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MORE THAN A DRINK

Towards an understanding of young Mongolian men's perceptions
of alcohol consumption and drinking norms

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Abstract

This thesis provides an insight into young men's perceptions of alcohol and drinking norms in Mongolia. The foundation of this case study is qualitative research conducted in Central Mongolia which is set into a theoretical framework of drinking norms and Goffman's concept of 'face-work'. It is argued that drinking norms have to be understood in their specific context. Traditional drinking norms are defined explicitly, with a specified minimum amount of drinking, at celebrations. In certain contexts alcohol consumption is inherently part of sociability and pressure to drink is constructed through reference to tradition, respect, trust-building and group activities such as toasting and drinking games. Alcohol consumption is furthermore closely related to stereotypical masculinities, which puts special pressure on men, to drink. The emergences of modern celebrations, the removal of seasonal restricted availability of alcohol and the introduction of new beverages create new preconditions for drinking which influence drinking norms. Having identified some external structures in which drinking takes place and shown examples of some existing norms, it is argued that alcohol consumption in Mongolia should be understood in its socio-historical and cultural context and that policies should take into consideration, the cultural specific framework in which alcohol consumption occurs.

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Introduction

Research Background

Mongolia is a sparsely populated and landlocked country, which is developing quickly despite its vast territory and harsh climate. After the collapse of the Soviet System in 1991 the country's infrastructure disrupted and poverty and unemployment escalated (Bruun 2006). Since then Mongolia has seen enormous economic development, mostly fuelled by mining of its rich natural resources. It is not only the economic system which is undergoing changes, but also the society which experiences various transformation processes. Sedentarisation, Urbanisation and Modernisation processes challenge traditional concepts of life-style, family and gender (Bruun et al. 2006). One aspect, which cannot be ignored when discussing Mongolia's development, is alcohol. It is argued that a high level of alcohol consumption among men is one of the main hindrances to Mongolia's development (Armstrong et al. 2010; UNDP 2007).

Globally, consumption levels of alcohol are rising, due to an increase of consumption in developing countries (Jernigan et al 2000; Obot et al 2005.). Certain drinking patterns can have implications for the individual and society. Harmful use of alcohol is related to various negative health outcomes (Parry et al. 2011). The term harmful use describes drinking practices which are negatively affecting the physical and mental health of the user (ICD-10 2010; WHO 2009). Globally, alcohol is the third leading risk factor to health, accounting for 4% of disability adjusted life years¹ (WHO 2009). In Mongolia, 6% of the population are estimated to suffer from alcohol use disorder (WHO 2011a). A large-scale study in 2006 classified even 22% of men as alcohol dependent² in contrast to 5% of women (Ministry of Health et al. 2006). Concerning physical health liver cancer is an outstanding example of negative health implications of alcohol consumption in Mongolia. Alcohol consumption facilitates the emergence of liver cancer and deteriorates the course of the disease. Among other causes this leads to Mongolia having the highest liver cancer mortality worldwide (Alcorn 2011). Moreover, risky drinking patterns are widespread, especially among male drinkers, of whom 39% engage in binge drinking³ (WHO 2010). Whereas men of all income

¹The disability-adjusted life year (DALY) extends the concept of potential years of life lost due to premature death to include equivalent years of "healthy" life lost by virtue of being in states of poor health or disability' (WHO 2009).

²The CIDI Composite International Diagnostic Interview Instrument was used.

³Binge drinking is here defined as consumption of 5 or more standard drinks at one occasion (Ministry of Health 2009)

groups and education backgrounds have high rates and levels of consumption, it is the ones between 25-35 years old who show the highest consumption rate and riskiest drinking practices (Demaio et al. 2013). Alcohol consumption is furthermore connected to violence⁴ and family conflicts (Ministry of Health et al. 2006). UNDP reported that 72% of serious crime in Mongolia was related to alcohol (WHO 2004a). Whereas men were more likely to experience harm by strangers, women were more prone to be exposed to assault and violence through an intoxicated family member (Ministry of Health et al. 2006). Women also reported that their husbands' alcohol-intake was the most upsetting factor at the household level (IBID 2000). In 2006 about 20% of men stated that they continued drinking although it was causing problems with their family or friends (IBID 2006). Alcohol consumption is also related to loss of productivity and said to be a serious hindrance to employability and job performance of Mongolian men (UNDP et al. 2007). A fourth of all men reported that they purchased alcohol instead of household essentials (Ministry of Health et al. 2006). A third of the male respondents described drunkenness and hangovers having interfered with their domestic duties and work responsibilities (IBID).

Initially alcohol consumption and related problems were regarded as a private matter (Bruun et al. 2006). With the current President Mongolia who outspokenly aims to reduce alcohol consumption and abstains himself, alcohol consumption became more a topic of public concern which is broadly discussed (Dari 2013).

Research Aim

Against this background it becomes crucial to understand alcohol consumption in Mongolia better. Alcohol consumption is a complex psycho-social phenomenon. It is widely acknowledged that it is embedded into cultural norms, which are of highest importance for an understanding of consumption patterns (Halim et al. 2012; Heath 2000, 1995; Stimson et al. 2007). Therefore, the discussion of alcohol consumption should not be reduced to the intoxication effect of alcohol via its biochemical reaction. As a beverage, alcohol is used for different purposes and bears different

⁴ However, it is important to note that the relationship between alcohol consumption and violence is not a causal one. Reasons leading to crime commitment while and after drinking might not be the consumption as such. Expectancies of alcohol outcomes, the motivation for drinking or a cultural connotation between alcohol and crime which allows to use alcohol as an excuse for deviant behaviour might influence the relationship between alcohol consumption and crime (Livingstone 2011).

symbolic meanings (SIRC 1998). Consumption takes place in a framework of social interactions in which drinking norms are being played, norms that make this practice socially or culturally sanctioned or, on the contrary, expected and fostered. In other words, in order to enable effective ways of addressing harmful consumption patterns, these norms have to be understood and taken into consideration. To my knowledge, no research provides an insight into the cultural context and norms in which drinking takes place in Mongolia. In reply to this gap, with this case study I wish to provide an improved understanding of alcohol consumption problems in Mongolia by approaching the norms and cultural context in which the representations and practices of alcohol drinking exist. For this I shall give particular emphasis to identifying inter-subjective norms through utilising perceptions of young adult men about alcohol. These norms will be analysed within a socio-cultural context from which they originate and in which they are meaningful. As such the following research questions are posed:

How do young Mongolian men perceive alcohol consumption?

How can cultural drinking norms help to inform policies addressing harmful alcohol use?

For answering these research questions qualitative data in form of interviews and participatory observation was collected in Erdenebulgan Soum, one of the provincial centres of central Mongolia. This data will be analysed through utilising sociological theories on social interaction by Goffman and conceptualised drinking norms by Paton-Simpson. Whenever it may be relevant, the analysis will be enriched by findings from research on drinking norms in other cultural contexts.

Delimitations

Alcohol consumption can be discussed from various different perspectives. The focus of analysis lays here on drinking in social interactions and drinking norms. Hence, solitary drinking or the development of addiction to alcohol will not be discussed as such and the medical, biochemical or psychological perspective will not be drawn upon. This does not mean that neither of these or other perspectives is irrelevant for an understanding of alcohol consumption. It is moreover not argued that certain drinking norms can be equalised with harmful consumption patterns. As important as norms might be in shaping behaviour, they cannot be substituted with an individual's agency in decision-making.

Disposition

This thesis begins with a description of methodology, which offers an insight into the research design and process. This section is followed by the theoretical framework in which key concepts are introduced. The analysis section, in which the collected data is embedded into the theoretical framework and interpreted subsequently, is followed by concluding remarks.

1 Methodology

1.1 Research Design

This research is grounded in a social constructivist worldview. Hence, I acknowledge that individuals aim to make sense of their life and environment using their subjective experiences, which are built up in interaction with others and influenced by societal and cultural norms (Creswell 2007). Based on this philosophical assumption, I embrace an interpretivist standpoint in terms of epistemology, which means that this research offers my interpretation of the participants' interpretation, which is analyzed through a particular theoretical lens (Bryman 2008). Since this research aims very much at understanding social facts, I chose to use a qualitative approach for this case study and to collect data based on semi-structured interviews and participatory observations. Qualitative research gives me the opportunity to make sense of the complex meaning of alcohol, based on the perceptions of the people concerned while giving them an active voice. The case study design allows to study the phenomenon of young men's drinking norms '*within its real-life context*' (Yin 1994: 13). A single case study design was found suitable given the limited time in the field and the explorative nature of the research.

1.2 Data Collection and Methods of Selection

This case study utilises primary as well as secondary data. The secondary sources consist of academic literature and statistics. Sources on Mongolia are quite limited and the topic of drinking culture in Mongolia is academically unexplored, which made the collection of primary data crucial to this research.

The primary data was collected from November 2012 to January 2013 in Erdenebulgan Soum, the province town of Arkhangai *Aimag*⁵. This town was chosen because my residence prior to the research facilitated the access to the field and I was familiar with the structure and characteristics of this provincial town. The primary data was generated through participant observation and interviews. The latter comprised expert interviews, exploratory interviews as well as semi-structured interviews. The interviewees were chosen based on criteria, which are explained in detail below. All of them were purposively sampled, which in this case means that the participants which met the criteria were identified and contacted by people belonging to my professional and social network (Bryman 2008).

1.2.1 Expert Interviews

In order to learn more about the extent of the alcohol problem in Mongolia I conducted expert interviews, with a hospital doctor, a NGO-leader and a police doctor. The hospital doctor works in a mental health ward, which is responsible for patients with alcohol related problems. The NGO-leader is running a small faith-based withdrawal facility for men and the police doctor is in charge of the sobering stations. These are special cells in the police station that are reserved for intoxicated people. All of the expert interviews were conducted in their offices with the support of my interpreter. They lasted between 30 to 90 minutes and extensive notes were taken during the interviews⁶.

