

# Nordic Alcohol Policy and Globalization as a Changing Force

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# Foreword

This paper is a result of a 6 month research project financed by the Nordic Council for Alcohol and Drug Research (Nordiska Nämnden för Alkohol- och Drogforskning – NAD) under the Nordic Council of Ministers. NAD operates to promote interdisciplinary cooperation in alcohol and drug research as well as in research concerned with other addictive substances, and aims to increase knowledge and understanding about substance abuse, prevention, policy issues, substance-related harm, and the treatment of substance abusers.

The general aim of the project “Globalization and Nordic Alcohol Policy” was to address questions related to changes in the Nordic alcohol policy and the impact of globalization. The project was to explore how national institutions relate to international organisations with a potential influence on alcohol policy. The World Trade Organization (WTO) was seen as especially relevant here. Researcher Svanaug Fjær was assigned as leader of the project, Lise Hellebø was assigned as researcher and carried out the study.

Bergen, 26 March 2003

Svanaug Fjær  
Project director

# Forord

Dette notatet er et resultat av et 6 måneders prosjekt finansiert av Nordiska Nämnden för Alkohol- och Drogforskning (NAD) under Nordisk Ministerråd. NAD har som oppgave å fremme og utvikle tverrvitenskapelig samarbeide innenfor alkohol- og rusmiddelforskning, og arbeider for å fordype kunnskap om konsum, forebygging, rusmiddelpolitikk, rusrelaterte skader og behandling av rusmiddelmisbrukere.

Den generelle målsettingen for prosjektet “Globalisering og nordisk alkoholpolitikk” var å ta opp spørsmål som gjelder endringer i alkoholpolitikken i Norden og den økende globaliseringens betydning for disse endringene. Prosjektet skulle undersøke hvordan nasjonale institusjoner forholder seg til internasjonale organisasjoner med betydning for alkoholpolitikken, og Verdens Handelsorganisasjon (WTO) ble sett på som en særlig interessant aktør i denne sammenhengen. Forsker Svanaug Fjær har vært prosjektleder og Lise Hellebø var tilsatt som forsker i prosjektet.

Bergen, 26. mars 2003

Svanaug Fjær  
Prosjektleder

# Summary

Several recent studies argue that the Nordic alcohol policy, based on restrictive measures and aimed at reducing consumption, is changing. This paper discusses the potential impact of globalization on Nordic Alcohol policy – exemplified by the liberalising efforts of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Two countries; Norway and Sweden, are in focus. Three types of integration; positive integration, negative integration and “framing” integration, are introduced in order to characterize the influence of the WTO. Relevant WTO agreements and national participation patterns in the WTO organisation are accounted for. A conclusion is that the WTO has indeed influenced and to some extent changed alcohol regulation in many countries. This is mainly a result of efforts to reduce trade barriers. Public health motivated arguments have so far not had any weighty importance in the WTO. The influence of the WTO can mainly be assessed as negative integration through liberalization efforts, and as “framing” integration as influence on norms and cognition of involved actors. The more direct and prescriptive pressure from positive integration is less evident. Established national institutions and traditions can to some extent resist and modify externally initialised reforms. At the same time, the Nordic countries are highly globalised, and the further globalization pressure is powerful. Increasing liberalization efforts from the WTO must be followed with vigilance from actors in the national and Nordic alcohol policy field, if the traditional Nordic Alcohol policy is to remain standing.

# Sammendrag

Nordisk alkoholpolitikk, tradisjonelt basert på en restriktiv linje og med en målsetting om å redusere det totale alkoholinntaket, er i endring. Dette slås fast i flere studier som nylig er utgitt. Dette notatet diskuterer globaliseringens innflytelse i den endrete nordiske alkoholpolitikken, eksemplifisert ved den liberaliseringen som skjer gjennom Verdens Handelsorganisasjons (WTO) innflytelse. To land, Norge og Sverige, vies særlig oppmerksomhet. WTOs potensielle innflytelsen karakteriseres ved hjelp av tre integrasjonstyper – positiv integrasjon, negativ integrasjon og “framing” integrasjon. Relevante WTO-avtaler og nasjonal deltakelse i WTOs organisasjon gjennomgås. En konklusjon er at WTO har påvirket og til en viss grad endret alkoholreguleringen i flere land. Dette er hovedsakelig et resultat av WTOs arbeid for å redusere handelshindringer mellom land. Helserelaterte argumenter har så langt ikke hatt noen særlig gjennomslagskraft innenfor WTO-samarbeidet. Innflytelsen fra WTO kan hovedsakelig forstås som negativ integrasjon gjennom liberalisering, og som “framing” integrasjon gjennom påvirkning av nasjonale aktørers normer og oppfatninger. Den mer direkte innflytelsen i form av positiv integrasjon er ikke like tydelig. Etablerte nasjonale institusjoner og tradisjoner kan i stor grad motstå og modifisere reformforsøk utenfra. Samtidig kan nordiske land karakteriseres som sterkt globaliserte, og sannsynligheten for endringer på grunn av en økende globalisering er stor. Om det er et mål at den tradisjonelle nordiske alkoholpolitikken skal bestå, bør derfor et økende liberaliseringspress fra WTO følges med årvåkenhet fra aktørene innenfor nordisk alkoholpolitikk.

# Nordic Alcohol Policy and Globalization as a Changing Force

Alcohol policy in the Nordic countries is often presented as unique, because of the strong emphasis on social control and overall health protection and prevention, and the exceptional role of the state in the regulation of alcohol consumption. Indeed, many other countries do not have a pronounced official alcohol policy. In most EU countries questions related to alcohol trade and consumption falls within the sphere of agricultural or industrial policy, and alcohol is seen purely as a commercial product (Holder et al. 1998:25). Although restrictive measures may be in force, such as regulated opening hours for retailers and restaurants, they are often not explicitly motivated by efforts to reduce alcohol consumption. More often such regulations are justified by consideration of local commerce or workers' welfare. In the Nordic countries, alcohol policy is strongly tied to public health and social policy, significantly more so than in most other countries of the world.

Alcohol policy in the Nordic countries is in general aimed at reducing the consumption of alcohol and the acute and long-term adverse effects of alcohol consumption (see for instance Edwards et al. 1996:7). A traditional view is that Nordic alcohol policy is primarily alcohol *control* policy. Alcohol control policy involves regulation of the alcohol market in order to control and limit consumption and thus reduce harmful effects. However, alcohol policy can also be viewed more widely. This would include *both* direct control of negative effects, and more indirect measures; involving policy choices and actions that (also unintentionally) can influence attitudes, consumption and alcohol trade. Alcohol policy also has commercial aspects, involving trade, export and import of alcoholic beverages.

This paper discusses the potential influence of globalization on Nordic alcohol policy. In order to focus the study empirically, the potential impact of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) on national alcohol regulation and policy is given particular attention. The main aim is to understand how globalization and the globalization debate can inform and influence the Nordic alcohol policy field. In order to get an introductory overview of the field, the first part of the paper addresses recent changes in the Nordic alcohol policy field, and looks into contemporary research and policy documents published in Norway and Sweden. This section asks the question: How has the international level entered the traditional national field of alcohol policy?

When globalization is discussed, a clarification of what is meant by the term is pertinent. The second part of the paper therefore addresses contemporary globalization literature and the extensive theoretical debate on globalization and globalization

processes. The third (and main) part of the paper has a more empirical outlook, focussing in particular on the WTO and its potential influence on national alcohol policy.

Throughout the paper, three analytical concepts focussing *integration* are central. Globalization can be seen as a form of “world” integration. Globalization implies that relations and interaction across borders become more tightly interwoven and can transform domestic relations, dominant beliefs, attitudes and policy decisions. Borrowing a set of analytical terms from Knill and Lehmkuhl (1999), three ideal types describing different types of integration are used to understand this process: *positive integration*, *negative integration* and “*framing*” *integration*. Knill and Lehmkuhl are mainly concerned with the Europeanization of domestic institutions. This paper will use their approach to focus the possible impact of globalization on domestic institutions.

