ Sweden

All the indications are that improved communications, increased exchange and interaction and the marked price differences between Sweden and Denmark have a major impact on alcohol purchases especially in southern Sweden. This, combined with the scrapping of Swedish quota for the private import of alcohol as from 1 January 2004, has left the Swedish alcohol system very much between a rock and a hard place. In 2004, tourist imports and smuggling accounted for one-third of total alcohol consumption in Sweden (SOU 2005, 52). In Skåne, the proportion was considerably higher.

It is intriguing, to say the least, that the debate in this situation on alcohol policy

have made no reference whatsoever to the process of *general* economic integration in Själland and southern Sweden. This would have been more understandable up to spring 2000 when Sweden was still counting on its being able to renegotiate an extension to its exemption from EU rules on alcohol imports (Tigerstedt & Karlsson 2003). But Danish-Swedish integration continues to remain ignored in the debate on alcohol policy even now that the exemption has expired.

A significant example is provided by the two reports from the Alcohol Import Commission (SOU 2004 & 2005). The reports provide detailed accounts of how alcoholic beverages are imported legally and illegally, how much is being brought into the country, who is buying and using the imported alcohol, how the import and resale of alcohol should be prevented, how total alcohol consumption and alcohol-related harm have developed, how consumption breaks down regionally etc. Even the chapter on "Alcohol outside Sweden" has eyes only for alcohol. We learn about EU rules and activities in the alcohol area, about Sweden's attempts to influence these rules, about tax rates and consumption trends in Finland, Denmark and certain other EU countries (SOU 2004, 141–157).

How does one explain this almost exclusive focus on the *specific substance*, i.e. alcohol, the omission of various other phenomena that so obviously are relevant in this context? We have to assume that the knowledge and the awareness is there, but for some reason it is just not put to use. Governmental and party political views probably come into play here, but this is not the place to go into these aspects. Instead the argument we want to make is

that the *substance-oriented* perspective that cuts through the commission reports is rooted in a deep-seated Swedish way of dealing with alcohol issues.

There is an interesting parallel. In the late 1960s and early 1970s voices were raised in Sweden which argued that the alcohol problem is not reducible to the substance of alcohol. "Socio-structural factors" – housing, employment, education, family circumstances – also needed to be taken into account. This radical view became known as the "symptom theory": This radical view became known as the "symptom theory": alcohol as such was not the cause of social deprivation, rather alcohol problems were symptoms of social shortcomings (Nycander 1996, 210ff.; Sutton 1998, 61ff).

The symptom theory has never really been accepted and endorsed in Swedish alcohol policy. For "alcohol policy" to truly live up to its name in Sweden, it needs to come up with political measures and arguments that are firmly anchored to the specific substance. The problem is *in* the bottle rather than outside it. The alcohol problem is substance-driven and must therefore be tackled by substance-driven solutions. This view, however, clearly involves the risk that one loses sight of the fact that the alcohol problem (among other things the border trade problem discussed here) is also a reflection of various social policy choices that are not alcohol-specific, but that nonetheless have important implications for the way that "alcohol policy" can be pursued (see Tigerstedt 1999, 85-86 and Tigerstedt 2001, 24-29 & 147-151).

Clearly then, the Alcohol Import Commission's choice not to address important,

non-alcohol-related aspects of border trade is motivated by reasons of not wanting to dilute the alcohol content of Swedish alcohol policy. Perhaps it is thought that if this is allowed to happen, the alcohol issue might become watered down and the specific alcohol policy field might be weakened.

### ■ Norway

The private import of alcohol from Sweden into Norway has increased sharply from the mid-1990s to 2003 (Lavik 2004, 19-20; see Nordlund 2003). The political leadership in Norway has voiced its concern over steps to be taken in Sweden and called upon the country not to lower its alcohol taxes. It has also been pointed out that Swedish alcohol policy has strong symbolic value in Norway, which may have repercussions on people's attitudes, on pricing policy and on the legitimacy of the retail system (Brofoss 2004).

For the time being it seems that price differences between alcohol in Norway and Sweden are within tolerable limits from a Norwegian alcohol trade and policy point of view. However if Sweden decides to cut its taxes on alcohol, then the price balance between these two countries may become similar to the current situation between Sweden and Denmark (see Table above). In this situation it is possible that cross-border trade of alcohol in Strömstad and in the Svinesund area will increase sharply and attract growing numbers of Norwegian consumers.

There are also some factors that provide Norway with protection. As an EEA country, Norway can continue to adhere to its strict rules on alcohol imports.<sup>1</sup> Whether it can enforce those rules is a different

matter. The evidence so far suggests that border trade in alcohol has remained moderate; Brofoss puts the figure at no more than just over 5 per cent of total consumption. Some commentators believe that this protection is indeed adequate and that there are no real grounds for concern over a dramatic increase in border trade and the growth of a new illegal market if Sweden cuts its taxes (Brofoss 2004).

### ■ Finland

Finland decided on 20 August 2003 to lower its taxes on spirits, wine and beer by 44, 10 and 32 per cent, respectively. The most important argument for the tax reduction was the huge price differences in spirits between Finland and Estonia. The government assumed that without tax reductions private imports might even grow sixfold (RP 80/2003). On this point Finland had a tougher nut to crack than Sweden in relation to Denmark, and Norway in relation to Sweden. On the other hand it should be noted that before the tax decision the private import of alcohol from Estonia accounted for just four per cent of total consumption.

In hindsight it is clear that there has been no major influx of either alcoholic beverages or alcohol tourists from Estonia to Finland: the private import of alcohol has increased by some 70 per cent, the number of passengers has gone up by 6 per cent and the number of cars by 63 per cent (Alkoholiveron ..., 2005). Two factors have probably been decisive in discouraging travel and consumption, i.e. the distance and the absence of a fixed land link between the countries, and the tax reductions that averaged 33 per cent.

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### NOTE

- 1) Norwegians travelling to Sweden are allowed to bring back one litre of spirits, one litre of wine and two litres of beer.

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V



# The Nordic borders are not alike

## Introduction

Denmark joined the European Community (EC) in 1973. In the 1970s EC membership did not have a great influence on border trade in general or border trade with alcoholic beverages in particular. It was only in the 1980s when alcohol import quotas for Danish travellers returning home from other EC countries increased so much that border trade in alcoholic beverages became important in quantitative terms (Bygvrå & Hansen 1987; Thorsen 1988; Bygvrå 1990). When Finland and Sweden joined the European Union (EU) in 1995, the EU had already realised the single European market. On the EU level the single market meant among other things that with the exception of distilled spirits in Denmark, all travellers' import quotas for alcoholic beverages were abolished in 1993.

In Finland, Norway and Sweden travellers' alcohol imports and alcohol import quotas have been an important topic in alcohol policy discussions since the late 1980s (Tigerstedt 1990). These topics have continued to be on the alcohol policy agenda both in Finland and Sweden, both of which joined the EU in 1995, but also in Norway, which rejected EU membership in a referendum in 1994. In the Nordic

## ABSTRACT

T. Karlsson & E. Österberg: The Nordic borders are not alike

### ■ AIM

To pinpoint the most important and interesting border trade areas for alcoholic beverages in the Nordic countries and to investigate patterns of routes and directions of border trade with alcoholic beverages in these areas.

### ■ DATA & METHODS

Travellers' alcohol imports in general and border trade in alcoholic beverages in particular are studied in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, paying special attention to different borders and border areas in the Nordic countries.

### ■ RESULTS

The main motive for border trade in alcohol is differences in the prices of alcoholic beverages. The greater the price difference the higher the volume of border trade in alcoholic beverages, *ceteris paribus*. However, differences in alcohol prices are by no means the only factors affecting the volume of border trade in alcohol. In the Nordic countries the volume of cross-border trade in alcoholic beverages is currently especially significant in five geographic areas.

### ■ CONCLUSIONS

Not only factors derived from the basic economic theory of consumer behaviour, but a mixed variety of intervening factors, as for instance manmade hindrances or geographical circumstances, markedly influence cross-border trade in alcoholic beverages in the Nordic countries.

### ■ KEYWORDS

Border trade, alcohol, Nordic countries



EU Member States adaptation to the general EU principles on travellers' alcohol imports took nine years and even after the abolition of the quotas on 1 January 2004, the debate on border trade and travellers' import quotas has continued lively.

### ■ Economics and dynamics of border trade

Border trade in various commodities has been around as long as borders have existed. For people living in border areas, borderlines, either simply drawn on maps or clearly marked in the terrain, have always formed man-made hindrances to the free movement of people and goods.

According to basic economic theory, the extent and volume of border trade is steered by the same logic as trade in general. Cross-border trade is, for instance, influenced by what kind of goods and at what prices these goods are offered for sale in different places. Other elements that come into play are the demand for goods, consumer purchasing power as well as costs of travelling, both in money and time. All these have an impact on the amount and frequency of cross-border trade.

The main difference between border trade and trade in general is that border trade is often concentrated around certain commodities, either because these commodities are available only on one side of the border or because they are much cheaper there. Consequently, border trade is often fuelled more by price differences in certain specially taxed commodities, like alcoholic beverages, gasoline, perfumes, soft drinks, sweets or tobacco than by differences in average price levels between two countries. In some cases, however, foodstuffs or clothes, or even certain

services, are also of great importance for border trade.

Besides elements from the economic theory of consumer behaviour on the free market, the volume of border trade is also influenced by natural geographical hindrances as well as by artificial structural hindrances. These structural hindrances may include extra travel expenses, like visa requirements as well as other payments needed to be allowed to cross the border. Costs for exchanging foreign currency and regulations for carrying it over borders may also be considered as artificial hindrances to border trade. Others include few and poorly placed crossing points, rigorous and time consuming border controls, quantitative restrictions on importing goods brought across the border, time required to be spent abroad in order to import certain goods or limitations of how often a traveller is allowed to cross the border with certain goods. Rules and laws against smuggling can also be considered a hindrance to an illegal form of border trade.

On the other hand, there are also a variety of measures for stimulating border trade. A widely used measure is, for instance, policies of paying back value added taxes (VAT) on goods purchased by foreigners and taken out of the country. Retailers at the borders may also try to attract customers from neighbouring countries by making their stores easily accessible at the border, by adjusting their supply to meet the demand of people living on the other side of the border, and by advertising their products across the border. The retailers may also adapt their sales practices for the needs of customers from other countries, for instance, by accepting foreign currency

in payment.

As already mentioned, the volume of border trade is also affected by geographical circumstances. These have a bearing on the possibilities to cross the borders and to control border crossings, which in turn affect how border trade or smuggling can be controlled. The number of people living near crossing points and the social relations of people on different sides of the border may also have an impact on the magnitude of border trade. As the standard of living and the amount of leisure time have increased, the number of border crossings and the intensity of border trade have increasingly been connected to different kinds of leisure time activities, like going on short holidays across the border (Karlsson & Österberg & Tigerstedt 2005).

With some exceptions travellers' alcohol imports in the Nordic countries have been studied mostly from a national perspective, and seldom from a more detailed or regional point of view. The most important exceptions are Swedish studies, where special attention has been paid to the distance to Denmark (Norström 2000; Trolldal 2000). Some Finnish studies have also paid special attention to certain geographical areas, like northern and south-east Finland (Österberg 1995; Österberg et al. 1996). In this article we study more closely the different borders and border areas in the Nordic countries, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, by paying special attention to travellers' alcohol imports in general and border trade in alcoholic beverages in particular. Our hypothesis is that not only factors derived from the basic economic theory of consumer behaviour, but a mixed variety of intervening factors, markedly influence

cross-border trade in alcoholic beverages in the Nordic countries.