1.2.2 Exploratory Interviews

To begin with I conducted four exploratory interviews with men who are between 20-45 years old and with different professions which was used as indicator for their socio-economic background. These four interviews helped me to narrow down my research question and to improve my question guidelines⁷. Three of the interviews were conducted in a café and one of them at the participant's workplace. They lasted between 25-45 minutes and all but one interview was conducted with the same interpreter. The interview which was held with the help of another

⁵ Aimag is the name for the 23 administrative provinces Mongolia is divided into (Bruun et al 2006)

⁶ Please find the question- guideline in Appendix 1

⁷ Please find the question guideline in Appendix 2

interpreter was transcribed in Mongolian. This transcript was then translated by my usual interpreter in written form, because the former translation was not sufficient enough for the data analysis. Two of the exploratory interviews, whose participants met the criteria, were included into the in-depth data analysis.

1.2.3 In-depth Interviews

Based on the exploratory interviews, I refined the sampling criteria which then included a sociographic profile of respondents, with the variables gender, marital status, age and profession. I decided to interview married men because I wanted the participants to have experience of possible gender differences in regards to alcohol and be able to reflect on alcohol in terms of its possible influence on their nuclear family life. The age was limited to participants of an age between 24-35 years old. Age hierarchy is very important in Mongolia (Bruun et al. 2006) and was taken up in relation to alcohol by the participants of the explorative interviews. Therefore, I chose to talk to men of an age group which is already old enough to have established their own nuclear family, but still so young that they are in a low and subordinate position in the age hierarchy. This decision was supported by an ease of access to this age group, who prove to be more open for an interview. Furthermore, this age group has a comparatively high level of alcohol consumption (Ministry of Health 2006). All people willing to participate turned out no older than thirty. The profession of the participants was used as indicator of socio-economic status. While sampling, I aimed to interview men with experiences at different workplaces and different backgrounds. Five men were interviewed and in order to enrich my understanding with a perspective of both genders three women with the same sociographic profile participated as well. The participants are listed in the table depicted below.

Table: Participants of Exploratory and In-depth Interviews

Pseudonyms	Age	Gender	Marital Status	Profession	Place of Interview
Pre-Interviews					
Bayarmunkh	23	Male	Single	College student	Café
Gambaatar	24	Male	Married	Sports teacher	Office
Itgel	30	Male	Married	Unemployed	Café
Naranbataar	45	Male	Married	Market shopkeeper	Café
In-depth Interviews					
Bathuu	29	Male	Married	School teacher	Office
Chuluun	29	Male	Married	Public administration	Office
Erdenehuyg	29	Male	Married	Car workshop owner	Café
Mungun	27	Male	Married	Computer Salesman	Café
Tengis	29	Male	Married	NGO-Manager	Café
Altantsetseg	26	Female	Married	Accountant	Café
Bayangerel	28	Female	Married	Baker	Café
Oyuntsetseg	29	Female	Married	Social Worker	Café

The interviews lasted between 45-70 minutes and the interview guideline was constantly reviewed and improved.⁸ Two of them were conducted at the participants' office and the remaining ones were held in a café. One interview, which is not presented, was terminated on request of the participant. He stated that he was in a rush, nevertheless, I had the impression he was feeling uncomfortable after he shared sensitive information with us. I discussed this situation with my interpreter; his data was deleted and not taken into consideration at any stage of data analysis.

⁸ Please find the interview guideline in Appendix 3

1.2.4 Translation

Interaction between the researcher and the participants is a crucial aspect of qualitative research. Since my command of Mongolian is not sufficient enough to understand the participants' narratives in-depth, the interviews for this case study were conducted with the support of an interpreter. Translations unfortunately imply a loss of meaning and add another person into the interaction process (Scheyvens et al. 2003). Therefore, finding an interpreter who is not only able to translate adequately, but empathic to the challenges of the interview situation and participants, proved to be challenging. My translator qualified for interpreting since she was a professional English teacher in college and had experience in translating research for different development agencies. However, although her language proficiency was comparatively very high, she was not fluent. Therefore, my Mongolian language knowledge was supportive to follow the conversation and to identify possible misunderstandings. One of my interpreter's strengths was that she could easily establish an atmosphere of trust with the participants and showed a high level of empathy. She did not endorse alcohol consumption or abstinence, but found alcohol abuse to be a topic of concern in Mongolia.

1.2.5 Participant Observations

During my stay in Mongolia the observation of alcohol consumption and the experience of drinking-related norms inspired me for this research. Therefore, I chose to continue with observations throughout the research process. To participate in the context allows the researcher to experience and observe behaviour (Gomm et al. 2000). When it comes to sensitive topics it is an excellent method to collect data, especially when verbal communication is shortened by limited language knowledge of the researcher. Whenever an informal conversation about alcohol arose or I happened to be in a social situation including drinking, I made field notes describing these, as suggested by Dewalt et al. (2002). Then, I discussed my observations with different personal contacts in the field in order to allow for a deeper understanding of the experience. The observation helped me to get a broader understanding of the case, to narrow down my research questions and for the refinement of interview questions.

1.3 Analysis

As foundation for the analysis, I transcribed the English translation of the interviews. They were read carefully multiple times, information clustered into themes and main themes selected. The notes of the participatory observation were treated accordingly. The data was then interpreted in a reductive way, going back and forth between theory and data (Freshwater et al. 2004). In the analysis section frequent direct quotes are provided to allow the reader to follow the rationale behind the interpretation. These quotes were grammatically corrected if necessary in order to facilitate their understanding for the reader.

1.4 Ethical Considerations

This case study was conducted independently by me for the purpose of this thesis. However, my stay in Mongolia prior to the research was based on an internship with FLOM-Mongolia who were supportive in facilitating my residence in Mongolia throughout the research process. In order to prevent participants connecting the research with the organisation, it was thoroughly explained that my research is conducted independently by me as a student of Lund University.

Throughout the process, data was handled confidentially and the anonymity of the participants preserved. The names of the participants were changed and pseudonyms used at every stage of the data processing. I explained the importance of anonymity and confidentiality to my translator and the gatekeepers who arranged the interviews. The participants were asked beforehand whether they agree to meet at the proposed café or prefer another place. All of the participants were asked for their voluntarily agreement to the interview, after I thoroughly explained the purpose of the research and their interview.

Alcohol consumption, due to its psycho-social origin and its connotation to alcohol abuse, is a sensitive topic. Although in everyday life people spoke relative openly about alcohol (abuse) with me, personal consumption was somewhat a more delicate topic. Based on this experience I decided not to inquire about personal habits and experiences of my participants in order to respect their private sphere. Therefore, the topic of alcohol usage was discussed in the third person and when I felt that a participant is not comfortable with a topic I did not inquire in-depth. The majority of participants spoke about their personal consumption and experiences unbidden.

1.5 Reliability and Validity

In order to construct validity for this case study, data was collected through multiple sources, and the different primary and secondary data triangulated (Yin 1994). Constant peer-reviewing and supervision was furthermore used to critically question the research process and to strengthen the validity of this research. The content of this case study has to be read and understood in its context. As such it does not claim to be a representative case of young men's drinking norms in Mongolia or externally generalisable (Bryman 2008). To provide transparency and allow the reader to follow the linkage between theory and data, frequent quotes of the interviewees and examples of the participant observation are provided in the analysis. With being transparent I furthermore aim to provide the possibility to the reader, to judge this thesis' dependability and the possibilities of replication (Yin 1994).

1.6 Limitations

As a foreign researcher people first of all seem to perceive me as a stranger and outsider to their society. During the fieldwork, this facilitated the field access because people showed interest and were willing to support my research aim. Nonetheless, it also restricted the research design, process and analysis due to my limited knowledge of the Mongolian language and culture.

The topic of alcohol consumption already confronts the researcher with two layers of analysis. The first one is the action of drinking itself, which needs to be set into the frame of society and culture. The second layer originates because not only drinking is guided by cultural appropriateness, but also the way of talking about it (Simpura 1983). I, being foreign to the Mongolian context and culture added another layer, for example, through the use of an interpreter and the linguistic limitations due to it (Scheyvens et al 2003).

Another limitation to the depth of analysis and implications to validity arises due to Mongolian linguistics. The literal translation of the word alcohol is *arxi*. However, the word *arxi* is synonymously used to describe the beverage vodka. This means that there is always a connotation to vodka as a beverage when talking about alcohol. To allow for a wider discussion the participants were asked about different beverage types specifically.

2 Theoretical Framework

2.1 Literature on alcohol and norms

Alcohol consumption is an age old phenomena found in numerable human societies. Scientists from various disciplines, aimed at an understanding of alcohol consumption from different perspectives, such as medical, chemical or anthropological ones. Nowadays, it is widely acknowledged that alcohol consumption is embedded into cultural norms, which are of highest importance for an understanding of consumption patterns (SIRC 1998). Nonetheless, a considerable body of literature on alcohol is very specific, difficult to access and understand, whereas other literature is rather too simplistic for scholarly use (Heath 2000).

