Control of restaurants in small Swedish municipalities

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Introduction

In the past 10-15 years the scope for traditional state alcohol policy has become ever more constrained, not only in Sweden but all the other Nordic countries. To an ever greater extent, recent developments in the alcohol field show that alcohol control has become a local matter (Reuter & Tigerstedt 2001, p. 63). A number of guidelines and principles have been issued, projects launched, articles and books published and committees set up. One of the specific issues that has become a local matter is the control of on-premise serving of alcohol.

In Sweden, most alcohol is consumed off-premises, i.e. in homes or out of doors. Alcohol consumed at restaurants or bars accounts for about 9% of total consumption (Boman et al. 2006, p. 8), or about 20% of documented consumption (Johansson 2008, p. 439). Restaurants and bars are frequently discussed and debated in newspapers, often in connection with pronounced liberal or restricted views on restaurant policies.

The proposal by right-wing [Social City - ?] Commissioner Ulf Kristersson to permit 24-hour bar service in Stockholm was rejected (Aftonbladet.se, 12 March 2007, my translation).

We would like to see a situation where a family with children could go out for dinner in a restaurant without coming face to face with alcohol. Research has shown that families with liberal alcohol habits and continuous exposure to alcohol, for the younger family members, leads to a higher consumption later in life (Sundsvalls Tidning, 1 Nov 2007, my translation).

Alcohol consumption in restaurants is sometimes connected to violence or disorder, which is why some kind of regulation of this environment is necessary. As other alcohol policy fields, the control of restaurants is more liberal than earlier, a trend that became clear in all the Nordic countries during the 1980s (Reuter & Tigerstedt 2001, p.63). The field has seen tremendous changes in the past few decades. The number of licensed on-premise alcohol establishments is much higher today than only 20 years ago (PHI1 2004a, p. 35). Opening hours have also become less restrictive. One of

1 The Public Health Institute
the consequences has been that less time is now available for restaurant supervision. This article will further examine some aspects of these changes with a focus on the local level; the particular aim will be described after the background part.

**Background**

This section treats background information regarding restaurant issues at a local level in Sweden. It will shortly go through some research and the contents of new procedures in Swedish alcohol policies. The STAD² project is a central issue in this study and therefore needs a closer explanation. Moreover, other topics will be described as they are important for the overall understanding of the article, for example concepts of restaurant supervision as well as the actors in this process. Further regional and local differences regarding licences are mentioned as well as what kinds of serving issues are becoming judgment errands.

Concerning alcohol prevention the concept is formally an important political goal. In the Swedish National Alcohol Action Plan it is stated that a stimulation of community-based target-oriented and coordinated preventive efforts is the main direction in policy concerning alcohol. The ideas impact many parts of the alcohol policy field in Sweden. Local alcohol prevention in research is very much a model and method discussion of how to be successful in this process. In 1998 Holder presented “an approach to prevention of alcohol-involved problems from a systems dynamics perspective, in which the community is studied and understood as a complex and adaptive system” (Holder 1999, p. 8). In Sweden Wallin, like Holder, points out some important factors for a successful local prevention: for example research should be the starting point. Further it is important to involve different local actors, to include both supply and demand, to have a distinct focus on changes in policy, to use local media and to employ a local key person to overcome differences between research and practice (Wallin 2002). Andreasson claims that education and information is much more effective if they are connected to or supported by policy. He refers to international science on restaurants and prevention. He also points out the importance of combining those methods in order to get positive effects on

² STOCKHOLM FÖREBYGGER ALKOHOL- OCH DROGPROBLEM
(Stockholm prevents alcohol- and drug problems)
alcohol-related problems at restaurants, in this case education to restaurant staff (for instance how to handle intoxicated persons) together with an impressive supervision (Andréasson 2002, p. 275). In the light of this different preventive methods and models have been proposed in different contexts, this article will focus on one specific method (further described below as the STAD-method). Suggested methods have been both criticised and welcomed in research. Among other things Elmeland points out that there are different expectations about the aims with alcohol prevention, for instance, if a project is financed by the state the researcher has to consider or stick to particular concepts. She means that it is important to put a light to this complex of problems (Elmeland 1999, p. 121). The researcher as an important actor is emphasised by Holmila, according to her the researcher has replaced the state, who previously was the significant actor. Moreover, she points out that the concept of local prevention should be defined in a local cultural and political context. Holmila’s starting point is a great confidence in the possibilities to find suitable methods for successful local alcohol prevention (Holmila 1999, p. 151).