The overall objective of this article is to pinpoint the most important and interesting border trade areas for alcoholic beverages in the Nordic countries and to investigate patterns of routes and directions of border trade in alcoholic beverages in these areas. We aim to show that besides purely economic factors based on supply and demand of goods, man-made obstacles and attractions as well as geographical circumstances have an important bearing on the formation of border trade in alcoholic beverages.

In the following we will first present the prevailing price differences for alcoholic beverages between the Nordic countries and the adjacent countries in order to indicate the route and directions of border trade in alcoholic beverages. We will then study the quantitative restrictions or quotas for travellers' tax free imports of alcoholic beverages. After this we will investigate the borders country by country, looking at the numbers and places of crossing points, control practices at the borders and the number of people living near the borders, as well as the number of border crossings and how the supply of alcoholic beverages and other goods has been organized.

## **Taxes and prices of alcoholic beverages**

Prices of alcoholic beverages are composed of production and transportation costs, including producers', importers' and wholesalers' margins, and the costs and margins of the retailers and of taxes – usually value added taxes (VAT) and excise duties on alcoholic beverages. In

the Nordic countries alcohol excise duties have had and continue to have an important role in determining the retail prices of alcoholic beverages. Alongside restricted physical availability of alcoholic beverages and a comprehensive state monopoly for the production and trade of alcoholic beverages, high alcohol taxes and prices have been one of the three pillars on which traditional Nordic alcohol control was based upon for most of the twentieth century (Holder et al. 1998; Österberg & Karlsson 2002a; Tigerstedt et al. 2006, 112–113). The only Nordic country with no tradition of state alcohol monopoly, Denmark, has also had high alcohol taxes since the First World War (Bruun et al. 1975, 73; Karlsson & Österberg 2002).

In connection with the creation of the Single European Market in 1993 the EU adopted a Directive on harmonising alcohol excise duty structures in Member States. This Directive determined how alcoholic beverage categories were to be defined and the way alcohol excise duty rates were to be imposed in these beverage categories (Österberg & Karlsson 2002b, 58–61). Consequently, it is quite easy to follow changes in alcohol excise duty rates, and to compare excise duty rates in different EU Member States from 1993 onwards.

Changes in alcohol excise duty rates from the 1970s to the year 2000 have been documented for the EU-15 and Norway by Österberg and Karlsson (2002a). The most important changes in alcohol taxes in the Nordic countries in the 1990s were the decrease of alcohol excise duty rates for beer and wine by half in Denmark in the years 1991–1992, the decrease of beer excise duty rate in Sweden by 39 per cent

in 1997 and the decrease of wine excise duty rate in Finland by 17 per cent in 1998 (Österberg & Karlsson 2002a).

During the present decade there have been several changes in alcohol taxation in the Nordic countries (Figure 1). In addition to the changes in Figure 1, Norway has also implemented a policy to try to hinder the decrease of the real value of alcohol excise duty rates by small nominal yearly increases in alcohol excise duty rates. The excise duty rate for wine has, in nominal terms, increased by 20 per cent from 1995 to 2007, whereas the excise duty rate for medium strength beer has increased by 31 per cent (Rusmidler i Norge 2007, 68–74). The latest increase in Norway took place on 1 January 2009, when the excise duty rates for all alcoholic beverages increased by 3 per cent.

Denmark's EU membership has resulted in better opportunities for Danes to take advantage of lower alcohol prices in Germany (Bygvrå & Hansen 1987). Quotas for duty free imports for beer and wine grew larger especially since the mid-1980s, and this also affected the volume of border trade in these beverages (Bygvrå 1992; Thorsen 1993). One more explanation for the growth of border trade in alcoholic beverages between Germany and Denmark is that in Germany alcohol excise duty rates have been nominally on about the same level since the early 1980s, meaning that their real value has decreased and is now only half of their real value some thirty years ago. The real price of alcohol has not decreased as much as real excise duty levels, as nominal prices of alcoholic beverages have increased because of increases in other cost elements (Kraus et al. 2002, 200–205).

The Baltic countries, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, joined the EU in May 2004 together with Poland and six other European countries. Since May 2004, alcohol excise duty rates have increased in Estonia on other alcoholic beverages than wine by 5 per cent in January 2005, by 10 per cent in January 2008 and by 20 per cent in July 2008. Consequently, in January 2009 excise duty rates for distilled spirits and beer were nominally 39 per cent higher than in 2004. In Latvia and Lithuania the excise duty rate for distilled spirits was also nominally clearly higher at the beginning of 2009 than in 2004. In Latvia the increase since 2004 was 37 per cent and in Lithuania 38 per cent. The corresponding increase in excise duty rate for wine was in Latvia 22 per cent, and in Lithuania 32 per cent. In Latvia beer excise duty rate at the beginning of 2009 was nominally about the same as in 2004, whereas in Lithuania the corresponding rate increased by 21 per cent from 2004 to 2009.

In Poland excise duty rates for alcoholic beverages increased nominally from January 2004 to January 2009 by 52 per cent for distilled spirits, 57 per cent for wine and 35 per cent for beer.

Although the differences in excise duty rates for alcoholic beverages have decreased between the Nordic countries and their neighbours, the Nordic countries are still surrounded by countries with low and in many cases very low excise duty rates for alcohol. Of the Nordic countries, the alcohol excise duty rates are lowest in Denmark and highest in Norway followed by Iceland, Sweden and Finland (Table 1). In Table 1, Danish, Icelandic, Norwegian and Swedish crowns have been converted to Euros using the currency exchange rates valid in November 2008, when the financial crisis had already lowered the value of the Icelandic crown. By March 2009, the financial crisis had also considerably lowered the value of the Norwegian and Swedish crone in relation to the Euro.

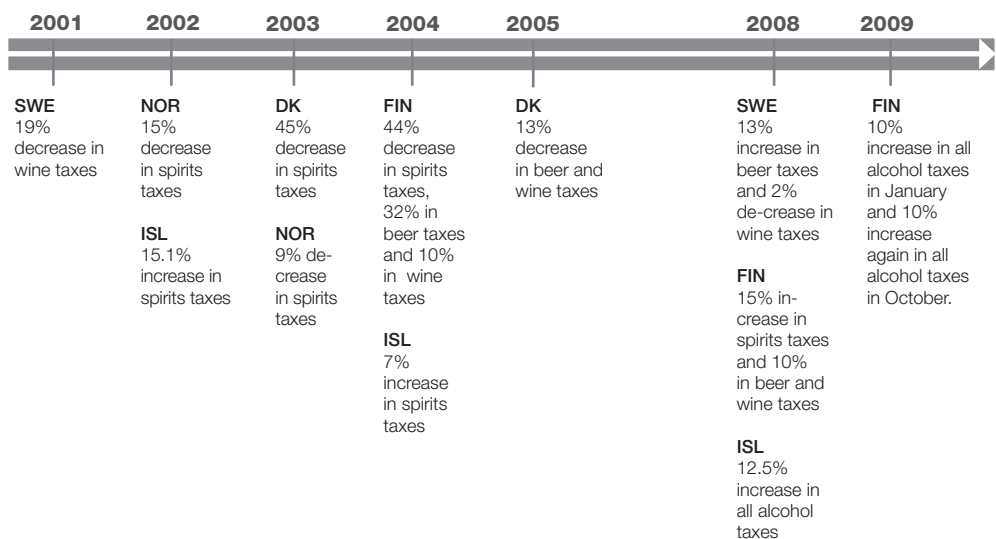


Figure 1. Major changes in alcohol taxation in the Nordic countries 2000–2009

In the Nordic countries taxes constitute an important share of off-premises retail prices of alcoholic beverages. In Finland, for instance, the share of excise duty and VAT in 2008 constituted 77 per cent of the price of a relatively cheap bottle of vodka. The corresponding share for a relatively cheap bottle of wine was 45 per cent and of an ordinary bottle of strong beer 47 per cent (Annual Report... 2009). In Sweden the combined share of excise duty and VAT for distilled spirits was even higher than in Finland. At the beginning of 2008 it accounted for 84 per cent of the price of a relatively cheap bottle of vodka. The corresponding share for a relatively cheap bottle of wine was 52 per cent and of an ordinary bottle of strong beer 49 per cent (Systembolaget Annual Report 2008, 55). Even if taxes are not the sole factor affecting alcohol prices, their role is so prominent in the Nordic countries that differences in tax levels tend to reveal the direction of possible alcohol flows in cross-

border traffic.

Nordic alcohol off-premises retail monopolies have a consistent price setting for each brand throughout the country. Therefore it is much easier to compare prices between Nordic alcohol monopoly countries than with their neighbouring countries, where off-premises retail stores can price their products at will with the constraints imposed by the markets. Based on available data, it can, however, be concluded that, on the average, at least all low and medium priced alcoholic beverages are cheaper in Danish supermarkets than in Swedish Systembolaget stores, and that, on the average, prices of all alcoholic beverages are cheaper in Germany than in Denmark. According to Eurostat, prices of alcoholic beverages in Germany were in 2007 one third lower than in Denmark (see Lavik & Nordlund in this issue). According to the same source, average Danish prices of alcoholic beverages were in 2007 some ten per cent lower than the Swedish

**Table 1.** Alcohol excise duty rates in the Nordic and Baltic countries as well as in Germany and Poland on January 1, 2009 according to beverage category in Euro per litre of 100% alcohol\*

|                  | Distilled spirits | Intermediate products | Wine  | Beer  |
|------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------|-------|
| EU minimum level | 5.50              | 2.50                  | 0.00  | 1.87  |
| Denmark          | 20.11             | 7.86                  | 7.48  | 6.82  |
| Estonia          | 12.91             | 7.89                  | 6.04  | 4.92  |
| Finland          | 35.80             | 28.61                 | 23.36 | 23.60 |
| Germany          | 13.03             | 8.50                  | 0.00  | 1.97  |
| Iceland          | 45.17             | 33.70                 | 26.81 | 20.61 |
| Latvia           | 11.63             | 5.48                  | 5.13  | 2.04  |
| Lithuania        | 12.79             | 4.89                  | 5.21  | 2.46  |
| Norway           | 73.49             | 47.94                 | 47.94 | 47.94 |
| Poland           | 14.67             | 4.91                  | 4.25  | 5.07  |
| Sweden           | 51.55             | 22.80                 | 20.17 | 17.07 |

\* For Latvia the figures are from February 1, 2009. Calculations are based on the following alcohol content: beer 5% alcohol by volume, wine 11% alcohol by volume and intermediate products 18% alcohol by volume. Exchange rates used to convert national currencies to Euro are from November 1, 2008.

Source: CEPS, 2009.

prices. The differences between Danish and Swedish alcohol prices are, however, greater if we take into account the cheapest prices and special offers available in Denmark.

In mid-2008, prices of alcoholic beverages were clearly higher in Norway than they were in its adjacent Nordic countries (Table 2). Alcohol prices in neighbouring Finland and Sweden differed in that distilled spirits in mid-2008 were cheaper in Finland than in Sweden, whereas the situation concerning wine and beer was the reverse.

In January 2009, one could purchase a half litre bottle of vodka in a supermarket in Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, for 3.83 Euros. In the Finnish alcohol off-premises retail monopoly Alko, the price of the corresponding vodka was 9.17 Euros. The price of the cheapest wine in a three-litre bag-in-box was 9.96 Euros in Tallinn and 21.90 in Alko in Helsinki. It is more difficult to compare beer prices because in Finland, too, grocery stores are at liberty to set

prices for medium strength beer at their discretion. Moreover, in Finland medium strength beer is often used as a special offer product. Consequently, in Finland the prices of medium strength beer vary quite a lot by time and place. Taken together, in January 2009 the price of the cheapest vodka in Estonia was about one third of the price of the corresponding vodka in Finland, and the prices of bag-in-box wines were about half of their prices in Finland. Beer was also cheaper in Estonia than in Finland.