Noteworthy early attempts of understanding alcohol and its role in society better are, for example made, by Heath (1958) in his analysis of Bolivian Camba and Sangree (1959) in his analysis of Drinking in Bantu Tiriki. Mandelbaum (1965) offered an early insight into variances in drinking patterns in different societies, underlining the importance of further research in this field. Well-known is Bacon's analysis of alcohol consumption in "complex" societies, in which, he argues that due to the emergence of social complexity, meanings and norms of alcohol consumption diversify and change and problems related to alcohol consequently increase (Bacon 1962). Gusfield (1962) also focused on change processes in relation to drinking norms, reasoning that the politicisation of alcohol made consumption a matter of moral discussion and decision-making. The anthropologist Heath (2000, 1995) added value to the discussion of norms in offering a cross-cultural analysis of drinking cultures and common traits in different societies' Paton-Simpson (2001, 1995) enriched the discussion by emphasizing different forms of deviance to different drinking norms exemplified with male drinking in New Zealand. Room gave several insights into alcohol consumption in different cultural and policy settings from a public health perspective (Room et al. 2007, 2005, 2002, 2001). Babor et al. (2010) include drinking norms and culture in their analysis of international policies on alcohol.

2.2 Drinking Norms in Context

From this literature it is understood that drinking norms are not cross-culturally valid, but can vary to a huge extent in different societies and in extreme, one societies norm can be another society's

deviance. Moreover, in heterogeneous societies, far more than one valid set of norms exist and one group's norm could be one group's deviance. This is certainly true for drinking norms, which are shaped by a variety of different factors (Simpura 1991).

One aspect, which is interlinked with the construction of drinking norms, is changes of external structures. The availability of alcohol and access to it for example, as well as the introduction of new beverages can stimulate changes in drinking norms and patterns. However, norms do not change congruent with external factors, and harmless habits might become harmful, when traditional norms apply to new structures. The availability of alcohol throughout the year for example, might lead to adverse drinking patterns in a society whose drinking was restricted through seasonal availability and whose norms therefore do not promote moderate drinking (Jernigan et al. 2000).

Minimum and Maximum Drinking Norms

Not only do the external structures influence the construction of drinking norms but also the social interaction in which alcohol consumption takes place. In order to allow a structured presentation, norms are simplified categorised under minimum and maximum drinking norms in the following.

Acknowledging, that alcohol-related norms can be various and social occasions numerous; attention is especially drawn to *'shared expectations [...] about the minimum levels of alcohol consumption appropriate for particular types of people in particular types of context* (Paton-Simpson 2001: 137). These norms are described as minimum drinking norms and the failure to comply with them as 'underconsumption'. The concept of 'underconsumption' must always be understood in the particular context in which drinking takes place. It is not defined based on statistics of drinking volumes but in contrast to perceived expectations of drinking behaviour in a given interaction. 'Underconsumption' therefore does not only refer to not-drinking, but drinking less than expected. (Paton-Simpson 2001). However, in the analysis, the term is at some points used interchangeably with not-drinking, based on the participants' reference to it.

In the same way, 'overconsumption' is defined as consumption which does not comply with the expected maximum of alcohol consumption. 'Overconsumption' refers here to the situational appropriateness of alcohol consumption as well as levels of intoxication. Normative limits of acceptable consumption are important to understand in order to gain an insight into drinking norms (Sabroe 1994). In this regard, 'overconsumption' will not only be discussed referring to the transgression of expected consumption or intoxication patterns, but also include an insight into the understanding of prolonged and sustained patterns of drinking. These will be set in relation to a discussion of stigmatisation.

Symbolic power of alcohol

Crucial for the understanding of drinking norms is the symbolic power which might be assigned to alcohol. In many different cultural contexts, alcohol is not only a beverage, it also carries symbolic meaning. Its intoxicant characteristics give it a special status among beverages and it might serve as a symbol in religious and spiritual events or signal the festivity of an event (SIRC 1998). Depending on the given context, it might serve as defining hierarchies and as a gender-differentiator. It can be utilised to express the establishment of a relationship and to express best wishes with, for example, the cross-culturally known activity of having a toast (SIRC 1998). This symbolic meaning of alcohol is fundamental for an understanding of drinking norms and drinking patterns. As Mandelbaum stated so accurately:

When a man lifts a -cup, it is not only the kind of drink that is in it, the amount he is likely to take, and the circumstances under which he will do the drinking that are- specified in advance for him, but also whether the contents of the cup will cheer or stupefy, whether they will induce affection or aggression, guilt or unalloyed pleasure. These and many other cultural definitions attach to the drink even before it touches the lips. (Mandelbaum 1965: 282)

The symbolic meaning alcohol is given by the participants, will be discussed in relation to its usage in festive contexts, sociability and relationship-building, as well as being incorporated into the discussion of gender with focus on masculinity.

2.3 Face-work

Attitudes, values and beliefs have to be understood in relation to the person who is having and holding them and in the social environment in which and through which they are shaped. Using

the lens of Goffman, it is argued here that people in interaction with each other engage in *face-work* (Goffman 1967).

Face-work means that every person aims to maintain his face and the face of his counterparts in social interaction, a face which is an '*image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes*' (Goffman 1967: 5). The maintenance of face should not be understood as goal of people in interactions as such, it is rather a condition in which the social interaction is created. Alcohol consumption is here understood as being part of face-work through which an individual aims to establish or maintain a certain face. Which action is appropriate, depends on the social interaction, counterparts and on the sociocultural framework. This brings us back to the importance of norms, which influence these social interactions.

A situation might arise in which an individual is unable to fulfil the minimum or maximum drinking norms of a certain social interaction and therefore chose to engage in certain strategies to *save* his face. To save face means that the person will try to make everything he does consistent with his face, which becomes important in situations in which '*effective symbolic implications threaten face*' (Goffman 1967: 12). This is not always done consciously but can be an intuitive, unconscious or habitual action. There are various applicable techniques in order to save face; here *passing* strategies will be focussed on.

When someone engages in passing strategies, it means that an individual tries to hide or conceal his unconformity and pass as 'normal' in order to prevent face loss and in worse case, stigmatisation (Goffman 1965). The perceived necessity to engage in passing strategies in order to appear 'normal' reflect a presumed common understanding of 'normal' drinking and pressure to engage in it. In this case study, avoidance, account-making and pretending to drink will be discussed. As indicated by the term avoidance processes, an individual aims to elude himself from situations in which he could lose his face, in this case, situations in which he is afraid of not being able to comply with minimum or maximum drinking norms. Account-making means that a person gives socially accepted explanations for drinking or not drinking in order to avoid negative

implications in a given social interaction (Goffman 1965). Pretending to drink here means that a person simulates alcohol consumption without engaging in drinking in reality.

Obviously, people do not always act like they ought to for various reasons. This might cause reactions to their behaviour, which can take multiple forms. The one discussed here is verbal expressions. Verbal expressions are understood as vehicles of attitudes and beliefs and are therefore taken as relevant means to express norms (Paton-Simpson 1995). This does not mean that the absence of (verbal) reactions equal an absence of norms. In some settings it might not be noticed. If noticed as a violation, people might accept it, tolerate it or see it only as a minor transgression, which is not worth a reaction. If people chose to comment on a certain drinking behaviour, these verbal expressions can be used to reflect their attitude towards certain consumption behaviours. (Paton-Simpson 2001, 1995).

Limitation of context

As pointed out before, the symbolic meaning of alcohol and drinking norms in general are not created in a vacuum, but in social interactions and have to be understood as situational. This gives importance to the context in which drinking takes place. Acknowledging that numerous different contexts could be discussed, the focus here will be limited to alcohol consumption at festive contexts and casual drinking situations, which are both common frameworks for alcohol consumption (Heath 2000). Arguably, the characteristics of the individual are of importance as well, and again there are numerous aspects which could be discussed in relation to it (Stimson et al. 2007). In this case, the characteristics of the consumer/non-consumer will be limited to gender and age.

3 Analysis

This analysis provides an insight into the perceptions of young men on alcohol. Exploring their perceptions on consumption in different contexts, allows conclusions to be drawn on related inter-subjective norms. As explained before, these norms are likely to vary in relation to diverse aspects, since they are constructed by different actors in social interactions. With this analysis, I do not claim to make a full account of situations in which drinking norm exist. The analysis is

grounded in the accentuations the participants gave and crossing these with my observations, I seek an understanding of this material, through embedding it into the theoretical framework as outlined above.

3.1 Perceptions of alcohol consumption in a process of change

Alcohol has to be set into an historical and social framework of the rapid changes Mongolia has experienced and still experiences. This section gives a short insight into the change processes in which alcohol consumption has to be understood and sets the participants' perceptions of alcohol into the perspective of the objective regulations.

3.1.1 Recent development process of Mongolia

Mongolia has undergone a unique transformation process from a former soviet satellite state to a democratic market-oriented economy. From 1924 onwards, the sparsely populated and landlocked country was 'Sovietised' thus becoming dependent on economic and political support from the Soviet Union. During this period the living standard rose steadily, employment was secured and a public health infrastructure established. When the Soviet Union dissolved in 1992, Mongolia did not only lose its financial support, but also experienced a total political and economic break-down. The political and economic infrastructure had to be built up from scratch again and the social, education and health sectors had to be remodelled to fit into a liberal market economy. (Bruun 2006)

The disruption of the political and economic system in the 1990s created economic uncertainty, unemployment and poverty, which was found to have tremendous effects on the individual alcohol consumption in other cultural contexts (Moskalewicz 2000; Mossakowski 2008; Mulia et al. 2008). At that time Mongolia was in receipt of the highest amount of foreign aid worldwide (World Bank 2011). Today, a solid democracy is established in Mongolia, its economy is growing rapidly and poverty is decreasing. The annual GDP growth rate exploded to about 18% in 2011, which made Mongolia the fastest growing economy worldwide (IBID). A vast number of developing countries is experiencing an increasing alcohol consumption (Jernigan et al. 2000) and Mongolia experienced an increase of 402% in per capita alcohol consumption from 1970 to 1996 (Ministry of

Health et al. 2006). Although there are slight differences in consumption levels in relation to employment, high levels of male alcohol consumption persist in all income groups (Demaio et al. 2013). The police doctor describes the men being brought to the sobering stations, saying:

The typical person taken into the sobering cells is 20-45 years old and male. There are all kind of different people; they range from state employees, over students to unemployed people. It is really not the income this does not matter. Also, I think, unemployment is a problem, but then it's really everybody: who wants to drink, drinks. It is so common now in Mongolia, if you want to drink, you drink, it does not matter who you are.

