

THE OUTSIDE AND INSIDE MEANINGS OF ALCOHOL: CHANGING TRENDS IN INDIAN URBAN MIDDLE-CLASS DRINKING

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I hereby certify that this thesis is the result of my own work except where otherwise indicated and due acknowledgement is given.

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Abstract

To explore the political economy of Indian urban middle-class alcohol production, distribution and consumption; the underlying power structures; and the emic context of drinking, including the reasons for and meanings of drinking, in this thesis we use a Mintzian method based on the concepts of outside and inside meaning. Taking a contemporary historical perspective, we examine the economic, political and social conditions from 1980 to the present that have had an impact on the recent increase in the availability, accessibility and permissibility of drink and have thereby shaped Indian middle-class individuals' alcohol consumption decisions.

We analyse changes in alcohol production and distribution and the structures (i.e. the supply of raw materials, management, the composition of final demand, the organisation of distribution, advertising and marketing, and tax) that have underpinned the shifts, as a means to highlight the different vested interests that come into play at various stages of production and distribution. In particular, we highlight the conflicting interests of the alcohol industry and that of the state governments, which have, nonetheless, resulted in a cooperative relationship to the benefit of both.

Shifts in alcohol consumption are investigated in a three-fold manner. First, changes in middle-class income and the consequences for alcohol expenditures are statistically analysed. Then, representations of alcohol in English-language print media, such as newspapers and magazines, are explored in order to shed light on shifts in the permissibility of drinking, which reflect broader changes, related to caste, class and gender, concerning social and consumption behaviour for members of the Indian urban middle-class. Then, the inside meanings that individuals attach to alcohol consumption are examined. Drawing on interview data, I consider the way in which middle-class students of Delhi universities represent and justify their drinking, which reveal the role of alcohol in class- and education-based distinctions.

We conclude that the recent shifts in the availability, accessibility and permissibility of alcohol have been made possible not only by the structural power of the alcohol industry and state governments, but also by the exercise of individual power by, for instance, alcohol executives. We also conclude that the importance of the institutions of religion and caste are waning in the area of alcohol consumption, indicating the variable significance of institutions in different contexts due to the role of human agency.

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List of abbreviations

BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
CONGRESS	Indian National Congress
CONGRESS-I	Indian National Congress Party
ENA	Extra neutral alcohol
FAB	Flavoured alcoholic beverage
FERA	Foreign Exchange Regulation Act
FIPB	Foreign Investment Promotion Board
IMFL	Indian-made foreign liquor
LVMH	Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy
MoFP	Ministry of Food Processing
MPCE	Monthly per capita expenditure
MRTP	Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act
NCAER	National Council of Applied Economic Research
NIMHANS	National Institute of Mental Health and NeuroSciences
NSSO	National Sample Survey Organisation
OBC	Other backward caste/class
SC	Scheduled Caste
SSA	Social structure of accumulation
ST	Scheduled Tribe
SWA	Scotch Whisky Association
TASMAC	Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation Limited
WHO	World Health Organization

Chapter 1 – Introduction

In 2003, during her third term as Chief Minister of the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu, Jayaram Jayalalitha's government took over the retail vending of Indian-made foreign liquor (IMFL), with the ostensible motivation of ending the cartelisation of the liquor industry. She placed it under the control of the Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation Limited (Tasmac), which was also responsible for overseeing the wholesale vending of IMFL pursuant to regulations established during [M.G.Ramachandran](#)'s chief ministership (Anand 2006: <http://outlookindia.com>)¹. Following the government's 2003 takeover of IMFL retailing, despite display of the warning that “drinks are bad for you, your home and the nation” by all government retail outlets, Tasmac's turnover was reported to have increased from a pre-2003 rate of Rs. 34.99 million to Rs. 73.35 million in 2005-6 (Anand 2006:<http://outlookindia.com>), while state accounts indicate that Tamil Nadu experienced a significant rise in state excise and particularly tax revenues, as laid out in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Tamil Nadu Excise and Tax Revenues, 2001-2 to 2004-5 (Rs. million)

	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
State Excise Revenue	2.058	2.113	1.657	2.549
State Tax Revenue	13.009	14.341	15.944	19.357

Source: (Government of Tamil Nadu 2005: http://www.tn.gov.in/budget/archives/eighteen_year_accounts/revenue_account_receipts.pdf).

Tamil Nadu's experience has been shared by other states, such as Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. The former asserted in 1994 that prohibition would result in the yearly loss of Rs. 12 billion of state receipts (Jayasuriya and Jayasuriya 1998: 97), and that more than ten percent of its 1991-1992 annual budget, Rs. 8.4 billion, came from liquor revenue

¹ Please note that all lengthy references have been placed in the footnotes rather than the body of our thesis.

(Isaac 1998: 154). Karnataka's alcohol excise earnings have progressively expanded from Rs. 0.5 billion in 1985 to Rs. 3.5 billion in 1992-1993, Rs. 4.1 billion in 1993-1994, and Rs. 7.1 billion in 1994-1995 (Isaac 1998: 154). These examples illustrate the fiscal, and consequently the potential developmental, importance for state governments of alcohol² revenues, which Benegal estimates at fifteen to twenty percent of states' total tax revenues, second only to sales tax (2005: 1052), as well as the controversial nature of the commodity, which requires governments to avoid the appearance of promoting its consumption even as they seek to maximize tax revenues.

The commoditisation of alcohol has long been a contentious matter in India. The debates that have raged over alcohol's social, political and economic consequences have drawn on a range of evidence and arguments³. Socially, alcohol is cited as a facilitator of relaxation and networking (Isaac 1998), but is also blamed for contributing to social stratification and social ills, such as domestic violence (Isaac 1998) and even suicide (Edwards 1994). Politically, prohibition issues are characterised as mechanisms of empowerment for marginalised groups, such as poor women (Isaac 1998), even as alcohol is simultaneously said to be employed to enforce oppressive power structures at the macro level through the alcohol-disinhibition link, which attributes alcohol-related problems to lower-class individuals as a means to discredit them (Heath 1998: 297). At the micro level, it is claimed that alcohol confirms and exacerbates disparities in the intra-household distribution of power and resources through indirect abuses, such as expenditure of scarce household resources on drink, and direct abuses, such as physical violence (Isaac 1998). Economically, alcohol is noted as an important source of revenue

² Please note that in our thesis, "alcohol" always refers to legal, manufactured alcohol. Any other usages will be indicated explicitly.

³ (Arora 2001; Basu, et al. 2000; Bennett, et al. 1998; Diwanji 2002; Global Alcohol Policy Alliance 1998a; Global Alcohol Policy Alliance 1998b; Isaac 1998; Iyer 2002; Kazmin 1996; Malhotra, Malhotra and Basu 1999; Manor 1993; Patel 1998; Rahman 2002; Sharma 1969; WHO 1999; WHO 2004).

for Indian state governments (Kazmin 1996). On the contrary, for indigent households it is described as a pauperising financial drain (Sharma 1969).

These debates have largely overlooked Indian urban middle-class drinking. Little effort has been made to understand it, although it is at the heart of the commoditisation of alcohol. Thus, an “emic” standpoint that perceives alcohol consumption and its ramifications by way of the categorisations and experiences of the Indian urban middle-class, rather than through outside conceptions superimposed onto theirs, is in need as a precondition to an interpretation of their social role. In addition to being significant in and of itself, the emic view is valuable for “etic” reasons as well. Urban middle-class consumption fuels the legal industry, which in turn provides the national and state governments with essential revenue. Alcohol tax revenues offer Indian governments funds that provide investment and current expenditure opportunities that these governments might otherwise not have. Thus, the middle-class consumption of alcohol has the potential to play a significant part in sourcing state-led development in India. Before this role can be understood, however, middle-class drinking must be studied, including the economic, political and social circumstances that permit and facilitate drinking, the health and social reasons for it, and the contexts in which alcohol is consumed.

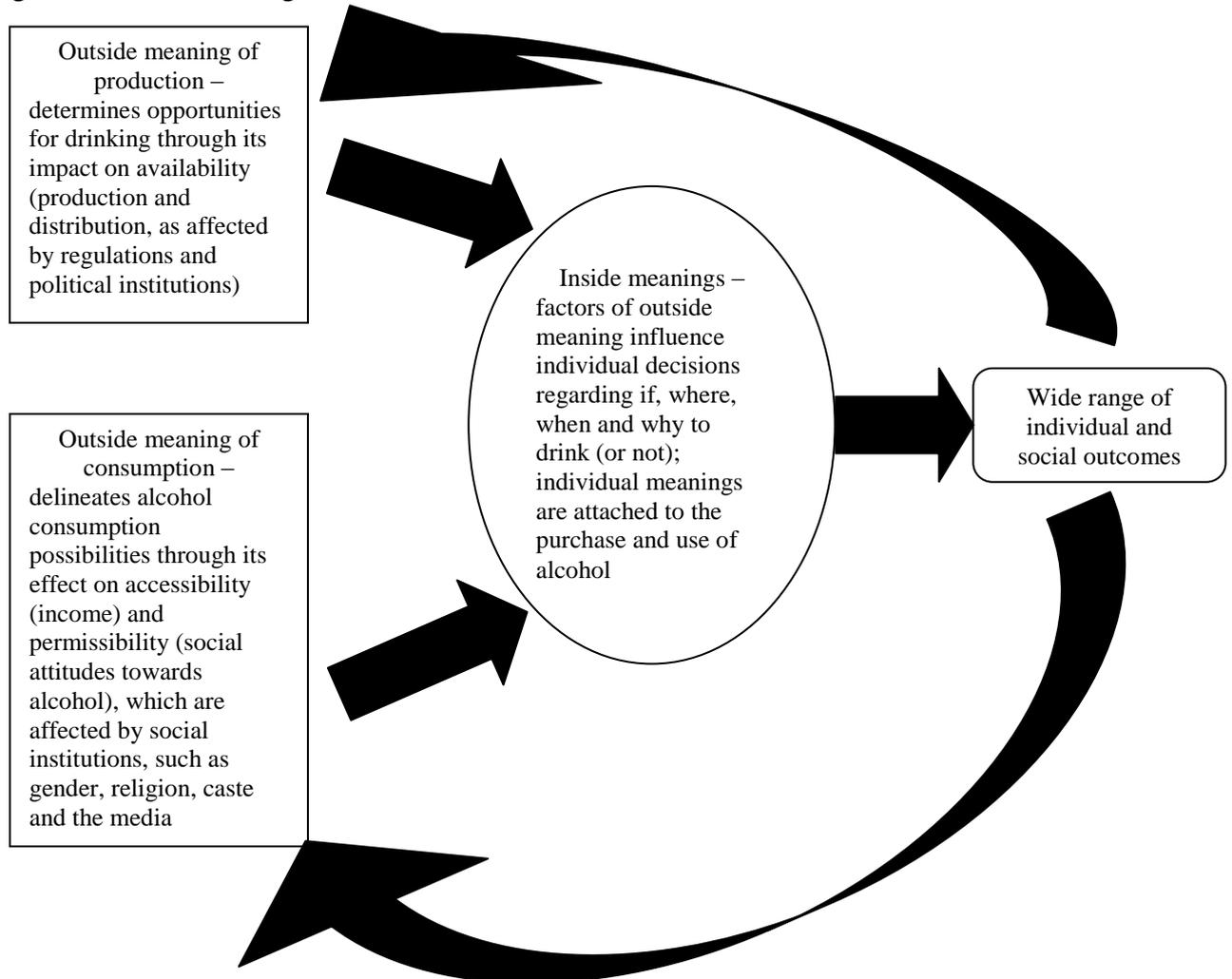
This research takes on this challenge. By applying the theoretical model of outside⁴ and inside meaning⁵ developed by Sidney Mintz in *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (1985) (to be discussed later in this chapter), it attempts to: 1) obtain an understanding of the political economy of Indian urban middle-

⁴ Outside meaning pertains to the economic, social and political conditions of a period that delineate the consumption possibilities of individuals and thereby shape the parameters within which the formulation of inside meaning takes place (Mintz 1996: 20). The concept is looked at in greater detail in section 1.3 of this chapter.

⁵ Inside meaning refers to the insider, emic meanings that people ascribe to the various uses of a product, such as sugar or alcohol. This concept is also further discussed in section 1.3 of this chapter.

class alcohol production, distribution and consumption; 2) explain the underlying power structures; and 3) to examine the emic context of drinking, including the reasons for and contexts in which alcohol is consumed. In this thesis, we argue that since 1980 in India the outside meaning of production and distribution, which conditions the availability of alcohol, and the outside meaning of consumption, which shapes the accessibility and permissibility of alcohol, have altered in such a way as to facilitate and encourage alcohol consumption by the urban middle-class. The factors of outside meaning influence individual decisions regarding where, when and why to drink (or not), and the ascription of specific inside meanings to the purchase, use and consequences of alcohol. This individual decision-making results in a wide range of individual and social outcomes. Our thesis argument is depicted in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1 Thesis argument



This thesis' exploration of the outside and inside meanings of alcohol in India is organised as follows: because of the increasing commoditisation of alcohol, Chapter 1 begins by briefly summarising the treatment of commodities in development theory and in anthropology. This is followed by an exploration of the body of literature debating the various health, social, political and economic repercussions of alcohol. Our theoretical framework is then presented. For the purposes of our research, we draw on the theoretical model of outside and inside meaning as developed by Mintz. A brief overview of his argument regarding the rise to prominence of sugar in the English diet from 1650 to 1900 is offered, after which the advantages and disadvantages of his theoretical model of outside and inside meaning for our application to alcohol are discussed. Next, some

refinements, including definition of key terms, to be made to Mintz's model for the study of changing urban middle-class alcohol consumption in India are considered. Lastly, the research methodologies used to collect and analyse data are outlined and justified, and a comment on methodological pluralism is made. In Chapter 2, the scene is set through a review of the history of production, distribution and consumption of alcohol in India, and of the economic and political changes related to economic liberalisation that have taken place since 1980 and frame the recent growth in the production and consumption of drink.

The outside meaning of the alcohol industry and markets, which determines the availability of alcohol for members of India's urban middle-classes, is analysed in Chapter 3. After a consideration of Mintz's method and the need to refine it through the incorporation of an explicitly political economy approach (in this case, loosely derived from the social structures of accumulation)⁶, the alcohol industry is overviewed. Then, through a development of the social structures of accumulation approach, the various institutions moulding different stages of the process of accumulation are examined. Institutional features to be studied include interfirm competition; the structure of supply of raw materials; management; modes of sales and marketing, including distribution networks and advertising; the composition of final demand; and tax.

Chapter 4 tackles the outside meaning of consumption. In the case of Indian urban middle-class alcohol consumption, the primary elements of outside meaning influencing the decision to drink (or not to drink) are income, attitudes and institutions, such as gender, religion, caste and the media, through their impact on the accessibility and permissibility of alcohol consumption. With radically different evidence, on the one hand NSSO surveys and on the other key texts from the print media, this chapter examines

⁶ Although the SSA approach was initially developed to study business cycles (Gordon, Edwards and Reich 1994), we have decided to refine and apply it to our research, because its framework provides us with the most relevant systematic method of examining the institutions framing and constituting the alcohol industry and markets.

changes in the outside meaning of urban middle-class alcohol consumption by investigating the shifts in accessibility, as conditioned by income, and permissibility, as influenced by social attitudes. First, a brief summary of recent trends in the consumption of legal manufactured alcohol is provided. Second, by exploring shifts in income and consumption as well as the impact of social institutions on economic opportunity and consumption, changes in the accessibility of alcohol by the Indian urban middle-class are investigated. Third, shifts in social attitudes and, consequently, permissibility are investigated by analysing the representation of alcohol-related issues in the newspapers *The Hindustan Times* and *The Times of India* and the women's magazines *Femina* and *SAVVY*. In order to understand how social institutions condition the permissibility of drinking, the treatment of social attitudes concludes with an examination of the relationship between social attitudes and social institutions.

The inside meanings of consumption are the topic of Chapter 5. Again a different kind of evidence is used: structured interviews. Interview data regarding the drinking histories of middle-class students from two universities in Delhi, Delhi University and Jawaharlal Nehru University, are utilised to illuminate the meanings that the Indian urban middle class ascribes to various uses of alcohol through the processes of “intensification” (uses arising out of the emulation of others’ consumption patterns, usually those belonging to persons of higher status) and “extensification” (uses that do not stem from imitation) as well as the impact of family members’ drinking preferences and practices, and the educational environment on individual decisions regarding drinking. Our findings are summarised and some conclusions are drawn in the final chapter, by extrapolating out to the bigger picture to understand the significance of recent trends affecting the availability, accessibility and permissibility of alcohol consumption and the meanings that individuals attach to them.

As this thesis probes the process of development through the single commodity of alcohol, which is one with a peculiar set of roles and meanings, the next section of this chapter will briefly address the treatment of commodities in development theory and in anthropology. This is to be followed by a consideration of the alcohol-specific literature.

1.1 Commodities in development theory and in anthropology

As products with the capabilities to satisfy human wants and to be exchanged (Bottomore 1991: 100-2; Gregory 1982; Marx 1990: 125-7), commodities⁷ are an integral part of people's daily lives. For this reason and due to the income deriving from their production for employees, for industry, and for government, they also play a central role in development. Nevertheless, the concept of the commodity has been largely ignored in development theory, and there has been little effort to theorise their vastly differing particular effects, except in economies through the concept of elasticities. Without a theory of the implications of the essential characteristics of commodities on production, distribution and consumption, it is not possible to understand their roles in development.

This is particularly important in the case of a commodity such as alcohol, the focus of this thesis, which plays a key role in revenue generation and whose physical and psychological effects in the individual can be mild or strong, positive or negative, depending on contexts such as the amount of intake and the social drinking environment. Moreover, as alcohol is always used in ways that are specific to a society, an analysis of its effects must be specific to time, place and society. To determine the most appropriate framework that recognises and encompasses such features, the following section assesses the literature on commodities, starting with development studies' treatment of them and, faced with its shortcomings, moving onto the theorising of commodities in anthropology.

⁷ Commodities are goods and services that are exchanged or sold/purchased in the marketplace (Thomson Nelson 2006: <http://socialsciencedictionary.nelson.com/ssd/main.html>).

1.1.1 Commodities and development: a history of development theory

An all-inclusive study of development theory alone would provide enough academic fodder for multiple theses and is, as such, outside the scope of this project. The purpose of our brief review is to highlight the treatment of commodities in development studies. Employing as our point of departure the broad sweep of development studies' history presented in Cowen and Shenton's seminal work, *Doctrines of Development* (1996), supplemented by the major syntheses of the history of development theory by Leys (1996), Nederveen Pieterse (2001) and Sen (1981, 1991, 2001, 2004), in this section we show how these reviews of development theory have treated commodities. They focus on extensions of Keynes' theories, modernisation and dependency theories, human development approaches, neoliberalism, and the "post"- and "anti"- developmental reactions, and so shall I.

Despite the wide range of meaning attached to the concept of "development", all of them involve some transformation of the material base. A common and persistent theme is the production of commodities to compensate for deficiencies in existing material conditions in developing countries, or the "intent to develop" (Cowen and Shenton 1996: viii). Although the centrality of commodities is implicitly recognised, they are rarely explicitly addressed, which will become evident in this overview.

Development theory had taken root well before the sub-discipline of development economics came into being in the post-World War II era of reconstruction. Development economics was closely linked to Keynesian thought, which entrusted development through policy to the state. In particular, the state was nominated the trustee of capital, the force underlying development, and was assigned the task of encouraging and, if need be, leading investment (Cowen and Shenton 1996: 465-466). Although neither

development economics nor Keynesian theory deals explicitly with commodities, certain assumptions about them can be inferred. For instance, the Keynesian prescription of government spending as a means to raise consumption levels – demand – and consequently, through the multiplier effect, to reduce unemployment and stimulate economic growth, implicitly places commodities in a central position in the development process. It is through the purchase of commodities that incomes are to be increased, thereby stimulating investment, employment and eventually economic growth. Hence, commodity production and consumption can be seen as central objectives in the Keynesian conception of development.