Based on Table 1, it can be concluded that from the Nordic perspective alcohol prices in January 2009 were about the same in all Baltic countries and in Poland. Before the major increase in alcohol excise duty rates in Latvia in February 2009, alcoholic beverages were clearly cheaper in Latvia than in Estonia, in fact, so much cheaper that Estonians were purchasing alcoholic beverages from this neighbouring country. In Russia, also a neighbouring country to Estonia, alcohol excise duties

**Table 2.** Prices on selected alcoholic beverages in the Norwegian, Icelandic, Swedish and Finnish alcohol off-premises retail monopolies in July 2008, in Euros according to the exchange rates of June 23, 2008

| Brand and type and size of the container | Norway | Iceland | Sweden | Finland |
|--|--------|---------|--------|---------|
| Smirnoff Vodka (0.7 lit)                 | 33.26  | 25.86   | 23.30  | 17.87   |
| Ballantine's Finest (0.7 lit)            | 38.42  | 31.06   | 27.56  | 24.90   |
| Gato Negro Cabernet Sauvignon (0.75 lit) | 10.19  | 7.90    | 6.28   | 6.48    |
| Baron de Ley Reserva (0.75 lit)          | 18.64  | 13.50   | 10.64  | 14.95   |
| Vina Maipo Chardonnay (3.0 lit)          | 37.28  | 31.07   | 18.94  | 23.90   |
| Veuve Clicquot Brut (0.75 lit)           | 44.74  | 33.50   | 37.14  | 46.90   |
| Domestic medium beer, bottle (0.33 lit)  | 1.89   | 1.32    | 0.95   | 1.12    |
| Domestic strong beer, can (0.5 lit)      | 4.55   | 2.37    | 1.12   | 2.31    |
| Imported beer, bottle (0.33 lit)         | 3.03   | 1.93    | 1.44   | 2.13    |

Source: Information on the Nordic alcohol market 2008, 24.

and prices of alcoholic beverages are even lower than in Latvia. At the beginning of 2009 the Russian excise duty rate for distilled spirits was 4.29 Euros per litre of 100 per cent alcohol or one third of the corresponding tax rate in the Baltic countries and one tenth of the Finnish rate.

### Different types of borders

Besides entry by sea and by air, all Nordic countries except Iceland can be entered by land. The way of leaving and entering the country affects the costs and time needed to cross the border and transport goods back to the home country. In addition to classifying borders by their geographical type, they can also be classified by their political nature.

The main political difference between Nordic borders is that they are either borders between two EU countries or borders between an EU country and a third country. Three Nordic countries, Denmark, Finland and Sweden are fully fledged members of the EU. Among the countries neighbouring the Nordic countries, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Germany are also members of the EU.

In the Nordic sphere the third country category, clearly an EU classification, includes three different kinds of borders, stemming in the first place from the fact that Iceland, Norway and Russia are not members of the EU. Unlike Russia, however, both Iceland and Norway have signed the European Economic Area (EEA) agreement with the EU and are also both a part of the Schengen agreement. Russia is therefore the only neighbouring country to the Nordic countries that is outside the Schengen treaty. Another category of third country borders with the EU stems from

the special situation of the Åland Islands, which are an autonomous part of Finland, and thus a part of the EU, but not a part of the EU's Tax Treaty (Karlsson 1999). This enables ferries and ships that ply the Baltic Sea, mostly between Finland and Sweden, and that make a stopover at the Åland Islands, to sell alcoholic beverages and other products tax free, contrary to the common EU rule. Tax free sales within the Single Market were abolished in 1999 (Österberg & Karlsson 2002b, 64).

Different types of political borders offer different possibilities for border crossings as well as the opportunity to bring alcoholic beverages legally over the border. The level of border control is also at least partially dependent on the type of political border. Borders between EU countries belonging to the Schengen agreement can be crossed without any formalities. Furthermore, the customs authorities within the EU can no longer do random checks on travellers, and in many cases there are no occupied custom stations, especially on land borders.

The Nordic EU countries, Denmark, Finland and Sweden have had to adapt their quotas for travellers' tax free alcohol imports to the EU regulations. When Denmark became an EU Member State in 1973 it increased its alcohol import quotas from zero to 2 litres for beer and 3 litres for table wine and 3 litres for fortified wine (Bygvrå 1994, 224; see also Bygvrå & Hansen 1987, 144). By 1993 quotas for travellers' tax free imports from other EU countries had increased to 12 litres for beer and 5 litres for wine. In 1993, import quotas for beer, wine and intermediate products were abandoned, although a one-litre quota for distilled spirits was maintained until January

1, 2004. At this time Denmark, together with Finland and Sweden, abandoned all quotas for travellers tax free imports and accepted the EU principle according to which travellers within the EU can take with them any amount of alcoholic beverages as long as taxes have been paid in the country of origin, and as long as the beverages are intended for personal use.

When Finland and Sweden joined the EU in 1995 they had to increase their travellers' import quotas, but they were able to keep quotas for travellers' tax free imports, first until the end of 1996, and after a renegotiation in 1996 until 2004 (Österberg & Karlsson 2002b, 62–63). All Nordic countries still have quotas for travellers' tax free alcohol imports as shown in Table 3. In Denmark, Finland and Sweden these quotas are for travellers arriving from non-EU countries, for Iceland and Norway for all travellers.

## Borders in the Nordic countries: a mixed variety of pathways for cross-border trade of alcohol

In the following, we examine what kind of border areas exist within and in connection to the Nordic countries. We pay special attention to factors affecting the total price for obtaining alcoholic beverages across the border including indirect costs, for instance travel expenses. We also examine the volume of border trade at different borders as well as the amount of alcohol imported by travellers. In addition to this, we look at the number and places of crossing points, the control practices at the borders, the number of people living near the borders, the number of border crossings, as well as how the supply of alcoholic beverages have been organized in these areas.

**Table 3.** Travellers' alcohol import quotas in the Nordic countries in January 2009, in litres of the product

|  | Distilled spirits | Intermediate products | Wine | Beer |
|--|-------------------|-----------------------|------|------|
| From outside the EU to Denmark, Finland and Sweden | 1 or 2            | 2                     | 2    | 16   |
| To Iceland (One of these 3 alternatives)           | 1                 | 0                     | 1    | 0    |
|  | 1 or 1            | 1                     | 6    | 0    |
|  | 0                 | 0                     | 2.25 | 0    |
| To Norway (One of these 3 alternatives)*           | 1                 | 1.5                   | 2    | 2    |
|  | 0                 | 0                     | 3    | 2    |
|  | 0                 | 0                     | 0    | 5    |

\* The Norwegian regulations do not mention different beverage types, but the quotas are defined by alcohol content. cf. Lavik & Nordlund, in this issue.

Source: *Information on the Nordic alcohol market 2008*



### ■ Northern borders between the Nordic countries

Northern parts of the Nordic countries refers in this article to the area north of Oulu in Finland, of Piteå in Sweden and of Bodø in Norway. Defined in this way this area is larger than the Arctic area of the Nordic countries, but still quite scarcely populated. The northern part of Norway has about 400,000 inhabitants, which is less than 10 per cent of the total Norwegian population. The corresponding figures for Sweden are about 190,000 and 2 per cent and for Finland approximately 350,000 and 7 per cent.

In this northern region the land border between Norway and Sweden is about 500 kilometres long, between Finland and Sweden 586 kilometres long and between Norway and Finland 727 kilometres long. These borders are natural in the sense that high mountains separate Norway from Sweden, and the Finnish – Norwegian border as well as the Finnish – Swedish border is drawn along rivers or goes through vast uninhabited areas. Consequently, there are very few border crossing points in this area. There is for instance a railway from Narvik in Norway to Kiruna in Sweden, as well as a road (E 10) that goes alongside the railway, but no other major roads cross the border mountains between these two countries in the north.

As shown in Table 2, prices of alcoholic beverages are clearly higher in Norway than in Finland and Sweden. Between Finland and Sweden alcohol is expected to flow in both directions because distilled spirits have been cheaper in Finland since March 2004, whereas wine and beer have been cheaper in Sweden.

On the Finnish – Swedish border there are altogether six border crossing points, but to some extent locals also cross the border by boat or over the frozen rivers. As regards alcohol, the official crossing points are highly relevant, as the alcohol monopoly stores in the border areas, three in Sweden and five in Finland, are located very near the crossing points. In the twin cities of Tornio and Haparanda the distance between the alcohol monopoly stores is less than one kilometre, and the border control is minimal between the countries. On the Swedish side the only occupied customs station is in Haparanda. According to the Finnish northern customs district, it was calculated that 4.5 million cars and 7,196 buses crossed the Finnish – Swedish land border in 2008, of which 2.9 million car and 3 040 bus crossings were made in Tornio – Haparanda.

The Finnish – Norwegian border also has six official crossing points. According to the Finnish northern customs district 0.9 million cars crossed the Finnish – Norwegian border in 2008. There are two Alko stores and two delivery places for the alcohol monopoly situated near the crossing points on the Finnish side. In Nuorgam, according to the estimate of sales personnel in 2007, some 95 per cent of alcoholic beverages were bought by Norwegians. Besides alcohol, there are also quotas for importing cigarettes, meat and cheese into Norway, and on the Norwegian side customs authorities also randomly check the imports of travellers.

Even if there is border trade in alcohol in the northern part of the Nordic countries both over the Finnish – Swedish and Finnish – Norwegian borders, and even if the amounts of alcohol imported may

be significant from a local perspective, it does not have any major influence on the consumption figures on a national level. It has been estimated that in 2007 the Finnish Alko sold 160,000 litres of alcohol to Swedes and 40,000 litres to Norwegians, which constitutes 1 per cent of Alko's total alcohol sales and some 0.5 per cent of the recorded alcohol consumption in Finland in 2007 (Penttilä 2007). Alcohol sales in Tornio – Haparanda are, however, of a certain interest as it is a kind of a natural experiment to look at how prices of alcoholic beverages and other alcohol policy measures as well as distance affect peoples' habits of purchasing alcohol (see Österberg 1995).

#### ■ Nordic countries' borders with Russia

Finland has a 1,269 kilometre long land border with Russia. There are, however, only 10 official crossing points for passenger traffic, cars or trains. According to the Finnish Customs authorities, nearly 4 million persons entered Finland over the Finnish – Russian land border in 2008. Most of the border crossings were made in the southern part of Finland, where also most of the crossing points are located. The southern part of the border area is also more densely populated and has a better infrastructure for traffic than the areas farther north. In fact, the southernmost crossing point, Vaalimaa, accounted for one third of all border crossings and the four most southerly situated crossing points accounted for about 80 per cent of all passengers arriving in Finland from Russia.

Alcohol prices, especially prices of vodka and beer, are clearly lower in Russia than in Finland because of the low alcohol taxes in Russia. There is also tax

free sale on the Russian side of the border area in connection to the border crossing points in Vaalimaa and Nuijamaa. Besides alcoholic beverages, tobacco products and gasoline are also clearly cheaper in Russia than in Finland.

Finns visiting Russia need a visa, which is quite expensive, and the border control is often very time-consuming and rigid. Furthermore, the amount of alcohol and tobacco imported is restricted by an import quota, and to import alcoholic beverages legally from Russia the traveller has to spend at least 20 hours outside Finland. There are no time limits with regard to importing other commodities, including cigarettes and gasoline.

Norway has a 196 kilometre long land border with Russia in the north. There is only one official crossing point, Stor-skog, which is situated 15 kilometres from Kirkenes in Norway and 225 kilometres from Murmansk in Russia. Like the situation on the Finnish – Russian border, the surveillance of the border between Russia and Norway is very rigid, and the same applies to the control of the cross-border traffic.

