Bottling Scotland, Drinking Scotland: Single-Malt Whisky and the Paradoxes of Scottish Leisure and Tourism Policy

Karl Spracklen, Professor of Leisure Studies, Leeds Metropolitan University, UK

K.Spracklen@leedsmet.ac.uk

Abstract

Single-malt whisky is the product of over one hundred distilleries across Scotland, and is the subject of a number of claims about its status as an 'authentic' Scottish drink. The whisky industry in Scotland argues that it creates significant amounts of revenue for Scotland and the United Kingdom – not just in sales of single-malt whiskies and blended whiskies, but also from the contribution of whisky tourism. As such, Scottish policy-makers in tourism and local regeneration have used whisky both as an attraction to market to visitors to the country, and a vehicle for creating jobs. In this paper, the whisky industry and related whisky tourism industry in Scotland is explored alongside an analysis of tourist and local regeneration policies and strategies that explicitly nurture the notion that whisky is a necessary part of Scottish identity. I will then contrast this with policies on leisure that identify alcohol drinking as problematic, and argue that the whisky industry has worked to convince its public sector supporters that drinking single-malt whiskies in distillery visitor centres is harmless, while signing up to campaigns to moderate drinking in the wider Scottish public.

Key Words

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Introduction

This paper is not about Scottish independence. It is about policy claims made by the Scottish Government and other Scottish agencies about the importance of making more money for Scotland trough the whisky industry and whisky tourism, and making Scottish people healthier. But this analysis of those policies cannot take place without understanding why certain claims have been made about tourism, the whisky industry, and wellbeing.

By the time this paper is published, the outcome of Scotland's independence referendum on 18 September 2014 will be known. Scotland has had an uneasy relationship with England for hundreds of years, and for many centuries Scotland had its independence as a Western European monarchy. That monarchy had strong relationships historically and culturally with England, though they were rivals who periodically invaded each other or otherwise interfered in politics. In the seventeenth century the two countries became tied through the sharing of monarchs and the rise of a shared elite culture. Union became something first agitated for by Christian radicals, then supported by the elites.

The creation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain did not stop Scottish people dreaming of independence. Throughout the eighteenth century there were serious rebellions against English rule. Then in the nineteenth century a modern nationalist movement emerged, inspired by similar nationalisms in mainland Europe (McCrone, 1984). As English elites started to fancy themselves as Scottish lairds, and Scottish peasants were forced off their land, Scottishness became associated with anti-Englishness. Into and throughout the twentieth century, Scotland's status as a member of the Union was problematic and the cause of many calls for Scotland to become independent again. While many politicians, policy-makers and

others pointed out the benefits of being part of Great Britain, and the common culture of Brtitishness, others argued that Scotland was an unequal partner in the Union, and better off free from London (Franco-Guillén, 2013).

In 1997 Labour replaced the Conservatives as the ruling party in the British Parliament. Labour had campaigned on a policy of greater devolution of power to the regions of England and the countries of the United Kingdom, and they provided for referendum on Scottish devolution, which led to the creation of a Scottish parliament and the transfer of some powers. From the first election in 1999, Labour and the Scottish Nationalist became the biggest parties and bitter opponents, with the Nationalists on the left and Labour replicating the centrist politics of London's New Labour (Leith & Steven, 2010). The Conservative vote collapsed but they retained some seats due to the system of proportional representation, which also favoured the Greens. At each successive election except that in 2003, Labour lost ground to the Scottish Nationalists. In 2011, the Scottish National party won the general election to the Scottish Parliament and formed a majority government for the first time. It had campaigned on holding a referendum for Scottish independence, and had previously tried to set-up a referendum when they did not have majority control, but when they ran a minority government. In power, the Scottish Nationalists stuck to their promise and set-up a referendum on independence for 18 September 2014.

On 26 November 2013, Alex Salmond, First Minister of the Scottish Parliament and leader of the Scottish National Party, launched his government's white paper on Scottish independence, *Scotland's Future: Your guide to an independent Scotland* (Scottish Government, 2013). At the launch, he claimed:

This is the most comprehensive blueprint for an independent country ever published, not just for Scotland but for any prospective independent nation. But more than that, it

is a mission statement and a prospectus for the kind of country we should be and which this government believes we can be. Our vision is of an independent Scotland regaining its place as an equal member of the family of nations. However, we do not seek independence as an end in itself, but rather as a means to changing Scotland for the better.