In Sweden the Public Health Institute points out the municipalities to be the main actors in implementing strategies to increase control in drinking environments, providing information in schools, and improving supervision concerning age limits and alcohol serving (http://www.fhi.se/templates/Page____141.aspx). The content of the National alcohol action plan is a typical example of the changes in the alcohol policy field. Another example is the activities in the Alcohol Committee, which manifest that in order to achieve a successful alcohol policy, long-term, structured work on the local level is required (www.alkoholkommitten.se).

A subject that has become a local matter is to make decisions about the number of licensed on-premise alcohol establishments and also to perform supervision at restaurants. The control of restaurants was a regional responsibility performed by the county administrative board until 1995. After that the municipalities took over this duty. One measure recommended to implement preventive work on the local level is to recruit a person with a collaborative function. The person should act like ”a spider in the web” and connect with all actors in the field (Andréasson 2002, p. 284). Today there

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3 The Alcohol Committee is appointed by the Government to co-ordinate national efforts and has the main responsibility in implementing the national alcohol action plan (www.alkoholkommitten.se/default.asp?id=1307). The Committee was discontinued on 31 December 2007, and most of its activities were moved to the Public Health Institute and to the National Board of Health and Welfare.
are around 240 local alcohol and drug co-ordinators in Sweden. Their mission is to strengthen and integrate all alcohol and drug related work within the municipalities (Engdahl & Romelsjö 2007, p. 5).

In order to inspect the enforcement of regulations regarding on-premise licences, supervision is conducted. Supervision is divided into three parts: preventive work and internal and external supervision. The preventive part focuses on information, guidance and education by way of increased cooperation and more dialogue between restaurateurs and the authorities. Internal supervision contains inspection on the economic situation by checking marketing and restaurant reports as well as reports from the police. External supervision consists of follow-ups and control of the activities in the restaurant, mostly by personal visits. Intoxication, disorder, serving to underaged customers, drugs, discrimination, fire safety and the cash register are controlled. The number of visits conducted by the inspectors vary, one or two times a year is common (Eriksson & Fondén 2006, p.14-15, PHI, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2007).

**Restaurant control becomes a local responsibility**

When the municipalities became the main responsible authority regarding restaurant control, concerns about inadequate external supervision arose. Several investigations were made, and they pointed out the importance of cooperation among municipalities\(^4\), especially in small towns in which it can be hard to build up adequate competence (National Alcohol Board 1998:2). Moreover, the importance of frequent education to supervisors and politicians was pointed out. Some deficiencies from the municipalities concerning the managing of justice cases were also demonstrated (National Alcohol Board 1998:2, Eriksson & Fondén 2006, p. 11-12).

Controlling restaurants is usually conducted by the municipality supervisor in co-operation with other authorities. The police authority is, according to the alcohol law, also the governing body concerning the proposed bill regarding permission issues. It is also obliged to inform the municipality about bad conditions in restaurants and to assist other authorities concerning supervision. The police authority also appoints the restaurant doormen, who are obliged to report back to the authority (RPSFS 2000:3). Concerning health and food issues at the restaurants, the

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\(^4\) In 1997 there were 24 municipalities that co-operated concerning supervision. Regarding licences, 15 municipalities co-operated (National Alcohol Board 1998:2).
The environmental authority is responsible. The Tax office and The Rescue Service Agency are obliged to report possible debts (Eriksson & Fondén 2006, p. 15-16).

The number of licences as well as alcohol sales at restaurants varies substantially in different parts of Sweden. Serving alcoholic beverages at restaurants varies a lot at the local level. The municipalities' organisation and economy differ, as do their demographic conditions. More than half of all Swedish municipalities have less than 20,000 inhabitants and 72% have less than 30,000. The counties of Gotland and Jämtland, which both have many seasonal tourists, have the highest number of on-premise licences per inhabitant (Eriksson & Fondén 2006, p. 16-18, PHI 2005, p. 17).