Even if the cross-border trade with alcohol from Russia to the Nordic countries is currently quite modest, the southern crossing points in Finland are of interest, as Vyborg with its 80,000 inhabitants is located 60 kilometres from the border, and St. Petersburg with 4.6 million inhabitants is situated about 200 kilometres from the Finnish border. If the Russian border became more open with more fluent customs formalities, and higher import quotas, there is potential for a substantial increase in travellers' imports of alcoholic beverages from Russia.

### ■ Nordic Sea borders with the Baltic countries and Poland

The Gulf of Finland separates Estonia from Finland. Almost all of the passenger traffic between Finland and Estonia takes place by sea between the Finnish capital Helsinki and the Estonian capital Tallinn. Some 20 per cent of the 5.3 million inhabitants of Finland live in the Finnish metropolitan area, and about 30 per cent live within a 200 kilometre radius of Helsinki.

The distance between Helsinki and Tallinn is about 80 kilometres. The fastest ships need less than two hours to make the journey. For the bigger ferries the sea crossing takes about four hours. In 2008, 3.2 million passengers arrived in Finland by sea from Estonia (Merenkulkulaitos 2009). It is estimated that some two thirds of them are Finnish citizens. Since Estonia joined the Schengen agreement in December 2007, the border control has been almost non-existent. Ferry traffic from Finland to other Baltic countries and Poland has been on a very small scale, and at times even non-existent.

As indicated before, prices of alcoholic beverages are clearly lower in Estonia than in Finland. According to surveys, most of travellers' alcohol imports to Finland come either from Estonia or from the ships plying the routes between Helsinki and Tallinn. In 2008 some two thirds of all travellers' alcohol imports came from Estonia and ships; ships also including ships plying between Finland and Sweden. Ships between Helsinki and Tallinn are not able to sell alcoholic beverages tax free, but the prices are well below Finnish prices because the shipping companies pay alcohol excise duties to Estonia.

There are several ferry lines from Swe-

den to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. Ferries operate from Sweden to Estonia between the capitals Stockholm and Tallinn, and between Kapellskär (SWE) and Paldiski (EST). To Latvia, ships operate between Stockholm and Riga, and to Lithuania between Karlshamn (SWE) and Klaipeda (LI). Poland (POL) can be reached from Sweden by ships that traffic between Karlskrona (SWE) and Gdynia (POL), between Nynäshamn (SWE) and Gdansk (POL), and between Ystad (SWE) and Swinoujscie (POL) (Passagerarrederierna... 2008). Although there are several ferry companies operating these lines, the total number of passengers returning on these ferries to Sweden is not that great. In 2007, 623,000 passengers entered Sweden from the Baltic countries, and 605,000 passengers arrived in Sweden from Poland. The share of passengers arriving in Sweden from Poland and the Baltic countries is 8 per cent of the total number of passengers arriving in Sweden by sea (Shipping goods 2008, 9).

### ■ The Åland islands

In addition to the border in the far north, there is also a significant sea border between Finland and Sweden. Almost all sea traffic between the two countries goes through the Åland islands, because this allows the ferries to sell tax free products, mostly alcoholic beverages, cigarettes and perfumes, up to a certain quota, which is, however, not strictly controlled (Karlsson 1999).

In Finland the ferries use the harbours of Helsinki and Turku. On the Swedish side the harbours used are located in Stockholm and Kapellskär. In addition to the Finnish – Swedish ferry traffic, there are

also ferry lines that operate only between Mariehamn and Eckerö in the Åland islands and Kapellskär and Grisslehamn in Sweden. Because of the short distance between Stockholm and Mariehamn, the shipping companies also offer Baltic Sea cruises from Stockholm with a stopover in Mariehamn.

Tax free prices for alcoholic beverages on the ferries making a stopover in the Åland islands are higher than the prices on the ferries that ply between Tallinn and Helsinki. This is explained by the fact that ferries plying between Sweden and Finland compete with Swedish and Finnish alcohol prices, whereas the ferries plying between Helsinki and Tallinn have to compete with much lower alcohol prices in Estonia than in Finland and Sweden. Lucrative tax free sales and relatively high prices on the ferries have made it possible to keep ticket prices fairly low, making travelling on ferries profitable for ship owners and affordable for passengers. In 2008, 9.3 million people crossed the Finnish – Swedish sea border, which equals over 4.6 million arrivals on the Finnish side and as many on the Swedish side.

The existence of tax free sales in the traffic routed via the Åland islands has enabled a continuation of lively maritime traffic between Finland and Sweden. The sea border in the south is therefore meaningful for traffic to and from Finland, as well as for transit traffic to Russia and Europe. A lot of people use this route to travel to Sweden, Norway or Denmark and even mainland Europe by car. A majority of the lorry traffic also uses this route to cross the border between the countries.

#### ■ Nordic borders with mainland Europe

With regard to traffic crossing the Baltic Sea, Germany can be reached from Finland by ferries operating from Helsinki to Rostock and Travemünde. A one-way journey from Germany to Finland takes about a day. The number of people who arrive in Finland by this route, however, is not that large, only 140,000 passengers in 2008 (Merenkulkulaitos 2009).

Sea travel between Sweden and Germany is much more common than sea traffic between Finland and mainland Europe. An obvious reason for this is the geographic proximity of Sweden to Germany, which has a bearing on the price and duration of a journey between the two countries. Most ferry lines go from the southern Swedish port of Trelleborg to Rostock, Sassnitz and Travemünde in Germany. In addition, there are also ferry lines that operate to Germany from Gothenburg in Sweden. A trip from Trelleborg to Sassnitz takes four hours, whereas a trip between Gothenburg and Kiel takes up to 14 hours. In 2007, about 1.2 million persons arrived in Sweden from German harbours. The number of passengers arriving from Germany in Swedish ports amounts to 8 per cent of the total foreign passenger traffic by sea, which makes the sea traffic to Germany as big as between Sweden and the Baltic countries and Poland (Shipping goods 2008, 9). Alcoholic beverages are clearly cheaper in Germany, the Baltic countries and Poland than in Sweden. How many passengers travel on these routes because of cheap alcohol every year is unknown, but according to Center for Social Research on Alcohol and Drugs' (SoRAD's) Monitor surveys 4 per cent of the alcohol imported into Sweden in 2006 by travellers came

from the Baltic countries and another 2 per cent from Poland (Boman et al. 2007).

Even if we are not able to exactly measure the difference in alcohol prices by beverage categories, we know that prices in Germany are on the average about one third lower than in Denmark (Lavik & Nordlund, in this issue). Some 2.5 million Danes or 46 per cent of the Danish population lives on Jutland, where border trade is concentrated around the 67 kilometre long land border between Southern Jutland and Germany, on which close to 100,000 Danes live (Bygvrå 2007). The Danish – German land border in South Jutland is crossed by some 33 million people yearly, and the border control has been practically non-existent since the creation of the European single market in 1993 (Bygvrå 2007). A German town, Flensburg with 85,000 inhabitants, is situated 5 kilometres south of the border, and has long traditions of border trade with Denmark (Bygvrå 1990; 2007). Supermarkets situated in the suburbs of Flensburg accept Danish currency and stores and supermarkets also advertise in Danish newspapers. Besides alcoholic beverages, Danes also buy sweets, tobacco and foodstuffs on the German side.

Since 1998, the Danish capital Copenhagen has been connected to mainland Europe by a bridge to Jutland via the island of Fyn. Germany can also be reached from the island of Lolland by car ferries operating from Rødby in Denmark to Puttgarden and Lübeck in Germany and from the small town of Gedser on the island of Falster to Rostock in Germany. There is 24-hour ferry traffic between Rødby and Puttgarden and the trip between the ports takes only 45 minutes. The distance between the Danish capital Copenhagen and Rødby is about 160 kilometres.

### ■ The Øresund region

Southern Sweden is densely populated and closely connected to Denmark by ferries operating in the Kattegat strait between Helsingborg in Sweden and Helsingør in Denmark. By ferry a trip between these two cities takes only 15 minutes. Since July 2000 a bridge over Øresund also connects the third largest city in Sweden, Malmö, with Copenhagen, establishing a land connection from Sweden to mainland Europe. Housing over 3.6 million people, and accounting for more than one-quarter of Denmark's and Sweden's combined GDP, the Øresund region is the wealthiest and most densely populated area in the Nordic countries (Karlsson & Österberg & Tigerstedt 2005).

The Swedish – Danish border is crossed yearly by about 35 million people. The importance of ferry traffic has gradually diminished in favour of the bridge. In 2007, already over 70 per cent of road traffic used the bridge for crossing the border between the two countries. Finnish, Norwegian and to some extent Russian freight transporter also drive through Sweden, and therefore use the Øresund region as a transit route on their way to Denmark and further on to mainland Europe.

The main reasons for Swedes and Danes crossing the border are commuting, shopping and various leisure activities. While most of the commuter traffic heads from Sweden to Denmark and back, the main direction of people moving over the border is from Denmark to Sweden. People in Denmark are drawn to Skåne by lower costs of living and much lower costs of housing. Sweden also has a lower rate of income tax than Denmark. For people in Sweden, one important motive for cross-

ing the Øresund is shopping. Prices of beer, wine and spirits differ between the two countries, and therefore these are the most attractive buys for Swedes. Clothes and certain foods are also cheaper in Denmark (Bygvrå & Westlund 2004, 48; Matthiessen 2004, 37).

As the vision behind the development of the Øresund region has been to facilitate movement between the two countries across the bridge and to integrate Copenhagen and the Malmö-Lund area into one metropolitan region (Matthiessen 2004, 31), the border control has become relatively lax. This is true especially on the Danish side of the border. The Swedish customs authorities keep a closer watch on the passenger flows and vehicle traffic, and react when there is a suspicion that the large quantities of alcohol or cigarettes travellers are transporting over the border are not intended for the passengers' own personal use, but rather for sale on the black market. No random passenger checks, however, are performed.

In addition to the busy traffic in the Øresund region, Denmark can also be reached by ferries operating between Gothenburg in Sweden and North Jutland in Denmark. The volume of passengers on these routes, however, is only a fraction of the passenger volume crossing to Øresund. According to the Monitor surveys by SoRAD, 21 per cent of total alcohol imports by travellers in 2006 came from Denmark and 41 per cent from Germany. The respective shares of the total imports of beer, wine and distilled spirits from Germany were 51, 49 and 31 per cent. The corresponding figures for Denmark were 26, 26 and 15 (Boman et al. 2007, 43).

### ■ The Swedish – Norwegian border

The long Swedish – Norwegian borderline in the North traverses a sparsely populated mountainous area, with very few roads crossing the border. In the southern parts of Norway, cross-border traffic with Sweden is much more intensive, with about 25–30 million people crossing the border every year.

The border area in the South is in itself not that densely populated, but the Norwegian capital Oslo is situated only some 100 kilometres from the Swedish border. If from a border traffic perspective we also include Østfold, Oslo and Akershus, then the combined population in this area is over one million. It is only since the mid-1990s that traffic flows in the border region have reached considerable proportions, and there have been clear improvements in the transport infrastructure. For instance, a new bridge across the Svinesund was opened in June 2005, and in 2008 a new motorway was completed between Oslo and Sweden. The Svinesund border region between Norway and Sweden could even be described as “Norway’s gateway to the continent”, with the E6 serving as the main transport route (<http://www.granskommitten.org>).

The Svinesund area is the most important shopping place for Norwegians abroad. The main items for Norwegian border shoppers are alcoholic beverages, tobacco, meat, sweets and soft drinks (Ericsson 2004; Lavik 2004; Lavik & Nordlund in this issue). It is estimated that Norwegian border shoppers spend annually more than 250 million Euros in the Svinesund area. Swedish consumers, on the other hand, spend only 12 million Euros in Norway, which clearly indicates

that Norway, from a border trade point of view, does not attract Swedish border shoppers (Karlsson et al. 2005).