(Alex Salmond reported in Black, 2013)

The white paper and the claims made about independence have provided a fortuitous focus for my research on whisky. Single-malt whisky is the product of over one hundred distilleries across Scotland, and is the subject of a number of claims about its status as an 'authentic' Scottish drink (Gold & Gold, 1995; Martin & Haugh, 1999; McBoyle & McBoyle, 2008; Spracklen, 2009, 2011, 2013). Spracklen (2011) has sketched out the processes and policy decisions that lead to the whisky industry re-branding their drinks as authentic and their factory-distilleries as destinations with brand-new visitor centres. Spracklen (2011, pp. 112-113) suggests:

> The authentic in tourism is where we can see Habermasian communicative reason at work in the agency of individuals attempting to challenge the restrictions of the tourism industry… Unease with commodification leads individuals away from big corporations to small businesses. The industry responds by rebranding artifice as authentic experiences, but these exercises are always subject to the tension of criticism. So the Famous Grouse Experience may attract hundreds of thousands of customers, but the company behind Famous Grouse feels the need to pretend its product is as aesthetically pure as single malt; and whisky fans feel the need to validate their individuality through taste. Whisky tourism in Scotland, then, associated

already with a symbolically constructed community… where notions of the authentic are related directly to Habermasian communicative discourses about the reality of taste, the construction of Scottishness and the struggle over the meaning and purpose of whisky consumption and whisky production. Wherever authenticity is claimed or debated, then, we can see the competition between Habermasian communicative and instrumental rationality.

On the whisky industry, Spracklen (2013, p. 55) claims:

The whisky industry – like the drinks industry – is a product of Western modernity. Whiskies became commodities at the end of the nineteenth century, produced in a rationalising network of modernised distilleries, warehouses, vatting plants, regional agents and sales offices. Through the last century and into this one, the whisky industry has ebbed and flowed with global fashions, with blended whisky becoming a standard spirit found everywhere alcohol is sold and consumed.

The whisky industry in Scotland argues that it creates significant amounts of revenue for Scotland (and the United Kingdom, if it still exists) – not just in sales of single-malt whiskies and blended whiskies, but also from the contribution of whisky tourism. As such, Scottish policy-makers in tourism and local regeneration have used whisky both as an attraction to market to visitors to the country, and a vehicle for creating jobs. In this paper, the whisky industry and related whisky tourism industry in Scotland is explored alongside an analysis of tourist and local regeneration policies and strategies that explicitly nurture the notion that whisky is a necessary part of Scottish identity. I will then contrast this with policies on leisure that identify alcohol drinking as problematic, and argue that the whisky

industry has worked to convince its public sector supporters that drinking single-malt whiskies in distillery visitor centres is harmless, while signing up to campaigns to moderate drinking in the wider Scottish public. Before the policy analysis and discussion, however, I need discuss the three key themes of the theoretical framework in the literature review – instrumentality and policy; alcohol policy and public health; and moral panic – and my methodology.

Literature Review

Instrumentality, and tourism and leisure Policy

Researchers have noted the contradictions and tensions at work in national and regional tourism and leisure policies (Aitchison, 2000; Coalter, 1998; Getz, 2009; Quinn, 2010; Stevenson, Airey & Miller, 2008; Weed, 2001). It is too often taken as read by policy-makers and managers in the tourism industry that the aim of tourism policies and strategies is an instrumental one: an increase in tourists or visits or stays, which is equated with an increase in income. This neo-liberal, instrumental rationality at the heart of tourism policy has been strongly critiqued by those who questions its sustainability (Cohen, 2002), its lack of concern for the local communities that suffer visits by tourists (Walpole & Goodwin, 2000), its gross commercialization of spaces and practices (Crouch, 2000), its association with neo-colonialism and hegemonic power (Aitchison, 2000; Cohen, 2002), and its reduction of existential tourist experiences to commodification (Crouch, 2000). Some policy researchers in tourism have sketched out the potentiality for changing the tourist industry into something that is more sustainable, something enriched by an inter-cultural dialogue and exchange between people in local communities and those on the tourist trail (Moufakkir, 2013). It has been claimed that the tourist industry can evolve into something that is not simply judged by profits and numbers, but something that can be transformational in the way in which it

constructs cosmopolitanism (Holmes & O'Neill, 2012). If this is to occur, however, tourism policies have to change to reflect the communicative value of such cosmopolitan encounters. Following Habermas (1984, 1987) and Spracklen (2009, 2011), we should note that such communicative value is progressively limited by the on-set of late modernity and global form of capitalism. When tourism policies are set by governments and tourist industry agencies, the potential for such engagement and encounter is minimal. Nation-states, regions and potential nation-states are particularly susceptible to developing tourism policies that promote narrow versions of an imagined community, which is used to entice potential visitors (Laing & Crouch, 2011) – and the only debate is whether the focus should be on high numbers of visitors with lower spending potential, or lower numbers of richer tourists attracted by the cultural capital they think they will have upon returning home (Bourdieu, 1984).

Leisure policy more broadly has been more resistant to the instrumentality of neo-liberalism, and there are many policies and policy-makers in the public sector that resist reducing leisure to simple targets of numbers and profits (Aitchison, 2000; Blackshaw & Long, 2005; Bramham, 2006; Coalter, 1998; Weed, 2001). The leisure policy practices of the late twentieth century, which were the product of social liberal and Marxist politics, still survive in the heart of many national and local decision-making bodies (Coalter, 1998). Leisure and recreation in this old policy model are seen as moral and social goods, activities that can be used to promote self-realisation, inclusion, identity-building and community (Blackshaw & Long, 2005). Even where some policy researchers remain suspicious of the power structures and inequalities that are structured into debates about doing leisure, the problem is not with leisure, but with specific leisure policies that promote the interests of one elite group over other social groups (Bramham, 2006; Coalter, 1998). That said, leisure policy is increasingly at risk of being suborned into the instrumentality that is undermining the public sphere. Leisure policies that promote community engagement, active recreation or

communicative discourses are being replaced by policies that focus on the privatization of leisure spaces, the eventization of leisure, and the reduction of leisure policies to the ideology of the market (Spracklen, Richter & Spracklen, 2013). This can be seen in the ways in which urban spaces and city centre streets are becoming spaces where policies promoting the 'night-time economy' operate. Rather than encourage people to re-claim urban spaces for their own informal leisure, these policies legitimise the appropriate of leisure spaces by corporations, and turn night-time leisure into an economy of drinking and eating.