Modernisation theory germinated in the U.S. and achieved prominence during the Cold War period. In modernisation thinking, development is perceived as an evolutionary process, in which a nation moves from less to more advanced stages, whether economic, political or social, towards a known end goal often informed by Western values (Leys 1996: 9). As the stages of underdevelopment were defined in terms of the observable difference between rich and poor countries, development therefore implied a leapfrogging of stages by way of imitation. Due to modernisation theory's conception of the ultimate aim of development to be a mass consumption society, a highly positive value is once more implicitly ascribed to commodities.

Dependency theory was developed in Latin America in the 1960s. The notion of the “development of underdevelopment”, as propounded by dependency theorists, such as Andre Gunder Frank, involved the argument that the establishment of capitalism in the North was contingent upon underdevelopment in the South. The twin processes characterising development in the North were: 1) the estrangement of producers from their means of production, and 2) the reabsorption and reintegration of these producers into the production process as proletarian wage labourers (Cowen and Shenton 1996: 61).

The first without the second could only result in underdevelopment. In the South, only the first could take place, as the “lack of reintegration and reabsorption in the South [is] a result of the historical fact that the two processes were coherently coupled in the North” (Cowen and Shenton 1996: 62). A developing nation could never be free of this relationship as long as capitalism was driving development and “free trade” was allowed to reign. “Free trade”, the “diffusion” of capitalism, depleted the South’s potential surplus, as commercial products and capital goods from the North were exchanged for primary products and primary production capacity from the South (Cowen and Shenton 1996: 62). Commodity production here is seen as an instrument to promote *underdevelopment*.

The approach of human development (Sen 2004) has also resulted from dissatisfaction with prior theories of development. Developed theoretically by Sen (1981, 1991, 2001, 2004), it shifted the focus of development from the nation state and the process of industrialisation to the individual, and emphasised the expansion of people’s welfare and their choices. The transition from a national to an individual approach meant that the simple production and consumption of commodities in and of itself was no longer the ultimate goal, but that commodities were useful and instrumental in reaching other kinds of developmental aims (Sen, as above). By perceiving commodities as integral to attaining development objectives, their beneficial nature appears to be self-evident, and so in the human development approach a positive value is ascribed to commodity production and consumption.

Along with human development theory, neo-liberal theory was refined in the 1980s and then became hegemonic. Neo-liberals contested the Keynesian claim that state intervention was the key to development and, instead, proclaimed the benefits that would originate from *laissez-faire* principles. This, ideological as well as theoretical, position

stemmed from a deep hostility to the state (Leys 1996: 17-19). The rise of neo-liberal thought coincided with the unprecedented possibility of the emergence of a global capitalist economy – neo-liberalism was an expression of the values and aims of the forces that would profit from the new global economy (Leys 1996: 19). Commodities are not considered explicitly by neo-liberal theory, but seem to be viewed with neutrality, as they are left to be exchanged freely through markets.

Anti- and post-development are more recent evolutions of development theory. The anti-development movement expresses frustration with development by a repudiation of not only its results, but also its means and goals (Nederveen Pieterse 2001: 99). Post-development rejects the reductionism inherent in orthodox development theory, which conflates economic growth with development (Nederveen Pieterse 2001: 99). According to Nederveen Pieterse, “Post-development starts out from a basic realisation: that attaining a middle-class lifestyle for the majority of the world population is impossible...In time this has led to a position of total rejection of development” (2001: 99). Although anti- and post-development theorists vocally express their disenchantment with mainstream development, their point of departure in fact remains the acquisition of a middle-class lifestyle, and many of the criticisms are aimed at the inability of development policy to deliver on the promise of economic growth (Nederveen Pieterse 2001: 100). Therefore, it seems that only after a middle-class lifestyle was no longer perceived as a viable option for most of the world’s poor people that the need for an alternative was expressed. It is difficult to evaluate anti- and post-development’s valuation of commodities. The critique of mainstream theories appears to imply that a negative worth is ascribed to commodities. On the other hand, as their theoretical point of departure is the desire to obtain middle-class consumption levels, commodities seem to be perceived in a positive light.

This summary has drawn attention to the largely under-theorised nature of commodities by development theory. This is problematic because the complexity of individual commodities remains hidden, which in turn impedes the possibility of determining their importance in individuals' lives and their developmental role. The only exception is the human development approach as developed theoretically by Sen, which will be examined in further detail in the next section, before arriving at our preliminary conclusion regarding commodities and development.

1.1.1.1 Sen: Commodities and their use - characteristics transformed into capabilities

Unlike many other strands of thought within development, Sen's places value on commodities for their characteristics. Consequently, consumption includes both the simple purchase of goods and their utilisation, so that the purchase of commodities is akin to the obtaining of command over the corresponding properties. As Sen explains, the possession of food is significant for the characteristics one has access to, which may be utilised for the fulfilment of various purposes, such as the alleviation of hunger, nutritional value and the pleasure of eating (2004: 6). From the example, it is evident that commodities have many traits that can be used to meet more than one aim, but the mere existence of these characteristics is not indicative of how a person may actually employ them. The effectiveness with which these properties may be instrumentalised varies from individual to individual⁸.

Thus, according to Sen, although the characteristics of commodities remain fixed, the "functionings" that are enabled will differ on a person-to-person basis. Functionings are defined as "an achievement of a person: what he or she manages to do or be" (2004: 7) and are to be distinguished both from ownership of a commodity and the utility

⁸ Going back to the instance of food, someone with a parasitic disease impeding nutrient absorption will not derive the same degree of nourishment from an amount of food that would be adequate for an individual not suffering from an affliction (Sen 2004: 6).

derived from it. To exemplify, bicycling differs from having a bike and from the feeling of happiness produced by riding. Hence, Sen's analysis of commodities is innovative and valuable because it attempts to deal with their complexities by differentiating between purchase, use and consequences.

Nevertheless, much like other development theories, Sen's does not develop a distinction between different types of commodities, so that in fact they are all seen in a beneficial light. The examples of food and bicycles and the capabilities they are seen to facilitate, such as nutrition and mobility, can be viewed as benefits that are seen either as a necessity of life, as in the case of the former, or as a capability making life more rich, as in the case of the latter. The message is that commodities are useful, and their destructive aspects continue to be overlooked. For instance, "junk food" is not nutritionally balanced and its unremitting consumption can lead to effects such as obesity (European Public Health Alliance 2005: <http://www.ephha.org>). In this respect, assuming usefulness, Sen is also guilty of taking a black box view of commodities, thereby avoiding the issue of interpretation and emic meaning. Furthermore, he does not take into account the repercussions that an individual's consumption may have on others.

This brief account of the principal elements in the history of development theory highlights the under-theorised nature of commodities and suggests that they are not seen as a valuable lens through which to understand development. They are under-examined in three ways. First, they are ignored, so that with the exception of Sen's approach to human development, commodities are not explicitly addressed by development theories. Second, commodities are treated in an aggregate fashion. To categorise rice and tobacco together as commodities or "consumption" ignores the consequences that each may have. Lastly, apart from Sen, no distinction is made between the purchase of commodities, their use,

and their social consequences. To conflate purchase and use prevents an understanding of the effects that the latter may have, which is crucial to comprehending the role that a commodity, such as alcohol, plays in development. A more nuanced look at the emic employment and meanings of commodities is necessary to understand their impact and to formulate a clearer picture of how they can (and should) fit into development, which this thesis aims to do for the commodity of alcohol. Since commodities are not adequately addressed by any development theory, it becomes necessary to turn to anthropology, a discipline that has dedicated more attention to the topic.

1.1.2 Commodities and anthropology: commodities as seen from the inside

In anthropology, commodities as a category have been closely scrutinised in relation to other kinds of exchange, namely gifts and goods (Appadurai 1995; Godelier 1999; Gregory 1982, 1997). According to Gregory, commodities are described as alienable objects that are exchanged by transactors who find themselves in a state of reciprocal independence, and commodity exchange is a feature of class-based societies (1982: 68). By contrast, gifts are characterised as inalienable items that are exchanged by transactors who have a relationship of mutual dependence (Gregory 1982: 12), and gift exchange is a quality of clan-based societies (Gregory 1982: 68). In a commodity economy there is a clear distinction between people and objects, whereas in a gift economy items are extensions of persons (Gregory 1982: 43). The third category is that of goods, inalienable keepsakes whose value requires that they be kept (Gregory 1997: 17). Regarding consumables, such as food, they are commodities that simply satisfy physical needs (Gregory 1982: 79) and do not contribute to the establishment or maintenance of relationships, save through keeping those who consume them alive. They may also be gifts, as food is in Papua New Guinea (Gregory 1982), where food's

symbolism of marriage and sexual relations explains the role its exchange plays in facilitating relationships.

Moving away from production-focused interpretations of commodities, Appadurai emphasises an object's complete trajectory, from production to exchange/distribution to consumption (1999: 13). He notes that items do not necessarily remain gifts, goods or commodities throughout the entirety of their social lives, but may spend time in one or more of the categories (1999). The commodity phase in the life of an item is "the situation in which its exchangeability (past, present, or future) for some other thing is its socially relevant feature" (Appadurai 1999: 13), and is determined by the type of exchange that is involved. Appadurai also draws attention to the manner in which commodities are deployed to define the value of individuals, so that it is not a one-way process in which only exchange by people determines the value of commodities (1999: 20). In this context, exchange, representative and constitutive of power relations, is inherently political (Appadurai 1999: 57), and commodities can both send and receive messages, which we will find evidence of in our examination of the outside and inside meanings of alcohol in later chapters. Appadurai offers an example from Bayly's chapter in the same work: royal demand not only shaped taste and production in premodern India, but also reflected certain relationships with European styles and products (1999: 31).

The anthropological literature on commodities vis-à-vis gifts and goods does not explicitly discuss alcohol. There is a separate extensive body of anthropological literature looking at alcohol in the context of various cultures, ranging from "untouched", "traditional" ones to "modern" ones. Rather than focusing on exchange, however, this literature examines consumption and its ramifications. In "traditional" contexts, alcohol consumption is depicted as desirable, especially for ritual and ceremonial purposes (Linares 1993; Howell 1998). For instance, Howell cites the mental transformation

induced by palm wine, which by altering a person's state of mind thereby facilitates the possibility of communication and relationships between people, ancestors and spirits (1998: 164).

Anthropological work on alcohol in "modern" contexts is divided in its interpretation of its social role. Some ethnographies (McKnight 2002; Mitchell 2004) depict alcohol as harmful to society, as exemplified by domestic abuse and the erosion of family ties. Other anthropologists investigating alcohol in the "modern" context, such as Mary Douglas and Dwight B. Heath, contend that rather than engaging in problem inflation⁹, as the research focused on the chemical, biological and pharmacophysiological factors of alcohol consumption tends to do (2003: 18-19), their theoretical point of departure is that alcohol is neither a social nor a theoretical problem. They argue that the very nature of the research developed to address issues related to problem drinking, a body of work which focuses solely on the detrimental economic, health and social ramifications of drinking, inevitably results in the conclusion that alcohol is harmful. Heath claims that such a view is unwarranted, as the incidence of problem drinking is rare, and maintains that it is for this reason that anthropology should be concerned with alcohol as an artefact as well as the attitudes, values and actions that pertain to it (Heath 2003: 18).

Despite their different interpretations of the role of alcohol, all these anthropological works share a common thread, namely the effort to comprehend how alcohol is used and experienced by the members of the culture under examination. None would disagree with Douglas' statement, "Drinking is essentially a social act, performed in a recognized social context" (2003: 3). Hence, the treatment of commodities and

⁹ Robin Room, an anthropologist himself, contests Heath's position on the tendency towards problem inflation in other fields' assessments of alcohol and argues that "the disparity between the ethnographic and other alcohol literature also reflects a systematic bias in the modern ethnographic literature against the full recognition of alcohol problems in the cultures under study" (1984: 170).

alcohol in anthropology is valuable because it not only considers alcohol differentiated from other commodities, but attempts to understand how specific cultures conceive of it and its social role. Furthermore, as the literature on commodities in relation to gifts and goods concentrates on exchange, while the literature on alcohol examines use, anthropology distinguishes between the obtaining and the use of this particular commodity. Although anthropology largely ignores the health effects of alcohol, its focus on the uses and meanings that are associated with alcohol within specific cultures provides a useful counterweight to the etic epidemiological outlook held by other disciplines, which do not consider the emic view. Our research will incorporate the insights of anthropology and, in Chapter 5 on the inside meanings of alcohol, will consider the emic perspective by examining the manner in which alcohol is used and experienced by members of the Indian urban middle-class. Next, we turn to work on alcohol as a commodity.

1.2 Alcohol as a commodity

There is a body of literature, which considers alcohol as a commodity. Drawing on a wide range of evidence and sources, this body of work highlights the debates that have taken place on the political and economic repercussions arising from alcohol production and distribution as well as the economic, health, social, and political effects resulting from its consumption. This section overviews this literature, focusing, where relevant information is available, on India-specific examples.

In the debates concerning the ramifications of alcohol production and distribution, the economic benefits have been weighed against the disadvantages. The alcohol industry

is said to play an important role in the growth of the economies of the developing countries that have permitted its establishment by facilitating cash inflows (Isaac 1998: 155) and curbing foreign currency outflows (Walsh and Grant 1985: 13). It has also been argued that the alcohol industry has the potential to abet the flow of funds within the economy by injecting vitality into linked sectors, such as raw materials, construction, tourism, dining and entertainment. This has been questioned, however, by Walsh and Grant, who note that such outcomes are often not actualised and that raw materials and energy sources may have to be imported (1985: 13). Additionally, they assert that, “It is also possible that similar benefits could be obtained without the costs associated with increased alcohol production and consumption by encouraging the development of other industries appropriate to an early stage of economic development” (1985: 13).

The alcohol industry’s greatest stimulative economic effects are claimed to stem from employment creation and government income through taxation. The state of Andhra Pradesh asserted in 1994 that prohibition would result in the yearly loss of 20,000 jobs and 12 billion rupees of state receipts (Jayasuriya and Jayasuriya 1998: 97). As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, Benegal estimates alcohol revenues to comprise fifteen to twenty percent of states’ total tax revenues (2005: 1052). Nonetheless, some scholars have expressed reservations about the significance of the employment and tax income generated by the alcohol sector. Grant (1985: 4) and Leu (1983: 26) point out that the rules of economic efficiency dictate that resource allocation is determined by and adapts to meet consumers’ needs, rather than vice versa. Leu also cautions against confounding structural change with alterations in aggregate demand (1983: 26)¹⁰, while Grant claims that alcohol tax revenue is similar to a transfer payment that redistributes purchasing

¹⁰ He posits, “It is unlikely that consumers who reduce their alcohol consumption save the money previously spent on alcohol. It is more likely that they simply buy other commodities. Whether this results in a net increase or decrease in the overall number of jobs cannot be determined *a priori* and depends on the labour intensity of production and the import share of the different commodities affected” (1983: 26).

power without increasing either current or future consumption possibilities (1985: 7). Furthering such arguments, Sharma (1969) proposes that greater employment could ensue from investments in industries with more extensive backward and forward linkages.

The political consequences of alcohol production and distribution are closely tied to the economic ones, particularly, government tax income, and have been described at the international and national levels. It has been maintained that due to the size and resultant profits of the intoxicating beverage industry, estimated to have a market size of US \$900 billion (Accenture 2007: 2), alcohol producing multinational corporations wield a significant amount of political power both within home and foreign countries. Jayasuriya and Jayasuriya assert that this political power may be used to influence the formulation of the international political agenda in such a way that the interests of governments are sidelined (1998: 101). At the national level, the political power of the Indian alcohol industry is considerable, due to its size, its continued growth, and the tax revenues it provides state governments, and it has been able to utilise its political leverage to, for instance, attain preferential access to raw materials such as molasses¹¹. Isaac has also drawn attention to the fact that alcohol as a political issue has given political experience and influence to otherwise marginalised groups, such as indigent people and women, by offering them the opportunity to assert themselves politically (ironically) through calls for its regulation and prohibition. He comments on the success of such movements in the Indian states of Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Maharashtra and Bihar in preventing alcohol sales, closing liquor shops, and pressuring drinkers into quitting (1998: 168).

¹¹ This issue is discussed in Chapter 3.

The power relations surrounding alcohol have been characterised as a means of oppression. Heath mentions its place in reinforcing existing patterns of inequality. He states,

“beverage alcohol and the characteristics attributed to it have often been used, both symbolically and instrumentally, to promote and support systems of domination and subordination. Just as belief in the alcohol-disinhibition link can be used to deny or limit the availability of alcohol to subordinate groups, it can also be used to justify supplying it as a way of dissipating potential political problems. And the attribution of a variety of alcohol-related problems to lower-class people can be used to discredit and even oppress them” (1998: 297).

Traditionally, in India, such views were exemplified by the strict interdiction of the upper-castes, such as the Brahmins, from imbibing alcoholic beverages (Bennett et al. 1998: 247).

In addition to the repercussions of alcohol production and distribution, those stemming from consumption have also been debated. It has been contended that the economic ramifications of alcohol consumption include a reduction in total output through lower productivity (Berry and Boland 1977: 8; WHO 1995: 3) caused by absenteeism (Isaac 1998: 165; Walsh and Grant 1985: 11), maladjustment (Isaac 1998:165), industrial accidents (Isaac 1998: 165; Walsh and Grant 1985: 11), inefficiency (Walsh and Grant 1985: 11), and premature death (Berry and Boland 1977: 35). Contradicting such arguments, however, Gerstein asserts that production may not necessarily be affected by alcohol abuse, and that in order to discern the effects on productivity, one must look at the overall employment rate (1983: 58).

Isaac has also noted the strain that alcohol abuse places on scarce healthcare resources, such as psychiatric facilities, in developing countries such as India (1998: 160). Walsh observes that in light of the under-resourced nature of the health sectors in developing countries, “The additional burden imposed on publicly funded hospitals and clinics by the growth of alcohol-related problems may divert the limited available

resources from achieving reductions in maternal and infant mortality and in the incidence of curable and preventable diseases. These opportunity costs may be greater than those incurred in countries with high levels of public health care where life expectancy is already quite high” (1998: 318-9).

A further economic cost, according to Isaac, is the funds allocated to alcohol abuse measures and programmes by the federal government (1998: 167). Recently, in recognition of the growing rate of alcohol abuse within the country, the government of India and the Ministry of Welfare, in conjunction with non-governmental organisations such as the Madras-based T.T. Ranganathan Clinical Research Foundation, have provided financial support for the development and distribution of educational materials on alcohol abuse and other related issues (Isaac 1998: 167). Moreover, the Health Ministry has established several drug detoxification centres, primarily attached to psychiatric hospitals or general hospital psychiatric units, while the Welfare Ministry has financed a number of counselling centres, short-term inpatient detoxification centres, and longer-term aftercare homes (Isaac 1998: 166). Additionally, in recognition of the lack of personnel with substance abuse treatment skills, government funded centres are often allocated the task of developing research and training for treatment centre employees and healthcare practitioners (Isaac 1998: 167).

Despite the Indian government’s endeavours to combat alcohol abuse, Isaac draws attention to the shortfall of the 5,000 beds put aside in substance abuse treatment centres for alcohol related problems (1998: 166-7). He highlights the alternative approaches to the high cost option of alcohol treatment centres being developed at the community level by various non-governmental actors, ranging from companies to organisations to community groups. The Kolar based Bharath Earth Movers and Bangalore based Bharath Electronics and Motor Industries Company are two such examples (Isaac 1998: 169).