There are different kinds of on-premise licences in Sweden. The most common is the permanent licence, which will be treated in this article. In order to receive a permanent licence, the applicant must fulfil a number of criteria, for instance he or she needs knowledge about the Swedish alcohol law. Even if every criterion is fulfilled, the municipality can reject an application if the serving of beverages can imply alcohol political inconveniences (for example unacceptable disturbances for people living in the neighbourhood). According to the alcohol law the municipality is obliged to deliver a warning or withdraw a licence if the restaurant for example serves alcohol to underaged or intoxicated persons (Eriksson & Fondén 2006, p. 12-14, PHI 2003).

An overview of court decisions concerning restaurant issues in 2007 showed that economic matters dominated (more than 40%), followed by the question of serving hours, intoxication, disorder and insufficiencies in the kitchen. Other issues were illegitimate staff, inappropriate restaurateurs, invalid licences and alcohol consumption outside the bar. In some cases serving alcoholic beverages was permitted on special conditions, for example that the restaurant staff should participate in education arranged by STAD (explained below) or that the restaurant must keep watchmen (PHI, compilation of judgments from 2007).

A typical example of the focus on local prevention in Sweden is the STAD project. One central aim with the project is to construct new preventive methods on the local level. An ongoing project within the STAD project has developed preventive methods in the restaurant field. A special method concerning serving is called responsible beverage service. The method is based on collaboration, education (2 days) and improved supervision as well as policy. The collaboration takes place among the various

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5 See also Johansson 2008, s. 448.
parties concerned: the local authorities, the county council and the restaurant business
Within the STAD project, the Public Health Institute has issued a handbook concerning supervision. The manual is addressed to local supervisors and police officers, who are responsible for immediate supervision. It focuses on the significance of bars as trendsetters and on the connection between intoxication and violence as well as the importance of the alcohol law in this context. Moreover the definition of supervision is discussed in the manual (PHI 2007).

A vulnerable situation in small towns
As mentioned the control of restaurants is usually performed by persons working in the municipalities. They are the main actors in Swedish restaurant control. It was found in a smaller study that there was a big difference in the work situation among supervisors in different municipalities. In small municipalities supervision was carried out sparsely and supervisors had limited working hours available for these kinds of tasks. The study also showed that a high share of the supervisors many times felt alone in their work situation (Eriksson & Fondén 2006, p. 37). Even before the municipalities took over the responsibility for restaurant control, discussions concerning the appearance of great differences in practices arose. Variations between municipalities depending on political colour and eventual strong business interest in favour of alcohol political considerations were an issue (Johansson 2008, p. 445). In the light of this, the present study was carried out, with a focus on the possibilities of the supervisors to perform proper control in small municipalities. The special interest in small municipalities was also motivated by the idea that they seem less suitable for the specific methods developed by the STAD project and moreover in the light of the plans to spread this method in all of Sweden. STAD was developed in Stockholm, on the basis of the specific problems of inner city restaurant life (long queues, violence, narcotics) and also on the basis of greater resources (than smaller towns), and therefore probably more conformable in bigger cities (Eriksson & Fondén 2006, p. 37).

This article aims to illustrate this situation from the perspective of the work with restaurant control in some small municipalities in Sweden. With a special focus on the STAD method, policies, local actors, collaboration, networking and supervision and alcohol prevention at

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6 In this study smaller municipalities means less than 30 000 inhabitants.
restaurants will be studied. The following research questions will be examined: To what extent and in what ways are the subjects above showed in written documents and mentioned by key persons? Another question concerns the STAD method: how can it be understood and managed from a small town perspective?