Alcohol policy and public health

Alongside improvements in patient care and survival rates in hospitals, public health was transformed in modern nation-states in the nineteenth century with the construction of systems that brought clean water to the majority of citizens and took away waste water to be treated (Schultz & McShane, 1978). The success of water works and sewers gave public health officials the confidence to extend their influence to the production and consumption of food and drink and the regulation of pollution from factories. As scientists and doctors found cures for some diseases, populations were inoculated against these diseases through enormous, often compulsory programmes; some foodstuffs were fortified by nutrients to ensure children and others at risk of malnourishment got the things they needed to live healthy lives (Bishai & Nalubola, 2002). All these public health policies resulted in diseases and other illnesses disappearing or diminishing. In short, these interventions in public health resulted in huge improvements in the biological well-being of individuals and populations. Trans-national organizations such as the United Nations adapted all of these public health policies in their work with developing countries, targeting diseases such as malaria and smallpox, and funding the construction of clean-water sources.

Public health policy-makers have recently turned to leisure to solve problems seemingly associated with certain behaviours and lifestyles (Bramham, 2006; Fullagar, 2003). It has been argued by some researchers that promoting physical activity is essential to tackle problems of obesity and other forms of ill-health (Fullagar, 2003; Rojek, 2010). Tobacco smoking has been controlled by bans in public spaces. And the consumption of alcohol has been identified as the cause of a range of actual and potential health problems in individuals and communities across the modern world (Jayne, Valentine & Holloway, 2011). In the West, where alcohol drinking is viewed as part of normal everyday popular culture, the policy debate has revolved around definitions of safe levels of consumption and encouraging people to drink in safe environments and legislating against things such as driving while drunk (Jayne, Valentine & Holloway, 2008, 2011; Thurnell-Read, 2011). There is an ambivalence and a paradox in policies around alcohol. The alcohol industry is hugely influential in Western countries such as the United Kingdom, and is part of a wider hospitality industry that has pushed for the liberalisation of night-time economies and the privatisation of urban spaces. So politicians and policy-makers have warned about dangerous drinking and associated 'anti-social behaviours', while at the same time endorsing and helping the development of city-centres and other leisure spaces as destinations for alcohol consumers – and sites of instrumental profit (Jayne, Valentine & Holloway, 2011; Spracklen, Richter & Spracklen, 2013). This promotion of alcohol as a social lubricant and leisure choice runs counter to the views from the public health policy-makers that alcohol consumption should be restricted or stopped. Some campaigners have argued that there are dangerous levels of alcohol consumption, and people are out of control (Babor, 2010; Thurnell-Read, 2011). There is, in other words, a moral panic being created about the rise of alcohol consumption.

Moral panic

The concept of a moral panic can be traced historically to a number of moments where elites have worried about the behaviour or manners of the lower classes. Cohen's (1972) analysis of the moral panic over the mods and rockers of English tabloid headlines in the post-war years gave the notion of moral panic an academic rigour and critical framework. For Cohen, moral panics were generated around folk devils, mythologised scapegoats who are marginalised and Othered as a means for the elites in society to divert inquiring eyes from the elite, hegemonic control of power. Moral panics are then taken up and spread through popular culture, becoming in turn free from the hands of the elites who construct them. In recent years, a number of alcohol researchers have explored the ways in which alcohol-drinkers have become the new folk devils, the focus of moral panics about gender, youth and deviance (Jayne, Valentine & Holloway, 2008, 2011; Thurnell-Read, 2011; Yeomans, 2011; Young, 2011). Critcher (2011) has questioned whether the stories and policies and political campaigns about 'binge drinking' amount to a fully-fledged moral panic. For him, the media coverage of 'binge drinking' in the United Kingdom is driven by government 'spin' and the construction of stereotypes (the aggressive young man, the out-of-control and at risk woman), but these alone do not add up to the full definition of a moral panic mapped out by Cohen. While Critcher is correct in his analysis of the reporting of the concern about drinking, it is wrong to dismiss the idea of moral panic from analysing alcohol drinking. If there is not yet a moral panic about drinking alcohol, one is in the process of being created, and public health campaigners in particular would like to see the 'problem' of drinking alcohol 'solved' by policy-makers accepting their scientific and medical knowledge and their recommendations to restrict and ban it (Babor, 2010).