### Negative, Positive and Framing Integration

In the terminology of Knill and Lehmkuhl (1999), *negative integration* involves a deregulative element. By intervening against national barriers to the free movement of goods, persons, capital and services, negative integration reduces the range of national policy choices and represents a loss of political control and national regulatory power. In the context of the EU, negative integration demands that domestic regulation complies with Community law. Thus, negative integration implies indirect institutional impact. It does not so much specify how national governments should run their country, but rather tells them what they cannot do. This is therefore a more indirect integrative instrument. Regulation aimed at eliminating barriers of trade is typical instruments of negative integration. In contrast to negative integration, *positive integration* re-regulation rather than deregulation. Positive integration intervenes directly into national regulation by prescribing or at least encouraging new institutional models at the domestic level to regulate certain areas. By prescribing a concrete institutional model, a comparatively low level of room for adaptation is left open to the country in question.

The third ideal type established by Knill and Lehmkuhl, *framing integration*, takes on a more indirect form and includes a cognitive element. It describes efforts to set norms in areas where underlying conflicts of interest more often result in symbolic or vague policy commitments rather than in demands for regulative compliance. Framing domestic beliefs and expectations can become manifest in transformed beliefs of domestic actors or in reconfigured domestic discourses. The idea is that transformed values and participation patterns will add to domestic reforms or initialise reform steps, and thus provide legitimisation for the implementation of national reform policies. Framing integration can also be understood as cognitive integration, as it is based on a cognitive logic and designed to change the political climate.

Framing integration denotes a more indirect form of integration compared to negative or positive integration, and it can provide additional legitimacy for domestic leaders to justify the content and implementation of national reform policies. It provides adequate concepts of reform to resolve specific problems and thus an acceptable solution based on national conditions, and alters the expectations of reform opponents and their strategies (Knill and Lehmkuhl 1999). Through these mechanisms, domestic

reform is facilitated. Framing integration is thus an instrument that allows for national diversity while at the same time accommodating integration. It can eventually result in more direct regulation, through either negative or positive integration. In many cases, one of the integration forms may dominate. However, most policy fields are probably characterized by a mixture of the three.

Typical measures of framing integration include the establishment of expert networks or research or documentation institutions. In the European drugs policy area, the establishment of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) is illustrative (Fjær 2000). Framing integration can also be furthered through general legislation. General legislation can alter expectations and beliefs of domestic actors, and in so doing trigger domestic change. This is characteristic of some of the more overriding European regulation, regulation that does not prescribe specific legislative regimes or institutional models, and allow for national variations.

The ideal types are helpful for understanding mechanisms of integration. They are in the following used to analyse how globalization can influence domestic institutions and alcohol policy in the Nordic countries, and more specifically on how the World Trade Organisation can influence Nordic alcohol policy.

## Empirical Cases and Method

Norway and Sweden constitute the empirical cases of the paper. The two countries are selected mainly in order to limit data collection and the extent of the study. Furthermore, the two countries enjoy important similarities in terms of alcohol policy, and can be seen as the main bearers of the Nordic approach to alcohol policy. At the same time, the different international relations of the two countries might create differences in policy towards international organisations. Both countries are among the early signatories of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the predecessor of the WTO. Norway signed in 1948, Sweden in 1950. Sweden is a member of the EU since 1995, while Norway participates in the European Economic Area (EEA). This implies that the relations and practices towards the WTO differ.

The study is based on qualitative data. In order to assess main trends of Nordic alcohol policy, official documents and secondary literature has been examined. Secondary literature has also been central in the review of the contemporary globalization debate. A further examination of official papers and documents has been important when looking at the WTO. In addition, three interviews with officials in Norway and Sweden have informed the analysis.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> One interview with a senior officer in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the WTO section, was carried out in June 2002 (Interview 1). Two interviews were carried out in Sweden in September 2002; one with a Secretary of Ministry (Departementssekreter) in the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Interview 2), and one with a senior officer in the Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, responsible for international alcohol questions (Interview 3).

## The Nordic Alcohol Policy in Transition

There exist many accounts of the development and characteristics of Nordic alcohol policy. Holder et al. (1998), Sulkunen et al. (2000), Tigerstedt (2001a) and Ugland (2002) have published major works discussing the history and development of the Nordic alcohol policy approach. Recent research and literature emphasize changes in the Nordic alcohol policy field. The influence of the European Union and Europeanization processes feature as important explanatory factors for recent changes in the Nordic alcohol policy field. Only a few studies look towards organisations with wider remit. These studies bring in a global perspective when analysing trends in the alcohol policy field (for instance Grieshaber-Otto and Jernigan 2001, Grieshaber-Otto and Schacter 2001, Alavaikko 2002 and Gould and Schacter 2002).

This part of the paper will look into contemporary literature and policy papers in order to assess how the changes in the Nordic alcohol policy are interpreted. A central question is: What role does globalization play as explanatory in the changed alcohol policy field in the Nordic countries?

The Nordic alcohol policy is emphasised as peculiar compared to the rest of Europe and the world at large, both in literature and in recent policy documents. First of all, the Nordic countries have a long history of state control and state monopolies over much of alcohol production. In Norway, Sweden and Finland state monopolies have controlled both wholesale, import, and export; as well as alcohol retail sales in bars and restaurants (on-premise) and at stores for drinking elsewhere (off-premises) (Holder et al. 1998:1). Holder et al. (Ibid.) point out that the purpose of the alcohol control policy in the Nordic countries was and still is

*...to maintain a lower overall consumption of alcoholic beverages and lower levels of associated alcohol-related problems by reducing private profits and promotion of all aspects of alcohol, restricting retail access to alcohol, limiting personal imports of lower-cost alcohol from other countries, and maintaining high retail prices.*

Ugland (2002) notes that the distinctive Nordic alcohol policy is based in specific social characteristics, cultural traditions and historical experiences of the Nordic countries, rooted in the nation building and welfare state projects, and associated with strong social forces (the labour movement, Low Church groups and an independent temperance movement) (Ugland 2002:52).

Several authors point to important changes in the Nordic alcohol policy in the recent years (see Holder et al. 1998, Sulkunen 2000, Tigerstedt 2001a and Ugland 2002). Tigerstedt argues that the field is dissolving. Ugland describes the recent changes as a combination of “policy recategorization and integration”. Both emphasize the influence of the EU and the Europeanization process. Although important changes are recognized, there are discussions on how far the changes in alcohol policy have gone in the individual Nordic countries, and there are disagreements on how to characterize the changes (see Romanus 2001, Hauge 2001, Fjær 2001 and Tigerstedt 2001b).

Recently published policy documents recognise the changes and trends that are pointed out in the research literature. There seems to be a general agreement that the changes have been institutional and formal, as well as more general and cognitive (a change of ideas and beliefs). At the same time, these policy documents seem to stress

continuity in policy goals (see for instance Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs 2001 and Norwegian Ministry of Social Affairs 2002). An important question is, how are the changes interpreted?

The Swedish government points to new and changing international conditions when describing their approach to alcohol policy. A report on the Swedish alcohol policy plan 2001-2005 admits that “Increased international exchange and Sweden’s EU membership partially modified the basis of this country’s traditional efforts to prevent alcohol-related harm” (Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs 2001:6). Increased movement of people and goods across borders, and the increased contact which follows and influences attitudes towards alcohol and other matters. Thus, internal changes have followed from external pressure. According to the report, the state has taken on a new and different role. Decisions are now concentrated on individuals and local community rather than on the population or country as a whole. Changed conditions on the international and on the national level lead to the assumption that the traditional tools used to reduce alcohol consumption do not work as effectively as they used to. The traditional tools will “...remain significant in the future, but they must be supplemented by further measures to prevent any renewed rise in the trend of alcohol-related harm” (Ibid:7). International influence thus figures as a major explanatory for changed alcohol policy in Sweden.

International influence has also been recognised in Norway. The Norwegian action plan on alcohol and drugs 2003-2005 recognises that “Increased internationalisation (economical, political and cultural) and other societal changes in recent years have led to policy adjustments” (Norwegian Ministry of Social Affairs 2002:11, my translation). The impact of increased international influence was also stated as the main reason behind the government NOU-report in 1995 (NOU 1995). This report must be seen on the background of the establishment of the European Economic Area (EEA) and the Norwegian negative vote in the referendum on EU membership in 1994. It states that “The development towards an increasingly tighter international contact creates new challenges for Norway. This is also true within the alcohol policy field. When the world changes, it becomes necessary to consider whether the means of our alcohol policy are efficient enough in order to meet the challenges ahead of us, and whether it could be necessary to put new measures into use” (NOU 1995:24, my translation). Despite the recognition of a changing environment, the conclusions of the report on strategies for the future were “more of the same” rather than proposals for major change.

