

other arenas and with other actors. It is certainly not our task to feed the opposition with arguments.

And if we should loose a case, we have several alternative courses of action open to us. It can be more appropriate in this case to look to good business lawyers rather than to traditional judges, when choosing roles.

The approach to the problem is actually not unknown at the national level either. When the Government first becomes involved in a court

case, our lawyers are fairly concerned that administration accepts that it is no longer the highest authority, but is actually a party to the case in line with the private opposition. But the dimension for the need for this displacement of roles becomes completely different at the supranational level into which we now move.

Knut Brofoss

(Translation: Linda Grytten)

Finnish social alcohol research and alcohol policy

Research and decision making can be linked to one another in various ways. First, difficulties in choosing between different alternatives may result in the launch of a research project with the hope that the study will reveal the best alternative or even identify a new, superior solution to the initial decision-making problem. Secondly, research findings can be used as grounds for decisions made already before the study was actually carried out or decision makers can just initiate a study in order to gain time, because they are unwilling or unable to make the necessary but unpopular decisions. Thirdly, research initiated on its own can bring about more-or-less detailed recommendations for action, which will either be accepted or rejected by decision makers. And finally, research can analyze social problems, changes in them and general social trends, which yields specific information or additional general knowledge. This in turn can influence problem

definition and public discussion, thus changing the external conditions of decision making and, in this way, affect the political decision making process (Mäkelä 1970; Mäkelä 1985; Lampinen 1992).

A researcher is often seen as an individual who independently and in isolation produces results which then either make it possible for the decision-makers to act, or force them to act, in a certain way. However, a researcher — and why not also a decision maker — may function in different roles at different phases of a decision-making process: as a researcher, as a member of a political party or pressure group, as an expert in the state bureaucracy or even as a Member of Parliament or a Ministry. Sometimes intermediary groups exist between the research activity and the decision-making process, which influence how research will be conducted and interpret the results for policy makers. And finally, one has to bear in mind that the relationship between research and decision making never takes place in a vacuum; both are closely related to the general ideological and political currents that prevail at a given time.

This paper will discuss the Finnish social alcohol research. The focus will be on the extent to which the problems related to alcohol policy have been covered in research and also on more specific questions such as how problems, actually met in alcohol policy making, have been reflected in research and to what extent the changes in alco-

hol policy can be linked to research findings. This paper will also touch on the organizational link between Finnish social alcohol research and the Finnish State Alcohol Monopoly, Alko, and the future of these bonds.

The Finnish alcohol policy system

In Finland, the dominant use of alcohol has been as an intoxicant; the cultural acceptance of drunkenness has been, and still is, widespread. Drinking has been characterized as infrequent sessions, separated from everyday life, and concentrated on weekends and national holidays. Drinking alcoholic beverages with meals has been — and still is — quite rare. Consumption per capita has been low, but the amounts consumed in one session have been quite high (Mäkelä & Österberg & Sulkunen 1981; Simpura 1987; Simpura & Paakkanen & Mustonen 1995).

Finland has a long tradition of alcohol control legislation, including a period of total prohibition in 1919-1932, which has attempted to counteract disruptive drinking patterns. Since 1932 the cornerstone of the alcohol control system has been Alko, the state-owned alcohol monopoly. The company has been awarded a monopoly over the production, import, export, wholesale and retail sales, and the pricing of alcoholic beverages in Finland. The company's ultimate aim has been to prevent and minimize alcohol-related problems and — more or less clearly — also to reduce the total alcohol consumption. The private profit motive has not, however, been completely eliminated; all Finnish beer has been produced under license by private breweries since 1932, and the great majority of licensed restaurants has also been privately owned (Österberg 1989).

The 1932 Alcohol Act was in force without any significant modifications for nearly four decades. In 1969 it was replaced with a new Alcohol Act and a special Medium Beer Act, which allowed the selling of medium beer — alcohol content over 3.7 per cent but less than 4.7 per cent ethyl alcohol by volume — in ordinary grocery stores and cafés. In practice these amendments meant that the availability of all alcoholic beverages increased greatly in the first half of the 1970s (see e.g. Mäkelä & Österberg & Sulkunen 1981). Then for a de-

cade alcohol policy became a little more restricted, but from the mid-1980s alcohol availability has again begun to increase (Reuter & Tigerstedt 1992). It should also be mentioned that from the mid-1950s Alko has tried to encourage the consumption of wine and beer at the expense of spirits (see e.g. Österberg 1989).