Alcohol policy plans and guidelines at a starting point

To identify municipalities suitable for the present study, material from a previous examination was used. In that study the local supervisors answered a couple of questions about their work situation. A questionnaire was sent by mail to all local restaurant supervisors in Sweden. The response rate was quite high, the results cover 87% of Swedish municipalities (252 out of 290 municipalities). Respondents answered anonymously seven structured questions and two open-ended questions (Eriksson & Fondén 2006, p. 19-20). In this article the two open-ended questions are important because they concerned positive and negative views on local supervisors’ work situation and made it possible to find municipalities that in some way co-operate. Towns with less than 30,000 inhabitants were chosen and a second criterion was that the respondent had positive views on their work situation (in all 112 questionnaires fulfilled both criteria). Six municipalities participated in a specific study within the STAD project and were not selected in the current examination. Another selection was based on if the respondents had mentioned anything about preventive work, collaboration or networking in their answers. An exposition showed that a clear majority of the respondents did not have any such descriptions.

About 20 municipalities met both criterion and were previously analyzed. Three of the selected cases did not mention co-operation or preventive work in their answers. However, in 11 cases the importance of co-operation with other actors was emphasized. In addition, five supervisors stated the significance of being part of a network. Four cases declared the positive aspects of preventive work in the restaurant area (questionnaire with local restaurant supervisors in 2004). Out of the selected criteria it appears

7 The study concerned preventive work at the local level and was conducted by the Public Heath Institute, the Alcohol Committee and Mobilisation Against Narcotics, (www.fhi.se). The STAD model has been established in some municipalities by the Public Health Institute. Moreover, similar projects have been developed, for example the RUS (Restaurants, Development, Co-operation) project in Gothenburg.
that only a few professionals themselves portray a restaurant control based on co-operation, networking and preventive work.

In five municipalities documented policy plans were also studied (the municipalities of Sotenäs, Ödeshög, Östhammar, Karlsborg, and Åstorp) 8. Local alcohol and drug policy plans generally proceed from the National preventive alcohol action plan. It is stated in the plan that municipalities ought to set up local action plans. The document is supposed to contain all alcohol-related activity in the municipalities, including restaurant issues (Government Bill. 2000/01:20). The particular question concerned if networks, co-operation and preventive work directed at restaurants were central issues in the local drug policy plans.

In general the content regarding restaurants was about the same in the alcohol and drug policy plans, although the quality varied. Overall, only preventive work can be considered central in most of the plans. At least four out of five municipalities expressed preventive strategies, such as: education to restaurant staff, information meetings with licence holders, effective control, restricted policies and follow-ups. Concerning co-operation, only two municipalities clearly stated the necessity of such work. Only one policy plan included network building as a strategy regarding restaurant issues.

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Table 1. Restaurant issues in alcohol and drug policy plans (five municipalities)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality**</th>
<th>a</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>c</th>
<th>d</th>
<th>e</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aims and guiding principles</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>No serving to under aged persons</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reduce drunkenness</td>
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<td>Restricted opening hours</td>
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<td>Alcohol policy considerations regarding licences</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td>Applications will be rejected if authorities have objections</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Careful handling in housing areas with problems connected to alcohol drugs.</td>
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<td>Special carefulness in areas with youth activities</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Strategies</strong></td>
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<td>Education in responsible beverage service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increased co-operation between local actors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Network building</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Effective supervision</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regular follow-ups of licences</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>External supervision at least once a year at each restaurant</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td>Co-ordinated supervision between authorities</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yearly information meetings with licence holders</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Main responsible authority</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Municipal executive board</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social welfare board</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Implementation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Boards in the municipality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yearly follow-up</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Use &quot;key figures&quot;</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* a = Sotenäs, b = Ödeshög, c = Östhammar, d = Karlsborg, e = Åstorp

Table 1 illustrates the content related to restaurants in the documents examined. The most ambitious plan (the municipality of Sotenäs) contained a complete programme with the headlines as follows: aims and guiding principles.

**Analyses were conducted in May 2006, the municipalities might have updated their policy plans since then.**
principles, strategies, responsible authorities and implementation. In the
municipality of Ödeshög nothing regarding restaurants was mentioned in
their drug policy plan. Regarding aims, guiding principles and strategies the
municipality of Karlsborg also had an ambitious plan, especially concerning
different alcohol policy considerations and for example regular meetings with
licence holders. Three out of five municipalities mentioned the main
responsible authority in their policy plan, but only the municipality of
Sotenäs stated anything on the subject of implementation.