Methodology

This paper builds on two related research projects. Spracklen (2011) is an ethnography and discourse analysis of Scottish whisky tourism and whisky-related texts (websites and books about single-malt whisky). Spracklen (2013) is an ethnography of whisky-tasting events and qualitative research with people who attend such events and collect whisky. My knowledge of Scottish whisky tourism and its related whisky industry in this paper stems from these previous projects and my own insider status as whisky drinker and whisky tourist. The new research for this paper involves a content and discourse analysis of the following texts: public material and policies found on the website of the Scotch Whisky Association, the industry body; policies and documents found on the Scottish Government's website, including the White Paper setting out the vision of the Government for an independent Scotland; and public material and policies relating to tourism in Scotland published by the Scottish Government, Visit Scotland and the industry coalition Scottish Tourism Alliance. All material and policies were initially read line-by-line to grasp their scope and intent. A formal content analysis then followed, searching for key concepts relevant to this paper, namely public health, alcohol, whisky and tourism. A third discourse analysis provided a lens for the policy analysis, using the aims of the research and the theoretical framework to develop critical, evaluative accounts (Feighery, 2011). As I was working on this research the white paper was published, and its policies on tackling ill-health and promoting the economic viability of an independent Scotland meant it became central to this paper.

Analysis and Discussion

The industry on responsible drinking

The Scotch Whisky Association (SWA) is the industry body for the companies behind Scottish whisky distilleries, brands and blends. Not every company that makes Scottish whisky is a member of the association, but most are, and all the big trans-national

corporations that own a majority share of the output and sales are members (Diageo, Beam, Edrington and the Pernod Ricard-owned Chivas Brothers). The website is very professional and has a traditional aesthetic design: the SWA provides a narrative of doing good work on sustainability, on defending the authenticity of Scotch whisky, and working closely with government agencies nationally and internationally. The images on the site reflect the usual tropes and stereotypes of Scottish whisky – copper stills, babbling streams on heather moors, barrels in old-fashioned dunnage warehouses, golden-coloured samples in blending labs. On the website, tucked away on a page called 'Alcohol & Society' under the 'What we do' tab, the SWA recognises that alcohol is an important part of human culture. It says:

> Alcohol has an acknowledged place in our society. As in most countries and cultures, it plays and important economic role. Alcohol is alcohol. There is no difference between spirits, wine and beer. They are all alcohol. They are all capable of being enjoyed responsibly and of being misused. There is no such thing as a problem drink. There are problem drinkers. The SWA does not have an issue if reducing the number of hazardous and harmful drinkers cuts per capita consumption. But cutting consumption of moderate drinkers without reducing harm fails to address the problem of misuse.
>
> <u>Responsible Drinking</u>
>
> Enjoyed responsibly, alcohol encourages social interaction and is a social lubricant. http://www.scotch-whisky.org.uk/what-we-do/alcohol-society/ (accessed 10 December 2013).

The SWA mentions 'our society', presumably Scottish or British society, or Western society, or perhaps modern society. This carefully-phrased statement puts the onus for

alcohol-related problems onto drinkers, and absolves the industry of any responsibility for the use of its products. The SWA does not want the alcohol content of spirits to be in any way connected to 'irresponsible' drinking. It also suggests that the SWA believes that whisky drinkers might not be the 'problem' drinkers because the statement clearly differentiates 'harmful' drinkers from those 'moderate' drinkers who might not be causing 'harm' (to themselves or to others). The SWA then makes the claim that alcohol in moderation has an important function as a social good. This is true enough, and it is a measure of legislation on advertising alcohol and sensibilities about moral panic that leads the SWA to be modest on this point (Babor, 2010). It then goes on to say:

Social Responsibility

Distillers want to maximise consumer enjoyment of their brands, and to minimise harm from irresponsible drinking. The Scotch Whisky industry is committed to playing its part in tackling alcohol misuse by promoting responsible consumption, education, responsible marketing and partnership working. The SWA's publication Matured to be Enjoyed Responsibly gives an overview of the activity the industry is involved with.

Responsible consumption

The Scotch Whisky industry is committed to promoting responsible attitudes to alcohol. Members are required to include responsibility statements on all advertising. Many include information on label as well as supporting educational initiatives. Individuals must also take responsibility for their drinking choices - read our 'Hints & Tips'.

http://www.scotch-whisky.org.uk/what-we-do/alcohol-society/responsible-drinking/ (accessed 10 December 2013).

'Responsible consumption' is the key phrase used throughout these statements. The SWA has followed and replicated the medico-scientific advice from public health bodies in Scotland, the United Kingdom and Europe very carefully. Its members print information about responsible drinking and units of alcohol in advertising and on the backs of bottles. The SWA has done everything it has to do to meet legislative and policy requirements, and even includes links to the Portman Group ('the responsibility body for drinks producers in the UK', the lobby group working to defend the industry, set standards on 'responsible' drinking and influence policy and legislation around alcohol – see www.portmangroup.org.uk) and Drinkaware (a campaign group promoting safe drinking, funded by the drinks industry and others, including Diageo, Beam and Pernod Ricard) on its front page. Reading this information, one can see that I should only have three to four single measures of normal-strength (40% ABV) whisky a day, and if I am drinking then I need to eat food and alternate the whisky with non-alcoholic drinks – and I should not drive.