The economic implications for households and individuals have also been well documented. Grant (1982: 164-5) and Heath (1998: 303) claim that alcohol may contribute to earnings through its known palliative effects. By numbing the physical and psychological pain associated with everyday life, alcohol is capable of helping breadwinners and other earners persist in supporting their dependants. In contrast, Harriss-White concludes from village level evidence in South India, "Households with a high expenditure on alcohol relative that on food are likely to have a food related nutrition problem" (1991: 53). Furthermore, Sharma links higher alcohol outlays with greater spending on tobacco and other recreational costs enjoyed mainly by the primary breadwinner (Sharma 1969: 33).

Drink is also said to exact an economic toll at the household level through its impact on health, as in the case of alcohol-induced morbidity and mortality. Manor (1993) and Jayasuriya and Jayasuriya (1998) have documented the lethal effects of illicit alcohol or hooch in Bangalore and Orissa respectively. In both instances, hundreds of people became victims of handicaps, such as blindness, or of death, due to the unscrupulous traders' use of poisonous substances, such as methanol. Morbidity and mortality may exact heavy economic tolls from lower-income households. If the primary breadwinner is affected, not only must the other members attempt to compensate for his/her earnings, but, in the case of morbidity, must also bear the additional weight of caring for a handicapped individual and paying for treatment.

The health related repercussions of alcohol consumption have been discussed at length in recent decades as well. One result has been the distinction between moderate and heavy drinking¹². Many of the psychological and physical health benefits related to

¹² Definitions of heavy drinking vary depending on the society. According to the World Health Organization, individuals were considered heavy consumers if they reported alcohol dependency (various unspecified countries), ingested 100cc of absolute alcohol at one time (Paraguay), exceeded a daily alcohol intake of 20g (Czech Republic), and consumed over 0.2L of alcohol daily (Bosnia and Herzegovina). In the

alcohol are associated with the former. For instance, the numbing quality of alcohol has led Davies (1982: 164-5) and Heath (1998: 303) to characterise it as a reasonably effective self-administered tranquilliser, which may promote health by relieving otherwise unbearable pain and stress. Alcohol also has the potential to check the age-related stiffening of arteries; increase the level of HDL, or “good”, cholesterol; thin the blood, preventing clotting and associated dangers, such as heart attack and stroke; and protect men over age 40 and postmenopausal women from coronary heart disease¹³. In the developing country context, however, the physical benefit of moderate drinking has been questioned. The World Health Organization (WHO) states, as cited by Isaac, “moderate alcohol consumption for preventive purposes makes little sense in countries where the prevalence of cardiovascular disease is low, including most of the developing world” (1998: 163). On the other hand, heavy drinking is known to cause and/or exacerbate a myriad of acute and chronic health problems and diseases¹⁴, which may end in mortality. Moreover, a WHO Expert Committee pointed out that many physical, mental and social problems do not necessarily require addiction, so that “Alcohol dependence, while prevalent and itself a matter for serious concern, constitutes only a small part of the total of alcohol-related problems” (1980: 17).

The literature on alcohol as a commodity has underscored the ambivalent social role that alcohol has had and continues to have. According to Singh and Lal as referenced

U.S., men that had more than fourteen drinks per week, and women that had more than seven drinks per week were labelled heavy drinkers. (WHO 2004: http://www.who.int/ncd_surveillance/infobase/web/SuRFReports/SuRFReport1/en/index.aspx).

¹³ (British Heart Foundation 2003: <http://www.bhf.org.uk>; American Heart Association 2003: <http://www.americanheart.org>).

¹⁴ They include: cancers of the oropharynx, larynx, oesophagus, stomach, liver, rectum and breast; high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke (Edwards 1994:7); gastritis; stomach and duodenal ulcers; stomach haemorrhages; pancreatitis; diabetes; feminisation; sexual impotence; testicular atrophy; anaemia; chronic myopathy; cardiomyopathy; peripheral neuritis; Wernicke’s encephalopathy; Korsakoff’s psychosis; minor brain damage; dementia; fatty liver; alcoholic hepatitis; liver cirrhosis; fat metabolism diseases; gout; nutritional deficiencies; foetal alcohol syndrome; epilepsy; depression; anxiety; phobic illness; hallucinations; paranoid states; delirium tremens; withdrawal epilepsy; and alcoholic psychosis (Walsh and Grant 1985: 10). Alcohol has also been implicated in diseases of the skin and muscle and disorders of the endocrine, blood and immune system (Edwards 1994: 7).

in Isaac, the coexistence of prohibitive and permissive attitudes has prevented drinking from becoming a part of normal everyday life (1998: 147). Nevertheless, intoxicating beverages have been used to facilitate and regulate social interaction. Alcohol has been said to promote social interaction by abetting relaxation and network creation. It has also been used to delineate the bounds between religions, between castes, and between genders. For instance, Islam, Buddhism and Jainism urge their followers to refrain from drinking. In terms of caste, under the Varna classification, the Brahmins, the spiritual aristocracy, have traditionally been forbidden to drink, while the contrary has been true of the other castes, the Kshatriyas, the warriors; the Vaishyas, the peasants and traders; and the Shudras, the servants (Isaac 1998: 146). Drinking also serves to stratify society by gender, as it is generally more socially acceptable for men in India to drink (Bennett et al. 1998: 247). Isaac notes that the proportion of women indulging in drink is extremely low, estimated at under five percent (1998: 158), although, according to Sesikeran and Jagadeesan, alcohol consumption is said to be higher amongst twenty to 39 year olds¹⁵. The issue of stratification has been linked to the question of prestige by Isaac. He asserts that, notwithstanding the prohibition of alcohol to Brahmins, through various periods of Indian history, alcohol has been glamorised due to its use by elites (1998: 147).

Other social consequences of alcohol consumption highlighted in the literature include domestic violence, depression, suicide and crime. Isaac observes that alcohol consumption is closely associated with frequent male violence within the household, including wife-beating, which may ultimately end in separation or divorce (1998: 163). Drawing on studies of the wives of alcohol abusers by Rajendran and Cherian (1992) and by Devar, Cherian and Kalpana (1983) as well as on a study of suicide in the city of Madras by Ponnudrai and Jayakar (198), Isaac also underscores the link between the

¹⁵ (1997: <http://www.ceche.org/publications/monitor/vol-5/5-2.htm#AlcoholDrinking>).

financial problems, daily disagreements and physical assaults drinkers' spouses were subject to and physical and mental problems such as stress, depression and suicide (1998: 163-4). In addition to their relation with domestic violence, depression and suicide were also found to be independent alcohol-induced problems (Edwards 1994: 99-100). Lastly, alcohol has been considered to play a part in crime. Isaac states that although there is little data on alcohol-associated crime in India, the news media provides many examples of petty and serious crimes being committed by individuals under the influence of alcohol at the time of the crime (1998: 165).

Despite the fact that this body of work considering alcohol as a commodity is significant in drawing attention to the diverse impacts of the production, distribution and consumption of alcohol, it can be criticised for its discrete presentation of macro and micro factors, its value-laden nature, and its unbalanced analyses. By offering a characterisation of alcohol production (at the macro level) and/or consumption (at the micro level) and either the negative or the positive effects of alcohol, the literature is unusually confused. Additionally, instead of attempting to understand the different reasons for drinking and the contexts in which it takes place, much of this research takes as its point of departure the assumption that alcohol consumption has negative effects, which leads to the consequent conclusions that its production and distribution are also problematic. Finally, as most of this research is written from the etic or outsider perspective, the emic perspective is ignored, so that there is no effort to understand the reasons for, and experiences of, alcohol from the point of view of those actually deciding to drink – or refrain from consuming – alcohol. Although cursory comments on the significance of alcohol for specific groups are occasionally made in the literature, a systematic analysis that views the commodity and its uses from the viewpoint of the consumers is very rarely endeavoured. The few works, often anthropological, that do

attempt such an assessment in the context of India highlight the use of alcohol by marginal groups, such as various tribal groups including the Kondodoras, Koyas, Chenchus, Yanadis Pradhans, Gonds, Bhils and Oraons (Mohan and Sharma 1995). Urban middle-class perceptions of drinking remain obscured.

This is a problem for two main reasons from a development point of view. Without an understanding of the dynamics of urban middle-class drinking, one lacks knowledge of the driving force behind the licit alcohol industry. As the industry is the source of essential revenue for state governments, particularly in India, it is important to understand changes that have already taken place in urban middle-class drinking trends and social attitudes. Moreover, it is impossible to address the alleged negative ramifications of alcohol consumption, such as domestic violence, depression and suicide, without understanding the perceptions of drinkers and the other individuals who are affected by these consequences.

Despite the importance of the treatment of commodities in anthropology, and despite the body of literature examining the repercussions of the production, distribution and consumption of alcohol, for the purposes of our research, instead of looking to a theoretical model developed from any of these, we draw instead on Mintz's model of outside and inside meaning as developed in *Sweetness and Power. The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (1985). One reason for doing so is that it operates at several scales, in which an ethnography is only one of a range of methods, thereby enabling the exploration of emic perspectives, and experiences, of drinking as well as the circumstances that frame individual decisions to consume (or not to consume) alcohol. Hence, Mintz does not limit his investigation to the changes in people's consumption habits; he also problematises and examines the manner in which such changes take place – as well as the reasons for

them. As a result, his framework facilitates a balanced analysis of the interactions between structure and agency. For these reasons, Mintz's framework is more relevant and "powerful" for the purposes of our thesis.

The remainder of this chapter will first offer a summary of Mintz's argument about the rise to prominence of sugar in the English diet from 1650 to 1900. Then, the strengths and weaknesses of his theoretical model of outside and inside meaning will be outlined. This will be followed by a discussion of the refinements to be made to Mintz's model in our application of it to changing urban middle-class alcohol consumption in India; we also define key terms. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the methodologies used to gather and analyse data and a comment on methodological pluralism.

1.3 Mintz: outside and inside meaning

In *Sweetness and Power*, Mintz sets out to explain the rise in sugar consumption by England's population from 1650 to 1900, during which time sugar went from being a luxury confined to the most affluent circles to being a staple of the working class diet (1985: xxv). Breaking with anthropology's tradition of focusing on the "uncontaminated McCoy" (Mintz 1985: xxvii), he asserts the necessity of developing an anthropology of modern life and utilises the social history of a new food, sugar, in a western nation, England, to make a move in that direction. Rather than attributing changes in sugar consumption to a "natural" or self-evident human predilection for sweetness, he sets out to discover the reasons for the change in demand for sugar, the manner in which it took place, and the circumstances surrounding such changes. As the exact manner ("at what rates, by what means, or under exactly what conditions" (Mintz 1985: xxv)) in which sugar came to be known by a large proportion of the British population was obscure,

Mintz employs a historical method to trace trends in its production and consumption from the time of its introduction to English culture to the time of its widespread use.

Mintz notes that the use and application of power tend to underlie changes in a society's food consumption habits. Consequently, any study of such shifts must examine the sources of power, the reasons for and means by which it is applied, and how people react to this power and its application (Mintz 1996: 17-18). To look at these issues in the case of sugar, Mintz employs a theoretical framework revolving around two main concepts, "outside meaning" and "inside meaning". Although Mintz likens outside meaning to tactical and structural power¹⁶, he explains his choice of this term as a means to emphasise not only how events transpire over time, but also to stress the different meanings that these events have for different groups even within the same society^{17, 18} (Mintz 1996: 22), both of which encourage study of causes and causation (Mintz 1996: 23). As for inside meaning, Mintz considers the use of the word "meaning" completely appropriate here, as the term refers to the manner in which people ascribe importance to their actions and to the actions of those around them (Mintz 1996: 23).

Outside meaning relates to the economic, social, political and even military conditions of a period. These conditions fix the parameters within which the formulation of inside meaning takes place (Mintz 1996: 20). In his words, "*outside* meaning refers to

¹⁶ Drawing on Eric Wolf, Mintz defines tactical power as "power that controls the settings in which people may show forth their potentialities and interact with others" (as quoted in Mintz 1996: 28). Structural power is "power that not only operates within settings or domains but that also organizes and orchestrates the settings themselves" (as quoted in Mintz 1996: 29). For further discussion of the concept of power as well as the definition we use in our research, please see the section in this chapter on defining key terms.

¹⁷ According to Mintz, recent years have seen a shift in anthropology's focus. Rather than attempting to explain causation - why *this* happened rather than *that* - anthropologists' main concern has become viewing events in terms of their intended meaning. This shift has been accompanied by a homogenization of meaning, as the perspective adopted is usually that of a particular culture and not of individuals or groups within a culture. Yet, for those interested in understanding how events unfold over time and the consequences of such events, it is necessary to distinguish between different meanings and different types of meanings, which Mintz aims to facilitate through the concepts of outside and inside meaning (Mintz 1996: 23).

¹⁸ For instance, although the slave trade and slavery "meant" that the British working class had access to sugar, the meanings ascribed to the slave trade and slavery by plantation owners, bankers, members of the Colonial Office, and slaves themselves varied significantly (Mintz 1996: 22-23).

the wider social significance of those changes effectuated by institutions and groups whose reach and power transcend both individuals and local communities: those who staff and manage larger economic and political institutions and who make them operate” (emphasis original, 1996: 23). Mintz attempts to deconstruct the process through which dominant institutions and groups have an impact on outside meaning, the conditions that determine an individual’s consumption possibilities (for instance, the sources of sugar available, quantities of supply, means of distribution, and price), against which people decide what, how, when and with whom to consume (Mintz 1996: 21). He does this by examining England’s expanding sugar consumption from 1650 to 1900 in the context of the changing political, economic and social environment and asking questions about the sources of sugar, the reasons explaining the greater success of certain sources, beneficiaries of production and sale, and the manner in which prices changed (Mintz 1994: 114). His method will be described more explicitly in the next section.

Inside meaning has to do with the everyday conditions of consumption that allow individuals to incorporate into their lives a new substance to which they are unaccustomed (Mintz 1996: 20). Consumers of a new substance endow the various uses to which it is put with different inside meanings, which may either be borrowed through imitation or be newly created. Mintz terms the emulation of others’ consumption patterns, usually those belonging to persons of higher status, “intensification”. The meanings that arise out of new uses, those that do not stem from imitation, fall under Mintz’s concept of “extensification”. Now that the key concepts of outside meaning and inside meaning have been defined, we turn to a brief summary of Mintz’s work, *Sweetness and Power*, before moving onto a discussion of the weaknesses and strengths of Mintz’s framework.

1.3.1 The rise of sugar

The economic, political and social changes wrought by a shift from mercantilism to capitalism facilitated the possibility of an outside meaning dominated by capitalist interests, including a productive workforce whose consumer power also served as an ever-expanding market. The same capitalist institutions and groups that participated in the formulation of this outside meaning, thus, encouraged the cycle of workers using sugar to maintain and increase productivity and then spending the resultant wages on more sugar products. Hence, the events that put in place the forces of outside meaning unfolded in such a way to facilitate the increased daily intake of sugar by the “common Englishman”. These circumstances delineated the sphere in which consumption choices about sugar could be made by individuals and, consequently, defined both the possibilities of utilisation and of the various inside meanings attributed to the uses.

Inside meaning was created through both intensification and extensification, which were often part of the same process. In the case of the former, practices of the upper-classes were taken on by the working classes, as they attempted to adopt similar ritual and ceremonial utilisations of sugar, as exemplified by tea time, holiday meats served with unusual combinations of spices and sweets, the broad range of sugared products associated with religious holidays, and the presence of sweet drinks and baked goods at rituals of separation and departure (Mintz 1985: 173). Although the adoption of these uses initially may have been emulative, in the process of adoption the uses by the less privileged groups were instilled with an entirely different inside meaning. For instance, notwithstanding the fact that part of the initial impetus for tea and sugar consumption was emulation of more privileged classes, when adopted by the working classes, their stimulatory effect became of central importance to people required to adjust to the quickened pace of life accompanying the rise and spread of the factory system (Mintz 1985: 174). In this manner, intensification and extensification overlapped. As

usages of sugar trickled down from the most privileged groups to others, they lost the power that had underlined their use and that they had once represented (Mintz 1985: 173). Extensification also occurred without any element of imitation. New forms of employment specific to the working class gave way to new inside meanings stressing practical aspects, such as the convenience of tea as a warm “fast food” providing calories and stimulation (Mintz 1985: 129-30), rather than symbolic ones.

1.3.2 Sweetness and Power: weaknesses and strengths

This summary of Mintz’s account of outside and inside meaning reveals both weaknesses and strengths. The relationship between outside and inside meaning can be criticised. By asserting that outside meaning predefines the arena of possible action in which choices may be exercised, Mintz seems to overlook the possibility that individuals, whose agency he does not deny, making decisions related to inside meaning, may have an impact on the structure of outside meaning as well. Although the power manifested in outside meaning may appear to give it a greater ability to affect inside meaning, it is in fact the collective inside meanings that motivate the institutions and groups constituting outside meaning. In the case of sugar, if the British working classes had opted for more nutrient-rich alternatives instead of turning to sugar-based foods, even as they acted within the sphere circumscribed by outside meaning, they would have been able to induce the institutions of outside meaning, such as producers, to focus on the provision of “healthier” foods. Hence, those who create inside meaning may also have an impact on the changes related to outside meaning.

A second weakness in the relationship between outside and inside meaning is a failure to clearly differentiate the two concepts. For instance, Mintz notes the probability of unequal intra-household distribution of calories which privileged the primary

breadwinner, who was often male (1985: 130). Such actions suggest a belief that the main earner needed and deserved the greater and/or the choicest portions of food. At the societal level, by influencing people's consumption possibilities, this practice may be considered an aspect of outside meaning. On the other hand, since this belief may be held by individuals, it appears to fall into the category of inside meaning.

Despite these flaws in the conceptualisation of the relationship between outside and inside meaning, any study that endeavours to carry out a balanced analysis of outside and inside meaning and to examine the relationship between the two, cannot avoid being a multi-layered analysis, highlighting the underlying power relations. By problematising the manner in which the economic, social and political context and, consequently, outside meaning are created, one is able to obtain an understanding of how powerful classes directly and indirectly affect the consumption decisions of less powerful classes. Thus, although working class Britons were exercising their individual agency when they incorporated sugar into their diets, these poor nutritional choices were not made in a vacuum, but were facilitated by the changes associated with outside meaning, which made sugar available and accessible. The concept of inside meaning provides insight into emic, or insider, material and cultural practices and their significance. From this vantage point, Mintz demonstrates how sugar came to be imbued with inside meanings of practical significance having to do with sustenance and stimulation, on the one hand, and of display having to do with economic status, on the other hand.

Mintz's study covers both production and consumption, but is slightly biased towards consumption. Table 1.2 indicates the areas that are covered by Mintz in *Sweetness and Power*.

Table 1.2 Mintz's analysis

	Production	Distribution	Consumption
Outside meaning	Yes	No	Yes
Inside meaning	No	No	Yes

He fails to examine the inside meanings attributed to sugar by the producers and the slaves, who were the primary labour force in the British sugar colonies until the abolition of slavery in 1834-8. Although the inside meanings of production must have overlapped to a certain extent with the inside meanings of consumption, Mintz fails to mention any of the unique uses to which sugar was put in the process of its own production and the production of food-commodities using sugar as a raw material as well as the meanings ascribed to such uses.¹⁹ Moreover, the focus on production and consumption covers most of the story of sugar, but there is still a portion left untold. Sugar, as with any other commodity, is not consumed immediately upon production. Commodities are distributed through markets by intermediaries, such as wholesalers and retailers, so that consumers may purchase and/or consume them. This fundamental link between production and consumption is overlooked by Mintz.

He also never explicitly articulates his theoretical framework, including the institutions he favours and the reasons for such preferences. As a result, rather than systematically dealing with institutions, they simply emerge during the course of his historical narrative. The institutions Mintz privileges are class and race, and the perspective from which he approaches power and changing sugar consumption is an evolved Marxian one. Those in control of the means of production, the plantation and factory owners, who had the most to gain from the expanding sugar intake of the working class, determined outside meaning in such a way that a market for sugar was created.