In the drug policy plan of the municipality of Sotenäs, it was stated
that the plan serves as guidance for the municipal boards’ activities. The
policy plan underlines the importance of implementing the drug policy plan
in each activity area. Each board is responsible for making plans and ensuring
the support for the programme and its implementation. Additionally, a yearly
follow-up is to be conducted. The drug policy plan also contains information
about “key figures”, which can be used to make comparisons of the results
over time. An example of such “key figures” can be the numbers of licensed
on-premise alcohol establishments, as an estimate of availability. The
examination of policy plans demonstrate that making guidelines and plans is
just beginning.

Experiences of restaurant control

Two municipalities (of the five above) were selected for a more detailed
examination, Östhammar in the county of Uppland and Åstorp in the county
of Skåne. The selection was done randomly, it is not possible to decide
whether one town is more suitable than another; each of the five is unique
and supplies specific cases of local alcohol control. Data were mainly based
on interviews with key persons: restaurant supervisors, police officers,
politicians and alcohol and drug coordinators. Interviews with six persons
(three in each municipality) were carried out, either via personal meetings, e-
mail or by telephone. The interviews concerned the key persons’ experiences
of alcohol and drug policy, external supervision, collaboration, education and
preventive work. Other information included written documents like policy
plans and annual reports. The results are presented separately for each town
and begins with a short presentation of each municipality. A comparison
between Åstorp and Östhammar is made in the discussion, with particular
focus on the STAD project.
The municipality of Åstorp

The municipality of Åstorp looks at itself as part of a rapidly growing region in the south of Sweden. Since the Öresund bridge was built the region has been more closely connected to Denmark and the areas of trade and service are expanding. The municipality of Åstorp has around 14,000 inhabitants and the single largest industry is manufacturing and extraction. Concerning standards of education and income, Åstorp is below the national average, while the numbers of unemployed are average (Facts of the municipality of Åstorp 2007). Åstorp has about 17 on-premise establishments. According to the local police authority restaurant life in the municipality is rather limited:

All in all the municipality of Åstorp is very small regarding the numbers of on-premise places and the so called night life takes place in greater municipalities nearby, like Helsingborg and Ängelholm. (My translation, police officer).

Policy

Making policy and action plans has, according to the local supervisor, not been prioritised from management and politicians in Åstorp. Dialogue and follow-ups have been missing. However decisions of making a more detailed and deepened policy and action plan as well as improved documentation have been made. A reference group consisting of the supervisor and politicians has been put together (supervisor 1). A lack of knowledge regarding restaurant issues among those in power is expressed by a conservative politician:

Since the reference group still has limited knowledge of the area, we have leaned a lot on the supervisor while drawing up goals and “key figures”. A further policy in the municipality concerning these issues is not known to me. (Local politician)

External supervision

A couple of politicians in Åstorp participated in education (responsible

10 http://www.astorp.se/toppmeny/omastorp.4.7322f5f610a36545508000115.html
11 http://www.scb.se/templates/tableOrChart___167883.asp
12 Authorities of citizen restaurant register, the municipality of Åstorp.
beverage service) and supervision (local politician). At the same time, working hours regarding restaurant issues were cut down, external supervision and working on action plans got less space (supervisor 1). The supervisor works preventive, with personal visits, phone calls or education to restaurateurs. Moreover external supervision is conducted at randomly selected restaurants (in some cases together with the tax authorities). The visits are documented and recorded, the records are checked together with the person responsible for the licence, and if required a follow-up takes place (supervisor 1). The local police authorities also perform supervision in co-operation with the inspector and tax office; this takes part at least once a year at each restaurant. Their task is to check upon order issues, like order in general and the guards, moreover inspecting if underaged or drunken persons are served. Sometimes spontaneous visits take place, for instance if a restaurant has been reported on (local police officer).