As in the Northern border areas, in southern Norway the customs authorities also conduct surveillance of cross-border traffic and may conduct random controls of passengers. In this sense, the Norwegian customs authorities should be able to control border trade more efficiently than customs authorities in other Nordic countries, Iceland excluded.

#### ■ Tax free alcohol in Iceland and Norway

In addition to the main traffic routes, which have been discussed above, there are also other routes between the Nordic countries that are used to import alcoholic beverages. The number of passengers crossing over these borders, however, is not as great, nor is the amount of alcohol they bring with them as large as is the case of the other border areas.

Contrary to the EU countries Iceland and Norway are still able to sell alcoholic beverages tax free. The international airports of Gardemoen in Norway and Keflavik in Iceland both have tax free shops in the arrival areas, where inbound passengers have the opportunity to buy tax free products on landing and before leaving the airport. The tightened rules concerning liquids on board aeroplanes in recent years as also the fact that alcohol sales on flights have become less common have further increased the significance of inbound tax free sales. In Iceland but also in Norway a considerable share of all unrecorded alcohol consumption originates from the tax free shops at the airports (Lavik & Nordlund in this issue)

Tax free sales of alcoholic beverages are

also allowed on ferries operating to and from Norway and Iceland. For Iceland the amount of alcohol brought into the country on ferries is not that big because of Iceland's remote location in the Atlantic Ocean. However, for Norway there is regular ferry traffic, for instance between Sandefjord in Norway and Strömstad in Sweden, and between Larvik and Kristiansand in Norway and Hirtshals in Denmark, and between Oslo in Norway and Copenhagen and Fredrikshavn in Denmark as well as between Oslo in Norway and Kiel in Germany. Compared to the magnitude of tax free sales in the airports the significance of ferry tax free sales, however, is not great.

### Main border regions with regard to travellers' alcohol imports

Earlier in this article we examined the Nordic borders in order to identify which border areas or crossing points are of importance when trying to estimate the magnitude of border trade in alcoholic beverages and travellers' alcohol imports. We identified the following seven areas (Figure 2).

#### ■ Main border regions for alcohol imports

One of the areas, the twin cities of Tornio and Haparanda, is not important as regards the volume of cross-border trade in alcoholic beverages, but it is an area where it would be possible to further study border trade in alcohol and gain a more profound understanding of the mechanisms affecting that trade (Area 7 in Figure 2).

Neither is the border area between Southern Finland and Russia at the moment an important channel for large



**Figure 2.** Main Nordic border regions for travellers' imports of alcoholic beverages

amounts of cheap alcohol from Russia (Area 6 in Figure 2). This is highlighted by the fact that the share of travellers' alcohol imports outside the EU countries is about 10 per cent of the total travellers' alcohol imports. However, worth keeping in mind is that this area is one of the few border regions in the Nordic countries where trade in alcoholic beverages could increase substantially in the future. This would, however, require that the quotas between the countries should be amended and the border crossings would become much easier than they are at present.

Based on our analysis, we have identified five border areas of greatest importance from the point of view of travellers'

alcohol imports (Table 4). These are the land border between Germany and Denmark (Area 1 in Figure 2), the Copenhagen – Malmö – Lund area (Area 2 in Figure 2), the area including Oslo and the border shopping points on the Swedish side (Area 3 in Figure 2), the ships plying between Sweden and Finland via the Åland Islands (Area 4 in Figure 2), and the Southern Finland – Tallinn area (Area 5 in Figure 2).

In addition to these regions, tax free sales in Norway and Iceland in connection with international air traffic are an important source for travellers' alcohol imports. Concentrating studies on the trade and alcohol imports in the above mentioned areas would be advisable, and would fur-



**Table 4.** Characteristics of the five main Nordic regions of border in alcoholic beverages

|  | 1. DK/GER  | 2. DK/SWE                           | 3. NOR/SWE  | 4. FIN/Åland/<br>SWE                           | 5. FIN/EST  |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Type of border                           | Land   | Land, Water                         | Land  | Water  | Water   |
| Price differences of alcoholic beverages | Large  | Large/moderate                      | Moderate  | Large/moderate                                 | Large   |
| Import quotas                            | No   | No (indicative)                     | Yes   | Yes  | No  |
| Severity of border control               | None   | Medium                              | Medium  | Almost none                                    | None  |
| Direction of alcohol                     | GER → DK   | DK → SWE                            | SWE → NOR   | FIN/Åland → (TaxFree) ← SWE                    | EST → FIN   |
| Border crossings/year                    | 33.2 million                                     | 35.5 million                        | 25–30 million   | 5.6 million                                    | 5.8 million   |
| Infrastructure for traffic               | Road, railway                                    | Ferry, road, railway                | Road, railway   | Ferry  | Ferry   |
| Population living near the border area   | Scarce (≈ 160 000)                               | Dense (≈ 3.6 million)               | Moderate (≈ 0.4 – 1 million)                                | (no coherent border region)                    | Dense (1.4 million)                                   |
| Main types of cross-border traffic       | Shopping, leisure                                | Commute, leisure, shopping          | Shopping, leisure   | Leisure, shopping                              | Leisure, shopping                                     |
| Commodities of interest                  | For Danes: Alcohol, food-stuffs, sweets, tobacco | For Swedes: Alcohol, clothes, foods | For Norwegians: Tobacco, meat, alcohol, sweets, soft drinks | For all travellers: Alcohol, tobacco, perfumes | For Finns: Alcohol, tobacco, consumer goods, services |

ther clarify the extent and nature of border trade and travellers' alcohol imports in the Nordic countries.

### Unrecorded alcohol consumption and travellers' imports of alcoholic beverages

In all the Nordic countries unrecorded alcohol consumption includes alcoholic beverages imported by travellers (beverages exported by foreigners excluded) and legally home brewed and fermented alcoholic beverages as well as illegal distilling, smuggling, and alcohol substitutes. In Finland unrecorded alcohol consumption also includes alcohol consumed by Finnish travellers abroad, which accounts for about 18 per cent of all unrecorded alcohol in Finland. In other Nordic countries the amount of alcohol consumed by travellers

abroad is not included in the estimate (Information on the Nordic Alcohol Market 2008, 27).

In most cases travellers' alcohol imports are estimated with the help of different survey instruments, and the estimates are included as a part of the estimate for unrecorded alcohol consumption. For instance in Denmark the estimates are made by the Danish Ministry of Taxation and in Finland by TNS Gallup together with state authorities like the National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) and the Ministry of Finance and private industry representatives like the Finnish Brewery Association and the Finnish Food and Drink Industries' Federation. In Sweden the estimates are made by SoRAD at the University of Stockholm and in Norway mainly by the Norwegian Institute for Al-

cohol and Drug Research (SIRUS).

Travellers' imports of alcoholic beverages are by far the largest component of unrecorded alcohol consumption. For instance, in Sweden or Norway, the level of unrecorded alcohol consumption has during the past years constituted 20 to 35 per cent of total alcohol consumption, of which the majority has been travellers' alcohol imports (Karlsson 2008). The highest per capita imports of alcoholic beverages by travellers are found in Finland and Sweden (Table 5). Per capita alcohol imports are considerably lower in Denmark, and even lower in Norway, where quota remains in force for alcohol imports. In Iceland, the data on unrecorded alcohol consumption is very scarce, and therefore Iceland has not been included in Table 5. Travellers' alcohol imports are, however,

even lower in Iceland than in Norway. In 2007, the share of travellers' imports of total alcohol consumption measured in pure alcohol per capita was 12 per cent or 1.3 litres in Finland. In other Nordic countries the corresponding figures were 18 per cent or 1.5 litres in Sweden, 11 per cent or 0.7 litres in Norway and 9 per cent or 0.9 litres in Denmark (Information on the Nordic Alcohol Market 2008, 27).

## Summary

Several factors determine the magnitude of cross-border trade in alcoholic beverages: level of price differences, existence of import quotas, severity of border control, number of annual border crossings, traffic infrastructure, population residing near the border and motives for crossing the border. During the past decade border

**Table 5.** Alcoholic beverages imported by travellers, million litres, and total alcohol imports in litres of 100 % alcohol per capita in the years 2003, 2004 and 2007

|                | Spirits | Wine* | Beer | Cider & long drinks | Total in 100 % alcohol | Total in litres 100 % alcohol per capita |
|----------------|---------|-------|------|---------------------|------------------------|--|
| <b>Finland</b> |         |       |      |                     |                        |  |
| 2003           | 4.9     | 7.6   | 27.8 | 0.8                 | 4.6                    | 0.9                                      |
| 2004           | 10.2    | 9.1   | 37.8 | 7.6                 | 8.2                    | 1.6                                      |
| 2007           | 9.0     | 8.0   | 21.8 | 14.2                | 7.0                    | 1.3                                      |
| <b>Sweden</b>  |         |       |      |                     |                        |  |
| 2003           | 18.7    | 43.2  | 75.2 | -                   | 16.7                   | 1.9                                      |
| 2004           | 23.9    | 46.0  | 91.9 | -                   | 20.2                   | 2.2                                      |
| 2007           | 18.0    | 31.6  | 55.5 | -                   | 14.1                   | 1.5                                      |
| <b>Norway</b>  |         |       |      |                     |                        |  |
| 2002**         | 4.4     | 9.6   | 6.6  | -                   | 3.3                    | 0.7                                      |
| 2004           | 4.1     | 7.2   | 9.0  | -                   | 3.0                    | 0.7                                      |
| 2007           | 4.4     | 8.6   | 7.9  | -                   | 3.2                    | 0.7                                      |
| <b>Denmark</b> |         |       |      |                     |                        |  |
| 2003           | 7.0     | 18.0  | 80.0 | -                   | 7.0                    | 1.3                                      |
| 2004           | 6.0     | 12.0  | 85.0 | -                   | 6.0                    | 1.1                                      |
| 2007           | 5.0     | 10.0  | 80.0 | -                   | 5.0                    | 0.9                                      |

\* Wines include also fortified wines.

\*\* The Norwegian estimate is from 2002.

Source: Information on the Nordic Alcohol Market 2008, 26.

control regarding alcoholic beverages has relaxed significantly, mainly due to the expansion of the Single European Market and the abolition of import quotas for alcoholic beverages between EU Member States.

The main motive for border trade in alcohol is differences in the prices of alcoholic beverages. The greater the price difference the higher the volume of border trade in alcoholic beverages, *ceteris paribus*. Differences in alcohol prices undeniably determine the direction of border trade with alcohol but they are by no means the only factors affecting the volume of cross-border trade in alcohol. As the example of the Norwegian – Russian and the Finnish – Russian borders shows, even with the greatest difference in alcohol prices along the Nordic borders, strict control of border crossings as well as small quotas for travellers' tax free imports of alcoholic beverages are able to keep the volume of travellers alcohol imports to a very low level.

The Finnish – Norwegian border and the Swedish – Finnish border including the twin cities of Tornio and Haparanda are good examples of the importance of the amount of population. After the Finnish alcohol tax cuts of 2004, and before the financial crisis started in 2008, the Finnish Alko store situated in Nuorgam sold some 95 per cent of its alcoholic beverages to Norwegians, and the Alko store in Tornio was the highest selling Finnish alcohol store. For the local people in northern Finland, border trade in alcohol with Norway and Sweden is an important phenomenon, but considering the importance of alcohol traffic over the Nordic borders from a national perspective it is totally clear that it does not have any major importance for

the state alcohol income in Finland, Norway and Sweden nor for the total alcohol sales of their off-premises alcohol retail monopolies.