¹⁹ In light of this gap in his work, it is interesting to note that his initial interest in sugar had stemmed from the inside meanings of production, which he was able to observe while conducting fieldwork amongst a community of sugar cane workers in Puerto Rico (Mintz 1985: xiv-xxv).

They created a feedback between workers using sugar to maintain and increase individual and, subsequently, industrial productivity and then spending the resulting wages on more sugar products. This outside meaning in turn determined labourers' sugar consumption possibilities, which in turn affected the inside meanings ascribed to its uses, so that sugar, particularly in conjunction with tea, came to be valued by labourers as a warm "fast food" providing calories and stimulation as well as relieving the monotony of their diet. On the production side, Mintz includes the institution of race and highlights the integral aspect African slave labour came to play in the sugar plantations of the West Indian colonies.

The fact that sugar quickly became incorporated into the working class diet did not mean that it was their best option in all respects. As noted by Mintz, the fast and easy meals - often consisting of bread with butter and tea with sugar - that women opted to feed their families as they began to participate in wage labour were less nutritious than the porridge or broth that had previously been consumed (Mintz 1985: 129-30). Hence, even when family incomes rose from women's employment, eating standards declined (Mintz 1985: 130). Nevertheless, shifts in outside meaning related to the advent of the factory system led to a change in working class priorities, increasing the significance of considerations, such as that of time availability, as opposed to only costs; the desire to limit outlays on fuel; and the division of labour, which allocated household work to women even when they went to work outside the home (Mintz 1985: 130). These factors influenced food choices, such that a quick meal of bread with butter and tea with sugar came to be the preference. Although it was primarily the working classes that engaged in the "convenience eating" (Mintz 1985: 130) that was required by the long working day under the factory system, such consumption patterns served the interests of the producer classes who benefited through more productive workers as well as an expanding market for sugar products. In this conflict of class interests, those of the labourers were

superseded by the interests of the owners of the means of production, due to the latter's influence on outside meaning.

Mintz's Marxian approach results in an emphasis on the institution of class to the exclusion of others, such as gender and generation. He neglects to look at the intra-household distribution of calories, an important element in the story of sugar, and only states that it was most likely unequal, with the "breadwinner" favoured at the expense of wives and children who were systematically undernourished (Mintz 1985: 130). By privileging the category of class, Mintz presents a one-dimensional examination of power and changing sugar consumption. Rather than developing his study by investigating differences within each of the classes as well, he presents both the producer and working classes as homogenous groups²⁰ and does not allow for any cross class commonality. More generally with regard to non-class institutions, his failure to deal with them in a systematic manner results in some confusion for the reader, who is unable to discern whether the fact that his analysis favours certain elements is unconscious or conscious (and if conscious then why).

1.3.3 Mintz and alcohol

Reflecting on Mintz's study, we conclude that his general method is certainly relevant to a study of changing urban middle-class alcohol consumption patterns in India, but that it requires developing for the purposes of our research. There are several reasons for this conclusion. First, although the scope of our project will not match Mintz's, employing a historical method to investigate the ambivalent role of alcohol provides an

²⁰ Ironically, avoiding homogenisation of the meanings of different groups within a society or culture was one of the motivating factors for the use of the term "outside meaning", rather than structural power (Mintz 1996: 23).

understanding of not only present day conditions of drinking, but also of the factors that have shaped them. Seeing shifts in historical perspective is vital because contemporary circumstances never arise in a vacuum, but are the result of prior events and processes. Second, Mintz's focus on trends, rather than specific causes, is also pertinent to our research. In the case of alcohol, as in sugar, the exact manner ("at what rates, by what means, or under exactly what conditions" (Mintz 1985: xxv)) in which consumption changed is likely to be obscured, due to the complexity of factors contributing to shifts in drinking and due to the lack of documentation of these factors. Accordingly, our research will investigate trends, which are significant in and of themselves, in light of the paucity of such work on Indian middle-class alcohol consumption.

Third, Mintz's model does not look solely at production and omit consumption as many examinations of commodities tend to do, so that through the ideas of outside and inside meaning he is able to offer a sketch of how changes in the greater environment facilitate shifts in consumption. In Mintz's study of sugar, his concept of outside meaning illuminates the manner in which economic, political and social shifts affected consumption of the commodity through their impact on the availability (production and distribution) and accessibility (consumption) to the English working classes, while the concept of inside meaning sheds light on individuals' perceptions and experiences of sugar. By applying this theoretical framework to changes in urban middle-class alcohol consumption in India, we will be able to explore how the availability and accessibility of alcohol have changed and what their impact has been on consumption. Inside "emic" meaning can be used to develop an understanding of the purchase, use and effects of alcohol in terms of health, politics, economics and society *from the viewpoint of the Indian middle-class*, which has hitherto been largely ignored. Specifically, research on inside meanings (how people use alcohol and what their reasons are) would explore the

distinctions between the purchase, use and consequences of alcohol because different inside meanings would be attached to each of these elements. Finally, Mintz’s focus on the use and application of power underlying changes in a society’s food consumption habits through a deconstruction of the forces of outside and inside meaning acts as a model for an understanding of the power relations that govern the production, distribution and consumption of alcohol in India.

Despite the appropriateness of Mintz’s method, for the purposes of examining shifting urban middle-class alcohol consumption patterns in India, it must be refined further in a couple of ways. First, Mintz neglects to consider markets and distribution, both of which are essential links between production and consumption in a study of alcohol, and are particularly crucial in India, where states continue to place strict controls on distribution. So, our study will include the outside meaning of distribution, as indicated in Table 1.3.

Table 1.3 Our analysis

	Production	Distribution	Consumption
Outside meaning	Yes	Yes	Yes
Inside meaning	No	No	Yes

Additionally, although Mintz does not consider legal regulations and social permissibility, they have significant consequences for alcohol consumption, particularly in a country such as India where drinking is a contentious topic, and, hence, cannot be ignored in a study of Indian urban middle-class alcohol consumption. Lastly, Mintz fails to deal systematically with institutions, considering only that of class and, regarding production, of race. Due to the important role that institutions, such as the state, class, gender, caste, religion and the media, play in the story of alcohol in India, they will be taken into account and used to refine this analysis. By developing Mintz’s method, it is possible

systematically to explain the manner in which alcohol consumption has changed since 1980, how production and distribution have shifted and influenced consumption, and the inner meanings of such changes, through the processes of intensification and extensification.

In order to explore changes in urban middle-class drinking in India since 1980 and the reasons for the shifts, we will employ the theoretical framework of outside and inside meaning. The concept of outside meaning will be utilised to analyse how factors affecting the availability, accessibility and permissibility of alcohol have altered in such a way to facilitate and encourage drinking by members of the urban middle-class in India. The outside meaning of production and distribution, covered in Chapter 3, will be used to shed light on changes in the availability of alcohol, which is affected by factors such as economic and political institutions. The outside meaning of consumption, discussed in Chapter 4, will be employed to illuminate shifts in the accessibility of alcohol, conditioned by income and social institutions, and in the permissibility of drinking, shaped by social attitudes and social institutions. In Chapter 5, the concept of inside meaning will be utilised to explore the different meanings that urban middle-class individuals in India ascribe to various uses of alcohol through the processes of intensification (uses stemming from the emulation of others' consumption habits) and extensification (uses that are not a result of imitation).

Now that our theoretical framework has been presented, before moving onto an examination of the different institutions to be incorporated into our study, we will discuss our definition of power and of institutions.

1.4 Definition of key terms: power and institutions

1.4.1 Power

Mintz characterises power as tactical and structural. Drawing on Eric Wolf, he posits that tactical power is “power that controls the settings in which people may show forth their potentialities and interact with others” (as quoted in Mintz 1996: 28).

Structural power is,

“power that not only operates within settings or domains but that also organizes and orchestrates the settings themselves, and that specifies the distribution and direction of energy flows...I want to use it as power that structures the political economy... These governing relations do not come into view when you think of power primarily in interactional terms. Structural power shapes the field of action so as to render some kinds of behavior possible, while making others less possible or impossible” (as quoted in Mintz 1996: 29).

However, as an essentially contested concept, there are several other definitions of the term “power”. The rich and ongoing debates on the nature of power and its ramifications have given rise to the “three faces” of power. In order to determine the suitability of Mintz’s definition for our thesis, the different definitions, their drawbacks and strengths will be considered.

“Power to”, was developed by pluralists²¹, such as Robert Dahl, who characterised it in the following manner: “A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do” (1957: 203). The pluralist view, also referred to as the first face of power, has been criticised for its emphasis on the *exercise* of power resulting in *observable conflicts* of interest regarding decision-making on “*important*” topics (Bachrach and Baratz 1962; Digeser 1992: 978; Lukes 2005: 19). In their critique of the pluralist view, Bachrach and Baratz claim that the former’s restricted definition disregards the second face of power or the role of the “mobilization of bias” (1962: 949), a term borrowed from Schattschneider. The mobilization of bias

²¹ The pluralists, whose studies are concerned with power in the U.S. political system, challenge the elitist view that power is centralised in the hands of a select group and assert that power is diffused (Bachrach and Baratz 1962: 948). Hence, in contrast to the elitists, pluralists take the following as their theoretical point of departure: all human institutions are not characterised by an organised system of power; power structures are not stable; and reputed power does not necessarily imply actual power (Bachrach and Baratz 1962: 947).

refers to the manner in which some issues are organised into political agendas, while others are organised out, so that decision-making remains centred on issues that do not threaten the interests of the dominant group (Bachrach and Baratz 1962: 948-50). Bachrach and Baratz contend that it is necessary for a definition of power to recognise that “power is also exercised when A devotes his energies to creating or reinforcing social and political values and institutional practices that limit the scope of the political process to public consideration of only those issues which are completely innocuous to A” (Bachrach and Baratz 1962: 948), rather than to focus solely on decision-making concerning important issues. Therefore, recognition of the mobilisation of bias brings Bachrach and Baratz to question how “important” issues are chosen. Although Lukes commends them for revealing the second face of power, he argues that their characterisation of power also places an undue emphasis on observable behaviour in the form of overt or covert conflicts over nondecision-making between the interests of persons and groups who participate in agenda creation and those whose interests are excluded (Lukes 2005: 23-6). Moreover, both the first and second faces of power assume that power can only be exercised in a negative fashion, contrary to the interests of those being dominated, when it can in fact be productive (Lukes 2005: 109), protective or cooperative (Tew 2002: 166).

In his theory of the third face of power, Lukes allows for the possibility that even when B consciously wishes to do what A wants, if such an action is contrary to B’s real interests, power is being exercised on B by A (Lukes 2005; Digeser 1992: 979). Hence, Lukes’ “radical view” problematises the formulation and manipulation of the individual interests, preferences and aspirations that play a role in exacting compliance from people who possess “false consciousness” of their real interests. Furthermore, he maintains that in order to paint a complete picture of power and its workings, one must examine both

action and inaction (Lukes 2005: 40). The three-dimensional view of power has been criticised by Jon Elster with reference to the concept of adaptive preferences, which entail the adjustment of one's expectations to be on par with the circumstances of one's life or resignation to one's fate – what Bourdieu terms the “choice of the necessary”²² (1996: 372-4). Elster argues that the formation of adaptive preferences is not necessarily indicative of the application of power and questions the ability of “rulers” to cause their “subjects” to hold certain beliefs and desires (Lukes 2005: 136). Lukes disagrees and contends that power can encourage adaptive preferences. He offers an example from Martha Nussbaum's work: patriarchal power structures influence some Indian women to the extent that they fail to identify situations of domestic violence as problematic (Lukes 2005: 137). Lukes has also been criticised for his use of the term “false consciousness” (Lukes 2005: 149). Despite his acknowledgement of the “baggage” that is attached to the concept, Lukes states that by employing the term to refer to “the power to mislead”, rather than privileged access to truths, his use avoids the adoption of a view that condescendingly denies individuals the possibility of making out their own interests (Lukes 2005: 149). “False consciousness” in this sense may take many forms, from “straightforward censorship and disinformation to the various institutionalized and personal ways there are of infantilizing judgment, and the promotion and sustenance of all kinds of failures of rationality and illusory thinking, among them the ‘naturalization’ of what could be otherwise and the misrecognition of the sources of desire and belief” (Lukes 2005: 149).

Other approaches to power include “power within”, which is related to empowerment (Kabeer 2001), as well as more capillary conceptions of power drawing on

²² According to Bourdieu, “Necessity imposes a taste for necessity which implies a form of adaptation to and consequently acceptance of the necessary, a resignation to the inevitable” (1996: 372). In his examination of French society, he asserts that the “choice of the necessary” becomes so ingrained amongst persons with working-class roots that it persists even when the material conditions that initially dictated the tastes change (Bourdieu 1996: 372-4).

Foucault (Tew 2002). According to Naila Kabeer, an integral element of empowerment is agency, which she describes as the ability to define and act upon one's goals. The exercise of agency is not limited to observable behaviour, but also includes the "sense of agency" (emphasis original) or the "power within", which has to do with the meanings and aims that motivate individuals (2001: 21). Kabeer notes that although agency tends to be characterised as individual decision-making, particularly in the mainstream economic literature, it is also used to bargain, negotiate, deceive, manipulate, subvert, resist and protest (2001: 21).

Foucault, instead of conceptualising power processes as centralised and top-down, believed that "there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterise and constitute the social body" (1980: 93). Accordingly, power cannot be monopolised by a single group or institution, but emanates from many points, top-down in the form of domination in addition to bottom-up in the form of resistance. Additionally, though "there is no power that is exercised without a series of aims and objectives", its ubiquitous nature leads to outcomes that are both "intentional and nonsubjective" (Foucault 1978: 94-95). This seeming contradiction can be accounted for by the fact that power tactics exercised at the micro-level often result in consequences extending beyond those originally intended. Yet, when the tactics have woven themselves into systems, as they are bound to, "the logic is perfectly clear, the aims decipherable", despite the fact that they were not organised by a single subject (Foucault 1978: 95). Thus, Foucault's primary concerns are the organisation of power in social relations, their manifestations, and the techniques upon which they depend, rather than the individuals and groups dominating or being dominated (Lukes 2005: 89). According to Lukes, a salient and continuous theme in Foucault's prolific body of work is the simultaneous repressive and productive capability of power (Lukes 2005: 90). He claims that for Foucault, power is repressive by

limiting individuals' actions and desires, while it is productive by contributing to the creation of pleasure, knowledge and discourse through the production of "subjects", who adhere to societal norms, concerning, for instance, sanity, health and sexuality (Lukes 2005: 91). Foucault can be criticised for minimising the agency of subjects, who are unable to control the effects of their power tactics, and whose creation by discourse and power prohibits them from having independent interests (Lukes 2005: 95).

Upon consideration of the various definitions of power, we find Wolf's definition of tactical and structural power on which Mintz draws more relevant than the others, because, rather than stressing the interactional aspect of power, Wolf's characterisation focuses on how power structures the political economy, facilitating certain types of individual, and consequently collective, behaviour over others. This contrasts with the first, second, and third faces of power, all of which are concerned primarily with the interactional element of power, i.e. how power is exercised by an individual or group over another through conscious or unconscious action or inaction, depending on the theory. The focus on the interactional aspect of power, which assumes a direct relationship between a person or group's exercise of power and the consequent effects on another person or group, limits these definitions and prevents them from illuminating instances in which power is applied to effect changes in the economic or political sphere without necessarily being exercised by one group *over* another. For instance, shifts that have taken place in the laws governing the production and distribution of the manufactured alcohol consumed by the middle-class in India are not necessarily indicative of a dominant class exercising power over another. In fact, in Chapter 3, it will be revealed that increased alcohol production and distribution have been a result of mutually beneficial arrangements for manufacturers, distributors and state governments. As a result, for our study of alcohol in India, Wolf's conceptualisation of power is a more

appropriate analytical tool than the other forms of power discussed in this section, because it facilitates an examination and understanding of the manner in which economic, political and social trends since 1980 have contributed to changes in urban middle-class drinking, which are discussed in greater detail in Chapters 3 and 4, and the inside meanings ascribed to such shifts, which are examined in Chapter 5. Furthermore, even as it recognises the asymmetry often inherent in power structures, Wolf's conception of power leaves space for human agency – for it is evidently individuals who make the decision to drink or not to drink.

1.4.2 Institutions

While in the previous section we defined the key term of power for the purposes of our project, in this section we explore various conceptualisations of “institutions” to derive the definition to be used in the remainder of this thesis. As a result of the significant impact that social, economic and political institutions, such as gender, religion, caste, media and the state, have on the production, distribution and consumption of alcohol in India, they are integral to an analysis of changing Indian urban middle-class drinking. Mintz does not define the term “institutions” or offer a framework for dealing with them systematically. As there is no consensus on a definition and as the literature on defining institutions is too extensive to be comprehensively covered by our thesis, in order to arrive at one for the purposes of our project, in this section we will consider and compare several influential definitions of institutions from various academic disciplines and schools chosen for their diversity and the consequent opportunities for comparison they offer, including philosophy of mind, critical realism, political economy and institutional economics.

John Searle, the eminent philosopher of mind, characterises institutions as the result of collective intentionality, which arises from individual intentionality, which in turn stems from the basic human capacity of consciousness (1995: 6, 38). Collective intentionality is the tool used by groups to impose a function on an object that is not intrinsic to its physical features (Searle 1995: 39), what Searle refers to as a status function (1995: 41) and which takes the form: “X counts as Y in context C” (1995: 27). In some cases, the function assigned through collective intentionality requires continued human agreement in order to be maintained, as in the cases of government or money (Searle 1995: 40), and such assignment and agreement lead to new institutional facts (Searle 1995: 46). When the imposition of a particular status function becomes general policy, it then develops into a rule (Searle 1995: 47), of which there are two types: regulative and constitutive (Searle 1995: 27). The former regulate activities that existed prior to the rule, an example of which is “drive on the left hand side” (Searle 1995: 27). Although the rule regulates driving, the act of driving existed prior to the establishment of the rule. Constitutive rules not only regulate, but also open up possibilities of action (Searle 1995: 27). For example, the rules of chess do not regulate an antecedently existing activity; they create the very possibility of playing chess and are, therefore, constitutive. Institutions facilitate the collective recognition of rights, responsibilities and powers, thereby helping to: promote stable expectations, eliminate the necessity of physical force (e.g. to maintain a government), and eradicate the need of the original physical conditions to sustain arrangements (e.g. a married couple need not live together to be recognised as married) (Searle 1995: 81). Searle asserts that rational choice alone cannot explain the fact that people continue to recognise and abide by institutional facts (1995: 92). Rather, on the structural level, “the person behaves the way he does, because he has a structure that disposes him to behave that way”, while on the functional level, “he has come to be

disposed that way, because that's the way that conforms to the rules of the institution” (Searle 1995: 144).

The critical realist sociologist, Margaret Archer, describes institutions as emergent properties that condition human action by shaping the circumstances under which people act and by providing individuals with different vested interests depending on their relative position within pre-existing structures (1995: 89-91). Despite the fact that social and cultural structures do not determine people's actions, as individuals have the ability to exercise agency, the opportunity costs embedded in vested interests encourage those who are presented with rewarding contexts to strive for the maintenance of the status quo (morphostatis), while those who are faced with frustrating contexts aim to change existing structures (morphogenesis) (Archer 1995: 89-91). The same structures that condition aspiration and action (Archer 1995: 200) are subject to a range of interpretations by people depending on vested interests, which results in the variability of action (Archer 1995: 89-91).