**Collaboration, education and preventive work**

Collaboration and networking is well developed in Åstorp, especially with neighbouring towns. The focus regarding restaurant control has been education in responsible beverage service (the STAD method); a project group is responsible for the issue. An evaluation of the education confirmed that nearly 70% of the participants (around 40 restaurateurs) stated that the education was very good. Most appreciated was the part on how to deal with conflicts (79%), followed of information about legislation (64%) and knowledge about medical effects (57%). A smaller share of the participants was happy with the section concerning narcotics (32%) and of how the police work (19%). Moreover, only a quite small proportion (29%) expressed great benefits from the education (Supervisor 1 and a compilation of the education). A local police officer comments on the collaboration with the municipality:

> The co-operation with the supervisor in Åstorp works excellently and is very close, as it often gets in a small town. (Local police officer, *my translation*)

The supervisor in Åstorp considers that politicians mainly make the right priorities but she misses discussions about restaurant issues in general. To get the whole picture it is necessary to consider these issues in general and also look at questions like working hours and external supervision. Not the least to achieve the goals she means. The supervisor further points out the nearness to Denmark and Germany to be a specific complex of problems for the region, which involves high availability of alcohol and illegal activities.
She emphasises the risks of over serving and serving to underaged persons, which is why it is important to have educated and conscious restaurateurs. Åstorp does not have an alcohol and drug co-ordinator, only a public health co-coordinator who does not participate in the work with restaurants (supervisor 1).

**The municipality of Östhammar**

The municipality of Östhammar has about 21,000 inhabitants, in summertime there is a significant increase in the population because of all summer houses. The largest industry in Östhammar is manufacturing and extracting (Facts about the municipality, Östhammar 2007). The level of education and income is under the Swedish average, as is unemployment (facts about the municipality of Östhammar 2007). There are about 40 places with permanent on-premise licences in the municipality (Annual report on supervision, Östhammar 2006).

**Policy**

The guiding principles regarding on-premise licences in Östhammar are recommended by the supervisor and decided by the municipal council. The work is regulated by the alcohol law (1994:1738) and the law on administration. The directives also follow the national guidelines on the area (supervisor 2 and guiding principles for licences in the municipality).

The local police also have action plans for their activities. Around 20% of their total working hours concerns restaurants. Bar or street related violence is one of the highest prioritised areas in the work (chief of the local police). Follow-ups, investigations, co-operation with restaurant guards as well as a more outgoing and active police force are strategies for how to deal with the violence. Some successful factors are pointed out in the activity plan: increased external supervision, an increased presence at sensitive places and moments and a safer restaurant environment (Activity plan for the police authority in the county of Uppsala, 2007).

**External supervision**

According to the supervisor in Östhammar inspections take place at each restaurant with permanent licences one to three times a year. During the summer a special inspection (ISAK) was conducted in collaboration with

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13 The Board of National police force draws up the conditions for the activity plans in each county, based on a regulation letter from the Government (The activity plan for the Police authority in the County of Uppsala, 2007).

14 Införsel av alkohol, samverkan mellan myndigheter om krogen (Alcohol import, collaboration between authorities regarding restaurants).
the County council board, the Tax authority and Swedish customs, which mostly concerned illegal activities such as checking type of bottles (supervisor 2). The local police authority in Östhammar conducts external supervision as a matter of routine:

Supervision often takes place during our common patrol activities. We stop by and check, and get in touch with the restaurant watchmen. (Chief of the local police, my translation)

The fact that Östhammar is a typical summer town makes it harder to conduct a proper external supervision. The chief of the local police authority claims that resources are limited during the holiday season, there is not enough time (chief of the local police). In general restaurateurs are positive to external supervision; some even like to present their business, especially if the visits take place when they have spare time. However, sometimes there can be conflicts of course. Since Östhammar is a small city it is hard to stay anonymous, in some specific cases, the supervisors’ colleagues in the municipality conduct restaurant inspections. Moreover the supervisor points out some problems with the profession and external supervision, related to lack of resources. For instance, time is often too short to manage inspections in other places than restaurants with permanent licences like festivals and private groups with licences. The supervisor sometimes finds it troublesome to interpret the law, since the practices in many aspects do not follow the law. She misses suggestions on external supervision in the STAD method but welcomes the handbook written on the issue by the Public Health institute (PHI 2007). In addition, the supervisor finds the profession isolated in some parts and feels a conflict in what way to work, as an authority or more preventive (Supervisor 2).