At present the volume of cross-border trade in alcoholic beverages is especially significant in five areas. One of these is the land border between Denmark and Germany, which also was the first area to experience lively cross-border trade in alcoholic beverages after Denmark joined the EU in 1973, and after the quotas for travellers' tax free alcohol imports increased in the 1980s. Another important Nordic route for alcohol imports goes from Germany and Denmark to southern Sweden. Border trade in alcohol between Norway and Sweden is not as extensive as in the two previous cases, but locally important and with potential for further growth, especially if the quotas for alcohol imports are raised in the future. The extensive border trade in alcoholic beverages between Finland and Estonia goes back partly to the mid-1990s, but especially to 2004, when the quotas for alcohol imports were abolished.

The fifth important route goes through the Åland islands to Finland and Sweden. This route is based on the possibility to sell alcoholic beverages tax free on ships that ply the seas between Finland and Sweden, and make a stopover in the autonomous region of Åland. Before Finnish and Swedish EU membership, the ferries did not have to call at the islands to be able to sell tax free alcohol. The ferries are in fact the oldest way for Swedes and Finns to buy tax free alcohol, and to drink cheap alcohol on board ship. After the tax free system was abolished within the EU in 1999, airports lost much of their importance as a source of cheap alcohol. Tax

free alcohol connected with air traffic has, however, become increasingly important in the Nordic non-EU countries of Iceland and Norway, where people nowadays are able to buy alcoholic beverages tax free at the airports, even when they are entering the country.

Border trade in alcoholic beverages will exist as long as it is or feels affordable for people to bring in cheaper alcohol across the border. Price and tax differences will therefore always be relevant in determining the magnitude of cross-border trade in alcohol. If differences in tax levels between neighbouring countries decrease, the volume of border trade will likewise

decrease. On the other hand, border trade in alcohol may also increase in the future, especially over the borders between the EU and third countries if there are any changes in the import quotas or the level of border control.

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## Scaling alcohol control policies across Europe

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### **Abstract**

**Aim:** One of the tasks in the Bridging the Gap (BtG) project was to create a scale to measure the strictness of alcohol control policies in Europe. The countries included were all the current EU member states as well as three applicant countries plus Norway and Switzerland (BtG countries).

**Methods:** Alcohol control measures were divided in seven subgroups. The weights in scoring different alcohol policy measures were based on the evidence of effective alcohol policy. In order to validate the scores given to different alcohol policy measures a kind of Delphi technique was used. The data for the scale was gathered from the country information provided by the BtG Alcohol Policy Network, and from other relevant sources, as for instance the WHO Alcohol Control Database.

**Findings:** According to the BtG scale alcohol control policies are most strict in Northern European countries. Countries with low alcohol control include wine-producing countries. A common feature for these countries is that none of them have instituted a positive excise duty for wine. Central European beer-preferring countries and the new EU member states from Eastern Europe belong to medium alcohol control countries.

**Conclusions:** The scale offers an easy instrument for comparing different countries. At the same time it is a simplistic tool, which should be used cautiously.

### **Introduction**

Bridging the Gap (BtG) was a project initiated by Eurocare (<http://www.eurocare.org/btg/apn/members/index.html>) and partially financed by the European Union (EU) through the Health and Consumer Protection Directorate – General. The BtG project spanned the years 2004–2006 and involved 25 EU member states, three applicant countries (Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey) as well as Norway and Switzerland. Dr Peter Anderson acted as co-ordinator of the project.

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The BtG project included three task forces, one of them being the Alcohol Policy task force. The most important commitments of the Alcohol Policy task force were to produce country reports on alcohol policies from all participating countries and to create a scale to measure the strictness of alcohol control policies.

This article starts with a presentation and discussion of previous attempts to create a scale to rank countries on the basis of their alcohol control policies. Special attention is given to the scale constructed in the European Comparative Alcohol Study (Karlsson & Österberg, 2001). This is followed by a presentation of the BtG scale after which the scale is used to measure the strictness of alcohol control policies in the BtG countries. In the conclusions, the pros and cons of using quantitative scales in measuring the strictness of alcohol control policies are discussed.

### **Previous attempts to create a scale to rank alcohol control policies**

The first scale to rank alcohol control policies in Europe on country level according to their strictness was constructed by Phil Davies and Brendan Walsh in their study *Alcohol Problems and Alcohol Control in Europe* partly financed by the European Community (EC) (Davies & Walsh, 1983). The idea of a quantitative scale measuring alcohol control has, however, been discussed even earlier (see, e.g., Smart, 1977).

The overall objective of Davies and Walsh was to study alcohol consumption and alcohol problems, and the impact of alcohol control policies on these. The study included all nine countries of the EC as of 1980 and six other European countries (Austria, Norway, Poland, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland), as well as one non-European country, Israel. A rudimentary scale of alcohol control policies was constructed as part of the study in order to rank the countries according to the degree of their alcohol control (Davies & Walsh, 1983, p. 28).

The scale used by the Italian Permanent Observatory on Youth and Alcohol in their 1994 report was almost an exact copy of the Davies and Walsh scale (Young people and Alcohol in Europe, 1994). The questions included in these two scales were divided into four subgroups: 'control of production', 'control of distribution', 'social and environmental measures' and 'price and fiscal measures'. The scoring mechanism was also identical, giving one point for each existing and zero for each non-existing policy measure (Karlsson & Österberg, 2001). Eighteen European countries were studied, including the EU member states as of 1995, the EU-15 and three East European countries (the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland).

There were some differences in the wording of the questions of the scales by Walsh and Davies and by the Italian Permanent Observatory. This does not, however, fully explain the different scoring obtained in these studies, which both measured the strictness of alcohol control policy in 1981 (see Karlsson & Österberg, 2001, p. 119). Another factor that has contributed to the different

rankings is the use of different data sources or key informants. The questions on which these scales are based are not always unequivocal, which easily leads to differences in the answers depending on the key informants' interpretation of the questions. The differences in scores between the Davies and Walsh and the Italian study is thus a good lesson on the importance of using accurate, reliable and well-documented data sources when studying and quantifying alcohol control policies.

In 1995 Peter Anderson and Juhani Lehto further developed the Davies and Walsh scale in their *Evaluation and Monitoring of Action on Alcohol* adding seven more questions to the scale (Anderson & Lehto, 1995). The revised scale covered questions from random breath testing and warning labels on alcoholic beverages to restrictions on the maximum alcohol content of beverages and bans on alcohol advertising. In addition to the new questions an attempt was made by the authors to measure the differences in the enforcement of alcohol control legislation (Anderson & Lehto, 1995, pp. 42–43).

Including questions about the level of enforcement made the scale more comprehensive, and provided valuable information on the real strictness of alcohol control policies as the level of enforcement of alcohol control measures differs between countries. This may lead, for example, to a situation where a country with strict enforcement but lower legal minimum age limit is in fact controlling more strictly the availability of alcohol to young people but scoring less on a scale than a country with higher legal minimum age limit but poor enforcement. Including questions on the enforcement may, however, make the scale less reliable and certainly more open to criticism, as the assessments of the level of enforcement are often dependent on the subjective views of key informants and/or the researcher.

### **European Comparative Alcohol Study**

The European Comparative Alcohol Study (ECAS) covered the years 1950–2000 and included all European Union (EU) member states as of 1995 as well as Norway (Norström, 2002). In addition to country reports on alcohol policies, the project also included a scale to measure the strictness and comprehensiveness of alcohol control policies. Because of the long time period of the study, the ECAS scale was constructed to be as simple as possible. The scale was divided into six different subcategories, resembling the division used by Davies and Walsh. The questions included in the scale were mostly compiled from the earlier scales presented above (Karlsson & Österberg, 2001; Table I).

In the ECAS scale questions of alcohol taxation were omitted for two reasons. First, the ECAS project tried to study the impact of different alcohol control measures on alcohol consumption and alcohol-related problems. As price changes were already included separately in the analysis, the ECAS scale was needed mostly to give information of changes in the physical availability of alcoholic beverages (see Leppänen, Sullström, & Suoniemi, 2001;

Table I. The ECAS scale for measuring the strictness and comprehensiveness of alcohol control.

---

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Control of production and wholesale (max. 3 points) |   |
| 1.  | State monopoly for the production or wholesale of<br>Spirits (1 p.)<br>Wine (1 p.)<br>Beer (1 p.)   |
| 2.  | No production or wholesale monopolies but a license is required for the production or<br>wholesale of alcoholic beverages (1 p.)<br>(no points if the score for question 1 is 3 points)   |
| Control of distribution (max. 7 points)             |   |
| 3.  | State monopoly for off- or on-premise retail sales of<br>Spirits (1 p.)<br>Wine (1 p.)<br>Beer (1 p.)   |
| 4.  | No monopoly for off- or on-premise retail sales of alcoholic beverages but an <i>alcohol specific<br/>license</i> is needed for off- or on-premise retail sales of alcoholic beverages (1 p.)<br>(no points if the score for question 3 is 3 points)  |
| 5.  | Special restrictions on sales days and hours on off-premise retail sales of alcoholic beverages<br>(1 p.)<br>(the sale of alcoholic beverages is differently regulated than the sales of other commodities)   |
| 6.  | Other special restrictions on off-premise sales of alcoholic beverages (1 p.)<br>(alcoholic beverages cannot be sold for instance in kiosks, gasoline stations, near churches or<br>kindergartens, etc., or there is an upper limit on the amount of stores able to sell<br>alcoholic beverages)  |
| 7.  | Special restrictions on sales days and hours on on-premise retail sales of alcoholic beverages<br>(1 p.)<br>(alcohol sales has to be stopped earlier than other sales; special restrictions concerning alcohol<br>sales on-premise)   |
| 8.  | Other special restrictions on on-premise sales of alcoholic beverages (1 p.)<br>(special kinds of premises are not allowed to serve alcoholic beverages: canteens at the work,<br>in hospitals, etc.; alcohol cannot be sold in certain places, for instance near churches,<br>kindergartens; there is an upper limit on the amount of restaurants able to sell<br>alcoholic beverages) |
| Personal control (max. 3 points)                    |   |
| 9.  | Legal age limit for off-premise sales at least<br>20 for some alcoholic beverages (1½ p.)<br>18 for some alcoholic beverages (1 p.)<br>16 for some alcoholic beverages (½ p.)   |
| 10.   | Legal age limit for on-premise sales at least<br>20 for some alcoholic beverages (1½ p.)<br>18 for some alcoholic beverages (1 p.)<br>16 for some alcoholic beverages (½ p.)  |
| Control of marketing (max. 2 points)                |   |
| 11.   | Restrictions on alcohol advertising<br>Statutory control (2 p.)<br>Voluntary code (1 p.)  |
| Social and environmental controls (max. 3 p.)       |   |
| 12.   | Drunk driving<br>BAC 0.05% or less (3 p.)<br>BAC 0.08% or less (2 p.)<br>BAC limit at all (1 p.)  |
| Public policy (max. 2 points)                       |   |
| 13.   | National alcohol prevention programme or agency (1 p.)  |
| 14.   | National alcohol education programme or agency (1 p.)   |

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Norström, 2002). Second, in practice it was almost impossible to collect comparable and reliable data on alcohol excise duty rates for the whole study period because before 1993 alcohol excise duties were levied very differently in different EU member states (Österberg & Karlsson, 2002).

The scoring mechanism in the ECAS scale differed from the previous scales in the sense that different scores were given for a certain alcohol control measure depending on how stringent it was. For instance, instead of giving either one or zero points for a legal age limit for selling alcoholic beverages at all or over or under a certain age, a legal minimum age limit of 20 years scores more points in the ECAS scale than a legal minimum age limit of 18 years, which again scores more than a legal minimum age limit of 16 years. In the same manner, different blood alcohol concentration (BAC) limits for drivers score different points (Table I).

