

THE REGULATION OF SMOKING AND SMOKERS IN NORWAY 1964–2010

ABSTRACT

This chapter describes how the regulation of smoking has changed in Norway from the 1960s up to the present day. The focus is on policy changes, taking into account the understanding of the subject and the behaviour regulated (smokers and smoking), legitimization (the justification for the measures) and the interaction between the participants who influence or develop policy. The empirical analysis is based on a close reading of two Norwegian cases, the oldest one in recent history, the Tobacco Act of 1973, and the most recent one, the ban on the display of tobacco products in 2009. By analysing the public policy documents underlying these two cases, I show that the understanding of smoking has changed markedly, from being considered a normal, yet bad habit in the 1960s and the 1970s to being a largely deviant and unwanted behaviour today. Even though the justification for the measures was quite similar in the two cases, there was broad support for the measures in the first case, while in the second case politicians, other actors and public opinion were clearly divided. This divide is related to an increasing emphasis in tobacco policy on the benefits to society, on the one hand, at the expense of individual rights, on the other.

KEYWORDS: Smoking, tobacco policy, justification, tobacco display ban, Norway