Financial links between social alcohol research and the Monopoly

Alcohol research, with a social science orientation has been conducted in Finland for a century or so. As early as the 1930s Alko was financing some alcohol studies but before the 1950s there was no centralized system for coordinating or funding alcohol research (Immonen 1976). The earlier research tended to concentrate on the historical aspects, the temperance movement and alcohol policy (Ahlström 1985).

In 1948 Pekka Kuusi's work "The Finnish Liquor Problem" was published (Kuusi 1948). It was the first comprehensive empirical investigation of drinking habits. The study was based on an opinion poll financed by Alko. However, while writing the monograph, Kuusi, who had a strong temperance background, was actually employed by the temperance movement. In this work and in numerous later writings, Kuusi developed a new alcohol policy line. The basic idea was to change the habit of drinking strong alcoholic beverages in order to become intoxicated into a cultivated drinking pattern in which mild alcoholic beverages were dominant. In the late 1940s distilled beverages accounted for over 80 per cent of the total alcohol consumption in Finland, which was at that time under two liters per capita. In Kuusi's program, increasing the availability of beer and wines was one means of combatting the use of strong alcoholic beverages, although this would increase total alcohol consumption (Bruun & Mäkelä 1977).

In 1950 the Finnish Foundation for Alcohol Studies was established and this provided an institutional setting for long-term research work (see e.g. Kuusi 1963). The foundation was funded by Alko, but it was administered independently. In 1952 Alko also founded a research department, the Social Research Institute of Alcohol Studies,

whose function was to carry out the large-scale empirical projects included in the Foundation's program (Bruun 1960; Bruun 1978).

The basic explanation for this organizational link between Alko and social alcohol research was the stated and the real aim of the Monopoly, which was to prevent and minimize alcohol-related problems; it was held that this presupposes increasing the scientific knowledge of social alcohol questions (Kuusi 1963; Waris 1960). Furthermore, the scope of the research was not limited strictly to everyday alcohol policy questions. Alko, as a monopoly, could afford to finance also the kind of social alcohol research which in other countries would have been carried out in an academic context or in the state administration (Allardt 1976; Stolte-Heiskanen 1991).

Social alcohol research in Finland since 1950

In 1951 the Finnish Foundation for Alcohol Studies drew up its first research program. It constituted an attempt to grapple with topical alcohol problems using the tools of science. All of the outlined projects were justified in terms of alcohol policy. The main topics centered around the issue of Finland's dry rural districts (before 1969 Alko was not allowed to open liquor shops in rural areas) and the differences between the use of strong and mild alcoholic beverages. Pekka Kuusi's experimental study of how the establishment of an Alko shop in a dry rural community would affect drinking habits is the most clear-cut example of this program (Kuusi 1957). Other studies included: "Drinking patterns in Finnish Lapland" and "The effects of distilled and brewed beverages" (Sariola 1956; Takala & Pihkanen & Markkanen 1957). Although the questions were alcohol policy oriented, the research also provided ample material for the general public debate on drinking habits and their changes.

The period of alcohol policy-centered research projects was followed in the late 1950s and 1960s by an era which concentrated on the role of alcohol in culture and on theoretical and methodological questions (Bruun 1957). Broad experimental studies played an important role in the Foundation's second programme. The study on twins by Partanen & Bruun & Markkanen (1961) is interna-

tionally recognized as a classic analysis of the hereditary aspects of alcoholism and is perhaps still the most referred to publication of the Foundation.

The 1960s saw the end of the far-reaching research plans. Instead of broad, separate studies the tide of research favored small-scale studies. This view was based on the idea of gradual acquisition of knowledge and rapid publication of findings (Ahlström 1985). A new phenomenon in the 1960s was that many studies focused on the functions of the control authorities and on the interactions between deviant individuals and the state bureaucracy. All in all, during the time that the 1968 Alcohol Act was being prepared, research had drifted considerably away from the pure alcohol policy-oriented problem formulations (see e.g. Bruun 1968).