A comparison of the policy documents in question reveals that Sweden seems to have a more proactive approach to the international level of alcohol policy. The Swedish report on the future alcohol policy emphasises the importance of international collaboration and a strengthening of public health issues in international relations – especially within the EU (Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs 2001:13). An argument to support this is that Sweden was responsible for a WHO European Ministerial Conference on Young People and Alcohol in February 2001, and also took initiative for the EU Commission to embark on drafting voluntary codes of conduct for businesses that produce and retail alcohol, covering sale and marketing aimed at children or young people. Following this, a “Recommendation on Drinking of Alcohol by Young People, especially Children and Adolescents” was approved by the

Commission in 2001 (COM 2000/736). During the Swedish Presidency of the EU Council, Sweden proposed Council Conclusions on the need for an alcohol strategy. Here, the Commission was urged to start working on a strategy to reduce harmful effects of alcohol. Sweden is a member of the EU and Norway is not. This can give Sweden both incentive and opportunity to influence other EU members to adopt their ideas and attitudes towards alcohol. Because Norway is not an EU member, the opportunity for influence can be seen as more remote.

Even though the influence of “foreign” ideas and behaviour, and in particular the influence from Europeanization and international or global processes are recognised in both Sweden and Norway, this is not seen exclusively as a one-way relationship. The Swedish report on contemporary alcohol policy recognises that other countries might well be influenced by attitudes in the Nordic countries towards alcohol as well.<sup>2</sup> A Nordic seminar on alcohol policy and globalization held in Åbo, Finland in 2001, emphasised the multifaceted character of globalization processes (Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2002). Here, an approximation of consumption trends in alcohol was highlighted. A trend from national to global markets was recognised in addition to the changes in domestic drinking patterns. Also, alterations on the international policy level were recognised: towards common approaches to alcohol policy at EU level (Renström 2002:99). A conclusion made by Renström was that decision-making within the alcohol policy field is becoming both more local and more international at the same time, as a result of a gradual reduction of national measures. Allegedly, even countries that are not members of the EU use EU regulation as an argument for imposing less restrictive national regulation.

The literature and the policy documents I have looked at here emphasise a mixture of negative, positive and framing integration. This means that the changes that are taking place, are seen to follow from both liberalization efforts (negative integration), direct legislation (positive integration) and cognitive processes, i. e. the influence of beliefs and expectations (framing integration). The explanatory weight of the three integration forms varies in different papers. The policy documents in particular illustrate the “framing” effect; although the continuation of traditional policy goals and measures are emphasised, the change in beliefs and expectation (typical of framing integration) are rendered significant.

While none of the major academic studies or the policy initiatives and documents on Nordic alcohol policy *explicitly* discusses globalization as a changing force, many of the changes in policy are related to broader globalization forces and international trends. In the literature, Europeanization and the influence of European integration dominate as explanatory. In the policy documents, the reference is mainly to “international influence”. There are few attempts to go deeper into an analysis of what the international (or global) influence is, and how it should be interpreted. The next section

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<sup>2</sup> Wine consumption in Southern and Central European countries has decreased considerable over the last decades, while consumption patterns especially among young people resemble the traditional consumption pattern in the Nordic countries, where intoxication and consumption of beer and spirits is more common (Ministry of Health and Social Affairs Sweden 2002:6-7). This argument was also emphasised in an interview with an informant in the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs in Stockholm, September 2002.

of the paper will attempt to fill this void, by focussing recent globalization debate and literature.

## What is Globalization?

Globalization has become the buzz-word of our time, but in many cases it is not clear what globalization means. Many fail to define what lies in the phrase, and this could lead to globalization becoming an “empty” expression. Globalization is often seen as influencing “all” aspects of society, and might therefore have a large potential for changing normative understandings and interpretations, as well as formal arrangements and institutions. This might lead to changes in power distribution between central actors, and thereby change relations between important actors in different policy fields. The influence on public policy, herein approaches to alcohol control, are adjacent.

The impact of globalization in a particular policy area cannot be discussed without examining further what characterises globalization. If we are to assess whether globalization is of relevance for the alcohol policy field at all, we need at least to understand the theoretical basis of what globalization is.

The precise content and meaning of globalization is highly debated. A useful starting point is the book *Globalization: a critical introduction* by Scholte (2000). He distinguishes between five different definitions of globalization that figure in contemporary literature. These emphasise respectively internationalisation, liberalization, universalization, westernisation (or modernisation) and deterritorialization (or a spread of supraterritoriality). Scholte thus demonstrates that the term globalization is used in different ways, and covers a great many dimensions. If this is not recognized, it can result in a confusing picture and analysis of what globalization is. Scholte builds his own approach on a definition of *deterritorialization*, emphasising that globalization “...entails a reconfiguration of geography, so that social space is no longer wholly mapped in terms of territorial places, territorial distances and territorial borders” (Ibid:16).

David Held et al. (1999) have published a major work on contemporary globalization with the extensive book titled *Global Transformations. Politics, Economics and Culture*. Held et al. define globalization much in the same way as Scholte, emphasising transformations of spatial-temporal dimensions. An understanding of globalization must, according to them, acknowledge the distinctive spatial attributes of globalization processes and the way these unfold over time. Globalization implies a stretching of social, political and economic activities across frontiers, and patterns of interaction which transcend constituent societies and states are intensified. This growing extensity and intensity of global interconnectedness can imply a speeding up (higher velocity) of global interactions (Ibid:15). Globalization is thus defined as (Ibid:16)

*...a process (or sets of processes) which embodies a transformation in the spatial organisation of social relations or transactions – assessed in the terms of their extensity, intensity, velocity and impact – generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction, and the exercise of power.*

This definition includes both quantitative and qualitative aspects, and also helps distinguish globalization from more restricted processes of internationalisation.

The definition of globalization that is used in Held et al. implies that globalization can influence all sectors and all areas of social life. However, the impact of globalization varies across countries and across different sectors, and can follow different paths and paces. In their work on the different integration forms (negative, positive and framing integration), Knill and Lehmkuhl (1999) make use of a distinction between institutional “fit” and institutional “misfit” that can be of relevance here. Their argument is that different policy approaches, based in negative, positive or framing integration, are successful depending on the institutional compatibility of the country in question. The notion of institutional compatibility implies that the degree of national institutional fit or misfit may facilitate or hinder policy changes and reform originating from the European, international or global level. Domestic resistance to change is most likely in cases where reform efforts imply fundamental change of well-established regulatory patterns or institutional arrangements (Knill and Lehmkuhl 1999:5). Domestic reform is a more likely scenario if new policies require only moderate and incremental adjustments. In this discussion, the institutionalised Nordic alcohol policy field, with its long history, strong traditions and unique character might represent a case of “high institutional misfit” in the face of the liberalization pressures from outside, and domestic resistance towards changes can be assumed considerable.

At the same time, in a global context, Nordic countries can be seen as highly globalized and therefore more receptive of globalization trends compared to less globalized countries. A. T. Kearny and Foreign Policy Magazine have suggested a globalization index which is much referred to (Foreign Policy 2001). It measures levels of interdependence to determine how globalized different countries are. The index includes variables that measure the level of personal contact across borders as well as economic and technological integration.<sup>3</sup> According to the index, the Nordic countries are highly globalized countries – among the “top twenty”. The likelihood of further reform, or further globalization, of already highly globalized countries is considerable. Nordic countries are therefore more likely to adapt compared to countries that are ranked lower on the globalization index. However, the Kearney/Foreign Policy Index is not unproblematic – as are most indexes based on a limited number of variables. Lockwood (2001) points out problems of measurement and weighting of the variables included in the index. The range of indicators and their comparability across countries can also be questioned. Globalization is a complex matter, and many aspects of global integration defy measurement. One example is the globalization of culture and cultural exchange.