The results of the ECAS scale approach for the period 1950–2000 are shown by country in Table II. From the 1960s onwards a subtle, but gradual, shift towards stricter alcohol control policy was noticed in almost all countries included in the ECAS project. A more distinct move towards stricter and more extensive alcohol control policy could be detected between 1980 and 1990. A contributing factor in this development was that drunk driving was given more attention. Age limits for retail sales of alcoholic beverages were also introduced or sharpened in several countries, and restrictions on alcohol advertisements began to emerge (Österberg & Karlsson, 2002). Table II clearly shows that the average score has increased during this period indicating that formal alcohol control became stricter in the ECAS countries during the second half of the twentieth century.

Table II. The strictness and comprehensiveness of alcohol control policies in the ECAS countries, 1950 to 2000.

| Country       | 1950 | 1960 | 1970 | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 |
|---------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Austria       | 4    | 7    | 7    | 6    | 7    | 7    |
| Belgium       | 6    | 7    | 8    | 8.5  | 10.5 | 11.5 |
| Denmark       | 4    | 4    | 6    | 7    | 7    | 8.5  |
| Finland       | 17   | 17   | 15.5 | 18.5 | 18.5 | 14.5 |
| France        | 1    | 6.5  | 9.5  | 9.5  | 10.5 | 12.5 |
| Germany       | 4    | 4    | 5    | 6    | 7    | 8    |
| Greece        | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 6    | 7    |
| Ireland       | 8    | 8    | 12   | 12   | 12   | 12   |
| Italy         | 7    | 7    | 8    | 12   | 12   | 13   |
| Netherlands   | 6    | 6    | 6    | 11   | 13   | 13   |
| Norway        | 17   | 17   | 17   | 19   | 19   | 17   |
| Portugal      | 1    | 2    | 2    | 4    | 6    | 8    |
| Spain         | 0    | 0    | 0    | 4.5  | 10   | 10   |
| Sweden        | 17.5 | 18.5 | 18.5 | 18.5 | 18.5 | 16.5 |
| UK            | 8    | 9    | 14   | 14   | 14   | 13   |
| Average score | 6.8  | 7.7  | 8.7  | 10.2 | 11.4 | 11.4 |

Not surprisingly, the ECAS scale showed that in the 1950s and 1960s the Nordic countries, Denmark excluded, were classified as countries having high alcohol control (Karlsson & Österberg, 2001, p. 126). In the 1950s countries classified as having an average alcohol control were Ireland and the United Kingdom, accompanied by Italy. The reason why these countries were classified as having at least medium-level alcohol control was mainly in their licensing systems and sales restrictions for on- and off-premise sales of alcoholic beverages. The remaining nine countries scored less than seven points. These low-level alcohol control countries included the Mediterranean countries, except for Italy, and most of the Central European countries as well as Denmark.

When using the same score limit for low alcohol control in 2000 as in 1950 none of the ECAS countries were classified as having low alcohol control in 2000 (Table II). At the same time, however, the score had dropped for those countries having the strictest alcohol control policies, namely Norway, Sweden, and Finland mainly because of their participation in the European Economic Area Agreement (EEA) and the EU. This meant that these countries were forced to give up their former state monopolies on production, import, export and wholesale of alcoholic beverages and have only retained their off-premise retail alcohol monopolies (Holder et al., 1988; Sulkunen, Sutton, Tigerstedt, & Warpenius, 2000; Tigerstedt, 2001; Ugland, 2002).

In the ECAS project it was noted that comparing the scores in different countries over time was problematic because changes in these numbers reflect two separate trends (Table III). On the one hand there was a decrease in the control of production and sales of alcoholic beverages or the regulation of the supply side of the alcohol equation. On the other hand alcohol control measures targeted at alcohol demand or directly at alcohol-related problems had become more prevalent.

According to Table II, alcohol control policies became more similar in the ECAS countries during the second half of the twentieth century. Table III, however, shows that this convergence was not a process leading towards the kind of strict alcohol control policies that were practised in the Nordic countries in the 1950s (Andersson & Baumberg, 2006; Österberg & Karlsson, 2002). Instead, the

Table III. The strictness and comprehensiveness of alcohol control policies in the ECAS countries according to subgroups of alcohol control, 1950 to 2000.

| Subgroup*                                  | 1950 | 1960 | 1970 | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Control of production and wholesale (3 p.) | 1.2  | 1.3  | 1.3  | 1.3  | 1.3  | 0.9  |
| Control of distribution (7 p.)             | 2.9  | 3.0  | 3.0  | 2.8  | 2.9  | 2.8  |
| Personal control (3 p.)                    | 1.3  | 1.5  | 1.4  | 1.7  | 1.8  | 1.8  |
| Control of marketing (2 p.)                | 0.3  | 0.4  | 0.8  | 1.3  | 1.7  | 1.7  |
| Social and environmental control (3 p.)    | 0.6  | 0.9  | 1.2  | 2.0  | 2.3  | 2.7  |
| Public policy (2 p.)                       | 0.5  | 0.7  | 1.0  | 1.1  | 1.4  | 1.5  |

Note: \*Maximum amount of points for each subgroup in brackets.

European countries are becoming more similar in that they are all adopting similar measures trying to affect alcohol demand and alcohol-related problems instead of controlling the supply or availability of alcoholic beverages.

### **Creating the BtG scale**

In creating the BtG scale for measuring the strictness of alcohol control policies the previous scales and especially the ECAS scale were used as a starting point. The same six subgroups of alcohol control were used as in the ECAS scale but a new subgroup, alcohol taxation, was added (Table IV).

Deciding the weights for different alcohol policy measures and subgroups is largely or at least partly a subjective process, even when it is based on scientific evidence of the effectiveness of different alcohol policy measures (see, e.g., Babor et al., 2003, pp. 264–266). In order to validate the scores given to different subgroups of alcohol control in the BtG scale, a kind of Delphi technique was used. This was done by sending a draft of the BtG scale to 14 international experts in the field of alcohol research. These experts were asked to review and comment on the weights given by us to the different subgroups of alcohol policy and to make a proposal of their own. Altogether 11 experts reacted to our inquiry. Taking into consideration their views, we came up with the division of points presented in Table V. Without a doubt this kind of validation system is also subjective; first of all, because we chose the experts who got selected to the Delphi panel; second, because the views of our experts are partly subjective.

The data for the BtG scale were collected by sending a questionnaire to the country partners of the BtG Alcohol Policy Network. The filled-in questionnaires were checked against the Alcohol Control database of the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe (WHO EURO; <http://data.euro.who.int/alcohol/>) and other relevant data material. Data on excise duties of alcoholic beverages were taken from the Excise Duty Tables Part I – Alcoholic beverages published by the EU ([http://ec.europa.eu/taxation\\_customs/resources/documents/taxation/excise\\_duties/alcoholic\\_beverages/rates/excise\\_duties-part\\_I\\_alcohol-en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/resources/documents/taxation/excise_duties/alcoholic_beverages/rates/excise_duties-part_I_alcohol-en.pdf)). The checked country forms were once more sent to the country partners in spring 2006.

The results of the analyses of the strictness of alcohol control policies when using the scale for the BtG countries are shown in Figure 1. As the scale is based on the one used in the ECAS study, it is no surprise that the same countries as in the ECAS project emerge as having the most stringent alcohol control policies. According to the BtG scale, alcohol policies are most strict in the Northern European countries of Norway, Sweden and Finland. If Iceland had participated in the BtG study, it would also have belonged to the countries with very strict alcohol control policies.

Countries with medium alcohol control include Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom, the Baltic states (Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia), Poland, Hungary, the Netherlands, Belgium, France and Switzerland as well as Turkey.



Table IV. The BtG scale for measuring the strictness of alcohol control policies.

| Control of production and wholesale of alcohol (2 p.)  |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. State monopoly for the production or wholesale of   |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| Beer (½ p.)  |                          | Wine (½ p.)              |                          | Spirits (1 p.)           |                          |
| Yes  | No                       | Yes                      | No                       | Yes                      | No                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Points: /2   |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| Control of distribution (10 p.)  |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| 2a. State monopoly for off-premise sale of   |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| Beer (1 p.)  |                          | Wine (1 p.)              |                          | Spirits (2 p.)           |                          |
| Yes  | No                       | Yes                      | No                       | Yes                      | No                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2b. No state monopoly, but a restrictive license system for off-premise sale of  |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| Beer (½ p.)  |                          | Wine (½ p.)              |                          | Spirits (1 p.)           |                          |
| Yes  | No                       | Yes                      | No                       | Yes                      | No                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Special permanent restrictions on sales days (1 p.) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes and sales hours (1 p.) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes in off-premise sale of alcoholic beverages |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| 4. Other special permanent restrictions on places of sale (1 p.) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes for off-premise sale of alcoholic beverages  |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| 5. Special permanent restrictions on sales days (1 p.) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes and sales hours (1 p.) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes in on-premise sale of alcoholic beverages  |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| 6. Other special permanent restrictions on places of sale (1 p.) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes for on-premise sales of alcoholic beverages  |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| Points: /10  |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| Personal control (4 p.)  |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| 7. Legal age limit for off-premise sales at least  |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
|  |                          |                          |                          |                          | Yes                      |
| 20 for some alcoholic beverages (2 p.)   |                          |                          |                          |                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 18 for some alcoholic beverages (1 p.)   |                          |                          |                          |                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Legal age limit for on-premise sales at least   |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
|  |                          |                          |                          |                          | Yes                      |
| 20 for some alcoholic beverages (2 p.)   |                          |                          |                          |                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 18 for some alcoholic beverages (1 p.)   |                          |                          |                          |                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Points: /4   |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| Control of marketing (3 p.)  |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| 9. Restrictions on alcohol advertising and sponsorship   |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
|  |                          |                          |                          |                          | Yes                      |
| Ban on all national alcohol advertising and sponsorship (3 p.)   |                          |                          |                          |                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Ban on national alcohol advertising for some alcoholic beverages (2 p.)  |                          |                          |                          |                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Statutory control on national alcohol advertising for some alcoholic beverages (1 p.)  |                          |                          |                          |                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Voluntary code on national alcohol advertising and sponsorship (½ p.)  |                          |                          |                          |                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Points: /3   |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| Social and environmental controls (4 p.)   |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| 10. Drunk driving  |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
|  |                          |                          |                          |                          | Yes                      |
| BAC less than 0.05% (4 p.)   |                          |                          |                          |                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| BAC 0.05% (2 p.)   |                          |                          |                          |                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Points: /4   |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |

| Public policy (1 p.)   |  |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|
| 11. National alcohol prevention or education programme (1 p.) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |  |   |   |
| Points: /1   |  |   |   |
| Alcohol taxation (16 p.)   |  |   |   |
| 12. Excise duty on strong alcoholic beverages per litre of 100% alcohol                    |  |   |   |
| 44.01 € +<br>(4 p.)<br><input type="checkbox"/>  | 22.01–44 €<br>(3 p.)<br><input type="checkbox"/>   | 11.01–22 €<br>(2 p.)<br><input type="checkbox"/>  | 6–11 €<br>(1 p.)<br><input type="checkbox"/>      |
| 13. Excise duty on intermediate products per litre of 100% alcohol                         |  |   |   |
| 20.01 € +<br>(4 p.)<br><input type="checkbox"/>  | 10.01–20 €<br>(3 p.)<br><input type="checkbox"/>   | 5.01–10 €<br>(2 p.)<br><input type="checkbox"/>   | 2.75–5 €<br>(1 p.)<br><input type="checkbox"/>    |
| 14. Excise duty on wine per litre of 100% alcohol  |  |   |   |
| 14.97 € +<br>(4 p.)<br><input type="checkbox"/>  | 7.49–14.96 €<br>(3 p.)<br><input type="checkbox"/> | 3.75–7.48 €<br>(2 p.)<br><input type="checkbox"/> | 2.05–3.74 €<br>(1 p.)<br><input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. Excise duty on beer per litre of 100% alcohol  |  |   |   |
| 14.97 € +<br>(4 p.)<br><input type="checkbox"/>  | 7.49–14.96 €<br>(3 p.)<br><input type="checkbox"/> | 3.75–7.48 €<br>(2 p.)<br><input type="checkbox"/> | 2.05–3.74 €<br>(1 p.)<br><input type="checkbox"/> |
| Points: /16  |  |   |   |
| Total points: /40  |  |   |   |

Table V. The scores and weights in the BtG scale for measuring the strictness of alcohol control policies.

| Subgroup of alcohol control                       | Points in the scale | Share of the total score (%) |
|---|---------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Control of production and wholesale of alcohol | 2                   | 5.0                          |
| 2. Control of distribution of alcohol             | 10                  | 25.0                         |
| 3. Personal control (age limits)                  | 4                   | 10.0                         |
| 4. Control of marketing                           | 3                   | 7.5                          |
| 5. Social and environmental controls (BAC limits) | 4                   | 10.0                         |
| 6. Public policy                                  | 1                   | 2.5                          |
| 7. Alcohol taxation.                              | 16                  | 40.0                         |
| Total   | 40                  | 100.0                        |

In order to give a generalization, these countries could be called Central European beer preferring countries and Former East European countries preferring distilled spirits even if Hungary or Turkey would not fit in this generalization.