3.1.2 The availability of alcohol

Steady urbanization and sedentarisation processes lead to 61% of Mongolia's population being settled in its capital Ulaanbaatar and 8% in smaller urban centers like Erdenebulgan Soum (World Bank 2012). Alcohol is easily available in cities and towns, which have a growing number of shops, bars and restaurants. Strict policies govern venues in which alcohol is sold, but in reality the implementation of these policies is very low. This is criticized by all participants who expressed a desire for better enforcement of existing alcohol restrictions.

In Mongolia, only self-distilled beverages were available traditionally. These are fermented mare's milk, *airag* and the so-called Mongolian Vodka, *Mongol arxi*, which is produced of distilled Yoghurt and *airag* (Bawden 1989). Due to the seasonal restriction of dairy products, these beverages were primarily produced and consumed in the summer time. The alcohol content by volume of *Mongol arxi* is with 3-12 per cent comparatively low (May 2009: 97)⁹. During the Soviet period Russian vodka, was introduced to Mongolia (Bruun 2006: 15). Industrial distilled vodka has, with 38-40% of alcohol content, by far more percent of alcohol than traditional beverages, which makes consumption along traditional patterns comparatively more detrimental to health. Nowadays, industrial produced vodka is internalised into Mongolian culture and seen as an important beverage for traditional use.

⁹ Traditional beverages are perceived as healthy, but due to lack of control mechanism the consumption of self-distilled alcohol bear the risk of methanol contamination (Stimson et al. 2007).

Gambaatar explains that

At Nadaam¹⁰, it's in July, at that celebration people use more fermented mare's milk [...] but at each celebration they buy vodka [...] but in New Year's they drink more vodka because there is no more fermented milk. It depends on the season and also the celebration.

The availability of alcohol can influence drinking patterns and norms and the introduction of purchasable beverages is said to be related to the emergence of heavy drinking patterns in developing countries. It is argued that in societies where only self-brewed beverages were available; their production was limited in volume and to certain seasons. The introduction of new, industrially produced beverages, which are purchasable throughout the year, waves this restriction. This happens in cultural contexts which only provide regulating social norms for seasonal alcohol consumption (Jernigan et al. 2000: 494).

Urbanisation also gives fewer possibilities for the production of traditional beverages. Mungun states that *'people in the urban areas, in the aimag centers, they usually use alcohol which is produced in factories because they cannot buy Mongolian vodka in the shops'*. Industrially produced beverages, which are nowadays not only limited to vodka but also include beer and wine, are in contrast to self-brewed beverages. They are not only available throughout the year, but also purchasable in the urban centers, where self-brewed beverages are limited and therefore of increasing importance for the urban population.

3.1.3 Perceptions of alcohol and alcohol-related problems

The participants perceive alcohol consumption and alcohol-related problems, within the described background of transformation processes in Mongolia. Bathuu explains that *'in our tradition, the culture of alcohol usage was very different because nowadays we use it in a very wrong way'*. The participants justify problems connected to alcohol consumption with changes in external structures, exemplified by the introduction of the liberal market economy, the emergence of bars

¹⁰Nadaam is one of the most important holidays in Mongolia. It takes place in summer and its heartpiece are the three so-called 'manly' sports, which are wrestling, horse-races and archery' (May 2009: 115-123).

and clubs and the lack of strict policy enforcement. Although their opinions about successful policies differ, all participants call for stringent policy enforcement.

In order to tackle the high consumption level of alcohol, the current President, Elbegdorj, introduced policies a curfew for bars and clubs, a ban on sale of alcohol at payday and an increase of alcohol costs through taxation. In addition, he launched a national campaign on alcohol based on his own practice of abstaining from drinking alcohol and toasting instead with milk at celebrations (BDSeC 2013, WHO 2012). Nearly all participants welcome the president's speech and chosen abstinence, because they perceive alcohol consumption in Mongolia to be problematic and the president's action a good response to it. Bathuu for example says:

But of course I agree with the president's speech, it is very good to use milk. But I think we have to know about alcohol usage in the ancient time, how Mongolians used to use alcohol. Nowadays, it changed, so that is why it is very wrong.

Arguing that problems with alcohol were not present in the early history of Mongolia, Bathuu attributes the changes in culture as responsible for them. His reasoning suggests the abuse of alcohol is contrary to traditional Mongolian values but accepts the problem of alcohol abuse, without it being a specific problem of Mongolians as a people. In giving a perspective of traditional Mongolian moderate alcohol consumption, this argument also allows him to attenuate the president's strict call for abstinence without directly disagreeing with it. His example shows that alcohol consumption and people's attitude towards it, have to be understood in the context of the transformation processes in Mongolia and reveals an inconsistency towards alcohol, which is also expressed by other participants. Alcohol is regarded as powerful and partly threatening, which is a notion supported by the President's campaign, which leads the public discourse in broaching the issue of alcohol-related problems. Tengis explains *'in Mongolia [...] there is a saying: Alcohol is stronger than its bottle, because alcohol can be stronger, stronger than everything. But it cannot be destroyed, just its bottle'*. In contrast to that stand traditional patterns of alcohol consumption, which promote the usage of alcohol at certain occasions, as it will be explained in-depth below.

Alcohol-related problems are perceived to be a recent phenomenon in Mongolia, which contradicts the traditional use of alcohol but, however recent they are perceived to be, they are a reality which has to be dealt with. This adds a new perspective to alcohol consumption, which can

be seen as standing in contradiction to its traditional importance. The individual has to evaluate between the importance of traditional norms and the new facet of alcohol in relation to problems. This can be seen in Chuluun's statement. Acknowledging the prevalence of alcohol-related problems, Chuluun prioritises the preservation of traditions and therefore criticizes the president's initiative. He argues that *'In the past time and nowadays we never stopped alcohol using. That is why I think in celebrations it is very important to cheer with vodka'*.

In this section the interrelation of the historical and social change processes and perceptions of alcohol was highlighted. This interrelation emphasises the necessity of in-depth research on this processes to provide a stable foundation for the design of effective policies and interventions. The physical availability and restriction of alcohol has to be carefully considered when designing policies. Restrictions of availability, such as the sale in different venues and the curfew, need to be reflected and possible side-effects taken into account. The importance of external structures furthermore, highlights the necessity of addressing alcohol-related harm, not only through aiming for behavioural change of the individual, but also to create external structures which positively stimulate a reduction of harmful consumption patterns.

3.2 Perceptions of alcohol consumption in the context of social interactions

As it was indicated above, alcohol plays an important role in some specific contexts. Some of these, alcohol consumption at celebrations and at casual drinking situations, will be discussed in the following.

3.2.1 Alcohol consumption at Celebrations

A re-emerging topic taken up by the participants is drinking at celebration, in which alcohol is an inherent part of the festivity. Celebrations are important for drinking, as drinking is important for celebrations. The most important celebrations in Mongolia are *Tsaagan Tsar*, *Nadaam*, Weddings, New Year, Birthdays and work-related events. *Tsaagan Tsar* translates to White Month and is the traditional lunar New Year. *Nadaam* means Games and is a sport festival held in summer.

At traditional celebrations it is accepted for everybody, men and women alike, to engage in drinking and it is furthermore expected for adults to take part in the alcohol consumption. The participants describe alcohol consumption at celebrations as indispensable. Mungun explains that *'in any public holiday, in any big celebration day, the people have to drink because these are the oldest, the public holidays'*. Alcohol consumption at celebrations is perceived as different drinking behaviour than its consumption outside of the celebratory framework. Tengis' explanation offers an interesting insight into this distinction of drinking behaviour.

In his opinion most of the people hate the alcohol. Just we respect our tradition, our tradition. We think that alcohol is the thing of best wishes that is why we use it in celebration days. But it is not drinking, it is not drinking, it is just to respect our tradition. We don't drink, we use it.

In differentiating alcohol consumption in drinking and usage, he argues that alcohol consumption at celebration would not be drinking as such, but an expression of best wishes. This means that the usage of alcohol has an importance which goes beyond personal preference and is based on its symbolic meaning.

3.2.1.1 Alcohol as symbol of respect and best wishes

Cross-culturally alcohol has been assigned a special status among beverages, is perceived as supreme to other ones and even musically and lyrically praised (Heath 2000, 1995).

The participants assign a special status to alcohol, which makes its usage important for special occasions and its consumption necessary to retain traditions. Bathuu states that *'from the ancient time on the Mongolians speak about alcohol as the most respectful drink. That's why at every holiday we put a bottle of vodka on the table'* (Interview Bathuu). The power assigned to alcohol might be related to its potential effects and dangers. Since alcoholic beverages have a special status, they are adequate for the expression of respect. The participants argue that it is especially important to drink at wedding celebrations because

it is a very special celebration, because a marriage happens just once in a whole life. So this is why people express respect to the couples and they use a bit more than at the other celebration days, to respect the couple the people usually drink more than at other holidays (Interview Tengis).