Some globalization papers focus on how national structures and traditions modify globalization developments. Rieger and Leibfried (1998) argue that national structures of welfare and social policy and their developments can trigger, contain, differentiate or

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<sup>3</sup> The index quantifies economic integration by combining data on trade, foreign direct investment, capital flows and income payments and receipts. It charts personal contact via levels of international travel and tourism, international telephone traffic and transborder transfers. The index gauges technological connectedness by counting Internet users and the Internet hosts and secure servers through which they communicate and conduct business transactions. It also assesses political engagement by taking stock of participation in international organisations and U.N. Security Council missions (How the Index is Calculated, available at [www.foreignpolicy.com/issue\\_janfeb\\_2002/methodology.html](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/issue_janfeb_2002/methodology.html)).

modify, weaken or strengthen, slow down or speed up globalization. The Nordic alcohol policy can be considered a welfare policy that holds potential for modifying globalization. The modifying strength of such national arrangements is not unlimited. Evidence to support this can be found in the changing Nordic alcohol policy as shown earlier.

Authors like Knill and Lehmkuhl (1999) and Rieger and Leibfried (1998) demonstrate that different institutional and political settings embody different potentials for adaptability. Thus, capacity for reform and adaptation varies across countries. This supports a thesis – even though measurement can be difficult – that a high level of integration or globalization lowers the threshold for successful reform. At the same time, strongly developed welfare structures and institutions as well as strong national policy traditions limit the impact of reform and external pressures. This dynamic might be helpful in explaining the current changes in the Nordic alcohol policy field.

Even though globalization and globalization processes are discussed thoroughly in contemporary globalization literature, discussions on the substantial impact on particular national policy areas often come second to the more general and normative debates of what globalization is, how it should be interpreted and what it leads to. But what are the consequences for national policy, such as the Nordic alcohol policy? Questions like this one should be examined further. A thesis held by many is that globalization processes erode state powers, while international or supranational institutions become more important. If this is true, globalization should lead to a diminishing of state control and regulation of the alcohol market. However, predicting the outcome of globalization is an extremely difficult project, whereas globalization itself is a complex matter. At a minimum, we can agree that globalization represents a significant challenge to the sovereignty and authority of national states. With increasing globalization, nation states gradually become more enmeshed in and a part of a larger pattern of global transformations and global flows (Held et al. 1999:49).

A stretching of political relations across space and time and an extension of political power and political activity across the boundaries of the modern nation-state describes the increasing globalization of politics, or development of “global politics”. And as Held et al. point out; the idea of global politics challenges traditional distinctions between domestic and international, inside/outside and territorial/non-territorial politics (Ibid.:50). Although governments and states remain powerful actors, they increasingly share the global arena with other organisations – whether they are international or supranational, intergovernmental or non-state. This represents a challenge for all traditional national policies, and in particular the Nordic alcohol policy with its distinct character and state foundations. At the same time, state and national policies and institutions are not just passive receivers of global policy and pressure. Rather, global ideas are filtered down and modified according to national traditions and institutional settings.

We have seen that Knill and Lehmkuhl (1999) focus on different mechanisms of integration. Though their main interest is explaining mechanisms of Europeanization, their interpretation can also be used when discussing globalization. Positive integration – the most direct integration mechanism – happens when domestic arrangements change according to prescribed institutional models. This occurs when international or

supranational institutions actively intervene in domestic regulation and prescribe regulatory instruments or new institutional models for national governments. Negative integration is a more indirect mechanism, but still involves compliance to international regulation. Regulation aimed at eliminating trade barriers is a typical instrument of negative integration. It does not specifically prescribe institutional models, but nevertheless puts limitations on domestic policy action. The liberal trade regime introduced by the WTO is an example of such a global institution. Framing integration is an even more indirect mechanism. It describes cases where ideas and understandings within specific policy fields are “imported” from the international or global level to the domestic level. Thus, this mode of integration includes a cognitive element. Fjær (2000) has argued that Europeanization of the drug policy field serves as a relevant illustration of the more indirect form of framing integration. This type of integration can – along with the other two types, be important when understanding the characteristics of changes in the Nordic alcohol policy and globalization.

A tentative conclusion that can be made after examining relevant globalization literature, is that globalization indeed has relevance and can influence changes at the national level. It follows that it also can have impact on the Nordic alcohol policy field. This urges for a more empirical outlook. The next section will thus concretise the analysis further by relating the three integration mechanisms developed by Knill and Lehmkuhl to the potential impact of the WTO, in context of the changing alcohol policy field as described in the earlier sections of this paper.

## **The WTO and its Influence on Alcohol Policy**

One way to focus the possible impact of globalization on national policies, is to look at the influence of particular international organisations and institutions. Here, a concentration on the WTO is chosen partly because it is a large and significant international organisation that regulates trade between most of the countries of the world, and therefore has potential impact on questions related to alcohol trade and policy. The WTO is a major global actor, and its impact on national government action can illustrate the influence of “global” institutions on national policy. Globalization has largely been associated to a growth and spread of international trade, and to the establishment of international trade regimes and organisations, such as the WTO. The WTO, with 144 member states across the world, may be the most significant international trade organisation today. Its potential impact on trade patterns and on national regulation is therefore significant.

The influence of the WTO on national alcohol policy is so far relatively unexplored. A starting point is that, although the WTO primarily is a trade organisation, the premises which it lays down for members as well as non-members are wide-reaching. The framework that the WTO provides may therefore have important influence on health related matters and alcohol policy and regulation, even though public health (and certainly preventive alcohol policy) is not of its core engagements. A fundamental discrepancy between trade liberalization and national efforts to control and minimize

consumption of a certain product, such as alcohol, can be identified. Therefore, it is particularly interesting to look into the policy field of alcohol control.

Ugland has described the EU-Nordic relationship in the area of alcohol control policy as a case of substantive *policy mismatch* (Ugland 2002:200). Policy mismatch may also describe the relationship between the Nordic alcohol policy and the trade regulation regime of the WTO. Together with Jernigan, Grieshaber-Otto argues that there is an underlying incompatibility between efforts to minimize alcohol-related harm and the latest generation of international treaties that promote the freer flow of goods, services and investments (Grieshaber-Otto and Jernigan 2001). Grieshaber-Otto and Jernigan point out that international trade treaties are designed to foster lower prices, greater competition, more vigorous marketing and greater economic efficiency. This leads – “according to standard economic theory” – to increased production and consumption of the product in question. This also applies to alcohol. Furthermore, they argue that (Ibid.):

*The treaties are likely to be increasingly successful at boosting consumption, particularly in emerging markets. Under their provisions, alcohol becomes cheaper as taxes are lowered, more accessible as market restrictions are eliminated, and more desirable to consumers as alcohol products are advertised and otherwise promoted. But of course, from a societal perspective, increasing consumption of alcohol is likely to lead to more public health problems.*

Alavaikko (2002) has studied the possible impact of WTO on Nordic alcohol policies, focussing especially on Finland. He points out that WTO at ground is about trade policy, and therefore the social and health policy aspects of alcohol policy are the passive and defensive. WTO puts pressure on national liberalization and traditional state-centered policy systems thus become the passive part. Wider social and health policy reflections and alcohol-specific considerations must therefore fight for their place on the policy agenda (Alavaikko 2002:74).

Regulation of alcohol is relevant in terms of the WTO, because alcohol is a commercial product traded among countries and therefore subject to WTO regulations. In addition to this, the WTO can be seen to spread ideas and beliefs based on free trade ideals – ideas and beliefs that can influence national actors and institutions. The influence of the WTO can be characterized along the lines of negative, positive and framing integration. This will be shown in the following sections of the paper.

## The WTO – History and Development

In order to understand how the WTO operates, an overview of the history behind its establishment and the content of the agreements are important. Before the establishment of the predecessor to the WTO – the General Agreement of Tariffs and Trade in 1947 – there was no regulation of the international economy or trade. Individual countries and authorities were free to introduce the means and actions they saw fit in order to take care of their own economic interests. This freedom often resulted in protective measures, efforts aimed at protecting domestic production from foreign competition. Most countries introduced restrictive import measures and successive devaluations of domestic currency in the 1930's. The result was economic decline and mass unemployment; in effect a worse situation for all. These negative

experiences led to the establishment of the so called Bretton Woods negotiations, aimed at establishing international rules for trade and economic policy, and the following establishment of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. In this process, the first attempt to establish an International Trade Organisation (ITO) was initialised (Melchior and Norman 1998). However, the attempt to establish the ITO stranded when the American congress refused to ratify the agreement. Instead, a General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) was agreed upon. This did not establish a trade organisation, but represented a set of rules regulating international trade. 23 countries signed GATT in 1947, and made way for large multilateral trade liberalizations. In 1995, after lengthy negotiations, the GATT was transformed in the WTO. With successive new signatories and extensions of scope, it now counts 144 member countries across the world, and has undergone many changes and extensions.