Countries with low alcohol control include wine-producing countries like Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain. If the classification had been done on the basis of the share of the most important

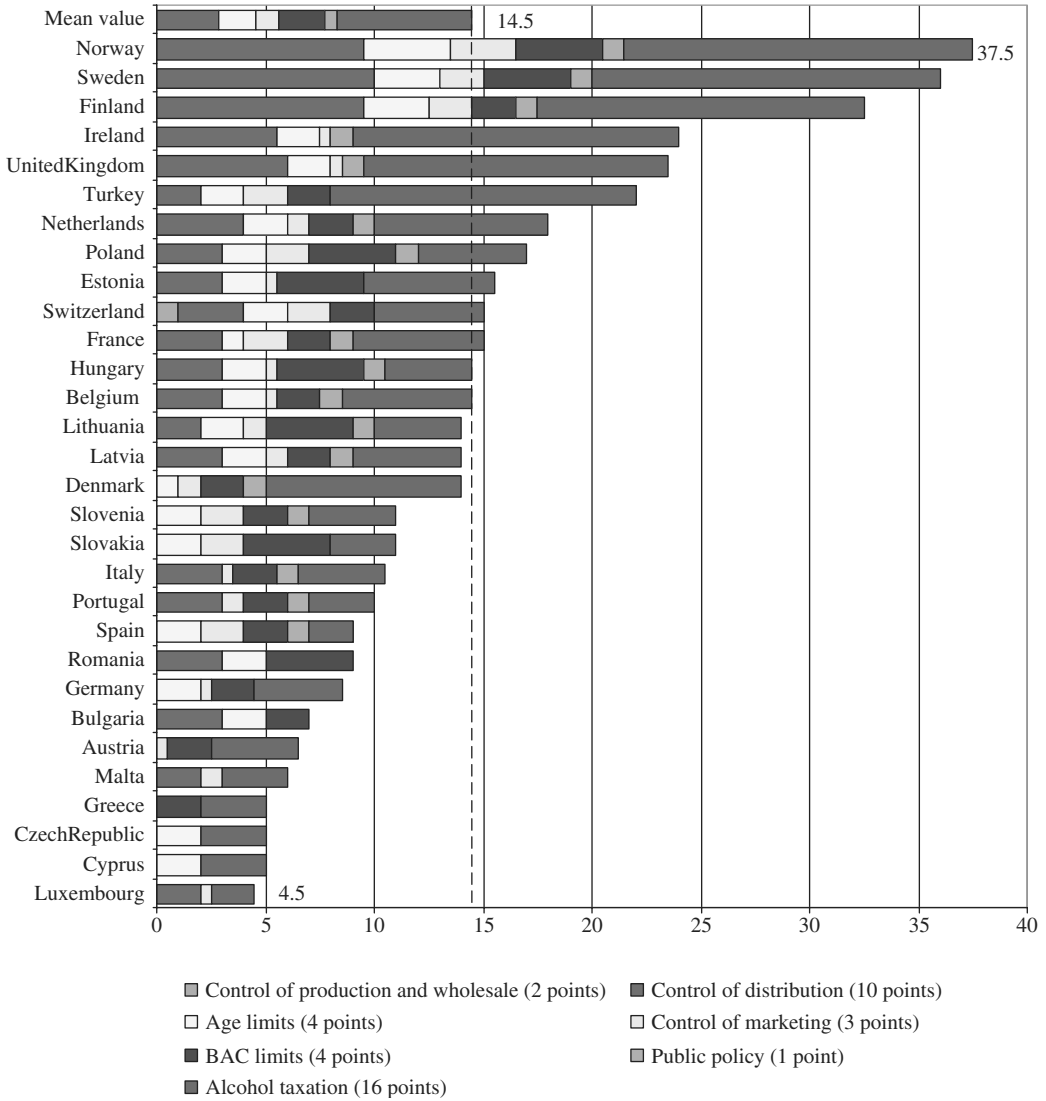


Figure 1. Strictness of alcohol control policies in the BtG countries in 2006 according to subgroups of alcohol control.

alcoholic beverage category in total alcohol consumption, some of the low alcohol control countries would be called beer-preferring countries like Austria, the Czech Republic and Germany. From the remaining countries only Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal and Spain could be clearly classified as wine countries on the basis of the share of wine in total alcohol consumption. Economic importance of wine and viticulture is, however, the most common feature for these countries with low alcohol control. This is clearly shown by the fact that none of these countries have instituted a positive excise duty rate for wine.

Table VI. The average scores in the BtG scale according to subgroups of alcohol control in 2006.

| Subgroup of alcohol control                       | Mean score | Max. score |
|---|------------|------------|
| 1. Control of production and wholesale of alcohol | 0.0        | 2          |
| 2. Control of distribution of alcohol             | 2.9        | 10         |
| 3. Personal control (age limits)                  | 1.7        | 4          |
| 4. Control of marketing                           | 1.1        | 3          |
| 5. Social and environmental controls (BAC limits) | 2.1        | 4          |
| 6. Public policy                                  | 0.6        | 1          |
| 7. Alcohol taxation                               | 6.2        | 16         |
| Total   | 14.5       | 40         |

On average 43% of all points were collected from alcohol excise duties (Table VI). Control of distribution gave on average 3 points or 20% of all points collected. Age limits and BAC limits were both given over 10% of all points. In the BtG scale control of production and wholesale measured by the existence of state monopoly did not score any points.

## Discussion and conclusions

There are several pros for a quantitative scale measuring the strictness of alcohol control policies. The scale allows us to illustrate easily how different alcohol policy measures have evolved over a long period of time and helps us to identify turning points and big changes in different countries' alcohol control policies. The scale also offers an easy instrument for comparing different countries with each other and ranking them according to how stringent or comprehensive their alcohol policies are. However, figures and tables based on the scale (like Figure 1 and Table II in this article) are easily misunderstood or misinterpreted. As the scales are summarising a large amount of data in a single figure, they are often strong tools in communicating with the public or politicians. At the same time, they are simplistic and based on many more or less hidden assumptions and more or less reliable data. Therefore, when ranking countries according to their alcohol control policies, either cross-sectional or in time, extreme caution should be used and the shortcomings and flaws of using such an approach should be clearly stated.

It should be pointed out that the scales presented in this article only measure the strictness of formal alcohol control. The scales are mainly based on legislative and regulatory control measures, which are quite common, for instance, in the Nordic countries. Informal alcohol control typical, for instance, in the Mediterranean countries is altogether missing from these scales.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to quantify and measure qualitative data on informal alcohol control with the help of a quantitative scale. Therefore, it is important to realize that informal alcohol controls also influence drinking habits and the level of alcohol consumption and alcohol-related problems.

Another problem to be aware of is that scales, however detailed they may be, cannot in practice be constructed to include the whole wide range of different alcohol policy options. In order to be able to cover all the different nuances of alcohol control measures, one could try to devise a very detailed scale containing up to 100 or more different alcohol policy options. In principle this kind of scale could be very useful but in practice it would be very laborious if not impossible to collect data on all items from many countries over a long period of time. The more simple the scale, the easier it is to collect reliable and comparable data from many countries, but at the same time its usability suffers in attempting to capture small changes in alcohol control over time.

Another built-in flaw in these scales is that they do not take into consideration how effectively different laws and regulations are enforced. Anderson and Lehto made an attempt to cover this aspect by adding two questions about alcohol control enforcement onto the scale, which measured the effectiveness of the control of production and distribution of alcohol. The drawback with these kinds of questions, especially if they are applied to the control of legal age limits, to the control of advertising regulations or to the control of BAC in driving, is that they are highly speculative and the answers depend largely on the subjective interpretation of informants or the researchers.

A drawback in using alcohol taxation as an indicator is that it does not take into consideration the purchasing power in different countries. This is not perhaps a big problem when comparing the Western part of Europe but it should certainly be taken into account when comparing Western European countries with Eastern European countries. In an article by Donald Brand and his colleagues, with the aim of developing an international alcohol composite policy index, this problem was tackled by adjusting alcohol price levels for standard of living by dividing the retail price by the per capita share of a country's gross domestic product (Brand, et al., 2007). In our case, a similar procedure would mean that Turkey and the new EU member states from Eastern Europe would move upwards on the scale given in Figure 1.

A further problem, not to be taken lightly, is that the scales measure alcohol control policies on a national level. In some countries there are considerable cultural and linguistic differences as well as different alcohol policy regulations between different regions. What makes this problematic is that, when some alcohol policy measures exist only in some parts of the country or only at a local level, one has to decide what is representative of the whole country.

Quantifying alcohol policy measures is difficult, if not sometimes impossible, but at least in certain cases it enables us to get an overview of genuine trends and differences in alcohol control policies in several countries at a glance. Not only alcohol control policies are subjected to these scaling exercises and have to struggle with these difficulties. We have, for instance, quantitative calculations of gross domestic products, scaling the countries on the basis of their affluence, not to say anything of the problems involved in calculating an international corruption scale index and rating countries according to that.

Results received from scaling alcohol control policies as for instance in the BtG or the ECAS project should always be interpreted carefully, by clearly acknowledging the flaws of such an approach. In these projects, alcohol policy scales have been constructed in combination with writing extensive country reports on alcohol control. These country reports clearly give a deeper insight into the role of formal and informal alcohol control and their effects and enforcement in different countries. Used correctly and in combination with qualitative reports of alcohol control policies, a scale of alcohol control policies can serve both as a versatile instrument in gathering basic knowledge on a country's alcohol policy as well as an indicator on the strictness of alcohol control policies in several countries. When carefully used, the pros of an alcohol policy scale clearly outweigh the cons.

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Thomas Karlsson

## Nordic Alcohol Policy in Europe

### The Adaptation of Finland's, Sweden's and Norway's Alcohol Policies to a New Policy Framework, 1994–2013

To what extent have Finland, Sweden and Norway adapted their alcohol policies to the framework imposed on them by the European Union and the European Economic Area since the mid-1990s? How has alcohol policies in the Nordic countries evolved between 1994 and 2013 and how strict are their alcohol policies in comparison with the rest of Europe?

These are some of the main research questions in this study. Besides alcohol policies, the analyses comprise the development of alcohol consumption and cross-border trade with alcohol. In addition to a qualitative analysis, a quantitative scale constructed to measure the strictness of alcohol policies is utilised.

The results from the study clearly corroborate earlier findings on the significance of Europeanisation and the Single Market for the development of Nordic alcohol policy. All in all, alcohol policies in the Nordic countries are more liberal in 2013 than they were in 1994. The restrictive Nordic policy tradition has, however, still a solid evidence base and nothing prevents it from being the base for alcohol policy in the Nordic countries also in the future.



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