The composition of the wedding celebration makes alcohol consumption an inherent activity of the celebration. Usually weddings are celebrated in late summer and autumn time because of the availability of dairy products. A bowl of *airag* is passed around the guests, who are supposed to

drink of it and sing a song or hold a speech in honour of the bridal pair when it is their turn (May 2009). The consumption of *airag* is complemented by vodka and *Mongol arkhi*. An informant in Bruun's monograph explains '*A good wedding takes 500 liters of airag, 200 liters of arkhi, and 200 bottles of vodka*' (Bruun 2006: 116). Responsibility for giving out the alcoholic beverages lies usually in the hand of the groom's male kin, who are passing around glasses with vodka. They might not accept them back until at least half of the shot glass is drunk (Participant Observation). For weddings, as well as for other celebrations, an explicitly defined minimum drinking norm exists. Gambaatar explains that '*in tradition I have to drink the first three glasses, of course*'. At a wedding I attended to some men tried to reject the vodka referring to the necessity of driving. The cheerful presented answer was that the drivers only need to drink the traditional three shot glasses (Participant Observation). This minimum drinking norm can be interpreted as involvement obligation, which means that participants in a social interaction are bound together following certain etiquette (Goffman 1967). Not drinking the shot glasses of vodka is seen as breaking with the etiquette of what is regarded to be a polite face.

Though, after consuming the three shot glasses, there is still a perceived need to engage in drinking. Bathuu says:

I think it maybe depends on the countries own culture and tradition. But in our country, it is very difficult to stop using after a little because they offer it to me and it is like an unwritten law, it is like a tradition, so I have to drink.

People, who accepted a drink in the beginning, are seen as having no reason to subsequently reject another and are expected to continue drinking therefore. This was also stressed by a young couple I met, who chose to abstain from alcohol when returning to Mongolia after studying abroad. Although they did drink alcohol before, they were shocked by the problematic alcohol consumption they were confronted with. They decided to abstain, because moderate or seldom consumption would not be accepted. Explaining his decision to me, the young man said: '*in Mongolia, either you drink or you don't*' (Participant Observation).

3.2.1.2 Consumption in modern celebrations

With the described societal changes, new celebrations are emerging like New Year's and birthday parties. Whereas alcohol consumption traditionally was restricted in season, it can be used for every celebration throughout the year nowadays.

The participants describe alcohol consumption for example as important for work-related celebrations, which are held throughout the year. Since alcohol consumption was prohibited in the work place in 2011, work-related celebrations are moved to restaurants and pubs. The new celebrations, which are added to the big traditional celebrations Nadaam and Tsagaan Tsar, increase the frequency of celebrations and presumably drinking at celebrations. As Gambaatar explains drinking is *'necessary [...] with my friends, at birthdays, although it is ok not to drink at birthdays maybe, but at the weddings most of the people drink'*. Since birthday celebrations are relatively new, drinking norms might not be so stringent. Generally, the new celebrations are perceived as being more unconstrained from traditional norms, which is judged differently by the participants. Whereas some connect this to an increase in heavy drinking, some connect it to a decrease. This can be interpreted as a reflection of the emergence of multiple norms in the contexts of new celebrations.

At modern celebrations, toasting is used to express best wishes. Toasting is a social interaction in which the group performance is of importance, since it unites the participants of a festivity or gathering. Therefore, toasting with alcohol *'may seem virtually obligatory'* (Paton-Simpson 1995: 201). Toasting is not only used to open a celebration, but different rounds of toasting can take place. If there is a huge celebration the host may walk from table to table and toast to everyone, sometimes more than once. At a New Year's Ball I attended, the Master of Ceremonies was having different rounds of toasting at each table. At some rounds it was sufficient enough to take a sip of the beverage; at others he was carefully watching everyone to down their drink. Frequent toasting was part of each table's activities, and everyone used the same type of beverage for it. The women switched from vodka to wine after some rounds, a decision which was respected after it was debated a bit. The women argued that wine is more appropriate for females, an argument which was accepted and reflects the connotation between wine as a weaker beverage and femininity (Participant Observation). The association of different beverages to stereotypical masculinity and femininity is found cross-culturally. Usually, the beverages which are lower in alcohol content and/or sweeter are connected to constructs of femininity (SIRC 1998). The rounds of toasting tend to increase alcohol intake, because the group action might stimulate the individual's consumption.

In conclusion alcohol is perceived as important for both traditional and modern celebrations, which is motivated with respect for tradition. Vodka is perceived as an inherent part of this traditional usage and consumption expected from men and women, with a defined minimum threshold of three shot glasses of vodka. However, if someone does not have a reason to abstain, people might as well expect higher consumption. With the emergence of new celebrations, alcohol consumption is linked to more occasions and embedded into a new festive framework.

The symbolic importance of alcohol consumption at celebrations is worth considering for policy-making. The promotion of alternative drinking patterns might be an important step forwards. The usage of the president as a role model for abstinence can lead to a fruitful change in this regard because it allows individuals to use the president as an example for 'underconsumption'. That he uses only milk at celebrations furthermore reduced the linkage between celebrations and alcohol, in utilising a widely available commodity, which is also perceived as important for Mongolian tradition. During my time in Mongolia I could attend celebrations in which no alcohol was offered, in order to facilitate the participation of men with a problematic relationship to alcohol. Tengis organised a milk New Year's for his political party and states that most of the people welcomed the idea. When the president's campaign is adopted slowly by different stakeholders, the possibility to celebrate without alcohol might become more natural and the linkage between alcohol and festivity weaker. Nevertheless, a variety of different drinking patterns should be considered for public health campaign, since a strong endorsement of abstinence could support the development of an ambivalent relationship to alcohol, which might be linked to harmful consumption patterns (Room 1976).

3.2.2 Alcohol consumption at Casual Drinking Situations

As outlined before, alcohol is available throughout the year and restaurants and bars offer the opportunity to casually meet for a drink. In the following section, alcohol consumption in this framework of casual drinking will be discussed.

3.2.2.1 Alcohol as support for sociability

The participants describe casual drinking as, meeting with friends in bars, restaurants or at home and refer to casual drinking situations as a predominantly male-only activity.

Alcohol is perceived as stimulating sociability and supporting the creation of a positive atmosphere. Cross-culturally, alcohol is seen as facilitating the sociability of people, an attribute assigned to alcohol which is expressed verbally and even in music and arts (Heath 1990). It is recognised as so powerful to enable sociability that Partanen describes it as *'social drug par excellence'* (Partanen 1991:288). Since alcohol is given this powerful attribute, drinking is interpreted as a signal of openness to socialise, as a symbol for *'social solidarity'* (Mandelbaum 1965: 282). Bathuu explains that *'When people are using alcohol they can create a very good and warm environment and can talk very open to each other and talk to each other easily'*.

Goffman proposes that in social interaction, every person in a group has to engage and support the interaction. If someone is not acting accordingly, this means the other participants of the social interaction have to invest more, in order to balance the deficiency out (Goffman 1967). If someone is not engaging in drinking, this might imply the sign of distancing himself from the process of socialising, which naturally places very significant pressure to drink. Therefore, it might be important for everyone to engage in the same drinking behaviour to create the desired atmosphere. This is described by Chuluun noting that *'usually when we drink we have the same glasses and we are drinking the same amount and we drink all the equal amount. No one drinks more'*. After inquiry, he adds that usually also nobody drinks less than the others.

3.2.2.2 Drinking Games

One tool to include everybody is drinking games. Drinking games are means of legitimising the 'necessity' to drink in order to reach the ultimate goal of the game and are used at casual occasions and modern celebrations.

The participants describe two drinking games, which are said to have their origin in Russia and South Korea. Their adoption shows another dimension of new influences on drinking patterns (Interview Chuulun, Tengis). In the game 'Ocean Wave' everyone has to down his drink in such an order that the group movement resembles a wave. In 'Bottoms up' everyone has to down his drink and to put his empty cup on his head when someone shouts 'Bottoms up'. These drinking games fall under the category of so-called communal drinking games. The single goal of these games is to engage everybody of the group into the same consumption process (LaBrie et al. 2013). Drinking

games which are based on competing with each other about the volume and or speed of drinking are rejected with the notion that this concept would stand contrast to the general character of Mongolians:

usually people don't have this competition because the Mongolian own character is very special. They are quiet people, so this is why they don't have any competition like this. If someone has this character the other people think that person is maybe the most uncivilized, the most stupid person.

Drinking games are usually studied in a university context and in this context associated with risky levels of intoxication and risky sexual behaviour in the USA (Borsari 2004). Further research is necessary which focusses on adults outside the university context and the influence of drinking games on drinking patterns in Mongolia.

3.2.2.3 Unconstrained drinking

It is important to outline the participants' emphasis on the 'possibility' not to drink, especially when being with friends, which is a remark made in nearly all interviews.

As it was described before, norms differ between groups of people and settings. This notion is also indicated by the participants saying that it is easier to 'underconsume' with some friends than with others, and more difficult to restrain oneself with some groups of friends than with others. Furthermore, Mungun explains that not drinking would not only be accepted by his friends but also welcomed. He and Tengis do not describe pressure to drink in casual drinking situations, but only at celebrations. In general, drinking with friends was perceived as more unconstrained than other occasions because drinking was not predetermined by tradition nor restricted because of age hierarchy. Tengis explains that when drinking with friends *'there is a difference, with my friends I can feel free, I can drink free-style (laughing)'*. For him this freedom seems to work in both directions, the ability to drink as much or as little as desired personally. This leads us to Simpura's argument that drinking norms in a modern heterogeneous society are diverse and rather have to be understood as a mosaic within a society, than country categories (Simpura 1983). Depending on the group of people, expectations of whether and how to drink can vary, even contradict and one groups 'overconsumption' can be one groups 'underconsumption' and vice versa (Paton-Simpson 2001). This argument is supported by Tengis' further explanations of meeting his friends. He describes the possibility of not drinking, saying: *'if all don't want to drink- we can do this, it is*

possible'. This brings us back to the former argument that people in social interaction are expected to engage in the same drinking behaviour in order to make the social interaction successful, which can be drinking the same, or not drinking at all, according to the people in the social interaction.