The WTO is a fully fledged trade organisation, including several trade agreements and a dispute settlement body for solving disagreements between member states. The main purpose of the multilateral trading system established by GATT and the WTO is to foster the flow of trade between member countries by providing a set of rules to regulate trade. The most important aim is to reduce trade barriers, such as customs duties (or tariffs), import bans or quotas that selectively restrict trade, and non-tariff barriers. Non-commercial values like public health appear only as exceptions to the agreements. The WTO agreement has three main functions: to supervise and carry out the international trade regulations, to operate as a forum for further negotiations, and to solve relevant disputes between member countries (Utenriksdepartementet 1998).

The establishment of the WTO in 1995 meant important organisational changes from the previous arrangements operative through GATT. More than 50 years after the international trade organisation first was proposed, international trade now has a permanent organisation. The permanent administration of the WTO is placed in Geneva. The highest decision-making authority in the WTO is the Ministerial Conference. It is held every two years, and relevant ministers of the member states partake. In between the ministerial conferences the daily work of the WTO is taken care of by the General Council, normally ambassadors and heads of national delegations in Geneva, and sometimes officials sent from the member states. The General Council delegates supervision of different agreements to different Councils that have a more specialized remit; the Goods Council, the Services Council and the Intellectual Property (TRIPS) Council.

With the establishment of the WTO, the scope of the trade agreement was significantly enlarged. While GATT mainly applied to industrial products, WTO in principle applies to all categories of goods, including agricultural products, textiles, trade in services, and to some extent capital and ideas (intellectual property or “immaterial rights”). With the establishment of the WTO, the interim secretariat of GATT was made permanent. The creation of the WTO also meant the establishment of a more powerful institution whereas dispute panels have the authority to make binding judgements in cases where trade rules are transgressed or subject to dispute (Held et al. 1999:165). All in all, as Anderson (1998:13) argues, this meant that the overall supervision of international trade and dispute settlement instruments were strengthened. The permanent organisation has been built out considerably, but the power of initiative

still rests with the Member governments whose representatives constitute and preside over the many councils and committees within the organisation. Furthermore, the WTO Secretariat itself cannot challenge any member and has no right to prosecute; it is fully up to member states to decide whether or not to bring a dispute against another member to the WTO.

The WTO builds on two important clauses or principles. *The most-favoured-nation clause* ensures that each member state is obliged to treat all other members as its “most favoured” trading partner. This means that every trading partner should be favoured as any other for both imports and exports. *The principle of national treatment* implies that there is to be no discrimination between national and foreign goods and services, and in relation to trade-related aspects of intellectual property. The WTO includes several distinct agreements signed by the member states; the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which includes the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) and the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS), the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) and the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).<sup>4</sup> In this paper, I will focus in particular two of these agreements; GATT and GATS. GATT has direct relevance for trade with alcohol products as it concentrates directly on trade in goods. GATS has relevance for trade in services, and therefore can have implications for services in the alcohol sector.

## The Influence of the WTO

So, what is the potential for WTO influence on national and Nordic Alcohol policy? First and foremost, the WTO agreements (GATT, GATS etc.) regulate actions and arrangements in member states by setting rules of international trade based on free trade and liberalization. Through this process, the WTO has a direct impact on national regulation and arrangements. Gould and Schacter (2002) further point out four other areas where alcohol control policies can be challenged by the WTO: Through membership qualifying processes, through periodic reviews of domestic trade policies of member states, through complaints from other members and dispute settlements, and through negotiations to expand the agreements of the WTO. The first point assesses that the WTO can also have significant impact on alcohol policy arrangements in non-member countries, also in countries that are not actively seeking membership. True, the WTO does not have direct influence on non-members, but the indirect impact on policy can be profound. Let us look a bit more closely at the more indirect impact of the WTO.

Because the free trade ideal has such a dominant position, and the WTO is such an important international organisation, thoughts and policy ideas in countries that are not members of the WTO are likely to be influenced. It is important for non-members to participate in the global trade system, in order to secure income and economic development. As such, the influence of the WTO can be seen as a form of framing

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<sup>4</sup> For a full account of the details of the different agreements, see [www.wto.org](http://www.wto.org)

integration. The ideas and approaches to international trade as provided the WTO are therefore likely to be adopted also by countries that are not (yet) members of the organisation.

Gould and Schacter (2002) argue that prospective members of the WTO tend to liberalize more sectors compared to member countries, in order to secure their entrance. Prospective members must submit progress reports on their privatisation plans to other member countries, and this can contribute to further liberalization pressures. The accession of Taiwan in 2002 might be illustrative. This story is at the same time relevant for the alcohol policy field.

Before Taiwan became a member of the WTO, the state run *Taiwan Tobacco and Wine Monopoly Bureau* cornered the market for alcoholic beverages; it had monopoly control over domestic production of tobacco and alcohol. In 2001, the Taiwan government pledged to end the monopoly as part of its bid to join the WTO (Dow Jones News Service, 20.04.01). Thus, the alcohol monopoly was abolished before the accession to the WTO, because the government anticipated that the arrangement would not be compatible with WTO rules. With this, the production of both tobacco and alcohol products were opened to the private sector and government subsidies ended. Domestic alcohol now had to compete on an even footing with imports (Taipei Times 31.12.02 and Taipei Journal 08.02.02). However, the dissolution of the state run monopoly apparently did *not* raise concern for excessive alcohol consumption, as we would expect to happen if the alcohol monopolies in the Nordic countries were abolished. On the contrary, there was concern about an expected *increase* of prices on alcohol and cigarettes (Taipei Times 31.12.2001) and an increase of moonshining activities (Taipei Times 07.05.2000). This goes to show that alcohol monopolies are not always motivated by public health interests. The state monopoly of Taiwan was not aimed at reducing or controlling alcohol consumption for public health purposes. It held prices at a low level, controlled import, and was mainly a source of revenue for the state. Some claimed that the Taiwan state alcohol monopoly also was motivated by voter-seeking activity, because it secured low prices on alcoholic beverages for the consumer (Taipei Journal 19.09.1999).

Gould and Schacter (2002) show that alcohol control policies can be influenced by the periodic reviews that the WTO make of member states' trade policies. Existing members of the WTO are reviewed at certain intervals, and have to account for their current trade policies. The frequency of the reviews depends on the country's share of world trade. EU members are reviewed together every two years. This means that Sweden as an EU member is not reviewed separately, while Norway is (every four years). In one particular case, questions concerning alcohol policies became relevant. In 1996 specific questions were asked about Norway's state trading operations for alcohol. One of the discussants participating in the WTO review commented that "The current régime, covering production, foreign trade and domestic distribution of alcoholic beverages was still over-regulated and trade directing given the additional high taxes and excise duties. Progress had been made but further liberalization would be welcomed" (WT/TPR/M/15, 5. august 1996:9). Further information on the restrictive system for licencing system for imports, exports and wholesale distribution of alcoholic beverages was requested by the representative of Chile, and a representative of the EU requested

further clarification of Norway's intentions to open competition in the area of alcoholic beverages. The representative of Norway responded that the retail monopoly would not be abolished, as it was considered an important element of Norway's alcohol policy (WT/TPR/M/15, 5 August 1996:25). According to one of my informants, the WTO questions on the Norwegian alcohol policy referred to here have not had any significant impact (Interview 1). This interpretation must be seen on the background that this particular informant is what can be characterised as an "insider" to the WTO, working in the Norwegian Foreign Ministry's WTO section. An official in the alcohol policy field (for instance in the Social Ministry) would probably see the case differently. As Alavaikko points out, Arcus AS – responsible for import and retail sale of alcoholic beverages in Norway – has been partly privatised since. The state now owns 34 percent, compared to 100 percent before 1998 (St. meld. 1 (2002-2003)). Alavaikko (2002) ties this to the WTO review of 1996, but the direct impact of the review on this matter is difficult to prove. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that the alcohol policy of Norway is something that other WTO members take an interest in. Referring to the types of integration discussed earlier, the WTO questions in the review of Norway can be seen to represent a type of framing integration – whereas the questions that were related to alcohol control system of Norway reveals a sceptical attitude from some of the other member states.