The industry on whisky tourism

The public health discourse about the danger of 'irresponsible' drinking disappears on the page devoted to whisky tourism. Here the assumption is that distilleries in their rural locations are a prime reason for anyone to visit Scotland, and places that demonstrate then long-stranding authenticity of single malt, and its necessary association with Scotland's landscape and Scotland's history. The images mentioned previously are read in conjunction with the discourses of Scottishness, the agency of the expert and discerning tourist (or one who wants to become one), and the authenticity of the drinking and tasting experience:

From the source of the water to the shape of the still, a distillery tour will help to explain what makes every Scotch Whisky different. No two distilleries are the same. Each has a unique setting and story, as well as a distinctive way of doing things that has evolved over many years. Visiting a distillery allows you to indulge your passion for Scotch and, at the same time, discover the environment and meet the people that have done so much to shape that instantly recognisable taste. Many distilleries welcome visits by members of the public. It is often necessary to make arrangements in advance, but many distilleries have extensive visitor facilities and do not require prior warning of a visit… No matter which distillery you choose to visit - be it island, mainland, large or small - you can expect great Scotch Whisky, a warm Scottish welcome, and a fabulous day out. The SWA's Distilleries to Visit 2013 provides information on some 40 distilleries and visitor centres open to the public, including opening times and the availability of disabled facilities.

ScotlandWhisky

Enthusiast or novice, there is no better place to enjoy your favourite dram than in Scotland, the home of whisky. Savouring Scotch in the country that shaped its character is an unforgettable experience.

http://www.scotch-whisky.org.uk/understanding-scotch/whisky-tourism/ (accessed 4 December 2013).

To be a true tourist, one must sample whisky at its authentic source – at the distillery, and in Scotland. The narrative tells the would-be whisky tourist that they need to visit as many distilleries as possible, and reassures the tourist that many distilleries have facilities for visitors or are willing to make arrangements for the genuine whisky traveller. The distilleries are located all over Scotland, so the casual tourist will hopefully find a distillery near the

place they are visiting. But the authentic tourist will plan ahead and decide to explore a particular region where they know whisky production is strong: Speyside, for instance, or Islay. Both casual and authentic whisky tourists to Scotland are encouraged to drink whisky in Scotland. The phrase 'there is no better place to enjoy your favourite dram than in Scotland' seems to imply that the taste and the experience of drinking Scottish whisky is diminished if one sips it somewhere else. The taste of whisky does not change where you drink it, but people will want to believe that it does taste better in Scotland, next to a roaring fire with a stag's head over it, or in the bar of a white-washed distillery building. The SWA's phrase supports the belief that the authentic experience can only be found drinking it in Scotland.

Come to Scotland

It is not that surprising or interesting that an industry body working to promote the products of its members promotes the products of its members. The logic of Habermasian instrumentality is clearly at work in Scotland, and the industry is an industry, a capitalist system that creates surplus products that need to be converted into cash and profits. The whisky industry needs people to consume whisky and to engage in whisky-related consumption practices, whether it is buying blended whisky to drink at home or in a bar, spending money to go around distilleries on tours or purchasing collectible releases (Spracklen, 2011, 2013). The industry needs drinkers to choose blended or single-malt whiskies over beer, or wine, or vodka (or coffee or tea). They need to convince consumers of the cultural capital that accrues when a whisky is chosen, and the whisky-makers have been successful at convincing people in markets around the world that whisky is more 'real' than other alcoholic drinks (Spracklen, 2011). Whisky is perceived as a more real, tasteful drink for the rising urban, middle-classes in many countries precisely because the industry has sold

its products in such a way. It is interesting that the Scottish Government and the UK Government has identified whisky tourism as a key sector within the wider tourism sector. In 2009, a tourism key sector report for the minority government of the Scottish National Party (which held office since the 2007 election with the support of the Greens, the first time the Nationalists had governed) discussed opportunities' as follows:

> Opportunities… Scotland's product: The Scottish tourism industry is relatively mature. Its distinctive 'offerings' (e.g. history, culture, landscape, golf, whisky, genealogy) have enjoyed strong and enduring global recognition over many years. In order to capitalise on the growth potential of the industry, there is an opportunity to extract more economic value from these distinctive 'offerings' through - for example collaboration and product enhancement, which will create a 'higher value' tourism product.
>
> (Tourism Key Sector Report, Scottish Government, 2009, p.8)

The proof of the importance of whisky tourism is easily found in the work of VisitScotland, Scotland's national tourist organisation for Scotland, the quango that is the successor of the Scottish Tourist Board. In 2003 it launched a project called ScotlandWhisky with two regeneration agencies, the SWA and the Scotch Whisky experience, a visitor attraction in Edinburgh. In 2010 the Scotch Whisky Experience took over the website and branding ('see the country, taste the spirit', www.scotlandwhisky.com). The initiative is described on VisitScotland as follows:

The aim of the initiative is to use Scotch Whisky's international reputation to encourage more tourists to Scotland. Though the project has a wide range of aims, its key strategic objectives are summarised as:

- To underpin Scotland's credentials as a quality destination using Scotch whisky's global renown.