Tony Lawson, the critical realist economist, defines institutions as enduring structured processes of interaction (1997: 165), which condition people's actions and are in turn reproduced or, at least partially, transformed (1997: 168-9). The social rules or generalised procedures of action (Lawson 1997: 162) that underlie institutions condition and are drawn upon in, but are not reducible to, the actions of individuals occupying different relative positions within society (Lawson 1997: 161, 164-5). Each of these types of relative positions (i.e. teachers and students) carries different rights and responsibilities (Lawson 1997: 164-5), which carry different degrees of force (Lawson 1997: 166) and reside not in individuals, but in the types of positions (Lawson 1997: 164-5). Furthermore, the rights and responsibilities of one position are derived from and can only be understood in relation to others (Lawson 1997: 164-5). Although social rules often

result in regular, repeated patterns of behaviour, not only because they are efficient, but also the only way in which to secure quotidian objectives (Lawson 1997: 179), they can be used in contrary ways as well to, for instance, break laws and rebel (Lawson 1997: 161-2). Therefore, social rules are not predictors of action, but a conception of how an act should or could be carried out (Lawson 1997: 163).

The political economist Geoffrey Hodgson describes institutions as “durable systems of established and embedded social rules and conventions that structure social interactions” (Hodgson 2001: 295-7). It is the fact that institutions are embedded in shared habits of thought and behaviour that allows them to work. They are built upon people’s habits and customs and, in turn, serve to reproduce both as well, so that influence is exerted both upward and downward (Hodgson 2001: 295). Institutions shape aspirations, preferences, thoughts and behaviour as well as the means of the acquisition of knowledge upon which decisions are based (Hodgson 1988: 124; 2001: 291-2). Similar to Lawson, Hodgson stipulates that although institutions mould and are dependent on individuals’ thoughts and actions, they are not reducible to them (Hodgson 2001: 291-2, 295-7). They are not static, and as they shift, the manner in which they condition human behaviour can give rise to new aspirations and preferences, thereby resulting in new habits (Hodgson 2001: 291-2). According to Hodgson, his definition departs from orthodox economic theory’s view²³ of institutions as constraints on freedom; instead, he asserts that they simultaneously constrain and enable behaviour (Hodgson 2001: 295-7). In the latter case, certain rules, such as those of language, open up new possibilities of action, such as communication (Hodgson 2001: 290). Important functions that institutions have are the imposition of consistency on people’s actions and the provision of information both directly to participants of institutions and also indirectly to outsiders,

²³ For an example of orthodox theory, please refer to the following paragraph on North’s definition of institutions.

who employ the routinised behaviour facilitated by institutions as a point of reference regarding people's potential actions (Hodgson 1988: 132-3; 2001: 295-7).

Finally, we turn to the definition by the economic historian and institutional economist Douglass North²⁴, who set out to develop a framework for the analysis of institutions in acknowledgement of economics' and economic history's failure to provide such a structure. He characterises institutions as "the rules of the game in a society, or...the humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction" (North 1990: 3) which govern the relationships between individuals, between individuals and organisations, and between organisations (Vandenberg 2002: 219). Institutional constraints can be prohibitive or permissive, in the latter case allowing certain individuals to undertake particular activities under specified conditions (North 1990: 4). By providing a structure for human interaction, institutions reduce the uncertainty of everyday life. Rather than being devised as socially efficient mechanisms, however, they are often formulated to benefit those with the leverage to influence the process of rule creation and alteration (North 1990: 6). It is important to note that institutions are not fixed, but are constantly in flux (North 1990: 6). Moreover, many different institutions, some of which are reinforcing and others of which are at odds, influence a person's decision to act or to refrain from action. Hence, the choices available to people are continuously changing.

Institutions have both informal and formal constraints. According to North, the difference between informal and formal institutions is a matter of degree, with "taboos, customs, and traditions" at one end of the continuum and, for instance, constitutions at the other (1990: 46). Informal institutions include codes of conduct, behavioural norms and

²⁴ In economics, the significance of institutions is often overlooked; one exception is the area of new institutional economics (NIE). The NIE is founded on the beliefs that: 1) institutions are important and 2) it is possible to analyse the factors that shape them with the tools of economic theory (Williamson 2000: 595). The latter assumption is what distinguishes NIE from "old" institutional economics.

conventions (North 1990: 36), while formal institutions consist of political and economic rules (North 1990: 47).

Although these definitions of institutions reveal a common theme, that they structure and condition human behaviour, they also reveal much individualism and a number of logical problems. Quoting John Commons, Hodgson notes that one common problem of definitions of institutions is that they are characterised as “analogous to a building, a sort of framework of laws and regulations, within which individuals act like inmates” (Hodgson 2001: 297). Searle’s and North’s definitions fall into this trap. By stating that even when individuals are neither consciously nor unconsciously following rules, they do so because they have adapted a “set of dispositions that are sensitive to the rule structure” (Searle 1995: 145), Searle seems to leave little space for individual agency and the ability to act in ways that are “insensitive” to given structures. In North’s case, despite his assertion that people’s actions can have an impact on institutions (North 1990: 5), his definition as the rules of the game also places undue emphasis on the structural impact of institutions on human behaviour, denying people their agency.

In contrast to Searle and North, Archer, Lawson and Hodgson maintain a finer balance between structure and agency by acknowledging the fact that although institutions condition human action, they are not reducible to it due to human interpretation. So, we will draw on aspects of their definitions to inform our own. We will adopt Lawson’s, because his characterisation of institutions as enduring structured processes of interaction implies a historical perspective, which is integral to our study of changing patterns of alcohol consumption in India. Furthermore, his assertion that rather than being predictors of action, the social rules underlying institutions offer a point of reference regarding how an act should or could be carried out is relevant to this study of alcohol in India, as members of certain groups that prohibit alcohol consumption, such as

Brahmins and Muslims, may or may not choose to drink. Additionally, Lawson's acknowledgement of the influence that people's actions have on institutions as well as that of institutions on human behaviour is critical, because in a study of shifting Indian urban middle-class drinking, changes in perceptions and habits regarding alcohol consumption are often a result of the sum of *individual* choices concerning drinking. With regard to Hodgson, his emphasis on the impact that institutions have on perceptions, aspirations and behaviour will be incorporated, since the way in which alcohol is conceptualised often has consequences for both aspirations to consume it and its consumption. Finally, although Archer's theory of morphostasis and morphogenesis has been criticised for the artificial temporal separation of the exercise of structure and the exercise of agency (Bates 2006), certain aspects of her definition, such as the role of vested interests, remain relevant to our project. So, from Archer's definition, we will also incorporate the concept of vested interests, which sheds light on the differences in power that are to be found in any society, and which, as Mintz states, tend to underlie changes in a society's food consumption habits (Mintz 1996: 17-18).

Despite his deterministic definition of institutions, North's distinction between informal and formal aspects of institutions²⁵ will also be integrated into our definition. The two that he specifically mentions are class and religion. North offers an example of a class-based informal institution and its binding nature: although Alexander Hamilton's misgivings compelled him to write a letter detailing the reasons for which he should not engage in a duel with Aaron Burr to settle a dispute, he chose to adhere to the socially

²⁵ North can be criticised for providing a contradictory view of informal institutions' significance. He asserts that as a society becomes increasingly complex, a "unidirectional" movement occurs from informal institutions towards formal ones (1990: 46). Yet, in his own words, "formal rules, in even the most developed economy, make up a small (although very important) part of the sum of constraints that shape choices; a moment's reflection should suggest to us the pervasiveness of informal constraints" (1990: 36). Particularly in a country such as India, where informal practices are vital in the social as well as the political and economic spheres (Jenkins 1999; Harriss-White 2005), it is imperative not to underestimate the role of informal institutions. Nevertheless, the fact that he makes the distinction between formal and informal institutions, unlike many other discussions of institutions, is important.

sanctioned form of dispute resolution amongst gentlemen in order to maintain his effectiveness in the public sphere (North 1990: 40). North's example illustrates the significant role that informal social constraints have the potential to play in governing people's actions. He highlights the same characteristic with regard to religion. "Strong religious beliefs...for example, provide us with historical accounts of the sacrifices individuals have made for beliefs" (North 1990: 42). North's distinction between informal and formal rules is pertinent to this study of alcohol, because what he calls "informal institutions", such as those governing gender roles, may be employed flexibly in various contexts (e.g. in the case of gender roles, either to facilitate or to prevent drinking by women).

To summarise and synthesize, drawing on Hodgson, Lawson and Archer, we define institutions as enduring structured processes of interaction, which serve as a point of reference for people in formulating their aspirations, thoughts and actions. Although they are not determinant, vested interests encourage those who benefit to strive to maintain the status quo, and those who do not to attempt to change existing structures, which have consequences for tactical and structural power, depending on the influence of the individual or group. Employing this framework, we will incorporate social, economic and political institutions into our study of Indian urban middle-class drinking. For the purposes of our project, we are able to explore the social institutions of class, gender, religion, caste and the media²⁶; the economic institutions of laws and regulations; and the political institutions of the state, political parties, lobby groups, and the bureaucracy.

1.4.2.1 Social institutions

²⁶ Although I would also have liked to explore the effect of the institution of the family in greater depth by interviewing students' families, due to time constraints, it was not possible to do so.

The social institutions of class, religion, caste, gender and the media will be looked at, as they directly affect alcohol consumption by their impact on the conceptualisation of consumable things as well as by the way they shape access to resources and economic opportunities. Regarding religion, caste and gender, we are able to explore both the informal elements that govern access to resources – and the consequent accessibility of alcohol – as well as the formal norms influencing the permissibility of drinking. Finally, the media will be included, not only because it is an important source of information, but also because its representations of alcohol influence peoples’ perceptions of consumption practices, their aspirations to consume and, consequently, their consumption behaviour. We begin with a brief discussion of the middle-class in India before looking at the ways in which religion, caste and gender affect both the accessibility of alcohol and the permissibility of drinking. The concluding portion of this section examines the role of the media.

The Indian urban middle-class

Due to the extensiveness of the literature on class, a full review of which would be outside the scope of this thesis, our observations on the Indian middle-class are confined to a few key texts that are particularly pertinent to our research. Class is usually defined in relation to production. The middle-class, as a result, is subject to vague or contradictory definitions. Stein’s *A History of India* (1998) is one example. Initially, he describes the Indian middle-class as the “petty bourgeoisie”. This “petty bourgeoisie” he then equates to the lower-middle-class (1998: 227). Later, however, he states that the Indian middle-class beginning to emerge by the later nineteenth century, was characterized by western educated professionals, while the lower-middle-class consisted of individuals such as merchants, bazaarmen, artisans and minor government officials

(1998: 242). Stein goes on to describe the “bourgeoisie proper” as comprised of bankers, money-lenders with significant income from rent and interest, and wholesale merchants (1998: 244). Below them were the lower-middle-class artisan traders, petty bazaar traders, commodity brokers, labour contractors, petty money-lenders, and religious and governmental officials (1998: 244). Despite his own contradictory characterisations of the Indian middle-class, Stein appears to situate it between the capitalists and proletarians (1998: 344), one notch above, for example, the merchants, artisans and bazaarmen who make up the lower-middle-class, and to identify it as the group of professionals and intellectuals that provided the initial political impetus for the independence movement.

Misra also offers a production-based definition of the middle-class in *The Indian Middle Classes: their growth in modern times* (1961). He interprets the term middle-class loosely and uses a vague definition. Misra asserts that the middle-classes are composed of: 1) the merchants, agents and proprietors of modern trading firms; 2) banking, trading and manufacturing executives; 3) the higher salaried bureaucrats of institutions and societies such as the chambers of commerce and trade associations; 4) civil servants; 5) members of certain recognised professions, such as lawyers, doctors and professors; 6) middle grade landholders; 7) affluent shopkeepers and hotel keepers; 8) rural entrepreneurs; 9) full-time university students; 10) clerks, assistants and other non-manual workers; and 11) the upper range of secondary school teachers and officers of local bodies (Misra 1961: 12-13).

According to Misra the commercial and political elements with the potential to grow into the middle-class existed in India before British rule, but failed to transform because of existing political, social and economic constraints (1961: 152). These included the Mughal political system’s despotic nature, characteristic of previous regimes as well, which impeded the capitalist growth that had provided the necessary initial condition for

the rise of the English middle-class (Misra 1961: 6). The king and his court-appointed merchants were able, for instance, to monopolise specific areas of trade and set fixed prices (Misra 1961: 8), thereby destroying competition and ensuring that the flow of money remained in the hands of a select circle of people, rather than contributing to the emergence of new income groups (Misra 1961: 57). So, opportunities for capital accumulation were dependent on the whims of the ruler (Misra 1961: 8). The situation was exacerbated by the rigidity of the caste order, which “hindered occupational mobility, precluded social criticism, and made for authoritarianism as the principle of the Hindu social order” (Misra 1961: 51). It was only when the British came to India and through their education policies actively encouraged the creation of a class, “Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and intellect” (Thomas Babington Macaulay as quoted in Misra 1961: 11), to assist them in colonial administration and internal resource development (Misra 1961: 10), that the middle-class began to take shape. This middle-class was to serve two purposes: to constitute an ever-expanding market for imported British goods and to develop domestic resources, particularly the raw material inputs needed in British industry, which served as payment for the imports (Misra 1961: 152)²⁷.

In contrast to production-based characterisations of the middle-class, Shurmer-Smith posits, “Western-generated notions of social class, based on employment characteristics in the context of industrial, market-based, national economies, do not export well to an Indian context” (2000: 29). India’s history as a colony, she argues,

²⁷ In the educational dispatch of 19 July 1854, Sir Charles Wood states these aims clearly when he asserts that the advancement of European knowledge “will teach the natives of India the marvellous results of the employment of labour and capital, rouse them to emulate us in the development of the vast resources of their country, guide them in their efforts, and gradually, but certainly, confer upon them all the advantages which accompany the healthy increase of wealth and commerce; and, at the same time, secure to us a large and more certain supply of many articles necessary for our manufactures and extensively consumed by all classes of our population, as well as an inexhaustible demand for the produce of British labour” (as quoted in Misra 1961: 155).

diminishes the relevance of models of social class founded on Western experience. Despite the existence of a number of influential Indian industrialists, British colonialism did not allow for the unhindered development of an Indian capitalist industrial economy or an entrepreneurial middle-class of significant size before independence (Shurmer-Smith 2000: 30). Even after independence, an industrialist and managerial middle class did not emerge immediately, due to the development of Indian industry under the aegis of the state. As a result, Shurmer-Smith contends that social prestige was derived from government positions, rather than from entrepreneurship and corporate management in professions such as banking, brokerage, insurance and consultancy (2000: 30). Furthermore, she comments that cleavages and alignments resulting from consumption patterns may be displacing class characteristics based on relationships to production (1994: 140), and that the economic transformation resulting from globalisation has encouraged the focus on modes of consumption in order to differentiate social strata (2000: 30). Consequently, she focuses on consumption practices.

Notwithstanding differing emphases on production and consumption, what others, such as Stein (1998) and Misra (1961), loosely saw as the middle-class, Shurmer-Smith sees as the upper-middle-class, or the local elite. The lifestyle of the upper-middle-class, as exemplified by a professor's quality of life, is marked by home ownership late in life (unless there is family money); employment of at least one full-time domestic servant; liberal utilisation of personal services, including launderers; and private education of children (Shurmer-Smith 2000: 32). Finance schemes have made cars more affordable than in the past, but they still pose a considerable financial strain on these upper-middle-class households (Shurmer-Smith 2000: 32). Although homes may be sparsely furnished, they will usually have a telephone, a TV, a personal music system and a personal computer (Shurmer-Smith 2000: 32). This group will not consume internationally

branded products as regularly as their “very rich” counterparts, or the Indian urban global elite (Shurmer-Smith 2000: 32). In addition to the upper-middle-class, in metropolises, such as Delhi, Mumbai, Calcutta and Chennai, and in new growth areas, such as Bangalore, Hyderabad, Pune and Kochi, there is another middle-class segment that deserves mention, namely the new service class. It is being built on the foundation of the “traditional” urban administrative, professional and commercial middle class through the use of established higher education institutions (Shurmer-Smith 2000: 42). Persons of the service class possess what Bourdieu termed “cultural capital”, acquired culture that reflects and can be used as a means of social differentiation (Robbins 2005: 23), and “live off their superior education” (Shurmer-Smith 2000: 42).

A distinction has also been made by Das (2002) and Traub (2001) between the “old middle class” and the “new middle class”. The “old middle class” is comparable to Shurmer-Smith’s upper-middle-class. The “new middle class” is defined by its consumption and, according to the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), one of the foremost sources of economic reports on India, is considered a consuming class (Das 2002: 287). According to Dipankar Gupta of Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi (as quoted by Traub), the “new middle class” has been engaging in “Westoxication”, consumption of western goods without an accompanied belief in key western values, such as respect for the individual, meritocracy and public accountability²⁸. The twenty percent increase in the average middle-class family’s disposable income between 1999 and 2003 in conjunction with a shift in attitude from saving to spending are some of the explanatory factors in the consumerism of the “new middle class”²⁹.

²⁸ (2001: <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/04/15/magazine/15INDIA.html?ex=1116993600&en=c2eb8528e3390046&ei=5070>).

²⁹ (Philip 2005: <http://business.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,16614-1613877,00.html>).

Despite the criticisms levied at the “new middle class” and their consumerism, greater aspiration to consume and higher levels of consumption seem to be taking hold amongst even the “old middle-class” (Van Wessel 2004), signifying a general change in attitude amongst the middle-class³⁰ (Fernandes 2000b). Accordingly, as a result of the greater consumption possibilities offered by employment in, for instance, a multinational, occupational prestige no longer rests in a position with the civil service, but with private enterprise (Pinches 1999: 15). Besides a high salary, such jobs also provide various payments in kind, including a car, accommodation, entertainment allowance, clothing allowance, and membership of exclusive clubs (Fernandes 2000b: 92). These perks are not only additional income, but status symbols which significantly increase the appeal of corporate employment (Fernandes 2000b: 92). Pinches posits that “More and more, consumer items operate as the principal signifiers of standing and achievement” amongst the “new rich” (1999: 32), which category is comparable to the “new middle-class”. This has led to the phenomenon of “needing in order to become or remain a social equal with others”, so that to claim middle-class status one must engage in consumption behaviour that is considered appropriate by the income group as a whole (Van Wessel 2004: 97). Thus, members of the middle-class appear to define themselves increasingly on the basis of consumption practices.

In order to be able to engage in the consumption habits Shurmer-Smith describes as characteristic of the middle-class (i.e. services, such as cleaners and launderers; the private education of children; and the household possession of commodities, such as a telephone, a TV, a personal music system and a personal computer), according to the NCAER, households must fall into their middle- or upper-middle-class categories (NCAER 2003). In 2002, the former’s annual income ranged between Rs. 70,001 and

³⁰ The issue of changes in Indian urban middle-class attitudes will be addressed at greater length in Chapter 4 on the outside meaning of alcohol consumption.

105,000, and the latter's between Rs. 105,001 and 140,000 (NCAER 2003:6-7, 31). Thus, for the purposes of our project, middle-class will refer to individuals and households that have incomes falling within the NCAER's middle- or upper-middle range. The "old middle class" (Stein's middle-class and Shurmer-Smith's upper-middle-class) and the "new middle class" (including the new service class) will be under scrutiny in our study, as they both have the disposable income to be able to indulge in the consumption of legal alcohol products that are nationally and even internationally branded³¹.

Religion, caste and gender

The following overview will draw attention to some of the ways in which religion, caste and gender affect consumption in general and alcohol consumption in particular. As each of these institutions will be considered at greater length in the context of the outside and inside meanings of consumption, in this introduction we explore the proposition that both the informal and formal rules associated with gender, caste and religion matter for alcohol consumption through their influence on the accessibility and permissibility of drinking.