## GATT

GATT was designed to gradually reduce tariffs and other border measures that are considered barriers to trade in goods. Alcohol is relevant under GATT, whereas alcohol in principle is a commercial product like any other. The most-favoured-nation clause and the principle of national treatment apply in the same way for alcohol as for any other goods. This means that a member country cannot treat foreign alcohol products differently from domestic products. However, as long as there is no discrimination, each member state is free to impose any domestic tax they wish. In principle therefore, domestic taxes imposed in order to reduce alcohol consumption can freely be implemented as long as it does not favour domestic products. The most-favoured-nation-clause applies in the same way: A member state can not favour products from a particular country or region without giving the same treatment to all other WTO members. Most countries have legitimate needs for import protection in certain areas. Each member state has committed itself on separate national binding list, and cannot add other import restrictions. This list includes upper limits for tariffs for particular products (Utenriksdepartementet 1998).

GATT includes a health provision which states that "...nothing in this Agreement shall be construed to prevent the adoption or enforcement by any contracting party of measures (...) necessary to protect human, animal or plant life or health" (GATT 1947: Article XX). This article has been ascribed great importance, especially in the face of critics who argue negative consequences of liberalization of trade. The health provision has so far not been claimed in relation to trade in alcohol. However, the "Thai cigarette case 1990" might serve as an illustration of what *could* happen if the health provision was claimed in the case of alcohol control. In 1990, the Thai government issued an import ban on cigarettes for public health reasons. The legality of this according to WTO

regulations was soon disputed by other members. A WTO panel established to solve the dispute concluded that "...alternatives less restrictive than banning imported cigarettes were available to achieve the health objectives", and thus dismissed the Thai government argument based in article XXb) that the ban was "necessary to protect human... life or health" (Ranson et al. 2002:20). This did not hinder a following implementation of strong domestic tobacco control policies by the Thai government, on all brands of cigarettes. The point made was that the Thai import ban discriminated between foreign products and domestic products. Equally, alcohol control policies do not interfere with WTO rules as long as they do not discriminate between foreign alcohol products and domestic alcohol products.

The Thai cigarette case transported to the alcohol policy field illustrates a potential conflict regarding what constitutes adequate public health reasons. A crucial question in relation to the health provision is who decides what is an unacceptable risk, and who decides what is necessary to protect human life or health? According to WTO interpretation, if applied in a non-discriminatory way and based on scientific principles a regulatory action or trade barrier is justifiable. However, deciding what is an unacceptable risk may be difficult, and can give rise to disagreement. Disputes on the validity of scientific evidence, may be part of the disagreement. This was the case in the hormones in beef dispute between EU and the USA in 1998 (WT/DES26/15 and WT/DS48/13). In the Thai cigarette case, the WTO did not accept the Thai government arguments based on public health considerations. The borders between what is a public health argument and what is protecting domestic trade is nevertheless a difficult one – and can be contested.

Although the health provision has not been maintained in relation to alcohol, trade in alcohol has been disputed in the WTO system several times: in Japan (1995), Korea (1998) and Chile (1999). These disputes concerned internal taxes on alcohol and alleged violation of article III on National Treatment on Internal Taxation and Regulation.<sup>5</sup> In short, internal taxes on domestic products differed from taxation on imported alcoholic beverages in all cases (Japanese "sochu", Korean "soju" and Chilean "pisco"). In all three disputes, the final conclusion was that the taxation systems would have to be changed so as not to discriminate against foreign products (Panel report WT/DS8/R, WT/DS10/R, WT/DS11/R, Panel report WT/DS75/R, WT/DS84/R, and Panel report WT/DS87/R, WT/DS110/R). The Chilean dispute is of particular relevance here. It has implications for the ability for governments to discourage consumption of spirits with high alcohol content. Chile defended her case by arguing that the disputed tax measures were intended to discourage consumption of high alcohol content beverages, and had nothing to do with favouring domestic products. In effect, Chilean

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<sup>5</sup> GATT Article III 1. The contracting parties recognize that internal taxes and other internal charges, and laws, regulations and requirements affecting the internal sale, offering for sale, purchase, transportation, distribution or use of products, and internal quantitative regulations requiring the mixture, processing or use of products in specified amounts or proportions, should not be applied to imported or domestic products so as to afford protection to domestic production. 2. The products of the territory of any contracting party imported into the territory of any other contracting party shall not be subject, directly or indirectly, to internal taxes or other internal charges of any kind in excess of those applied, directly or indirectly, to like domestic products. Moreover, no contracting party shall otherwise apply internal taxes or other internal charges to imported or domestic products in a manner contrary to the principles set forth in paragraph 1.

pisco with a 35 percent alcohol content was taxed significantly lower than other liquor with 40 percent alcohol, mainly foreign produced products. The EC challenged the sincerity of Chile's claim, and won the case. To conform with the ruling, Chile had to eliminate the differential rates of taxation. Eventually all spirits were subjected to the lower rate applied for pisco. Whether Chilean regulation was motivated by genuine public health considerations or indeed motivated by commercial interests requires a more detailed analysis than is possible here. The fact remains that the health argument did not pull through in the dispute settlement. Dispute settlements in the WTO do not formally have implications for future cases, but may nevertheless influence taxation policies in other countries. Thus, the Chilean case might well influence future disputes on differential taxation of alcohol products.

A conclusion is that the WTO and GATT indeed have influenced and changed alcohol taxation and arrangements in several countries. This has not been directly related to health motivated alcohol control measures, but first and foremost been aimed against discrimination across borders, thus liberalization of trade. Indirectly however, the impact on health motivated interests can be detected, as we have seen in the Chilean dispute for instance. The GATT includes a health provision that allows exception for measures necessary to protect human (and animal or plant) life or health (Article XX (b)). However, according to Ranson et al. (2002:28-29), the exception under Article XX (b) has been interpreted narrowly in a number of cases so as to limit the extent of trade-restrictive environmental, health and safety regulations. This might explain why this article has not been used in the cases concerning trade in alcohol.

GATT does not *directly* prescribe certain tariff levels to which the member states must comply, but merely emphasises that there should be no discrimination across borders. The general aim is to hold tariffs at a low level, but no explicit limit is prescribed. In relation to the three modes of integration described by Knill and Lehmkuhl (1999), the instruments that the WTO make use of cannot be described as positive integration. Positive integration implies prescribing concrete institutional requirements with which member states must comply (Ibid:1). Such policies are explicitly directed at replacing existing domestic regulatory arrangements. Although the WTO agreements might change national regulation, the agreements do not positively prescribe domestic provisions in each member country. This is a more common instrument in the EU. The potential influence of the WTO on alcohol policy is therefore mainly indirect. Negative integration is thus a term that better describes the general approach of the WTO. The WTO sets rules for trade, and works for the elimination of trade barriers between member countries. Rather than prescribing how things should be done, the WTO lays down the general framework for how trade across borders should be conducted. The abolition of trade barriers for alcohol products has in principle no direct impact on how the production of alcohol products is regulated at the national level. It only implies that alcohol beverages can be freely sold in any member state. Indeed this alters opportunities and constraints for producers as well as consumers, but in a more indirect manner. In addition to this negative integration effect, the influence of the WTO and the agreements it includes can also, as argued earlier in this section, be seen as a form of framing integration, by providing ideas and approaches

to trade and economic policy that eventually are adopted by domestic actors. The influence of the WTO on national alcohol policy therefore can be profound.

## GATS

The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) is another important agreement in the WTO framework that needs to be addressed. GATS regulates trade in services. Like GATT, GATS might have an impact on national alcohol policy, in this case on the service sector involved in the alcohol policy field. According to GATS Article II (the most-favoured-nation clause), "...each Member shall accord immediately and unconditionally to services and service suppliers of any other Member treatment no less favourable than that it accords to like services and service suppliers of any other country". As in GATT (Article XX (b)), Article XIV of the GATS authorises members to take measures to restrict services and service suppliers for the protection of human, animal or plant life or health.