- Develop the domestic Scotch whisky experience, to enhance its position as a commercial opportunity for the tourism trade and motivating factor for tourists to travel to Scotland.

- To integrate Scotch whisky as a key element of Scotland's tourist experience.

http://www.visitscotland.org/what_we_do/partnership_initiatives/tourism_initiatives/scotlandwhisky.aspx (accessed 12 December 2013).

The initiative involved providing tourism businesses with information for their staff about types of Scottish whisky, tasting notes, the regions of Scottish whisky production, along with tips about providing food to go with whisky, how to make sure local distilleries are promoted in one's hotel or bar. For tourists, it provided maps, tasting notes and information on bars, hotels and shops that sold whisky. Single-malt whisky is presented in all this information as an authentically Scottish drink that needs to be drunk in Scotland to be fully appreciated, and whisky enthusiasm is a marker of good taste and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984). The theme of authenticity, local provenance and genuine experiences runs through the strategy produced by the Scottish Tourism Alliance, *Tourism Scotland Strategy 2020* (Scottish Tourism Alliance, 2012). The Alliance is the independent industry body for businesses, organisations and other groups involved in Scottish tourism. It has a number of key Platinum Patron Sponsors, one of which is Diageo, demonstrating the importance Diageo

places on tourism, and the importance of whisky to Scottish tourism. The Strategy (p. 14) states:

> In tandem with developing specific assets we also need to collaborate across assets in order to offer visitors a diverse range of authentic experiences. In other words, experiences which are underpinned by elements unique to Scotland, and therefore cannot be easily replicated by our competitors. Consumer research shows that people want to feel that they have had an authentic experience, taking in a wide range of things to see and do: from gleaning an insight into a destination's past to appreciating its contemporary offer, interacting with its people and sampling its local produce…

It goes on to promise (p. 18):

> We will use our local provenance wherever possible, drawing on what makes Scotland unique to create authentic, distinct tourism experiences.

Interestingly, whisky is not mentioned by name in the document, though it is indirectly present in the discussions around food and drink, local provenance and authentic experiences. There is no picture of a distillery or barrel, or even a glass of whisky, though there are castles and hills. It might be that the Alliance is nervous about the stereotypes of Scotland associated with whisky tourism (the tartan biscuit boxes and the rolling heather), or nervous perhaps of putting off potential visitors who do not like whisky or even drink alcohol at all. But the absence of direct references to whisky might also be evidence of the maturity and strength of whisky tourism. It does not need to be the focus of a strategy because it is already doing so well.

The white paper on health and wellbeing

The white paper on Scottish independence has an entire Chapter on 'Health, Wellbeing and Social Protection'. In this chapter, a case is made that independence will overturn relatively low life expectancies and improve the lives of Scottish people. The chapter sketches out the health, public health and wellbeing problem in stark terms (Scottish Government, 2013, pp. 135-136):

> Life expectancy in Scotland is lower than in the rest of the UK. In 2010, life expectancy at age 65 was 1.2 years higher in the UK than in Scotland for both men and women… Life expectancy in Scotland is now lower than in all other Western European countries. Compared to similar countries, Scotland has a greater incidence of cancer and of premature deaths from all causes including heart disease, chronic liver disease and cirrhosis. With devolution, the Scottish Parliament has been able to deliver some improvement. For some indicators, such as deaths from coronary heart disease, health inequalities have decreased, but for others, such as healthy life expectancy, mental health, smoking and alcohol and drug misuse, they remain significantly worse in the most deprived parts of Scotland

All three diseases identified under 'premature deaths' are linked to a range of causes, but consumption of alcohol is clearly a significant causal factor in all three. This section of the chapter finishes by noting that alcohol 'misuse' remains a significant problem in 'deprived' areas. The language of this section of the chapter is the language of moral panic, if not a full-blown panic in Cohen's original definitions of the phrase. The underlying causes of ill-health are structural, as Wilkinson and Pickett (2009) demonstrate so logically in *The*

Spirit Level. Inequality causes ill-health, and Scotland's working classes have suffered enormous levels of inequality compared to the elites of the United Kingdom. The white paper eludes to this at the beginning of this chapter, but the section cited here clearly plays to the idea that alcohol misuse is a problem of the poor, as if they are somehow a different caste, people who cannot help themselves from drinking to excess. There is no mention here of alcohol consumption among the elite and middle classes. Consumption of alcohol re-appears as a problem to be fixed by public health policies later on in the chapter (p. 174):

> Independence will also allow us to do more to tackle major causes of ill-health, which disproportionately affect poorer communities. In March 2006, Scotland was the first country in the UK to enact a ban on smoking in public places. This has resulted in a dramatic reduction in smoking related diseases. We have also led the way in developing ambitious proposals to tackle harmful drinking by legislating for a minimum unit price for alcohol. We have maintained our commitment to strong action to tackle smoking and alcohol misuse with all the powers available to us. In contrast, the Westminster Government has chosen to put on hold proposals for plain packaging for cigarettes, and abandon plans for minimum pricing for alcohol. With independence, we will have greater scope and clearer powers to regulate alcohol and tobacco, including through taxation - reducing the opportunities for legal challenge which have held up several of our initiatives to date.