The most influential factor to affect the direction of alcohol research in the early 1970s was the 1968 Alcohol Act, which boosted alcohol consumption and alcohol-related adverse effects markedly (see e.g. Österberg 1983). It had been estimated that the new legislation would increase alcohol consumption, at most, by some 15 per cent, and preparations had been made to examine the effects of the amendments (see e.g. Mäkelä 1971; Ahlström-Laakso 1975). The actual increase in the total alcohol consumption was 46 per cent and the effects were so unexpectedly radical that additional kinds of minute investigations were in order. Subsequently, there was renewed attention to research on the effects of the various policy measures, changes in drinking habits as well as the interaction between drinking and alcohol-related consequences. Finland was for the time a laboratory for studies in major changes in alcohol control. The 1970s also saw a series of studies addressing the structural and economic determinants of control policies, often including a historical dimension (Bruun 1983).

The examination of alcohol policy questions was not restricted only to studies on changes in the Finnish alcohol control system. Nordic co-operation, which was already active in the 1960s, was extended in the 1970s (Bruun 1971). Also, international co-operation increased rapidly. One of the most important publications of this period was Kettil Bruun's and his colleagues' (1975) monograph "Alcohol control policies in public

health perspective", the basic source today for arguing in favor of or against "the total consumption model." Another important piece was the "International study of alcohol control experiences", headed by Klaus Mäkelä (Mäkelä et al. 1981).

The last two decades have also seen a number of other significant investigations. These include the "Drinking habits national population surveys" in 1976, 1984 and 1992, which have provided both basic material for public discussion about drinking habits and alcohol policy and data for many special studies (Simpura 1987; Simpura & Paakkonen & Mustonen 1995). Furthermore, the 1980s have seen an emphasis on cultural studies of drinking as well as a renewed interest in the apparatus for dealing with alcohol problems (Mäkelä 1988).

In 1969 the scope of the Finnish Foundation for Alcohol Studies was widened to include also research into other drugs. Still, in the beginning of 1990s the overwhelming majority of Finnish drug research consisted of alcohol research.

Interaction between social alcohol research and alcohol policy

When the Finnish Foundation for Alcohol Studies was established, it was strongly believed that moral arguments could be settled by scientific means and that social sciences with their new empirical tools would well serve this purpose (Bruun 1977). It was of great significance to the development of research that the originators of the Foundation believed in the power of education and that drinking habits could change. Of the founding members, Pekka Kuusi stands out: he was a researcher, a trail-blazer of the Foundation's research policy and the original thinker behind the country's alcohol and social policy (Kuusi 1961). From the end of the 1940s, it was Kuusi who developed a basic policy line, which Alko followed until the beginning of the 1970s — and in part still does (Koski 1994).

There is also another way in which the close connection between alcohol research and policy was personified in Kuusi: he was a Director of Alko between 1952-1972 and the Director General between 1972-1982. While a manager, Kuusi en-

sured that research was supported with sufficient resources, that the results of the work were utilized in the decision making and that Alko's management did not try to control the research work or influence the results. This practice has continued under Heikki Koski, the Director General from 1982 to 1994. To be sure, the research has not only been dependent on the good will of Alko's directors; research directors of the Foundation and the Institute, like Kettil Bruun and Klaus Mäkelä, have also successfully guaranteed the scientific standard of Finnish social alcohol research as well as its autonomy (see e.g. Kuusi 1963, 151).

When comparing the research and the findings to the actual changes in policy, it is by no means evident that changes in the control measures were a direct consequence of the research. Some individual examples can be found: for example the establishment of a new range of therapy facilities by the A-Clinic Foundation and the experiment to close all Alko shops on Saturdays during the summer in the 1980s (see e.g. Bruun 1980; Koski 1994). Sometimes the relationship between research and action remains unclear but it is easy to note that the Finnish social alcohol research has never used their scientific authority to justify decisions made by Alko's board of Administration or Board of Directors (Kuusi 1963; Mäkelä 1970).