In principle, GATS includes "all" services. However, in practice member states commit themselves positively on a binding list. This allows WTO-members to choose which service sectors to open up to trade and foreign competition and which modes of service to liberalize. Alcohol is not included in the list of Norway or Sweden (Interview 1). In practice therefore, services that are relevant to alcohol trade are excluded (Interviews 1 and 2). This illustrates the continuous importance of preserving domestic freedom of action in this policy area in the Nordic countries.

Treatment of alcohol problems in the Nordic countries is overall a governmental public health service. GATS specifically excludes trade in public services in Article I (b): "...services' includes any service in any sector except services supplied in the exercise of governmental authority". This means that this sector – in so far as it is not privatised – is not covered by GATS. A privatised and liberalized health service sector potentially represents an opening for foreign involvement and influence of new practices and ideas, because it then will be covered by GATS. Although parts of the health sector in Norway and Sweden indeed have been privatised, trade in health services is not very widespread; the health sectors in Nordic countries are still mainly public (Interviews 1, 2 and 3). Trade in health services throughout the WTO is also relatively modest, and commitments in health services under the GATS Agreement are generally at a low level (Ranson et al. 2002:28). Nevertheless, quantitative information about trade in health services is limited, and should be explored further.

Alcohol monopolies are still characteristic of the Nordic alcohol policy, although parts of the monopoly structure have been dissolved because of EU and EEA involvement. GATS includes a monopolies provision (Article VIII), which ensures that national service monopolies does not act inconsistently with the most-favoured nation treatment (Article II). While the Nordic countries have exempted alcohol from their commitments in distribution services, other EU members have not. This could put particular put pressure on Sweden – as Sweden is a member of the EU. Several of the EU members have substantial commercial interests in alcohol trade and are major producers and exporters of wine. Alavaikko even describes the EU Commission as "...an active protagonist for more open alcohol regimes" (Alavaikko 2002:74). This

creates an additional challenge for EU members – like Sweden – that have a more restrictive outlook.

Grieshaber-Otto and Schacter (2001) have discussed the consequences of GATS for public health motivated alcohol policy. They argue that, although the WTO and other international trade agreements have had important consequences for alcohol, with GATS these consequences became far more wide reaching. According to their interpretation, there is a fundamental discrepancy between a public health motivated regulation of alcohol and the GATS agreement. They claim that GATS includes many general features that can have an impact on national alcohol policy. For instance, it does not differentiate between alcohol related services that can have profound consequences for public health, and other services. However, they recognize that GATS includes certain exceptions, such as for public services. According to Grieshaber-Otto and Schacter, these are typically interpreted in a narrow manner and therefore might have profound influence on alcohol policy measures in the future. Furthermore, they argue that GATS “locks” political decisions, which means that political flexibility in the alcohol policy field will be restricted. They also mention that the agreement includes new measures that might influence alcohol policy, and includes provisions for further extensions through recurrent negotiations. The next revision of the GATS is to be completed in January 2005, and negotiations for the expansion of the agreement began early 2000. Grieshaber-Otto and Schacter argue that these elements together will lead to a further liberalization of the alcohol market at international level. In turn, this will mean that the availability of alcohol increases as well as the extension of advertising for alcoholic beverages (Ibid:233). Grieshaber-Otto and Schacter (Ibid.) further argue that GATS might have impact on the way the distribution and retail services are organised.

The arguments of Grieshaber-Otto and his co-authors (Grieshaber-Otto and Jernigan 2001, Grieshaber-Otto and Schacter 2001) point to important potential influences on Nordic alcohol control policies. At the same time their arguments are mainly based on a “worst case scenario”, and include elements of speculation. Predicting future outcomes in social science is extremely difficult. True, a further liberalization of the alcohol market might lead to an increase in availability. The relationship between availability, prices and consumption is nevertheless not necessarily straight-forward, and as we have seen in the previous section, the member states of the WTO still have considerable freedom to interpret national regulations in the alcohol market. WTO member states are relatively free to impose domestic taxes as they wish, as long as there is no discrimination between foreign and domestic products. In this context, the judgements of Grieshaber-Otto and Jernigan (2001) and Grieshaber-Otto and Schacter (2001) – although relevant – seem somewhat exaggerated. Although greater diversity of products may due to decreased tariffs on foreign products tend to increase overall alcohol consumption, this is not always the case. Lower tariffs may simply encourage consumers to switch from domestic products to imports, and public health objectives are not threatened. This is pointed out by Gould and Schacter (2002:125). This does not, however, mean that advocates of public health policies and alcohol control should not take heed of and try to influence policy developed at international or global level. All the more so, the potential *indirect* influence of the WTO calls for a more active and

alert community within the field of alcohol policy. This anticipates the discussion of the next sections.

## The WTO and Public Health

From a public health perspective, it is crucial to ensure that health-related issues, such as alcohol control, are fully taken into account in the trading system. Tension exists between trade interests and public health priorities. As we have seen in the previous sections, public health values within the WTO agreements appear mainly as exceptions. The WTO system recognises the need to protect health (GATT 1947 Article II), but the exceptions have often been read rather narrowly and appear allowable only under narrowly defined conditions (Ranson et al. 2002:35 and 38). Traditionally, international trade and public health questions have been addressed by two different international organisations; the WTO covers trade while the WHO deals with international (or global) health matters. Over the years there have been efforts to establish a greater dialogue between the WTO and the WHO. The recognition of multiple links between trade and health policy have resulted in high-level meetings between the WTO and the WHO since the late 1990s (Dodgson et al. 2002) However, according to Dodgson et al., there still remains considerable barriers to incorporating health as a legitimate and worthy concern on the global trade agenda.

The first report on the WTO and public health was published in 2002. Here, globalization and the links between health and trade policies are recognised. The study is published jointly by the WTO and the WHO, and deals with relevant WTO agreements and how they may influence health and health policies. The principle objective of the report is to describe actual and potential linkages between relevant WTO agreements and health. It does so by focusing on eight specific health issues: infectious disease control, food safety, tobacco, environment, access to drugs, health services, food security and nutrition, and “emerging issues” such as biotechnology. Alcohol is not mentioned specifically. Directors General Gro Harlem Brundtland and Mike Moore state that: “As the world becomes increasingly integrated, it becomes less and less possible for different policy areas to be handled independently of each other” (WTO/WHO 2002:1). With this statement, reciprocal influences between trade policy and public health policy is recognised. Although the report is an important one as it is the first report dealing with issues of trade *and* public health, it is aimed at “readers with limited knowledge of health-and-trade issues” and does not examine the debate in real detail. The stated objective is to “...explain the issues and the various views in a factual manner” (Ibid:24). Despite the recognition of interconnections, the report does not give an in-depth analysis of these linkages and the processes influencing them. However, it might be a first step towards a more integrated approach to the global issues of trade and public health, and as such gives interesting prospects for the future. The report can be seen as an effort towards framing integration of the two policy fields; public health and trade. Herein lies a potential for including alcohol policy issues based in health policy priorities.

## National participation in the WTO organisation

National participation patterns in the WTO organisation can give clues to limits and prospects for influence – both from the WTO to the member countries and from the respective countries into the WTO organisation. These patterns also give clues to variations across members. Sweden and Norway both have national delegations in Geneva that follow the daily work of the WTO and its committees, and report to the responsible authorities in their respective countries. In both countries, WTO affairs are mainly the responsibility of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MFA), but other ministries and authorities are involved when their policy fields are involved. The foreign ministries of the two countries have arrangements securing involvement of business organisations, workers organisations and different voluntary organisations (among them, ATTAC), where civil groups are encouraged to contribute with their opinions.