Reading this section of the chapter, one would imagine that the Scottish Government was firmly against alcohol, and resolutely for public health policies that made it harder for people to do things like smoke and drink alcohol. The language of the discourse is moralising and paternalistic, promising to save people from making bad decisions about their leisure

lives and their health. Again, the assumption is that it is only the poor that are at risk. Minimum pricing is targeted at the poor – the rich and the middle classes will still be able to pay for their wine and whisky, but the poor will have to give up on their drinks. Of course, what this policy does is use the discourse of panic and the individualisation of morality to absolve the policy-makers from doing anything that might seriously harm the alcohol industry. Elsewhere in the white paper, the whisky industry in particular is identified as key part of an independent Scotland's economic success.

The white paper on the whisky industry

The main thrust of the white paper is to demonstrate Scotland's *existing* economic and material wealth, so that voters in the referendum can see that Scotland could be (and should be) an independent country. The paper states claims (Scottish Government, 2013, p. 42):

> Scotland is blessed with a range of economic strengths and advantages: substantial natural resources, a strong international brand, world-class universities and research, and a range of world-leading industries including food and drink, life sciences, the creative industries, energy, tourism, insurance, wealth management and engineering.

Tourism and food and drink are clearly key sectors on the list. On page 84 the white paper provides a graphic representation of the amount of money created by various industries (see figure one). The tourism industry is said to create £9 billion for Scotland, with £13 billion from the food and drinks industry. The money created by exports of whisky is listed separately as £4.3 billion, a sizeable proportion of the overall money from food and drink, and a figure that does not include sales internal to the UK. The figure on whisky exports comes from *Scotland's Global Connections Survey 2011: Estimating Exports from Scotland*

(Scottish Government National Statistics, 2013), where actual figures for 2011 are slightly lower than those reported in the white paper. However, the report does say that the whisky industry is the 'major constituent of the food and drink manufacturing sector' (Scottish Government National Statistics, p. 5).

SCOTLAND
HAS GOT WHAT IT TAKES

£17 BILLION CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY[1]

£9 BILLION TOURISM INDUSTRY[2]

10% OF EU'S WAVE ENERGY POTENTIAL[10]

GDP PER HEAD SCOTLAND RANKS 8TH OUT OF 34 OECD MEMBER COUNTRIES[3]

98.8% OF PREDICTED UK OFFSHORE OIL PRODUCTION[4]

£2.8 BILLION CREATIVE INDUSTRY[11]

25% OF EUROPE'S POTENTIAL WIND AND TIDAL ENERGY[5]

£32 BILLION RURAL AND ISLAND ECONOMY[12]

£13 BILLION FOOD & DRINK INDUSTRY[6]

5.3 MILLION PEOPLE[7]

11.6% OF UK FARMING PRODUCTION[8]

£4.3 BILLION WHISKY EXPORT INDUSTRY[9]

£2.3 BILLION ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT[13]

1, 3, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12. SOURCE: SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT
2. SOURCE: VISIT SCOTLAND
4. SOURCE: PROFESSOR ALEX KEMP, ABERDEEN UNIVERSITY (IN THE 30 YEARS FROM 2011)
5. SOURCE: SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT ANALYSIS
7. SOURCE: 2011 CENSUS
9. SOURCE: HER MAJESTY'S REVENUE AND CUSTOMS
13. SOURCE: HISTORIC ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR SCOTLAND

(Figure One, Scottish Government, 2013, p. 84)

Further on in the white paper the food and drink industry is returned to and identified again as a key player in Scotland's existing economic success, but also its cultural distinctiveness. Food and drink is seen as playing a key role in selling a particularly distinct Scottish identity that is not bound by Britishness (Scottish Government, 2013, pp. 283-284):

Scotland's food and drink sector has been extremely successful in recent years… As international demand for our produce continues to increase, the Scottish Government has already been working closely with industry to support sustainable growth and identify and secure access to new export markets… Scotland's food and drink industry does an excellent job promoting the Scottish brand, but Scotland is constrained by the current constitutional settlement, which prevents it from directly engaging on a level footing with other countries.

Whisky is clearly identified as the most significant product that denotes Scottishness and Scottish cultural distinction. It is an economic success story that helps Scotland demonstrate to other countries on the world stage that it is an independent polity, with its own history and traditions, and its unique attractions and tastes. The paper continues with a warning about the danger for the whisky industry if Scotland is part of a United Kingdom that leaves the protection of the European Union (Scottish Government, 2013, p. 284)

There is also a real concern, particularly for the whisky industry, that if the Westminster Government takes Scotland out of the EU, we will lose the backing of the EU's trade negotiations with countries like India, the United States and China.