It may be somewhat surprising that the research program carried out in the 1950s, expressly aimed at yielding solutions to alcohol policy-related problems, did not cause any immediate alterations. In fact, Pekka Kuusi complains in one of his writings that the Government Alcohol Committee between 1958-1960, whose function was to take alcohol findings into consideration, did not dedicate even one of its sessions to alcohol research (Kuusi 1963; Bruun & Mäkelä 1977). The explanation for all this most certainly is that the very agrarian temperance-oriented Finnish society was not then politically ready for a liberalization of its alcohol policy.

On the other hand, the immediate and direct impact of the studies on practical alcohol policy should not be regarded as a criterion for the utility and fruitfulness of the research. The basic function of research is not merely to solve day to day political problems, but to increase general knowledge and to analyze problems and trends

from various viewpoints which can be used as a basis for creating different alternatives and models for action (Bruun 1981). Taking one more step, one perhaps should not ask what alcohol policy measures are the consequence of alcohol research but rather ask in what way alcohol research has really been able to question the prevailing policy and to provide new views and alternative measures for public discussion and decision making.

In the 1960s there was a considerable difference in the formulation of problems between alcohol researchers and Alko, on the one hand, and the public policy makers and temperance movement, on the other, although even at the time, as before and after it, alcohol researchers participated as experts in both Alko and in public administration as well as they were also involved in public debate. In this sense, Finnish alcohol research has been quite closely related to decision making during the entire post-war period, regardless of whether their views have been approved or rejected in actual policy making. The attitude of the press towards alcohol and social alcohol questions, in general, has also contributed to the relationship; the findings of alcohol research have received more coverage in the press than the results of other social sciences, reflecting the Finnish society's general interest in alcohol issues.

The legislative reform in 1968, which was followed by a sharp rise in alcohol consumption and alcohol-related problems, not only altered the direction of research, but also created a new situation in practical alcohol policy. The situation arose because the reform did not lead to more cultivated drinking patterns and to a further liberalization of alcohol policy as was commonly expected to happen by the decision makers. One consequence of the new situation was the appointment of the 1976 Parliamentary Alcohol Committee. After considering the research results, the Committee's recommendation was that alcohol policy should gradually be made stricter (Koski 1981). The strict line contributed to the stabilization of alcohol consumption and the negative consequences of drinking.

In the 1980s the social and political weight of the alcohol question has again been changing. This comes out, for instance, in the work of the Finnish Alcohol Committee appointed in 1987. It

did not just discuss alcohol policy, as such, but rather discussed alcohol policy as a part of the general social and health policy. Also, the recommendations of the 1987 Committee had less impact on actual alcohol policy making than the recommendations of the 1976 Parliamentary Alcohol Committee sitting before it (Koski & Österberg 1993).

The latest developments in the field have been affected by increasing international influences, market forces and the commercialization of Alko. In 1994, Finland entered into the European Economic Area Treaty which means that Alko will lose its monopoly position in the import, export, production and wholesale of alcoholic beverages (Karhu 1993; Koski 1994). These developments are not just negative side effects of European integration; they also have broad domestic support. Alko has itself voluntarily changed its image and some of its operating methods, such as the introduction of profit centers into the company and the creation of self-service Alko shops (Österberg 1993).

Despite the general strengthening of business attitudes and increasing market orientation, Alko has, at least until now, been a tool for the public health-oriented alcohol control policy. This public health role was emphasized in the Finnish negotiations for membership in the European Union (Karhu 1993). One outcome in these negotiations was that Finland received a statement from the European Commission which recognized the public health role and allowed a continuation of the monopoly on retail sales, under certain conditions (Koski & Österberg 1994).

Discussion

In 1993 the interaction of alcohol research and alcohol policy in Finland was summarized by Heikki Koski and Esa Österberg in four points:

1. The scope of Finnish social alcohol research has been wide after the Second World War. The research has been financed by Alko, but the researchers have enjoyed academic freedom with respect to study programs. In broad terms, the quality of Finnish social alcohol research has been high, also measured by international standards.

2. Researchers began their work in the 1950s, hoping to find a solution to the problems met in

alcohol policy. Answers were searched for with the help of large-scale research projects. In the 1960s the era of far-reaching research plans and alcohol policy-centered projects was followed by the era which aimed to increase the factual knowledge of alcohol questions not necessarily tied to alcohol policy questions. After 1969 alcohol policy issues gained renewed interest.