Collaboration, education and preventive work
There is close collaboration between the supervisor and the local police in Östhammar. Moreover the municipality has a preventive drug co-ordinator who is not directly working with restaurant issues. However she participates in meetings, particularly regarding responsible beverage service and she discusses restaurant control with the supervisor. The co-ordinator considers the restaurant issues important but finds it hard to achieve a continuous coherence regarding co-operation since a couple of restaurants are open only during the summer.
Since we are a "summer town" with many restaurants only open during the summer, it is hard to achieve continuous collaboration, for instance regarding information and education. (Preventive drug coordinator, my translation).

However collaboration between different instances (restaurateurs included) regarding information and education in Östhammar is carried out (Annual report and chief of the local police). Further, the co-ordinator points out the importance of personal connections in a small city like Östhammar (Preventive drug coordinator). As mentioned in the introduction, the STAD method dominates the discourse (from the Public Health Institute) on how to deal with prevention at restaurants in Sweden. For the municipality of Östhammar the current programme would be STAD Uppsala. The project is a co-operation between the licensing authority in the municipality of Uppsala and the police authority and the County administrative board in the County of Uppsala. The aim is to decrease alcohol and drug related violence, confirm a culture that prevents intoxication and that does not allow serving to underaged persons as well as improve co-operation and develop networks between actors involved (restaurateurs, staff, authorities). The method is founded on an education in responsible beverage service, collaboration as well as an effective supervision.

In Östhammar the method was introduced by a project leader from the County administrative board in the county of Uppsala. However the process got no longer since the supervisor in consultation with the preventive drug co-ordinator and the chief of the local police, decided not to adopt the method in the municipality. This decision was made for several reasons. The main reason is, according to the supervisor, lack of resources. She takes the view that this can lead to a project with low quality, since the County administrative board could not offer any support regarding an evaluation of the project. And without any considerable results the confidence from restaurateurs will be undermined. Another reason for not using the STAD method was that the method produces good results in problem areas that are not so extensive in Östhammar: such as dealing with narcotics and assault caused by drunkenness. Moreover the work with restaurant control in many aspects already was similar to the method (which still needed to be adjusted to the specific conditions of Östhammar). According to the supervisor the project leader of the STAD method made clear that no changes could be made to the method. Collaboration is well developed in this summer town; the supervisor regularly meets with other supervisors in the county for support, as well as with the police, the tax authority, the enforcement service in Uppsala, customs in Stockholm,
representatives from STAD as well as the drug co-ordinator from the Swedish Association of Local Authorities. Moreover there is a local group that meets in the beginning of the year to specifically plan supervision in Östhammar (supervisor 2). Finally the supervisor considers that restaurant control in Östhammar fulfils the guiding principles and claims adopted by the local council. Restaurant control is functioning well considering the small available recourses, she concludes (supervisor 2).

Discussion

This study has tried to contribute to an increased understanding of how restaurant control in small municipalities can function. The results illustrate that only a few supervisors in Sweden’s many small municipalities portray a restaurant control built on alcohol prevention, networking or co-operation. The conclusion was based on a survey and a question concerning positive views on the profession of supervisors, moreover if the answers contained concepts like co-operation, networking or preventive work. Further a small number of policy plans were examined, which also suggest that preventive work at restaurants is still very much in its infancy. The study mainly put the light on a couple of unique cases who appeared to act quite differently regarding restaurant control. Especially concerning the STAD method, that dominates the alcohol prevention discourse regarding serving alcohol at bars. The method has produced good results in Stockholm and the plan is to spread throughout the rest of the country. Despite this relatively one-sided strategy, to spread one particular method, no more than 70 municipalities have implemented it (http://www.fhi.se/templates/Page_8973.aspx).