3.2.2.4 Alcohol as a trust-builder

Furthermore, coming back to the argument of alcohol serving as a symbol to define a relationship, it is perceived as means to establish trust.

Rejecting an offer of alcohol is seen as dismissing the expressed respect. Gambaatar explains that it is more difficult to reject alcohol offered by people he does not know well. Young expatriates in Erdenebulgan Soum frequently described the necessity to consume vast amounts of vodka to build up a relationship with the herders they worked with and that drinking was inherent part of the trust-building process (Participant Observation). Phillips argues that alcohol consumption as part of sociability serves for the establishment, and a symbol, of trust (Phillips 1987). That drinking was used as trust-builder is found in different societies since ancient times and having a drink together could be interpreted as what Goffman describes to be a 'tie-sign' (Goffman 1967) marking the bond between people. Gambaatar describes alcohol, as having the power to reveal a person's real character.

He explains that people want to give me alcohol and after that they want to see my own character. Because maybe they heard something, maybe any bad thing about me and to see my personality [...] that's why they give the alcohol sometimes [...] if someone has a bad character maybe [...] after drinking this person will show this.

Alcohol consumption can have a disinhibiting effect (Rose et al. 2007) and might therefore be interpreted as socially dangerous. Rejecting offered alcohol might be interpreted as fear of disinhibition, which would reveal something hidden and therefore mean that the rejecting person is afraid of showing the 'real' person inside, an impediment to creating a trustful atmosphere. That 'underconsumption' becomes more acceptable with time is also explained by Oyuntsetseg based on an example of non-drinking colleagues at work celebrations:

at the first meeting, when we first meet people and they say 'no' its not very polite to us and of course we will have negative thoughts about this person. But maybe after two or more meetings we have knowledge about this person, we know whether this person drinks or not.

To sum up, alcohol consumption in casual drinking situations is perceived as comparatively unconstrained. Alcoholic beverages are given the strength to stimulate sociability and drinking might therefore serve as an indicator of a willingness to socialise. Whether or not the participants feel the pressure to comply with the group, depends on the people they are in interaction with, which highlights the importance of strengthening individual decision-making. Alcohol is furthermore seen as revealing someone's 'real' character and hence used for the establishment of trustworthiness. A salient aspect of the participant's narratives in both celebrations and casual drinking occasions is the importance of alcohol for the expression of respect and trust. This symbolic status of alcohol must be carefully considered and a further understanding of the meanings and their origin should be aimed for. Caution also has to be taken, when looking at possible adverse effects policies may have. The symbolic meaning of respect, which is attached to alcohol, has to be considered at all areas of policy and intervention planning. A side effect of restricting the availability of alcohol could, for example, be the reinforcement of the linkage between alcohol and respect. Rather than it could increase the special status alcohol has, by giving it scarcity value.

3.3 Alcohol and Gender

The striking gender differences in alcohol consumption propose that gender should be included into the discussion of alcohol. Perceptions on female and male drinking are therefore provided in the following and debated in regards to masculinity and targeted marketing.

3.3.1 Perceptions on female and male drinking

There are gender differences in drinking all across the world, although in industrialized countries the gap in consumption level is decreasing (Stimson et al. 2007). Not only the actual consumption levels differ between the genders but also the expectations people have in respect to drinking.

In many societies men are underlying higher normative pressure to engage in alcohol consumption than women (De Visser et al 2007; Lemle et al. 1989; Paton- Sympson 2001; Suggs 2001). In Mongolia *'Drinking arkhi is considered manly and is a subject of much joking among the men; anyone who cannot drink is considered a wimp'* (Bruun 2006: 59). Female drinking is perceived rather negatively when it happens outside of the framework of celebrations and the participants

perceive intoxication of women as immoral behaviour at the same time as they accept intoxication of men. Against this background, it is not surprising that there is a high expectation on them to engage in drinking as described by Bruun above¹¹. Applying Blumer's argument of symbolic interactionism to alcohol, Paton-Simpson argues that the connotation between alcohol and masculinity arose partly because it was drunken in an interaction of by men in a male sphere (Paton-Simpson 1995). In nomadic tradition it was usually the male head of the household who offered alcoholic beverages to the male guests (Interview Chuluun). Again, this was related to the expression to respect and a matter of hospitality. Hospitality is understood as very important in Mongolian society. Generally, drinking at home is rather perceived negatively by the participants, because it is understood as having a bad influence on children and bears the stigma of alcoholism. However, when people pay a visit, the hospitality is more important than the former, which means that alcohol is offered to male guests. Chuluun explains that:

I think people don't drink at home, but I think my each family has a bottle of vodka for celebration. If people visit their family, just to offer to them [...] If our friends visit our family of course we respect them, offer the alcohol, but otherwise the couples, the husband and wife, they never drink at home alone, just if other people visit to their home they drink, but it is rare.

As explained before, at celebrations, alcohol is usually offered to men and women and both are expected to express their respect and best wishes in accepting. Though, men who have traditionally a higher respected position in society than women are subject to the expression of respect through the offer of alcohol. This goes in hand with men being expected to respond to this sign of respect though accepting the offer. In this way a mutual sign of respect and relationship is built up. At the same time, alcohol serves as a gender-differentiator, because it symbolizes the difference of men and women in society and places men higher in a hierarchy of respect. This gives men a certain privilege of consumption but also puts increased pressure on them to consume. With changing gender roles in Mongolia, drinking norms in relation to gender are likely to change. In many high-income countries not only did the consumption level rise with an increasing number of women being involved in the labor market, but also the negative perception of female drinking decreased (Heath 1991; SIRC 1998).

¹¹ This does not mean that in certain situations there is no pressure to comply for women. However, a discussion of the dimension and complexity of norms on female drinking go beyond the scope of this paper.

Tengis explains:

[at a celebration] if a woman says 'no' of course the people usually don't offer. But if it's a man, they offer and they have to [drink] usually. Because in tradition [...] usually people respect more the men, more the men than the women, because this is from the ancient times [...] but I think maybe it will change soon because nowadays the men and the women are going to be equal. But from the ancient time the men are usually respected more than the women

3.3.2 Perceptions of 'Overconsumption'

The consumption does not seem to be restricted in volume, but by the man's ability to retain self-control. Drunkenness as such is not interpreted as losing control but as status of intoxication that leads to passing out.

Tengis explains that people think [about] a drunken man, if they see a drunken man, it doesn't look like a drunken woman, because it is very common in our society, but of course if a man drinks and passes out, it looks very strange to the others, but a drunken man is just a normal thing.

Although consumption and intoxication for men is acceptable, they are supposed to retain control whilst drinking and restrain themselves from passing out. Therefore, drinking might serve as an indicator to test someone's manliness and imply a competition between men. As Phillips describes in the case of New Zealand:

Although drinking huge quantities of alcohol at great speed was admired the great virtue was to deny that the booze was going to your head. To "hold one's liquor" and "drink up large" but still have a clear head and even drive home was the mark of a "hard man" (Phillips 1987:79)

Given the fact that the volume of drinking is predetermined by group norms, with which the individual is supposed to keep up, he has to drink as much as the others but to remain in self-control and avoid to passing out. If a person is known to have a problematic relationship with alcohol and 'overconsumes', the group might take precaution: *'when I meet with my friends and someone [...] cannot control himself in drinking we offer less to this person because we know this person's character. This is why we control this person'* (Interview Chuluun). Men who do not restrain their drinking at an occasion or men who develop a problematic relationship with alcohol are seen as unable to be in control, as weak. Making the individual's weakness responsible for alcohol-related problems means that alcohol consumption as such does not have to be demonized, because it is not alcohol or drinking as such which is problematic, but the deviant behaviour of the individual who is not able to maintain his self-control. This implies a

stigmatization of people who abuse alcohol as 'weak' and 'uncontrolled'. Mungun makes very clear that:

this person doesn't have any life goals, doesn't have any objectives for its life. Because if someone has a work, if someone has hard work, if someone has a big goal, that person has to work very hardly [...] but I think these people are very weak, not strong

This leads to a situation where on the one hand a man is especially expected to consume alcohol because of his gender but on the other hand also supposed to keep up self-control. Therefore, alcohol consumption becomes an indicator for the ability of a man to control himself while drinking, a symbol of his strength.