Although there is evidence of socio-economic stratification within religious groups, religion influences consumption differentials both formally by direct proscription and informally by a historical process of indirect restriction on the access to economic resources and opportunities of disadvantaged religious groups, such as certain agrarian Muslims in the Ganges valley, while facilitating such opportunities for some religious groups, such as upper-caste Hindus. Despite Hindu nationalist portrayals of a Muslim "community" as threatening, Harriss-White argues that from an economic perspective, far from posing a menace, many Muslims in the Indian economy suffer from "backwardness

³¹ Although the consumption of internationally branded products may place a greater financial strain on middle-class households, it is not beyond their reach (Shurmer-Smith 2000: 32).

and under-performance”³² (2003: 142), partly as a result of their differential access to essential resources, such as education and land. The proportion of Muslims receiving secondary education is one-third that of Hindus (Harriss-White 2003: 144), and they also experience a greater degree of landlessness than Hindus (35 percent rather than 28 percent respectively). In terms of employment, Khalidi has found in his study of Muslims in the Indian economy that in urban areas, only 29 percent of Muslims have regular salaried occupations, in contrast to the 47 percent of Hindus who do (1995: 65). Harriss-White has called attention to the greater likelihood of their involvement in what is considered menial work, such as services and petty trade (36 percent as opposed to 28 percent respectively) (2003: 144). Khalidi has also identified a scarcity of Muslim businessman in the industrial sector, so that of the 2,832 mining and manufacturing establishments owned by corporate units with sales of Rs. 50 million and above in 1981, only four of these establishments were owned by Muslims, which contrasts with the large numbers of Muslims engaged in small-scale enterprises producing goods such as brassware, pottery, carpets, woodwork, handprinted textiles, and silk embroidery (Khalidi 1995: 69-70). As a result of such differences, many Muslims are expected to have less disposable income available for consumption purposes than, for instance, their upper-caste Hindu counterparts. Regarding alcohol, Islam formally prohibits drinking altogether (although some Muslim men are said to consume alcohol), while Hinduism proscribes Brahmins from drinking (Bennett, et al. 1998: 247). Accordingly, as religion affects the sphere of consumption possibilities through its ramifications on income-neutral dictates in addition to economic opportunities and incomes, it will be an integral part of our analysis on changing middle-class alcohol consumption in India.

³² In the late 1980s, 53 percent of Muslims were found to be below the poverty line in contrast to 36 percent of Hindus (Harriss-White 2003: 142).

In the same dual way, caste is another element that informally and formally helps to determine consumption possibilities. Despite the implementation of constitutional safeguards to remedy discrimination against scheduled castes and tribes³³, caste still influences access to resources and occupation as well as education (Harriss-White 2003: 183). According to the cluster analysis conducted by Colatei and Harriss-White on three villages in northern Tamil Nadu, the highest castes monopolised land of the best quality (2004: 142). Landlessness, in turn, poses a barrier to attaining institutional credit, further disadvantaging low-caste people (Harriss-White, Janakarajan and Colatei 2004: 24). A correlation between the size of land holdings and credit, both formal and informal, was also revealed (Harriss-White and Colatei 2004: 262). Furthermore, the likelihood of a low-caste individual, particularly if landless and poor, being formally educated is minimal, as even those who are able to attend are more likely to be withdrawn prematurely from school (Kumar 2007). These factors encourage the perpetuation of caste-based occupational divisions³⁴. Poorly educated or illiterate scheduled caste people are disproportionately likely to be agricultural labourers. Conversely, at a national level, in 1990, Brahmins still held the majority of Class 1 posts in government. Though there are many exceptions, administration, management and professions were the mainstays of the upper- and middle-castes, while industrialist and heads of businesses tended to be from trading castes (Harriss-White 2003: 177). In relation to alcohol, under the Varna classification, the Brahmins, the “spiritual aristocracy”, have traditionally been forbidden

³³ Several articles of the Indian constitution aim to eliminate discrimination against persons of scheduled castes through removal of untouchability (Article 17), control of atrocities (Protection of Atrocities Act 1989), and equality of opportunities (Article 15[2], 29[2], 35, 244 and 371[A]) (Shah 2001:221-2). Articles 330 and 332 stipulate that 78 and 540 seats of the Lok Sabha and state assemblies respectively are to be reserved for scheduled-caste members. Although initially the reservations were to be implemented for ten years, they have been extended to 2010 (Shah 2001: 224).

³⁴ Shah highlights caste’s increasingly common role as a limiting, rather than determining, impact on choice of occupation, particularly amongst individuals with assets for investment or marketable skills, who have been able to utilise them to attain a university education and become, for example, professionals, entrepreneurs, white-collar employees or politicians (2001:228). This process has been facilitated by state-led economic liberalisation and globalisation (Shah 2001: 228).

to drink, while other castes have not (Isaac 1998: 146). Hence, the permissibility of drinking and the shaping of economic opportunities by caste suggest it has to be included in any assessment of consumption in India.

Gender also plays a pivotal dual role in informally and formally determining consumption possibilities in India. Female children and women are often consistently disadvantaged when it comes to access to resources. For example, relying on NCAER data for the 1990s, Asadullah found in Tamil Nadu that males receive greater expenditures on all aspects of education at all ages (reported in Harriss-White 2004: 170). It was also discovered that medical expenditure on males is 30 percent higher than that allocated to their female counterparts (Harriss-White 2004: 170). His conclusion is that strong gender discrimination in expenditure is perpetuated. To investigate these inequalities, he compares spending on “male items” (including alcohol, tobacco, cigars and betelnut) versus spending on “female items” (such as cosmetics), each as a proportion of household expenditure. Expenditure on male products by poor households was found to be many times that spent on female ones (Harriss-White 2004: 170-1). Gillespie, as referenced in Harriss-White, found in rural Andhra Pradesh that richer households’ spending on tobacco and alcohol, consumed primarily by men, were significantly greater than that by their poorer counterparts (2004: 171). This pattern indicates that significant gendered expenditure gaps exist across the income distribution. Moreover, women are barred from acquiring formal bank credit, due to bank rules and other impediments, including the ability to present appropriate collateral, such as land (Harriss-White 2003: 116). Their access to resources is further limited by predominantly male control over intra-household allocations and decisions, which changes little even when their contributions to household income increase (Harriss-White 2004: 173). Discrepancies based on gender extend to economic opportunities as well. Although larger numbers of

women are entering the labour market, they are still at a disadvantage regarding types of opportunities and remuneration. Women tend to be confined to certain employment niches, such as in government clerical positions, medicine and teaching; outside of these arenas, it is more difficult for them to obtain a position (Harriss-White 2003:116-7). In Indian family businesses, Harriss-White points out that not only are there fewer women employees, they are intentionally casualised, are prevented from unionising, are paid less, and are subordinated physically, all of which contribute to women's inability to start the processes of capital accumulation on the same footing as men (2003: 114-5). Even when employed in occupations of comparable effort and skill, women's wages are between 40 to 75 percent lower (Harriss-White 2003: 116-7). These myriad resource and economic biases against girls and women are expected to lead to gendered consumption. In terms of alcohol consumption, although formal cultural dictates expressly prohibiting women from indulging in it do not seem to exist, several studies claim that even amongst the middle-class female drinking has been noted as being far less common than male drinking and is considered more acceptable when done in the context of a festive occasion, such as a wedding (Isaac 1998: 146; Bennett, et al. 1998: 247).

This summary aimed primarily to draw attention to the fact that the social institutions of religion, caste and gender have consequences for alcohol consumption through their impact on permissibility, access to resources, and economic opportunities. Despite the cursory nature of the overview, the evidence presented provides a strong indication that there is a link between one's religion, caste and gender, and one's social ability to consume,³⁵ which will be explored in greater depth in the chapters on the outside and inside meanings of consumption.

³⁵ Although the implications of the overlapping of these institutions on consumption have been little studied, it is likely that they are such that they reinforce the biased power structures of each institution on its own.

Media

The media, such as newspapers and magazines, will be considered as a social, rather than an economic or political, institution because our thesis is concerned primarily with their impact on the conceptualisation of acceptable consumption practices and aspirations in India. In addition to being a significant source of information (Thompson 1997: 28), they have an impact on the construction, maintenance and alteration of the mental frameworks that people utilise to process and understand the world. Two important theories have been developed by McCombs and Shaw and by Gerbner concerning the way in which the media contribute to the creation of people's shared perceptions of their world. McCombs and Shaw, in their agenda-setting model, assert that rather than instructing individuals what to think, the media tell people what to think *about* (McCombs and Shaw 1997: 154, Newbold 1997: 121). On the other hand, Gerbner stresses media's interpretive function and claims that they indicate to their audience members "what *is*, what is *important*, what is *right*, and what is *related* to what else" (Wright 1997: 97, emphasis original). In a similar vein to Gerbner, Tudor contends that the media offer a "cultural reservoir" which directly and indirectly shapes what is taken for granted in a society and, thus, provides frameworks or "ways of seeing" that become the "constants of our cognitive processes" (1997: 179). Liu also draws attention to the media's interpretive function and their role in the formulation of subjective reality, which representations are then incorporated into individual world views and serve as the basis for attitudes and social actions (2006: 370). Despite the differing characterisations of the media's influence on their audience, the scholars discussed here all start from the presupposition that media do have an impact on what people consider to be critical issues, which implies that they do have consequences for individuals' mental frameworks and social norms. Nevertheless, rather than assuming that there is a direct causal relationship

between mass media content and people's perceptions, it is necessary to deconstruct the roles and messages of the media as a shaper and reflector of changing social practices.

Analysis of the media has not remained limited to their potential impact on their audience, but has also extended to the nature of media content and ideology, often influenced by the work of Marx and Engels and/or Gramsci. The former two argued that the ruling class controlled not only the material, but also the intellectual, means of production, so that the "ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relations, the dominant material relations grasped as ideas" (Marx and Engels 2001: 38). Gramsci developed this line of thought to inform his concept of hegemony (Lukes 2005: 8), which has fueled much of the contemporary debate on ideology and the media (Croteau and Hoynes 1997: 169). He saw hegemony as the ideological domination by the ruling classes, which allowed them to rule by consent (Lukes 2005: 144) through, for instance, "cultural leadership" (Croteau and Hoynes 1997: 169). Thus, from Gramsci's perspective, the media are a tool to disseminate dominant views in a seemingly benign fashion, which allows content to be perceived as "common sense" and "natural" (Croteau and Hoynes 1997: 169-70). More recent research has problematised the manner in which the dominant ideologies found in the media contribute to the maintenance of existing social hierarchies based on, for example, class, race, and gender (Kellner 2003: 11). Feminist studies, for instance, have critiqued media representations of women (Newbold 1997; Steeves 1997; Tuchman 1997), arguing, based on content analyses, that they have excluded, stereotyped, and devalued women (Steeves 1997:393) resulting in the "symbolic annihilation" of women (Tuchman 1997: 407).

The heated discussions on the biased ownership of and representations in the media reveal an underlying assumption: that the media do contribute to the shaping of people's perceptions of reality and their views of what is (and is not) acceptable.

Although individual agency is recognised by some studies (Thompson 1997: 33; Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch 1997), the media are important sites of contestation because it is believed that

“products of media culture provide materials out of which we forge our very identities; our sense of selfhood; our notion of what it means to be male or female; our sense of class, of ethnicity and race, of nationality, of sexuality; and of ‘us’ and ‘them’. Media images help shape our view of the world and our deepest values: what we consider good or bad, positive or negative, moral or evil” (Kellner 2003: 9).

Hence, both the bodies of work on media effects and on media content appear to agree that the media have consequences for individuals’ conceptualisation of what is and is not permissible.

Regarding the English language press in India, this discussion of the media suggests that it is reasonable to assume that it has an impact on the social attitudes of the urban middle-class, the group to which it caters and, consequently, on their perceptions of permissible behaviour³⁶. The English language press will therefore be explored as constituting an important element of the outside meaning of consumption of urban middle-class drinking in India. Despite, as Joseph and Sharma maintain, the English language press’ manifestation of the views of the “elitist...relatively affluent, upwardly mobile, university educated upper caste urban male” (1994: 17), by virtue of this characteristic it still serves as a significant source of definitions of social reality (Anand 2003: 2), so that the images conveyed in the media are not necessarily less compelling. Velacherry asserts in his study of the social impact of mass media in Kerala that media exposure has contributed to an increased consumerism and desire for conspicuous consumption in Indian society (1993: 201). In some cases, it has perceptibly altered people’s consumption behaviour. For instance, advertisements in the mass media and

³⁶ (Deb 2005: [http://www.cjr.org /issues/2005/2/deb-letter-delhi.asp](http://www.cjr.org/issues/2005/2/deb-letter-delhi.asp); Editor 1990: <http://www.pucl.org/from-archives/Media/freedom.htm>).

their representations of nutrition have resulted in changes in food habits, particularly amongst prosperous urban society (Velacherry 1993: 247-48). So, the media has the potential to act as an agent of institutional change. It is imperative, however, that one recognise that the media is one influence among many, as Klapper highlights (1997: 137), and that individual agency plays an important part in changes in social attitudes and behaviour. The changing representations of alcohol in the English-language press and the consequences for the conceptualisation of drinking will be examined in Chapter 4 on the outside meaning of consumption through an analysis of the alcohol-related articles from two newspapers, *The Hindustan Times* and *The Times of India*, and two women's magazines, *Femina* and *SAVVY*, since 1980.

1.4.2.2 Economic institutions

For the purposes of examining shifting trends in Indian urban middle-class drinking, economic institutions will be considered as being comprised of the formal regulations³⁷ that govern the production, distribution and consumption of alcohol in India. Economic rules are important, particularly in the case of the highly regulated Indian alcohol industry, because they have an impact on the possibilities of production and distribution, which in turn shape consumption opportunities. As regulation will be analysed more thoroughly in the context of the outside meaning of production, this brief discussion aims only to highlight the fact that economic institutions are integral to a study of Indian urban middle-class drinking.

In addition to dictating whether or not production and distribution are politically permitted, regulations determine the conditions under which they may occur. Both state

³⁷ Heretofore “state” has been employed loosely to refer to the government as an entity; to the individuals, departments and parties of which it consists; and to the regulations shaping economic and political interactions between people, between people and groups, and between groups. Various components of the “state” will now be highlighted so as to encourage a rigorous analysis of why and how economic and political institutions matter to the outside and inside meanings of alcohol.

governments and the central government have liberalised regulations pertaining to the alcohol industry. State governments have done so by overturning prohibition, as in the cases of Tamil Nadu in 1981, Andhra Pradesh in 1997, and Haryana in 1998, and by implementing policies facilitating the production and distribution of alcohol. For instance, the Delhi government extended the opening hours of bars in restaurants and hotels by an hour, allowing them to shut at midnight (Hindustan Times 29 September 2004); and a Delhi government recommendation to the Delhi Development Authority suggested the opening of liquor shops in residential neighbourhoods, which had theretofore been banned under a Supreme Court order (Hindustan Times 13 January 2005). Regarding the central government, in addition to a relaxation of import quotas and a reduction of duties on liquor imports³⁸, liberalisation has resulted in the increased presence of multinational companies in India through joint ventures, as in the cases of Stroh Brewery Company, Anheuser-Busch, Allied-Domecq, Brown-Forman and Guinness; through wholly owned subsidiaries, as in the case of Seagrams; and through imports (WHO 1999: 322). Furthermore, the centre recently granted foreign manufacturers the right to produce alcohol locally and to market their products under foreign brand names (WHO 1999: 324). Hence, as laws and regulations directly affect the production and distribution - and consequently consumption - of alcohol, they are vital in a study of changing Indian urban middle-class drinking.

1.4.2.3 Political institutions

Political institutions include the national and state governments, government departments, political parties, lobby groups and constituents as well as their interactions. They are significant in an analysis of Indian urban middle-class drinking, because they have a direct impact on the economic institutions that dictate the permissibility of alcohol

³⁸ (Iyer 2002: <http://www.utnws.utwente.nl/utnieuws/data/37/27/engels1.html>).

production and distribution and on the conditions under which the activities may occur. The analytical focus will be on informal aspects of political institutions, because in India it is often the uncodified interactions between government, the bureaucracy, political parties and/or lobby groups that have the greater influence on the process of agenda setting and decision making. According to Jenkins, a particularly salient feature of political parties in the Indian context is their informal aspect and the opportunities that this characteristic offers individual leaders to build and maintain relationships with a diversity of people, both within and outside of political parties. These relations can then be employed to achieve mutual understandings between representatives of different interests in their capacity as individuals rather than as holders of a particular position (Jenkins 1999: 120). He gives examples of links between politicians, political parties and the liquor lobby: liquor manufacturers use their associations with state government members to obtain assistance in dodging the payment of excise taxes and in acquiring vending concessions that provide substantial “kickbacks” (Jenkins 1999: 90). These practices shape production and distribution, affecting the availability of alcohol, which in turn has an impact on the consumption possibilities that are available to individuals. Thus, political institutions matter in a study of shifting trends in Indian urban middle-class drinking and will be taken up at greater length in the chapter on the outside meaning of production. We now move onto the final portions of the chapter in which our methodology is presented and a comment on methodological pluralism is made.

1.5 Methodology

India was chosen as our country of study because there is an evident diversity of attitudes towards drinking, which offers opportunity for a richness in comparison and evaluation. The decision to conduct the bulk of our fieldwork in New Delhi was based upon: access to archives of *The Hindustan Times* and *The Times of India* at the libraries of

Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and the Nehru Memorial Museum (Teen Murti House), the availability of a large pool of potential student interviewees at Delhi University (DU) and JNU, and the location of a research institute, the Institute for Human Development, willing to provide an affiliation during our time in India. The magazine articles were collected in Mumbai, where the *Femina* and *SAVVY* archives are located.

My methodology was developed in three stages: a literature review, data collection and data analysis. Firstly, before departing for India, an extensive literature review was done of research regarding the production, distribution and consumption of alcohol in general and in India in particular. References were located through libraries and the internet and served as the primary means of exploring changes in the outside meaning of production and as the preliminary means of investigating the outside meaning of consumption³⁹.

The subject has required an eclectic set of sources of evidence. During the period of our fieldwork in India, both secondary and primary data were collected. To look into the manner in which the regulations governing the alcohol industry have altered and in which the permissibility of alcohol consumption by the Indian urban middle-class has shifted since 1980, the secondary data gathered during this phase consisted of 632 alcohol related articles from the two English-language dailies with the highest readership, *The Hindustan Times* and *The Times of India*, as well as 92 articles from two popular women's magazines, *Femina* and *SAVVY*. The two newspapers and two magazines were chosen because they are not only widely read, but also cater to the urban middle-class. The period 1980 to the present was decided upon, so that we could investigate alcohol production, distribution and consumption before and after the economic liberalisation that

³⁹ Referring back to our thesis argument as laid out earlier in the chapter, the outside meaning of production has repercussions for the possibility of drinking through its influence on the availability of alcohol, which is shaped by production and distribution, as affected by laws and regulations as well as political institutions. The outside meaning of consumption has consequences for alcohol consumption through its impact on accessibility, as determined by income, and permissibility, as shaped by social attitudes.

accelerated in India after the 1991 launching of Manmohan Singh's structural adjustment programme for the Indian economy. When gathering secondary data, the selection criterion applied to the newspaper and magazine text⁴⁰ was that they have at least one instance of one or more of the following terms: alcohol, beer, bubbly, champagne, drink, liquor, prohibition and wine. To locate the newspaper articles between 1990 and 2005, we utilised the Institute for Studies in Industrial Development's newspaper archive database, which allows one to search for articles by keyword.

In order to gain an understanding of the different health, social, political and economic inside meanings ascribed to individuals' experiences of alcohol, we then conducted 32 semi-structured interviews in English with students from DU and JNU. We decided to utilise personal semi-structured interviews to collect data on people's experiences with alcohol, so that we could tailor our questions as needed and pursue interesting ideas that emerged during the course of the interview. This would permit us to obtain a better understanding of the complex topic of alcohol than if we were restricted to a fixed set of questions. University students were chosen for the following reasons. First, we believed that as a group, they would be more easily accessible both in their willingness to be interviewed and to offer relevant information, even to an outsider. Second, university students would be aware of and be able to give views on the circumstances surrounding their own, their peers' and other household members' consumption of alcohol. Third, in a university setting, students would be from different religious and caste backgrounds, which would facilitate our ability to obtain a variety of perspectives. Fourth, as all DU and JNU students speak English, we were able to conduct interviews in English, precluding the need for a translator or reliance on our limited Hindi skills. Fifth, as our case study of university students is not meant to be representative of

⁴⁰ "Articles" also encompasses editorials.

the Indian urban middle-class, but to provide an indication of its views, in attempting to understand the manner in which alcohol and its uses are categorised by Indian urban middle-class students, (although we tried to obtain detailed household data) our focus was on the students' *perceptions* regarding the repercussions and social meanings of drinking for households as well as individuals.