Two cases were closer examined, the municipality of Åstorp in Skåne and the municipality of Östhammar in the County of Uppland. The results show that the STAD method was adopted by Åstorp but not by Östhammar. Åstorp seems to be satisfied with the method but there still were question marks. The project is just starting up why it is difficult to see any permanent results and the restaurateurs were far from convinced of the advantages of the method. According to an evaluation by the municipality, not every part of the education appeared to be equally appreciated. The parts concerning narcotics and police work was not as appreciated as were the sections regarding how to deal with conflicts and information about legislation. The results shed no light on the reason for that. One possible reason could be that different parts of the education shifted in quality. Or perhaps some sections of the method are less suitable for these restaurants or for problems...
typical in Ästorp. Another explanation might be that the restaurateurs consider that they already possess this knowledge. Is the education package motivated or are there other ways to work preventive in Ästorp as well as neighbouring towns and villages with similar conditions? Unfortunately, because of time restraints and other reasons, it was not possible in this study to cover the views of restaurateurs.

Irrespective of what decision is made regarding the STAD method, small municipalities have reasons to reflect on the issue. The example of Östhammar clearly shows that limited resources were a reason not to accept the method. And many municipalities in Sweden lack the kind of resources needed for these kinds of projects. Responsible actors worried that the quality of such a project would be to low. Moreover they considered that the method mainly deals with problems that are not so common in Östhammar.

The supervisor in the municipality of Östhammar also expressed other problems regarding restaurant control. For instance, she emphasized that there is a conflict in the profession itself, is it mainly about exercise of public authority or about preventive work? The trend today is to assume both parts and that preventive work is getting more space. Not the least regarding an increased incorporation of the restaurant issues in the alcohol prevention action plans as well as a higher share of persons working as co-operators on the issues. In a report from the Alcohol committee it was stated that local co-ordinators’ contributions regarding supervision at restaurants as well as working on restaurant policies had increased. Nearly 70% of the co-ordinators said they worked closely with the municipal licence authority and 35% co-operated with restaurants. Moreover 67% of the municipalities reported that they consider the restaurant issues to be a problem area that they will work on the following year. In 57% of the municipalities, restaurant staff was mentioned as a target group in their alcohol and drug policy documents (Engdahl and Romelsjö 2007, p. 5, 11, 12, 21, 26).

The use of specific methods implies that it is also realistic to implement them. For example, in the municipality of Östhammar, it was not possible to adjust the STAD method in order to suit the conditions of Östhammar. In many ways methods are not flexible and therefore troublesome to implement regarding that each municipality have their own conditions. As Swift-Johannison writes in her investigation of alcohol prevention at university colleges:

As /.../indicated, methods must be developed in dialogue with the local conditions and former, reliable, experiences. The programmes must be flexible, and be able to adjust and modify according to its environment. (Swift-Johannison 2006, p. 19)
Karlsson and Törrönen (2002, p. 360) emphasise the importance of distinctive (special, individual) alcohol prevention strategies. A method that works perfectly well in one municipality can totally fail in another. The researchers claim that this unlikeness between the municipalities increases the demands of a flexible and adjustable central governing of information. According to them it would be hard to implement the same method in all municipalities on the basis of information that is to general.

The Public Health Institute reports good results in the municipalities that have participated in the STAD project, regarding communication between actors within the restaurant field. Moreover they state an improved documentation and preventive work (http://www.fhi.se/templates/Page_8973.aspx). But the question still remains, has this improved the practice of restaurant control?

In many aspects, but not further examined in this study, one of the hardest problems with local restaurant control is the favour of commercial interests from politicians. This might be even more common in small towns that need to profile them selves in order to survive. However Johansson mentions mainly bigger municipalities concerning the needs of being expansive and having lots of restaurants and pubs (Johansson 2008, s.447). Other factors worth considering in a small town setting are the isolation felt by supervisors in their job situation (Eriksson & Fondén, 2006).

Further the Public Health Institute believes that external supervision is carried out more frequently the latest years, however it is difficult to measure the quality of the work. Great geographical differences regarding serving to drunken people or to underaged persons is to be feared. The Public Health Institute points out the importance of external supervision and the quality of the work, where responsible beverage service is a significant part (PHI 2005, p. 21). However, after examining these issues, it is as far as my concern, uncertain if it is possible to improve the quality of restaurant control with the method of responsible beverage service (STAD). There is in many cases a lack of relevance for such a package deal, especially in small towns in Sweden. They might not have the resources to manage the program or in many cases the problem picture in a little town varies from the problems treated by the method.

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