3. Alcohol research has not directly caused many new measures, but by producing results and research reports it has influenced the public and private discussion and understanding about social alcohol questions and alcohol policy, and in this way also affected alcohol policy making. Also participation in the decision-making processes at its different stages has been a crucial way in which researchers have affected alcohol policy.

4. In the 1950s and early 1960s Finnish alcohol research affected more the policy line of Alko than the Finnish society in general. Particularly in the 1970s, the ideas and views presented in the studies had fairly immediate and direct repercussions on alcohol policy discussions and practical measures as well. In the 1980s the valuation of the social alcohol question has changed; one outcome has been a decrease in the significance of research that strictly holds to alcohol policy.

In the beginning of the 1990s about two-thirds of all Finnish alcohol research was financed in some way by Alko. The prevailing scope, organization and financing of Finnish social alcohol research (Alko totally finances the Foundation and Institute, which is a department in the company) can be understood when looking at the history and development of Finnish alcohol research and policy. Besides structural factors, persons like Pekka Kuusi have had an influence on the current situation.

The research started with large-scale projects aimed at solving practical alcohol policy problems at a time when the State had not yet created institutional arrangements to finance these kinds of social science research programs (Allardt 1976; Stolte-Heiskanen 1991). Large-scale alcohol policy-oriented projects also produced ample material on drinking habits and alcohol-related problems to be used in more general discussions of the social alcohol question. From the beginning, the research financed by Alko had a much broader scope than serving only day to day alcohol policy

making. Amongst others the Foundation and the Institute have greatly contributed to the general training of the Finnish social scientists (see e.g. Allardt 1976). Furthermore, the research tradition which started from pure domestic problems have later produced relevant studies for the Nordic and international audiences. These developments have been widely accepted as logical consequences of alcohol research fulfilling its basic task inside its given mandate (to increase the understanding of the social alcohol question) and they have not endangered the organizational or the financial links between alcohol research and Alko. In fact, the crucial question for the future relationship between alcohol research and Alko mostly concerns the changing role and organization of Alko in the context of European integration.

The Finnish solution in the alcohol field with regard to the European integration has thus far been threefold. First, unlike Norway, Finland has been ready to give up all of the alcohol monopolies except the monopoly for off-premise retail sales of alcoholic beverages. Finland has already changed its old, value-based alcohol taxation in favor of alcohol taxes based on the amount of pure alcohol contained in the different beverages. Second, the need for an off-premise retail monopoly has been motivated by a national health policy which seeks to protect the public health. Additionally, Finland has claimed that the retail monopoly system does not discriminate against any products or producers. Third, to guarantee the nondiscriminatory functioning of the retail monopoly, the original Alko Company, with one organization holding all monopoly rights from production to retailing, will be changed to an Alko Group holding three subsidiaries: one for production, one for on-premise retailing and one for off-premise retailing.

The problem with the Finnish solution for harmonizing its alcohol monopoly with the requirements of the European Economic Area Treaty is that the monopoly for off-premise retailing of alcoholic beverages and the structure of the company, which retains some institutional ties between production and retailing, may not meet the demands of nondiscrimination stipulated in the EEA Treaty. If that would be the case, Alko, or in fact the Finnish State, might ultimately have to choose between keeping Alko Group intact,

without any retail monopoly rights, or to divide the Company into two totally independent companies. One company would operate in a competitive market producing alcoholic beverages and perhaps other products or services. The other one would hold the monopoly rights to manage the off-premise retailing of alcoholic beverages and would have the ultimate aim of protecting public health (see e.g. Karhu 1994).

It is difficult to predict the future organization and mandate for Alko. It is, however, certain that the 1993 structure of Alko will be changed in the very near future in one way or another. Similar changes will also take place in Norway and Sweden. These changes will affect the Finnish social alcohol research more than similar research in Norway and Sweden. In Norway social alcohol research has been conducted in a research institute financed directly by the State since 1960. In Sweden, most of the social alcohol research takes place in universities through general academic funding (see e.g. Bruun & Rosenqvist 1985). Therefore, both in Norway and Sweden changes in the State alcohol monopolies will not directly affect alcohol research, whereas in Finland new organizational and financial solutions may have to be sought in order to guarantee the continuation of the social alcohol research tradition.

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