3.3.3 Targeted marketing

This connection between alcohol consumption and strength is actively used by targeted marketing. The connotation between alcohol and masculinity is clearly expressed in the utilisation of historic symbolism and male national 'heroes' for marketing purposes. May explains rather naively:

What is notable about the alcohol industry in Mongolia is that it has embraced Mongolia's heritage. Brand names range from the popular Hunter to a series of historical motifs ranging across the span of Mongolian history—from Hun and Golden Horde to the ever-popular Chinggis Khaan vodka (May 2009: 97)

The figure of Chinggis Khaan is omnipresent since the foundation of the Mongolian state. He is perceived as a glorious and strong conqueror and a role model to Mongolian men. The use of his image for marketing purposes, especially in the alcohol industry, has become so popular that the government is discussing a ban to stop a 'cheapening' of it (The Business Council of Mongolia 2013). That especially the figure Chinggis Khaan became the pioneer in alcohol marketing is quite cynical, given the fact that he actually criticized alcohol consumption. Chinggis Khaan is known for the relentless implementation of strict laws, the *yasa*, which was a set of laws embracing all aspects of life (Morgan 1986). It is said that the *yasa* defined a legal minimum drinking age of forty and that men were allowed to drink more with increasing age (Interview NGO-leader). A significant quote of Chinggis Khaan, which seems not to be known too well, is:

If unable to abstain from drinking, a man may get drunk three times a month; if he does it more than three times he is culpable; if he gets drunk twice a month it is better; if once a month, this is still laudable; and if one does not drink at all what can be better? But where can such a man be found? If such a man were found he would be worthy of the highest esteem (Chinggis Khaan quoted in May 2007:97)

It can be concluded that consumption patterns and norms are highly gendered. Whereas female consumption is perceived rather negatively outside of the framework of celebrations, male consumption is encouraged. While intoxication of women is seen as a sign of bad morals, men can be intoxicated as long as they do not pass out. This is linked to the notion that drinking and keeping self-control is a sign of strength and therefore reflects masculinity. These gendered norms about drinking should be carefully considered, when addressing harmful alcohol use. Interventions and campaigns which weaken the link between alcohol consumption and stereotypical masculinity would be of high importance. It might be possible to utilise the symbolic figure of Chinggis Khaan for this purpose. After all, he is perceived as the most influential man in Mongolia's history and an outspoken role model. Enforcing the ban of Chinggis Khaan from certain marketing to avoid a 'cheapening' of his name, as it was proposed by the parliament, might have a positive side effect on the linkage between masculinity and alcohol consumption. In addition, one might think about the inclusion of his symbolic figure in public health campaigns. However, putting emphasis on the strength to reject alcohol has to be done sensitively in order to avoid a reinforcement of the stigmatisation of alcohol addicted people as weak. As we can see, alcohol-related norms are complex and when aiming to address harmful consumption patterns, they have to be taken into account carefully.

3.4 Construction of normative pressure

It is very important for the participants to accentuate that rejecting offered alcohol is 'possible' and only depends on the individual's decision. Though, by looking closer into situations described by the participants, we can understand that they actually avoid rejecting offered alcohol and that a certain pressure to conform is exercised at certain occasions.

3.4.1 Verbal reactions

Verbal reactions can be utilised as a helpful indicator for understanding whether some behaviour is interpreted as deviant or not (Paton-Simpson 1995). Verbal reactions are by far not the only possible indicator. Mimics and gestures, for example, provide an interesting insight into reactions indicating a certain norm. However, the available data for this research does not allow for such an in-depth analysis of reactions, but will discuss verbalised reactions only.

The participants describe questioning, attempts of persuasion and jokes as a reaction to 'underconsumption'. These verbal reactions indicate the existence of minimum drinking norms in which 'underconsumption' is a form of deviance. With exception of Erdenehuyg, the male participants drink alcohol in general. Therefore, it is not surprising that people do ask for their reasons not to drink, when they chose to do so. However, an explanation might not be accepted, and attempts of persuasion are described. These are for example underlining the outsider position of the 'underconsumer', to convince him to drink. Chuluun describes that: *'usually we say that: we didn't meet in a long time, we all drink and you alone don't drink'*. This stresses the importance of alcohol as a group activity and it is argued that the individual does not fulfil his involvement obligation. Itgel shares his experience of drinking with his friends:

But if I drink with others, saying no is difficult [...] if I say no, they start to say bad words. So I have to drink. The other people are already drunk and then they say: drink! Drink! [...] It happened to me they say: we know you, you don't say no, drink! Drink!

This is an example of an intensified invitation to drink, with constructed pressure on the non-drinker through the usage of insults. Furthermore, the 'underconsumer' is compelled to drink through the remarks of the other interactors who claim to know him and his desire to drink.

Another described way to pressure someone is by joking. It can be used as a tool to imply criticism under the secure coverage of 'only' joking. Goffman comments:

Of all the claimed keyings through which responsibility can be relieved, the plea that one was only joking seems to be the most important. It appears in every context and must be one of the most widely employed dodges in the history of man (Goffman 1974: 331).

Paton-Simpson found joking and mocking to be very frequently described by New Zealander men and was seen as a huge drawback for people who 'underconsume' (Paton-Simpson 2001). Certainly, whether someone might joke about a topic depends on the people they are in interaction with. Mungun makes clear that his friends do not joke about non-drinkers because they support the idea of not-drinking. Tengis explains that his friends do not joke if a valid reason is provided to them. The other participants describe joking about people who do not drink as 'normal'. They were reluctant to give examples, which is understandable given the sensitivity of the topic. Gambaatar says: *'yes, yes of course my friends joke at me. But eh everybody jokes in different ways. But it is very different, I don't want to give any examples (laughing)'*. When men are rejecting a drink, and especially when they are in a male dominated setting, joking might attack

the person's masculinity (Lemle et al. 1989). Interestingly, the jokingly attack on men's masculinity is brought up by the female participants, who might feel more comfortable to speak about it directly.

Altantsetseg explains that jokes are difficult to deal with for men, especially when they are among other men:

my husband is a fireman and he works with many men. So my husband says the men's jokes are very different, they tell to him so many jokes! So, for example you are a man, you should be strong, this is why you have to drink and they tell a lot of jokes.

Oyuntsetseg states that jokes aimed at criticizing the self-determination of a man, by joking about him being subservient to his wife, are very common. This brings us back to the connection of masculinity and alcohol as described before and supports the argument that alcohol is a symbol of strength.

The described verbal reactions indicate that not-drinking causes various different reactions, but is not ignored. The invitation to drink with the group is underpinned by the notion of unconformity to the whole group. Jokes are directed to the non-drinker, which imply criticism to the 'underconsumer' masculinity and self-determination.

3.4.2 Face-Saving Strategies

In order to avoid negative reactions to their 'underconsumption' the participants describe different strategies which they apply to save their face.

3.4.2.1 Shamanistic Sacrifice of the beverage

One possibility of avoidance in festive situations is sacrificing the vodka. Sacrificing the vodka is a shamanistic tradition in which a person dunks their fingertip into the drink and spills it into the four cardinal points. In that way, the person still engages in an interaction using alcohol, without drinking it. Tengis describes this as a possible way to avoid drinking; however, he adds that it could be good to take a sip as well. He furthermore explains, that sacrificing the vodka, might not be sufficient enough for a wedding and recommends that at least half of the offered cups should be consumed, to retain the expression of respect at the wedding celebration (Interview Tengis).

3.4.2.2 Account-making

Schur says in relation to account-making, that *'Even where no guilt or shame were consciously felt, one might well offer justifying rationales in the hope of lessening what could be, nonetheless, very real stigmatizing pressures'* (Schur 1979: 300). The participants described account-making mostly explaining that they could not drink because of an illness or medication. In doing so they might want to avoid being labelled (Paton-Simpson 1995).

Erdenehuyg gives the example that *'they tell me I have to drink. But I tell them any reasons: I am sick or [...] my organs are not so good or I had a cure and I mustn't drink anymore'*. Erdenehuyg was addicted to alcohol and lives abstinent now. He utilises the argument of illness, medication and sometimes Christian faith in order to cover up that he was addicted to alcohol and to avoid. The provision of these health reasons, serves as a protection strategy for being labelled an 'alcoholic' on the one hand or a 'wimp' on the other. Tengis uses practical excuses for not drinking temporarily, such as health reasons, driving, or visiting the parents or older family members. The latter excuse is based on the age hierarchy in Mongolia, which is still of high importance. Older people and especially older family members have to be paid the due respect. Being drunk in front of an older person is interpreted as sign of disrespect, because consuming alcohol was once a privilege of older man. For Chuluun sickness is the only accepted reason for not drinking: *'if someone is sick of course the other people don't offer to this person, otherwise they usually drink and they have to, we say'*.

3.4.2.3 Passing strategies

Another possibility is to engage in strategies which conceal discrepancy from norms, which are called passing strategies (Goffman 1965).

Discussing drinking at celebrations, the participants describe a possibility of passing at celebrations through engagement in the organisation tasks and kitchen. Erdenehuyg for example says:

Usually, at the wedding I go to the kitchen and help the people and bring food for the others. Otherwise, I don't sit down longer. If I sit down longer of course the people offer [alcohol] to me and I have to drink.

In avoiding the focal point of alcohol consumption the participants can take part in celebrations while eschew being offered alcohol. Which passing strategy is adequate depends on the context in which it is felt necessary to use them. When a celebration is crowded, it might be easier to pass with such a strategy, than when there are only few people. If the situation allows for pretending to drink, this is another passing strategy (Paton-Simpson 1995). At a celebration, a colleague taught me how to place a napkin in the same hand as the vodka glass and let the vodka slowly drip into the napkin. This passing strategy was successful because it was very crowded and the peoples' attention was diverted. Mungun explained that it is possible to drink less than expected through sharing the alcohol. He exemplifies: *'If one of them drinks so much this person would be so drunk. So to avoid that, the husband and wives drink for each other'*.

3.4.2.4 Personal cost of 'underconsumption'

As described before, alcohol consumption is perceived as important in certain situations in which 'underconsumption' might lead to face-loss. In these situations 'underconsumption' can imply negative consequences for the individual, which are described with the term personal costs here.

Personal costs include, for example, negative verbal reactions and insults as they were described above. The perceived necessity for passing strategies, lead to the individual behaving in a socially constricted manner, which could be interpreted as a cost as well, as it restricts the perceived personal freedom. Another cost might arise in building up and sustaining relationships. Goffman explains that a *'failure to sustain the many minor norms important in the etiquette of face-to-face-communication can have a very pervasive effect upon the defaulter's acceptability in social situations'* (Goffman 1965: 129). Since 'underconsumption' is interpreted as a sign of disrespect and low sociability, it might build up a distance between the interactors. A young man who is abstinent told me that: *'they might invite you one, two, three times to a celebration, but when you don't drink they will stop inviting you.'* (Participant Observation). Paton-Simpson argues that behaving deviant can lead to social exclusion, because the person is found to be ineligible by social gatekeepers (Paton-Simpson 1995). Erdenehuyg states that it was very difficult to make his friends accept his choice of abstinence at first and that after he experienced pressure in social drinking situations, decided not to join them in bars and pubs. He felt that with increasing time they accepted his choice better and is comfortable with them now, but still avoids drinking occasions.