While the economic, political and social benefits of being a member of the EU have been made by the Scottish Nationalist party in their policy documents and campaigns for many years, this paragraph seems to have been written by someone far from the left-wing centre of Scottish Nationalism (Franco-Guillén, 2013). Being in the EU has become something that is essential 'particularly for the whisky industry', which it is reported fears being locked out of important export markets without the collective bargaining power of the EU. This is instrumentality and neo-liberalism at its most ruthless, making policy through supporting trans-national corporations in their attempts to make even bigger profits from even more consumers. The drift to instrumentality and neo-liberalism is also obvious in the white paper's plans on taxation. One might have hoped corporations would be taxed at a higher rate by an independent Scotland governed by a party of the left. However, the white paper says (Scottish Government, 2013, p. 97):

> We plan to set out a timescale for reducing corporation tax by up to three percentage points below the prevailing UK rate… This will be one way to secure a competitive advantage and help to reverse the loss of corporate headquarters which has been a feature of the Scottish economy over the last 30 years.

Who are the corporations the Scottish Government wants to attract? The key phrase is 'reverse the loss'. They want to bring back the headquarters of trans-national corporations that have departed Scotland to find lower taxes and other perks elsewhere. Whisky producers might feature here. United Distillers, the whisky-related precursor of Diageo, had its headquarters in Scotland along with other big whisky distillers. Diageo is still the biggest producer of Scottish whisky, one of the biggest trans-national corporations in the alcohol industry, and it still has offices and a subsidiary company based in Scotland. But when

Diageo was created in a merger between other corporations in 1997 its headquarters was established in London.

Conclusion

There are a number of important intersecting policies and priorities at work in the white paper, and in the wider Scottish economy and polity. The whisky industry wants to keep on making money from its products. This pursuit of profits has made the whisky industry important to the viability of Scotland's economy (whether independent or part of the United Kingdom). Although most of the exports and domestic sales of Scottish whisky are of blends produced in factories in less-fashionable parts of Scotland, the recent growth in interest in single-malt whisky as a marker of middle-class and elite taste means that the whisky industry has opened up its distilleries to tourists (Spracklen, 2011). Whisky production literally bottles Scotland and sells Scotland to the world, a version of Scotland that is forever associated with the Scotland of Queen Victoria, Balmoral and the nineteenth-century invention of highland Scotland. The industry relies on tourists travelling around different distilleries, paying to go on guided tours and tasting sessions, and spending huge amounts of money in the gift shops. For the wider tourism sector, whisky tourism is lucrative, ensuring that hotels and restaurants are full even in towns and villages that do not have other spaces and places that are desirably Scottish enough (lochs, mountains, salmon streams, golf courses). Whisky tourism has become a way in which Scottishness is constructed in the minds of potential and actual visitors, and a way in which a narrow, Victorian, elite Scottishness of castles and shooting parties is imposed on modern-day Scotland. The Scottish Government and other policy-making organisations in Scotland have therefore ensured that both whisky production and whisky tourism is supported – through encouragement, partnerships, marketing campaigns and possible future tax cuts.

Running contrary to the encouragement and support of whisky production and whisky-drinking tourists is the public health agenda. The whisky industry through the SWA is careful to encourage 'responsible' drinking. It does work to make people aware of the dangers of 'irresponsible' drinking, keeping on the right side of legislation, while also arguing strongly that drinking alcohol is a normal part of (Western?) society and many cultures, and as such it should be protected from further restrictions and prohibition. The Scottish Government wants potential voters for independence to know that it takes alcohol 'misuse' seriously, and so it sets out a range of policy commitments that it says will reduce alcohol misuse. In its policies for health and wellbeing, the Scottish Government draws on the language of moral panic, and its measures to tackle misuse seem to be targeted only at the poor. There is a dissonance between its public health policies on alcohol and the other policies in the white paper around the economy. The figures on life expectancy presented seem to suggest the need for drastic action against alcohol drinking, but the only concrete proposals are a minimum price that will serve as a tax on the less well-off. All the people who visit distilleries and drink whisky do not seem to be included in the debate about alcohol misuse. There is no plan to tackle those who drive to a distillery, drink whisky and drive away again. There is no concern that consumers of whisky might be encouraged to drink too much through the marketing of distillery-only bottlings and other special releases. The assumption is that these whisky drinkers, like wine drinkers, are from classes that are allowed to get drunk without policy-makers getting worried. The language of the moral panic is reserved for the poor, the irresponsible others (Spracklen, 2013), not those consumers who keep the whisky industry in full production.

Through its material and campaigns around whisky tourism, the SWA has worked to convince its public sector supporters in the Scottish Government that drinking single-malt whiskies in distillery visitor centres is harmless, because they are responsible drinkers, while

signing up to campaigns to moderate drinking in the wider Scottish public. What we can see in the analysis of the SWA's website is a careful positioning of whisky and whisky tourism as being something that represents a supposedly authentic Scottish tradition. That is, it is sold as being something Habermasianly communicative, while being essentially a product of the instrumental rationality of modern capitalism (Habermas, 1984, 1987; Spracklen, 2011, 2013). Scottish policy-makers allow the industry to sell this idea because the industry is important to the economic strength of Scotland – so the white paper on independence provides lots of rhetoric about tackling alcohol misuse while carefully excluding whisky consumers and the whisky industry from suffering its policy-making.

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