In Norway, a WTO-section within the MFA (*WTO-seksjonen*) deals specifically with questions concerning the WTO. The section employs about 15 people. Most of them are economists, though many have a background in law or political science. In Sweden, the unit dealing with WTO questions is placed under the division for international trade affairs (*Enheten för internationell handelspolitik*). The division employs about 30 people, and 7 of them work specifically with questions related to the WTO. Traditionally, Swedish ministries are small compared to Norwegian ministries. However, the Swedish government delegates to a larger extent administrative tasks to independent agencies sorting under different ministries. The National Board of Trade (*Kommerskollegium*) is such an independent governmental agency, which deals with foreign trade and trade policy. The agency employs about 85 people. Here, a unit for global trade (*Enheten för global handel*) works with WTO-related questions, in addition to several other global trade relations (EU, OECD, UNCTAD, non-European countries etc).<sup>6</sup> This unit employs about 15 people in total. Norway does not have a similar authority with delegated powers.

From Norway, the MFA and often also other involved ministries participate in the WTO meetings in Geneva and sit in several of the different committees in the WTO. Because Sweden is a member of the EU, trade and commercial policy is dealt with at community level. This means that Sweden for the most part participate in the WTO through the EU. In general, the EU Commission speaks for the EU and its member states in WTO meetings. When Swedish officials meet in WTO committees, they do so as representatives of the EU, and not as representatives of Sweden.<sup>7</sup> The so called “133

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<sup>6</sup> More information on the Swedish National Board of Trade can be found at [www.kommers.se](http://www.kommers.se)

<sup>7</sup> Of course, in practice it can be difficult to leave one's national affiliation behind. In principle however, Swedish officials have to act according to EU standpoints.

Committee” is central here.<sup>8</sup> Representatives of EU members meet in the 133 Committee to discuss and negotiate standpoints on trade issues before they are taken to other fora – like the WTO. In practice, the EU Commission decides the agenda for the meetings, and may send out text suggestions in advance. Member states may act for certain matters to be laid before the committee or certain positions to be included in relevant documents, but the Commission always has the initiative. Alavaikko (2002) points out that, through this process, it is possible to see how policy issues “come down the ladder” from the EU Commission to the 133 Committee and from there on to the national level.

The decisions of the 133 Committee are advisory. Although the recommendations of the committee for the most part are adopted, in principle the Council of Ministers always has the last word. The committee aims at consensus agreement, and tries not to run over single member states if they strongly disagree with a decision or statement (Interview 2). The committee meets formally once a month and consists of higher ranked civil servants from member states and representatives of the Commission. It can also organise thematic (on textiles or services for instance) or ad hoc meetings limited to experts. The representative of Sweden in Brussels often attends meetings and represents the Foreign Ministry there.

Because Sweden cannot act on her own in relations or negotiations with the WTO, but has to act through the EU and the 133 Committee, her standpoints on commercial and trade policy issues may not always come to the fore in the WTO. On the other hand, acting jointly with other EU members give more weight to arguments in the negotiations compared to single and “small” countries – like Norway. Member states can raise issues of national interest on the EU agenda and may have a stronger influence on WTO policies through the EU than they would have alone, because EU as a single actor carries more weight than any individual country.

## Positive, negative or framing integration?

The impact of the WTO can be assessed in terms of positive, negative or framing integration. Positive integration in the WTO – understood as direct prescription of institutional models – is virtually non-existent. The effect of the WTO on national policy and arrangements is more indirect, and is better interpreted as forms of negative integration (setting the framework for liberating trade) or framing integration (influencing beliefs and expectations through cognitive measures).

The GATT and GATS agreements can mainly be seen as instruments of negative integration. The agreements regulate terms of trade in goods and services, securing the principle of no discrimination across borders. The WTO as such is an institution working for deregulation and for the reduction of national barriers of trade. The

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<sup>8</sup> The name of this committee refers to Article 133 of the EU agreement. Article 133 allows the European Union to negotiate, conclude and implement trade agreements with other countries of the world. Paragraph 3 of the article states that: “If the agreements with one or more States or international organisations must be negotiated, the Commission presents the recommendations to the Council which authorises the opening of the necessary negotiations (...) The Commission shall conduct these negotiations in consultation with a special committee appointed by the Council to assist the Commission in this task...”

member states dealings with, and participation in WTO institutions, can be seen as a form of framing integration. As we have seen in the section above, participation patterns differ among various member states. Norway, for instance, deals directly with WTO institutions. Sweden, as an EU member, acts through the EU organisation when dealing with the WTO.

By interacting in WTO committees with representatives from other member states or constellations of member states, ideas and policy approaches are spread and can influence existing domestic ideas and policies. Thus, attitudes towards alcohol policy can “travel” from country to country. Ideas and beliefs can thus be formed within the WTO framework and influence actors who participate within it. As this paper has shown, the potential influence of the WTO on its member states – as well as on non-members – are profound. However, this is not a one-way relation. By participating in the WTO, representatives of the Nordic countries can spread their ideas and beliefs. Sweden mainly interacts with the WTO through the EU, and the direct influence on the WTO is somewhat distorted by this additional organisational level. However, through the EU, decisions and standpoints may appear more powerful compared to the arguments of Norway – a small country operating completely on its own. The potential influence of Sweden may thus be greater than the influence of Norway. At the same time, Sweden first has to negotiate with other EU members; a process that can make it difficult to promote certain national standpoints.

The impact of globalization can be seen to depend on institutional compatibility and potential for adaptation combined with the force of direct or indirect external pressures for reform. In the case of alcohol policy in the Nordic countries, the prevalence and strength of the special Nordic model modifies reform pressures from outside. When looking at the WTO, adaptation pressure is probably more profound through mechanisms of framing integration – through the influence of beliefs and expectations of domestic actors rather than through direct prescription of new institutional models. Unfortunately, framing integration is difficult to measure, and requires a lot more in-depth analysis and interviews with central actors than has been possible in this research project.

## Conclusions

Contemporary literature and recently published policy documents on alcohol policy in the Nordic countries reveal policy changes and international influence in a field that has strong traditions and a long history. The force and impact of globalization has so far not been examined explicitly in either of these. This paper aims to meet this theoretical and empirical deficit, and tries to give some answers to the potential impact of globalization in the Nordic alcohol policy field.

The question of globalization and its impact on the Nordic alcohol policy is a complex one, and a straight forward answer is difficult to give. In the case of the Nordic alcohol policy field, global integration pressures meets with strong national arrangements and institutions, and in this changes take place. In particular, there is a conflict between efforts to build down regulations on alcohol trade at the international

level (through the WTO), and a national interest in limiting alcohol trade and consumption. However, national institutions and traditions – as we have seen in the Nordic alcohol policy field – can to some extent resist and modify externally initialised reforms. At the same time, Nordic countries are highly globalized countries, and as such they are more compatible to further globalization pressures compared to countries that are not as globalized.

Negative integration, positive integration and framing integration have been useful terms in the analysis of the changing Nordic alcohol policies and the impact of globalization. Negative integration captures indirect changes, typically restricted to the abolition of domestic arrangements which distort free trade. This is the main instrument of the WTO. A direct influence on national administration is more evident in efforts of positive integration, where institutional models and regulative measures are positively prescribed. This is a more common instrument used by the European Union, for instance in food policy where detailed regulations prescribe the composition of different products and how hygiene and safety measures are to be enforced. In the WTO such measures are not prominent.

Framing integration describes an even more indirect form of influence. Here, the norms and cognition of actors are influenced. These are activities that can be aimed to prepare the ground for subsequent policies of positive or negative integration. Rather than prescribing concrete outcomes or altering institutional opportunity structures, these policies are designed to change the domestic political climate by stimulating and strengthening the overall support for broader reform objectives. The mechanism of framing integration is implemented when only vague and symbolic policies can be adapted, given underlying conflicts of interest, or – as in the case of Nordic alcohol policies – when traditional national policies are at a clash with other (global) ideas. Framing integration alters expectations and beliefs of domestic actors, and in doing so, trigger domestic institutional change. Framing integration can be important in the WTO in addition to instruments of negative integration. Through participation in the different fora of the WTO, ideas and beliefs on trade and trade policies can be altered and further influence domestic attitudes. Indirectly, this can influence beliefs and attitudes relevant to alcohol policy.

Framing integration is not so much a characteristic of the WTO as it is of globalization in general. Tighter relations across countries spurs flow of ideas and beliefs, and spread attitudes and consumption patterns. However, it is important to note that these “flows” of ideas, behaviour patterns and beliefs are not one-way only. Nordic countries are not only influenced by the outside world, they themselves can influence others. Some of the empirical evidence on consumption patterns in Europe point in this direction.

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