The 37 core interview questions fell into three categories, personal background, the individual's history of experience with alcohol, and family history of experience with alcohol⁴¹. They focused on past, rather than current, experiences in the hopes that allowing people to distance themselves temporally from their accounts would decrease their reticence regarding the sensitive topic of drinking. Initial contact with potential interviewees was made through personal contacts or through interaction at university facilities and campus events. Thereafter, the snowballing sampling technique was used to find other students willing to be interviewed. This procedure was executed over and over again as we continued to meet other students, so that rather than restricting our interviewees to one group, we had the opportunity to discuss alcohol with and interview people from many different circles. Despite our efforts to speak with as wide a range of students as possible, we were unable to interview any Muslims.

During the period of interviewing, we faced three difficulties, gaining access to female and Muslim interviewees and drawing out relevant information during the interview. Concerning the first, when we initially appeared on campus to recruit interviewees, we discovered that male students were much more likely to volunteer. However, after making contact with some women and spending time with them, they would usually offer to be interviewed and to introduce us to their friends as well. The second hurdle was gaining access to Muslim students. Despite numerous efforts to recruit

⁴¹ Although some questions were asked about students' current consumption, the emphasis was on their previous experiences in regard to alcohol. Please refer to Appendix 3 for the interview questions.

Muslim respondents using the previously mentioned techniques, first, we found it difficult to meet them, and, second, to secure their participation. Factors that may have contributed to this include the significantly smaller number of Muslim, as opposed to Hindu, students at DU and JNU, as well as the proscription placed on drinking by Islam⁴². The third challenge was drawing data out during the interviews. We found that in many cases, even the most vocal men who were willing to discuss the general topic of alcohol for hours, would clam up considerably once it came time to discuss their personal history of experience with alcohol. To put them at ease, we would often begin with our experience of alcohol, which made them feel more comfortable and willing to open up about their experiences. It is interesting to note that both male and female students who did not drink were more immediately willing to talk about alcohol in a personal context.

With respect to reflexivity, we believe that our social identity and embodied characteristics were both assets and disadvantages during our fieldwork. In terms of our perceived social identity, what was considered the contradiction of our Asian background and Western accent, together with our association with the University of Oxford, piqued the curiosity of many students and increased their willingness to converse with me. During the interviews, our position as a foreign student who was not opposed to drinking and was from a culture where alcohol consumption was acceptable made interviewees more willing to divulge the details of their experiences with alcohol, as they did not feel that we would judge them morally. Being a woman enabled us to win the confidence of female interviewees more easily and quickly than would have been possible as a male researcher. On the other hand, our status as an outsider, together with time constraints, impeded our ability to meet and obtain the cooperation of Muslim students, who tended, for instance, to be less salient than their Hindu counterparts at campus events and *dhabas*,

⁴² If time had not been a factor, we would have attempted to interview students from Jamia Millia Islamia, an Islamic university in New Delhi, in addition to those at DU and JNU, which were chosen for the diversity of their students, in terms of religion, caste and home states.

or food stalls. Notwithstanding the limits of the sample used in our case study, which was not meant to be representative, by complementing our interview data with the results of the analysis of articles from newspapers and women's magazines catering to the Indian urban middle-class, we believe we were able to offer meaningful insights into some of the meanings members attach to alcohol, its uses and consequences.

The third stage of our methodology was data analysis, an inductive process due to the nature of our project, aiming to discern the changing social meanings attached to alcohol consumption by members of the Indian urban middle-class and the circumstances that have contributed to these shifts. The household consumer expenditure data collected by the Indian National Sample Survey Organisation was analysed statistically using Stata Statistical Software, Release 9.2. The 632 newspaper and 92 magazine articles were analysed using content analysis, focusing on themes, to investigate changes in the alcohol industry and in the representation of drinking. The first step in our examination of the newspaper articles was culling out the few, such as, "Rats too love liquor" (The Hindustan Times 1984) and "Geese guard whisky warehouse" (The Times of India 1985c), that do little to elucidate changes in the alcohol industry or in urban middle-class social attitudes towards alcohol in India. The remainder of the newspaper articles were classified into 29 categories, which were later grouped under the broader headings of industry, health, politics and social behaviour. The factual articles pertaining to the regulations governing the alcohol industry, categorised under industry, were analysed to ascertain changes in the legal environment pertaining to the availability of alcohol. The data from the newspapers were supplemented by that from industry reports and academic literature, and both data and findings will be discussed in Chapter 3 on the outside meaning of production and distribution. The 306 newspaper articles that had to do with alcohol's relationship to health, politics and social behaviour were examined to

understand changes in media representations of drinking, which affects social attitudes and, therefore, the permissibility of alcohol consumption. The magazine articles were placed under the categories of health and social behaviour⁴³ and examined to gain an understanding of the gendered permissibility of drinking. The newspaper and magazine articles relating to the permissibility of drinking will be analysed in Chapter 4 on the outside meaning of consumption.

Regarding the interview data, the first step in our analysis was to seek recurring regularities in the issues mentioned by interviewees in order to identify categories exhibiting both internal and external homogeneity⁴⁴. Upon establishment of our categories, we moved reflexively between them and the data to ensure the robustness of the former in terms of accuracy and significance, as a means to correctly pinpoint the inside meanings ascribed by the student interviewees to the social consequences of drinking, the health repercussions of moderate vs. heavy drinking, the costs of alcohol consumption, and the employment of alcohol as a means to both make distinctions between groups and blur the boundaries between them. These shed light on the inside meanings held by the urban middle class. The interviews and the inside meanings they reveal will be explored in Chapter 5 on the inside meanings of consumption.

1.5.1 Methodological pluralism

Before progressing any further, a brief commentary on methodological pluralism is necessary. In his critiques of mainstream economics' near-universal application of the formalist method of mathematical-deductive modelling, the critical realist Tony Lawson, in emphasising ontology, the study – or a theory – of existence, has brought attention to

⁴³ There were no articles relating to politics in the women's magazines.

⁴⁴ Internal homogeneity has to do with the way data in a given category "hold together" meaningfully, while external homogeneity refers to the "boldness" and clarity of categories to minimise, for instance, overlapping (Patton 1987: 154).

the necessity for methodological pluralism. As social reality is inherently complex and dynamic, he questions the validity of one of economics' underlying presuppositions, i.e. that regularities of cause and effect are evident in sequences of social events (Lawson 2006: 496). Economics' insistence on adopting this assumption – despite the continuously transforming nature of social reality – and applying the same methodology to all cases Lawson likens to using “a comb to write a letter, a knife to ride to work, or a drill to clean a window” (Lawson 2003: 12). He claims that the failure to recognise the relevance of all methodologies in some, but not all, situations has impeded and continues to impede the ability of economics to shed light on social reality (Lawson 2006: 496-97). Moreover, as all of the social sciences, including economics, sociology, politics, anthropology and human geography, seek to understand social reality, he asserts that rather than distinguishing economics as a separate social science, it is most usefully viewed as a “division of labour” within the social sciences (2006: 499). His conclusion is that an acknowledgement of the value of different methodologies and disciplines by mainstream economics would facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of the nature of the aspect of reality being researched.

Although his comments were directed at mainstream economics, we find Lawson's observations on pluralism pertinent to our thesis. Due to the complexity of the political economy of alcohol production, distribution and consumption in India as well as the complexity of the social meanings that individuals attach to drinking based on their experiences, it has been necessary to draw on several disciplines, including anthropology, political economy, development studies, and economics, in our analysis. In doing so, we have been able to draw on the most relevant discipline(s) for each section of this thesis, thereby allowing us to highlight insights that would perhaps have been overlooked had we limited ourselves to one discipline. For instance, whereas economics is useful in our

statistical modeling of the relationship between income and alcohol expenditures in Chapter 4, it does little to elucidate individuals' experiences of alcohol and the meanings they attach to the purchase and consumption of alcohol. A pluralist approach is particularly useful in the Indian context. Srinivas has noted in his study of caste that while micro-studies limit the general applicability of a given study due to, for instance, the regional and religious diversity of the country, macro-level research is equally limited in its inability to pick up on the complexities and nuances of social reality in India. As a result, he has called for ambidextrousness on the part of the researcher, and we have attempted to heed his and Lawson's advice to paint, in the latter's words, "as complete and encompassing as possible a conception of the broad nature and structure of (a relevant domain of) reality as appears feasible" (2003: xvi), in this case the social reality of alcohol production, distribution and consumption in India.

1.6 Conclusion

Upon review of development theory's treatment of commodities, we concluded that commodities are under-theorised by the discipline in three ways: they are not explicitly addressed; they are treated in an aggregate fashion; and no distinction is made between their purchase, use and consequences. We argued that a more nuanced look at the emic uses and meanings of commodities is necessary to understand their impact and to formulate a clearer picture of their role in development, which this thesis aims to do for the commodity of alcohol. In light of the under-theorised nature of commodities by development theory, we turned to the framework of outside and inside meaning developed by Mintz in *Sweetness and Power* (1985). After deliberating on its strengths and weaknesses, it was concluded that Mintz's framework is relevant to a study of shifting trends in Indian urban middle-class drinking for the following reasons: 1) its

historical perspective, 2) its examination of trends, 3) the inclusion of both production and consumption, 4) its focus on the power relations underlying changes in a society's food consumption habits, and 5) the ability of the concept of inside meaning to shed light on the uses of alcohol and the emic meanings ascribed to them by the middle-class. Despite its relevance to our project, however, Mintz's framework requires refining, which we have done by problematising the relationship between outside and inside meaning, by including distribution, and by dealing systematically with social, economic and political institutions. Now that our theoretical framework has been laid out, in Chapter 2 we move onto a consideration of the history of alcohol production, distribution and consumption in India as well as of the political and economic circumstances related to economic liberalisation that have framed the recent changes pertaining to the alcohol industry and markets. These are all necessary background to the analysis of the outside meaning of alcohol production and distribution in India.

Chapter 2 – The Setting

India is a vast and varied country, with a population of over one billion⁴⁵ and a landmass covering 3.3 million square kilometres. Although according to 2001 census data, Hindus form the majority, comprising 80.5 percent of the population, there are also a considerable number of Muslims⁴⁶, Christians, Buddhists, Jains and others. The same census results also indicate that approximately 35 percent of the population is under the age of fifteen, 57 percent between the ages of fifteen and 59, and eight percent over 59⁴⁷. The sex ratio is 933 females per thousand males⁴⁸, and the literacy rate is 64.8 percent, with 75.3 for males and 53.7 for females⁴⁹. Upon gaining independence from the British in 1947, a constitution was created for a socialist democratic republic with a parliamentary system of government, and a state-owned sector was developed to serve a capitalist economy. The country's economy is the fourth largest in the world, and as of 2005, 56 percent of gross domestic product consisted of services, 22 percent of agriculture and 22 percent of industries⁵⁰. The main agricultural products are rice, wheat, tea, cotton, sugarcane, potatoes, jute, oilseed and poultry; and the primary industries include steel, garments, petroleum, cement, machinery, locomotive, food processing, pharmaceutical products and mining⁵¹.

India has a rich history, evidence of which spans more than 4,000 years. It has been marked by frequent foreign visits as well as by conquests, such as the conquest of the Aryan tribes over the pre-Aryan *dasas* in the Indus Valley and Punjab between about

⁴⁵ The 2001 census estimated India's population at 1.03 billion (Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India 2001: http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Census_Data_2001/India_at_glance/glance.aspx).

⁴⁶ Muslims, the second largest religious group, constituted 13.4 percent (Government of India 2007: http://india.gov.in/knowindia/india_at_a_glance.php).

⁴⁷ (Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India 2001: http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Census_Data_2001/India_at_glance/glance.aspx).

⁴⁸ (Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India 2001: http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Census_Data_2001/India_at_glance/glance.aspx).

⁴⁹ (Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India 2001: http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Census_Data_2001/India_at_glance/glance.aspx).

⁵⁰ (Government of India 2007: http://india.gov.in/knowindia/india_at_a_glance.php).

⁵¹ (Government of India 2007: http://india.gov.in/knowindia/india_at_a_glance.php).

1500 and 1000 B.C., and by occupation, as in the most recent case of the British. Each of these incursions has influenced Indian culture in some way and helps to explain the attitudes towards alcohol that continue to exist in the country today. As we have noted in Chapter 1 in our discussion of Mintz's method, circumstances never arise in a vacuum, but are the result of prior events and processes. Hence, in order to understand the contemporary conditions of alcohol production, distribution and consumption by the Indian urban middle-class, it is important to understand the events that preceded them. To this end, this chapter will first provide a historical overview of alcohol production and consumption in India, focusing primarily on that for and by elites. This has been necessitated by the fact that the vast majority of the historical texts and accounts as well as reports that we have drawn on in this section either recount the drinking habits of the upper-classes or have been written by privileged individuals, such as the Mauryan prime minister Kautilya. The drinking preferences and practices of lower-class people tend to be mentioned only in passing⁵² and/or discussed in the context of temperance or prohibition movements. Then the political and economic changes from the 1980s that have resulted in a shift from a state-led to a market-dominated model of development and have facilitated greater alcohol production, distribution and consumption will be summarised. The chapter will end with a brief examination of the increasing political salience of religion and caste, which has facilitated economic reforms and contributed to changes in consumption behaviour amongst the Indian urban middle-class.

2.1 A history of alcohol production and consumption in India

Despite characterisations of Indian culture as traditionally dry or abstinent, there is evidence not only of consistent alcohol production and consumption throughout India's

⁵² A body of literature, however, exists on the drinking habits of various tribal groups in India (Mohan and Sharma 1995; Rao and Rao 1976; Reddy 1971; Roy 1978).

history, but of relatively relaxed attitudes towards drink (Benegal 2005: 1051) until the previous century. Brewing and distilling in India can be traced back to as early as 2000 B.C. in the Indus valley⁵³, where they were undertaken by the technologically advanced Indus civilisation⁵⁴. Drink also appears to have been consumed at the time of the Epics, evidenced by mention of alcohol in the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. During this era, circa 1200 to 1000 B.C.E., although drinking was frowned upon in the Hindu sacred text the *Rig Veda* – and consequently interdicted for Brahmins, the spiritual aristocracy, as well as for students - the warrior and trading classes were permitted to consume liquor brewed from honey, mahua flowers or jaggery (Isaac 1998: 147). Moreover, the *Sutras* instruct that strong liquor be served to guests upon entering a new house and to brides upon going into their husbands' homes for the first time (NIMHANS and WHO 2003: 7).

In the period of Mauryan rule, under the first emperor Chandragupta, his prime minister Kautilya is said to have written a Machiavellian text, *Arthashastra*, to be used as a practical guide to ruling. It covers topics ranging from the education and training of a king to civil and criminal law to the production and regulation of alcohol (Kautilya 1967). Regarding the latter, he not only provides instructions for the manufacture of at least twelve different alcoholic beverages, but also lists in great detail the rules and regulations governing production, sales, taxation, and conduct in taverns (Kautilya 1967: 133-37). Drinks were fermented and distilled from various grains and their products, such as rice, barley gruel or fermented rice flour; from the bark of certain trees; from flowers, such as mahua and jasmine; from fruits, such as grapes, mangos, and dates; and from syrups, such

⁵³ (National Institute of Mental Health and NeuroSciences (NIMHANS) and World Health Organization (WHO) 2003: 2).

⁵⁴ Needham attributes the origins of alcohol distillation to India with the advent of the Gandhara stills, consisting of a circular basin with a wide hole fitted onto the mouth of a water pot (NIMHANS and WHO 2003: 6).

as from a palmyra or coconut palm⁵⁵ (Kautilya 1967: 133-37). Liquor production and consumption seem to have been an integral element of life, evinced by Kautilya's provision for inclusion of liquor vendors in fort areas (1967: 54). Nonetheless, its consumption was highly regulated to mitigate the potential effects of drunkenness⁵⁶, and only individuals who were "well-known and of pure character" were permitted to take liquor out of the shops (Kautilya 1967: 134).

During the early Christian era, south Indian nobles imported wine for their use. Toddy, arrack and flavoured rice wine were also common (NIMHANS and WHO 2003: 7). Tribals consumed *laopani*, a rice beer, and, according to a Chinese visitor, *khshatriyas* (warriors) and *vaishyas* (peasants and traders) drank liquor brewed from grapes and sugarcane and strong distilled liquor respectively (NIMHANS and WHO 2003: 8). Distinguished physicians, such as Charak and Susruta, were among the first documented in the Indian context to draw distinctions between heavy and moderate alcohol consumption, and associated the latter with some positive health effects (Isaac 1998: 147). Other medical authorities from this period recommended moderation and balance in regard to alcohol, which was said to augment the "mental principle"⁵⁷, but diminish the "physical" and "vitality principles". Accordingly, it was advised that wine be avoided in the summer and rainy season, but not in the winter and spring (NIMHANS and WHO 2003: 8). In south India, drink was also said to be imbibed by women, who drank in the

⁵⁵ The fermented exudates of the palmyra and coconut palms yield toddy, which when distilled result in arrack, both of which continue to be produced today.

⁵⁶ In Kautilya's words, "Lest workmen spoil the work in hand, and Aryas violate their decency and virtuous character, and lest firebrands commit indiscreet acts, liquor shall be sold to persons of well-known character in such small quantities as one-fourth or half a kudumba, one kudumba, half a prastha, or one prastha" (Kautilya 1967: 134).

⁵⁷ In ayurvedic medicine, maintaining a suitable balance of the three humors or *doshas* that govern the physio-chemical and physiological functions of the body is integral to good health. The three humors are *vata dosha*, the "physical principle", *pitta dosha*, the "mental principle"; and *kapha dosha*, the "vitality principle". *Vata dosha*, considered to be from earth and air, is the most important one; its functions include controlling physical and mental movements. *Pitta dosha*, associated with fire or heat, is important for functions such as appetite, comprehension, and metabolism, while *kapha dosha*, from water and earth, provides, for instance, strength and power, stability, and fertility and virility (Ayushveda.com: <http://www.ayushveda.com/basics-of-ayurveda/ayurveda-basics.htm>).

company of their lovers or as they were gossiping with other women. Alcohol consumption, particularly in ritual contexts, appears to have been a social event taking place in pleasant surroundings, shared by lovers, married couples, families and friends (NIMHANS and WHO 2003: 8).

Alcoholic beverages were frequently consumed during the Mughal dynasty as well, despite the Koran's prohibition of drink. The emperors Babur (r. 1526-30) and Jahangir⁵⁸ (r. 1605-27) are said to have been great drinkers, with intermittent bouts of abstinence in the case of the former⁵⁹ (Chatterjee 2005: 190), while Akbar the Great (r. 1556-1605) only occasionally turned to drink over his preferred *bhang*. The sultans Danyal and Parwiz died of the alcohol related disease *delirium tremens*⁶⁰ (Chatterjee 2005: 2001). Court chronicles, such as the detailed and comprehensive *Ain-i Akbari*, also note that drinking was prevalent among the *mansabdars*, members of the imperial bureaucracy, and that many of them died of *delirium tremens* (Chatterjee 205: 201). By contrast, Aurangzeb banned alcoholic beverages (Wolpert 1991: 43).