Bathuu made very clear that a person who does not drink is unlikely to have many friends or has to obtain a special talent for socialising in order to build up friendships. Discussing the personal costs of abstinence, Erdenehuyg calls for self-determination and argues that people have to learn to openly reject alcohol, because they cannot be physically forced. He states: *'alcohol usage just depends on the person. But if a person says no, of course people don't come to them, open their mouth and pour in the alcohol. So, I think the people should learn to say no!'*

In this section we could understand that 'underconsumption' for the participants come with a socially accepted explanation for it. In situations like celebrations, in which they feel a high pressure to engage in drinking, people might engage in passing strategies in order to avoid personal costs, which can arise in the form of negative verbal reactions to implications for the social life of the 'underconsumer'.

3.4.3 The tension between individual agency and compliance

At first sight, the verbal reactions of other people in the social interaction and the described avoidance strategies, stand in contrast to the participants' accentuation that 'underconsumption' in drinking situation is 'possible'.

This does not have to be the case when looking at it closely. As it was discussed before, the participants understand alcohol consumption as a matter of self-control, and 'correct' consumption as a sign of strength. To make sense of alcohol as a matter of self-control, obviously the individual has to have the possibility to choose whether or not or how much he consumes.

This decision about drinking is interpreted as an expression of a person's ability to perform in a self-controlled way by the participants. Losing this self-control, by drinking unpremeditated or by drinking too much to 'handle' is understood as a sign of weakness. However, this decision is not made in a vacuum, but takes place in a social interaction and built up norms, by which the decision-making process is influenced. The interaction between norms and behaviour is a deeply complex phenomenon and certainly does not stand in any causal relationship. Norms do not dictate a person's decision-making; in contrast, an individual is a powerful agent in decision-making and in the creation of norms, since these are building up in social interactions (Paton-

Simpson 1995). Nevertheless, norms do influence behaviour and alcohol consumption, at least at celebrations, is closely interlinked with Mongolian tradition and hierarchy of respect for the participants. This builds up a tension, in which the participants acknowledge the importance of self-control and individual decision-making, but value traditional customs and group conformity at the same time. This tension becomes distinct at Gambaatar's explanation:

I think it is not very difficult to say no maybe when my well-known people offer [alcohol] to me, I can say no I don't want to drink or I can say anything to my friends, it is not very difficult, it just depends on me, because I should control myself, I should use it in the right way the alcohol [...]

At the same time, where he accentuates the sole importance of self-control and individual decision-making, he restricts individual agency in relation to the people he is in interaction with. This tension becomes intensified at celebrations, where the norms are formalised:

I think it is not very difficult to say no at the wedding, also it just depends on me. But it is very difficult; in tradition I have to drink the first three glasses of course. But if I don't use the alcohol, it is ok, if people know me (Interview Gambaatar).

To sum up, the importance of individual agency and certain normative structures lead to a framework of tension for the individual. On the one hand, the individual is supposed to act in self-control, which is a sign of strength. On the other hand, in certain situations he is also supposed to comply with drinking norms, although they might be detrimental to his preference. This tension has to be carefully considered when addressing harmful consumption patterns. It is important, that both sides, the individual and the society, are included into research and intervention design, in order to allow an affective decrease of harmful alcohol use.

Conclusion

Mongolia is a country undergoing rapid change and has a transforming society. While its economy grows and Mongolia modernises, high levels of alcohol consumption impose challenges to development. In this case study, which is based on qualitative fieldwork in Erdenebulgan Soum, an insight into young men's perception on alcohol and consumption norms is offered.

It is argued that alcohol consumption should be understood in its historical context. Rapid changes in politics, economics and society are interacting with habits and norms, which are adjusting, diverting and transforming. These processes have to be understood and taken into account for effective policy making, which should be culturally bound and specifically designed, to address the

underlying reasons for problematic alcohol consumption levels. The introduction of new alcoholic beverages can have a tremendous influence on consumption patterns. In Mongolia, it seems that especially the introduction of industrial produced alcohol, influences consumption patterns as vodka is now described as inherent part of the Mongolian tradition.

It is furthermore argued that analyses of alcohol consumption should be embedded in a framework of cultural norms and these carefully considered when drafting policies and interventions. The participants perceived drinking as necessary in certain social interactions and linked 'underconsumption' to loss of face. This could cause personal costs such as negative verbal reactions, the perceived necessity of engaging in passing strategies and social exclusion.

Drinking norms obviously differ depending on the contexts. At celebrations, the minimum drinking norm was described explicitly, as being three shot glasses of vodka. The symbolic power given to alcohol as a special beverage makes it eligible for and equalises it with, the expression of respect. In casual drinking situations, consumption is more about the group members acting in the same way, which leads to everybody being expected to engage in the same drinking behaviour. Gaining a deeper understanding of these and other drinking norms is crucial for designing effective policies to tackle harmful consumption patterns. Policy makers have to be aware that drinking takes place in a framework of social interaction and that the cultural context of consumption patterns is important to address sensitively, when aiming to reduce alcohol consumption. It should, for example, be taken into consideration that alcohol is used for the expression of respect. Certain policies, such as increased pricing of alcoholic beverages, should be discussed in relation to the symbolic power assigned to alcohol and the possible side-effects of introducing a scarcity-value taken into consideration.

It is understood from this case study that the symbolic power of alcohol is used to mark gender identity in a society where traditional gender roles are being challenged. Alcohol consumption bears the connotation of masculinity and men who 'underconsume' are running the risk of social exclusion. Men who 'overconsume' are vulnerable to being stigmatised as lacking self-control and appearing weak. Against this background it is laudable that the President makes use of his position, which is not only a position of political but power, but a symbolic position representing power as such. That he aims to be a

role model and abstains from drinking publicly, gives a valid example of a masculine man who is not drinking. This effort to change the symbolic connotation of alcohol and masculinity could go further in using the symbolic figure of Chinggis Khaan. At the moment, his powerful image, which symbolises traditional aspects of masculinity such as strength, power and risk-taking, is used to market alcohol. Since Chinggis Khaan was actually critical of high levels of alcohol consumption, his representation could be used to initiate a change in the symbolic meaning attached to alcohol, in relation to masculinity.

Overall, alcohol consumption and drinking norms are embedded into the various transformation processes Mongolia is undergoing. In order to address harmful use of alcohol and reduce the impediment to the human and social development caused by it, there is a high need for further in-depth research on the cultural and social context of alcohol consumption.

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Appendix 1

Question Guideline Expert Interviews

Would you like to tell me about your work?

Which kind of challenges do you face in you work?

Do you have any statistics in relation to alcohol?

Do you know any publications concerning alcohol in Mongolia?

Policies and implementation

Could you tell me something about the policies on alcohol?

Which policies did change?

What do you think about the president's campaign?

What is your opinion on the policy implementation level?

Which policies would be helpful in your opinion?

Are there any prevention programs in place?

Are there any education/training/awareness courses on alcohol (e.g. in schools, universities)

If someone has a problematic consumption, where can he or she go to seek help?

Are support programs free of charge?

Society

I which context does drinking take place?

In your opinion, which reasons do people have for alcohol consumption?

What is your opinion on alcohol consumption in Mongolia?

Police

What happens if someone is found intoxicated in the streets?

If someone is taken by the police while intoxicated, what happens?

Does this person receive any advice/offer of support?

Do they have to pay a fine for being taken in custody?

Does the police receive any training about how to deal with intoxicated people?

Hospital

Does the staff in the hospital receive any training about alcohol specific problems?

Which type of support do you offer? Is the treatment free of charge?

Who is coming for advice/support/treatment?

NGO

Which kind of support do you offer? Is the program free of charge?

Who is coming to seek support?

How do people learn about this NGO?

Do you work together with other NGO's, the government etc?

Appendix 2

Question Guideline Exploratory Interviews

When do people drink alcohol? At which occasions?

Where do people drink?

Who does usually drink alcohol?

Which type of beverages do people drink?

With whom do people drink?

Do people drink alone?

What is your opinion about the policies on alcohol?

What is your opinion about the president's campaign?

What is your opinion to drinking of men/women?

What do you think about people who do not drink?

What is your opinion about Airag and Mongol arxi?

Appendix 3

Question-Guideline In-depths Interviews

Occasions

When do people drink alcohol?

At which occasions do people drink alcohol?

At which celebrations do people use alcohol?

Which drinks are used at which occasion?

Venues

Where do people drink alcohol?

At home? Work? Outside?

What do you think about drinking at home/work/bars, restaurants?

How do people drink at home? How do people drink at bars and restaurants?

Beverages

Which types of alcoholic beverages are there? Are there different?

What is your opinion on beer/vodka/wine?

What do you think about Mongolian arxi and airag?

When do people drink which type of beverages?

Which alcohol do men drink? Which alcohol do women drink ?

Sociability

Who is drinking alcohol?

How is drinking with friends? How is drinking with colleagues? How is drinking at celebrations?

How do people react if someone does not drink, drinks less than the others?

How do people react if someone rejects a drink?

How do people react if a woman rejects a drink?

How do people react if a man rejects a drink?

Do you know about any games?

Do people joke about drinking? Would you like to tell me any jokes you know?

Do people joke about people who do not drink?

What do people think if someone drinks too much?

Policies

What is your opinion on the President's campaign?

What is your opinion on the alcohol policies?

What is your opinion on the curfew?

What is your opinion on the legal minimum age?

What is your opinion on the price of alcoholic beverages?

Personal Information

Age

Marital Status

Profession

Occupation