During the Mughal period, drink was not only an important element of entertaining, particularly in court circles, it also played an important part in strengthening and negotiating relationships, constituting authority, and establishing hierarchies (Chatterjee 2005). Regarding alcohol as a means to cement and negotiate ties with others, factory officials of the East India Company frequently requested that the authorities in London send them bottles of wine both for their own use and for gifts to the Mughal

⁵⁸ Jahangir is purported to have been a great drinker of double distilled liquor, taking in twenty cups on a daily basis, and to have enjoyed drinking games (NIMHANS and WHO 2003: 8-9). Other beverages during Jahangir's time included wine made by steeping raisins in rice spirit and a liquor produced by placing arrack or rice spirit in an empty wine barrel, to which was added remains from other wine barrels, water and sweet sugar (NIMHANS and WHO 2003: 9).

⁵⁹ One story recounts Babur's commissioning of a great tank to be carved out of a single piece of stone for the purpose of being filled with wine. At the time the tank was completed, however, he was abstaining from drink, and as a result, the tank was filled with lemonade instead of wine (NIMHANS and WHO 2003: 8).

⁶⁰ The WHO defines *delirium tremens* as alcohol withdrawal symptoms accompanied by delirium in alcohol-dependent individuals. It is characterized by confusion, disorientation, paranoid ideation, delusions, illusions, hallucinations, restlessness, distractibility, tremors, sweating, tachycardia, and hypertension (WHO 2007: http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/terminology/who_lexicon/en/).

monarch, prince, nobles, and officials of the state (Chatterjee 2005: 198-9). Being in a position to offer such highly prized presents enabled the giver, for instance, to gain acceptance to court, to breach hierarchies, to obtain favours, and to smooth negotiations (2005: 199). Thus, Chatterjee notes that while at times, Sir Thomas Roe, the English monarch's representative at Emperor Jahangir's court, presented caskets of wine purely as a gift to Prince Khurram or Emperor Jahangir, at other times it was utilised to attain privileges of trade or to secure the release of goods from the customs house at Surat (2005: 199).

Alcohol also played an important role in the constitution of authority during the Mughal period. According to Chatterjee, the actions of the Mughal emperors indicate their awareness that "the drinking of alcoholic beverages could be an area of manifestation of power and control" (2005: 200). Therefore, in addition to the prohibition of drinking in public and of appearing before the emperor after having consumed alcohol, the emperors carefully managed public representations of their drinking. For example, the court chronicle *Shahjahanama*, describing the reign of Shahjahan (r. 1628-57), states that the Mughal emperor consumed alcohol only once at the insistence of his father, Jahangir (Chatterjee 2005: 200). There is then no mention in court histories of Shahjahan having an affinity for drink (Chatterjee 2005: 200). However, William Foster portrays the emperor differently in the October 1640 reference in his introduction to the English factory records. He describes Shahjahan as a "good fellow" who had written to him requesting that he provide the emperor with wine either from the British or the Portuguese (Chatterjee 2005: 200). The emperors also attempted to derive authority from the rejection of alcohol, as in the cases of Babur and Prince Khurram, who announced their public renunciations of drink at the time of crucial battles in Khanwa in 1527 and in the Deccan in 1620 respectively (Chatterjee 2005: 202). Babur drew analogies between the

destruction of wine cups and of the “idolaters” gods (Chatterjee 2005: 202). Chatterjee argues that the emperors’ renunciations of alcohol were symbolic acts of purification as well as tools to discipline forces prior to battle through the establishment of their moral and psychological authority (Chatterjee 2005: 202).

In addition to strengthening and negotiating relationships, and constituting authority, drink was utilised to make class and wealth based distinctions. Court chronicles, representing elite sections of society, allude only to wine. The Mughal nobility commonly consumed the more expensive varieties of wine, such as Shiraz and Canary. Furthermore, the Dutch, French and English gave gifts of exclusive Spanish and French wines to gain, for example, trading privileges (Chatterjee 2005: 211). There is no mention in the court histories of arrack⁶¹ and toddy⁶², consumed by the lower classes (Chatterjee 2005: 211). Some travellers’ accounts, however, such as that of the French priest Abbe Carre, allude to the consumption of arrack and toddy, and deride individuals of “low extraction” for “becoming like animals” pursuant to drinking them (as quoted in Chatterjee 2005: 212). In contrast, the more expensive varieties of English beer and European wine were said to be consumed with “Temperance and Alacrity” (Ovington as quoted in Chatterjee 2005: 212). These accounts suggest that wealth and class distinctions made on the basis of the kinds of alcohol consumed were reinforced by characterisations of poor individuals as unable to drink moderately and to control their actions pursuant to drinking. Some foreigners were also criticised for their overindulgence in alcohol. The Italian traveller Manucci writing in the seventeenth century notes that Europeans no longer commanded the respect they had due to their constantly drunken state, their acquisition of ten or twelve wives, and their penchant for gambling (Chatterjee 2005: 210).

⁶¹ Arrack is country liquor.

⁶² Toddy is an alcoholic beverage produced by fermenting the sap from various species of palm, most commonly the palmyra and coconut.

Although some uses of alcohol during the Mughal period resonate with current ones, to be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, it is in the colonial and pre-independence periods that one finds the roots of current contradictory attitudes and regulations towards drink. The British introduced to India factory manufactured alcoholic beverages, such as whisky and gin, which had higher alcohol content than traditional drinks and offered less variety (Benegal 2005: 1051), and instituted tight regulations to govern the production of alcohol (Hardiman 1985: 188-89, 190, 193-94). Both phenomena contributed to the commoditisation of alcohol.

The system of alcohol manufacture left behind by the Mughals and Marathas was one in which “farms” for the production and sale of alcohol were sold to bidders for a period of a year. The successful bidder then chose village-level liquor dealers to produce and sell country liquor and toddy. From them, he collected the taxes on alcohol that the colonial government required on any alcohol that was made (Hardiman 1985: 186). In some areas, toddy was taxed by way of a levy on toddy yielding trees, but the majority of such trees evaded taxation (Hardiman 1985: 185). This arrangement provided manufacturers with little incentive to expand production or encourage consumption, as the government did not seek to extract increasingly greater taxes, and as it could only lead to rivalries with other manufacturers and/or a hike in bidding prices by the government (NIMHANS and WHO 2003: 9). Moreover, as the owners of the rights to the farms collected taxes in lump sums from dealers rather than amounts commensurate with production, the lack of control exercised over the local distilleries resulted in rampant tax evasion (Hardiman 1985: 186). Consequently, the British grew dissatisfied with the system. Nevertheless, they were unable to change it until their consolidation of power following the successful suppression of the 1857-8 revolt. At that time, efforts were made

to increase excise revenues through a policy of centralisation as a means to mitigate widespread tax evasion – just as they had in Ireland (Hardiman 1985: 186-87).

Thus, in 1959 the Government of India sent a circular to the provincial governments suggesting the establishment of central distilleries, particularly in heavily populated regions (Hardiman 1985: 187). This led to the implementation of the Sudder (District) Still system in which the government was the proprietor of the stills at which limited quantities of alcohol were manufactured (NIMHANS and WHO 2003: 10). However, the desire for greater revenues and the difficulty of manufacturing a standardised product, due to the diversity of practices in different areas (Hardiman 1985: 188), compelled the government to move to the out-still system. Introduced in 1876 and implemented in 1878, the system was marked by an increase in the number of distilleries, auction of the right to establish stills to the highest bidders, and no restrictions on production capacity (Benegal 2005: 1051; NIMHANS and WHO 2003: 10). The new system led to a significant and steady increase in revenue from £2,300,000 in 1873-4 to, £4,266,000 in 1887, as indicated in Table 2.1 (NIMHANS and WHO 2003: 10).

Table 2.1 Colonial alcohol excise revenues between 1873 and 1887

Year	Excise revenue (£)
1873-4	2,300,000
1878-9	2,600,000
1883	3,609,000
1884	3,836,000
1885	4,012,000
1886	4,152,000
1887	4,266,000

Source: (NIMHANS and WHO 2003:10).

In some regions, such as South Gujarat, the revenues derived from *abkari*, or the manufacture and sale of spirituous liquors, grew to be second only to land tax⁶³ (Hardiman 1985: 203).

As suggested by the growth of excise revenue figures, which the Commissioner of Revenue declared to be “marvellous” (NIMHANS and WHO 2003: 11), the consumption of manufactured alcohol rose during British rule. A commission appointed in 1886 to investigate the effect of alcohol excise policy in Bengal estimated alcohol consumption to have increased by 135 percent in 1874-5 and by 180 percent in some districts (NIMHANS and WHO 2003: 11). In 1905-6, the Indian Excise Committee reported that between 1901-2 and 1911-2, distribution of country spirits in gallons per 1,000 persons went from 117 to 168 in Bombay, from 52 to 55 in Sind, and from 24 to 41 in Madras (NIMHANS and WHO 2003: 11).

Temperance movements in England provided the moral justification for the increased regulation that resulted in greater tax revenues for the colonial government. According to Sydney and Beatrice Webb, nineteenth century British temperance movements were rooted in

“several distinct but converging currents of public opinion – the new-found evangelical zeal of saving men’s lives, the growing dislike of the propertied class of the insecurity of life and property, the alarm both of the financier and the ratepayer at the increasing burden of the poor rate, and last but not, we think, least, the half-conscious desire of the rising class of industrial capitalists to drive the manual workers out of the ale-house and gin-shop into the factory and workshop” (as quoted in Hardiman 1985: 187).

Under pressure from English temperance reformers, the government in India adopted these morals through a policy that sought to “restrain and, if possible, to correct and diminish the total actual consumption of spirituous liquors” (Bombay government

⁶³ In the case of Vansda State in South Gujarat, *abkari* revenues (Rs. 285,396) had exceeded land revenues (Rs. 222,227) by 1935-36 (Hardiman 1985: 203).

directive as quoted in Hardiman 1985: 187). However, where considerations of temperance and tax revenue conflicted, the latter appeared to supersede the former. Saldanha highlights an example: after crushing prohibition movements in the Thana and Kolaba districts of Bombay Presidency in 1886, the *abkari* commissioner defended his actions with the statement, “the question for decision is, shall we sit quiet and allow the movement to continue and to spread and thereby forfeit a large amount of revenue, or are measures to be adopted, which will bring people to their senses” (as quoted in Saldanha 1995: 2327).

The government aimed to realise the objective of maximising the revenue raised from a minimum consumption of alcohol by replacing locally produced beverages, such as toddy and arrack, with “safer” and costlier mass-produced commodities (Benegal 2005: 1051; Hardiman 1985: 189; NIMHANS and WHO 2003: 11). In regions such as South Gujarat, the policy was accomplished through measures including the regulation of the tapping of toddy trees and gradual increases in the price of country liquor. These policies were tantamount to prohibition for the poorest segments of the population, such as peasants and *adivasis*⁶⁴, as they were prevented from producing their own liquor and could not afford to purchase legal, manufactured alcohol (Hardiman 1985: 194, 209). On the tea plantations, Chatterjee notes that drink was decried as an “evil” that harmed workers’ health and prevented them from executing their tasks efficiently, even while the indigenous beer, *handia* or *pachwai* (made from grain and rice), was recognised as an important element of festivals and marriages (Chatterjee 2003: 192). Efforts were made to incorporate these local brews into the “legal” distillery system as a means to reap tax revenues, and eventually a licensing system was put in place to control production and consumption (Chatterjee 2003: 192-93). With the advent of these changes, distinctions

⁶⁴ *Adivasis* are now commonly referred to as members of Scheduled Tribes.

began to be made between “legal” and “illegal” drink. While the latter was considered “unacceptable” and consequently stifled, the former was considered a necessary evil that acted as a source of tax revenues, and served as compensation in lieu of payment, thereby preventing workers from saving to free themselves from servitude (Chatterjee 2003: 194).

The greater commoditisation of alcohol in India was met by two types of reactions. Poor rural individuals, who were thought to use alcohol to obtain relief from the difficult conditions of their existence (Benegal 2005: 1051), turned increasingly to illicitly manufactured alcohol (Hardiman 1985: 173; NIMHANS and WHO 2003: 13). In contrast, several movements agitating for abstinence and/or prohibition, commonly referred to as “temperance” movements⁶⁵ in the literature, also took root in India in the late 1800s. Contributing to the rise of these anti-alcohol movements were higher levels of drunkenness and crime associated with increased production and consumption of drink. This led Indians to link alcohol consumption with Western ways and to describe it as an English vice, particularly following Gandhi’s censure of the “foreign” habit, which he attributed to British imperialism⁶⁶ (Benegal 2005: 1051; Fahey and Manian Isaac 1998: 147). Later it came to be associated with the “licentiousness” of the upper-classes (Benegal 2005: 1051).

With the emergence in the nineteenth century of an urban middle class and the accompanying possibility for social change, abstinence was embraced by some of the

⁶⁵ In contrast to their British counterparts, the majority of “temperance” movements in India advocated complete abstinence from and/or prohibition of alcohol, rather than consumption in moderation. Nevertheless, due to the prevalence of the term in the literature, it will be used in this section to refer to such anti-alcohol movements. In instances where “temperance” movement refers to a campaign encouraging moderate consumption, it will be specified.

⁶⁶ Fahey and Manian contend that in light of India’s long history of alcohol production and consumption, assertions of alcohol as being alien to India were exaggerations (2005: 495). Drink was common amongst both the poorest and most elite groups in the colonial period. For many peasants, untouchables, and aboriginal peoples, alcohol was an integral part of festivals, weddings, and other celebrations (Fahey and Manian 2005: 496). With respect to elites, many Parsi males and even some high-caste Hindus, for whom drink was proscribed, chose to indulge in liquor. For instance, privileged youths from high-caste families consumed liquor “as a badge of Western civilization” (Knopf as quoted in Fahey and Manian 2005: 496). Additionally, as early as the 1870s most Calcutta elite families had instances of young male members who died due to alcohol related disease (Fahey and Manian 2005: 496).

more prosperous members of the lower castes. They sought to distance themselves from their communities (Hardiman 1985: 212) and to achieve upward social mobility through sanskritisation, or the adoption of upper-caste norms, such as vegetarianism and abstinence from alcohol, as a means to obtain higher social status (Benegal 2005: 1051). In the latter half of the century, abstinence from drink was embraced by whole communities in some regions, such as South Gujarat. These popular movements, such as the Devi movement⁶⁷, differed from the aforementioned isolated instances of sanskritisation because they involved whole communities. Additionally, rather than the attainment of social mobility, their aim was to save members from further indebtedness to liquor dealers and from pauperisation (Hardiman 1985: 212).

Carroll, however, contests assertions of Indian temperance movements as examples of sanskritisation, and highlights movements that, she argues were “organized, patronized, and instructed by English temperance agitators” (1976: 417). The central figures were William Caine, a Liberal Member of Parliament and philanthropist with twenty years’ experience in temperance work, and Reverend Thomas Evans, a retired Baptist missionary living in the northern Indian city of Mussoorie (Carroll 1976: 418). Caine and Evans were not only responsible for the establishment of numerous Indian branches of the London-based Anglo-Indian Temperance Association, but also, according to Carroll, for the politicisation of alcohol in India (1976: 419). Most significantly, the temperance movements provided a generation of, in particular, English-educated Indian students with the opportunity to gain an education in political organisation and to sharpen their political skills (Carroll 1976: 429). Moreover, by characterising the colonial government’s *abkari* policy as one that gave precedence to revenue considerations over

⁶⁷ In the south Gujarati Devi movement of the early 1920s, *adivasis* stopped drinking and eating meat and fish at the behest of a new, powerful goddess Salabai. It was believed that failure to comply with the injunctions would result in misfortune, madness or death. This movement is said to have improved the material conditions of tribals’ lives by diminishing their dependence on, for example, money lenders (Fahey and Manian 2005: 497; NIMHANS and WHO 2003: 14).

moral ones, Caine gave the Indian National Congress (Congress) additional grounds for criticism of British rule (Carroll 1976: 420). Thus, there were two types of anti-alcohol movements, the popular ones, such as the Devi, stressing abstinence and the largely urban, high-caste, middle-class movements tending to focus on the adoption of prohibition legislation. These two strands operated in isolation from one another until efforts to link them were made by the Congress following the emergence of Gandhi (Hardiman 1985: 216).

Amongst nationalist leaders, there were two schools of thought. One contended that colonial policy was encouraging the replacement of the “healthy” consumption of the “mild and harmless” beverage toddy with “bad” spirits (NIMHANS and WHO 2003: 14). Adherents to this belief were characterised as mouthpieces for Parsi liquor traders and toddy interests, whose support they enjoyed (Fahey and Manian 2005: 491; NIMHANS and WHO 2003: 15). The majority stand was for complete prohibition and was embraced by nationalists such as G.K. Gokhale and Gandhi, both of whom were adamantly against alcohol consumption by Indians. Gandhi asserted that prohibition was patriotic, as it decreased imperial revenue, and used temperance movements to symbolise the fight against colonial oppression in his protests against British rule and boycotts based on the principle of *swadeshi*, or of our own-country (Benegal 2005: 1051; Robb 2002: 197). Gandhi’s wife Kasturbai also led women in anti-liquor agitations (Wolpert 1982: 316). Fahey and Manian suggest that Gandhi effectively used prohibition policy as a political strategy to unite Hindus and Muslims (2005: 491). Furthermore, by characterising drink as a vice confined to poor, illiterate individuals lacking in political power, it was one with few political drawbacks (Fahey and Manian 2005: 491). Consequently, prohibition became an important element of the independence movement.

Following the attainment of limited rights of self-government, in the 1920s several Indian provinces endeavoured to reduce the number of alcohol retailers through the imposition of a rationing system or licensing boards. Upon the acquisition of partial control of most provinces in the 1930s, Congress ministries implemented legislation restricting alcohol sales (Fahey and Manian 2005: 502). The resultant wave of law breaking, sometimes with the collusion of local officials, compelled Vallabhbhai Patel to declare in a memorandum about the ministry in Bihar province that prohibition had proved to be “an utter fiasco” (as quoted in Fahey and Manian 2005: 502). Gandhi himself confessed that prohibition was “not going in the spirit in which it was conceived” (as quoted in Fahey and Manian 2005: 502). Despite placing greater restrictions on the distribution of alcohol, Congress was reluctant to impose complete prohibition, largely because of the need for revenue. Thus, as a compromise, and in contradiction to the wishes of Gandhi, who proposed immediate and complete prohibition, the Congress gave producers and sellers of drink a three-year notice before banning their businesses (Fahey and Manian 2005: 503).

The unflagging efforts of Gandhi’s agitations for prohibition eventually resulted in its incorporation into the Indian constitution following independence (Manor 1993: 56): Article 47 states, “the State shall endeavour to bring about prohibition of the use except for medicinal purposes of intoxicating drinks and of drugs which are injurious to health”. However, Fahey and Manian argue that this was more a symbolic than real win for prohibition (2005: 504). Jawaharlal Nehru did not consider prohibition a priority and only agreed to it in principle because of its importance to some of his ministers, especially Morarji Desai, a Gujarati Brahmin. Therefore, he left regulation of the alcohol industry in the hands of the states.

Although Bombay and Madras had instituted abstinence laws by 1951 (Bennett, *et al.* 1998: 249), and in 1954 the central government established a Prohibition Enquiry Committee to formulate a prohibition plan to be implemented on a national basis, most states chose not to adopt prohibition due to the difficulty of enforcement and a reluctance to forego alcohol excise revenues (Isaac 1998: 148). Despite efforts by the centre to facilitate prohibition through measures such as offering to compensate state governments for 50 percent of their excise revenue losses, and the appointment of the Tekchand Committee in 1964 to make prohibition policy recommendations (Isaac 1998: 149), the states that had implemented partial or full prohibition began to repeal it in the 1960s, so that by the 1970s, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat⁶⁸ remained the only dry states (Rahman 2002). In most cases, prohibition was overturned⁶⁹ due to fiscal considerations, as alcohol revenues comprise a significant proportion of states' total tax revenues. A few states such as Andhra Pradesh and Haryana implemented prohibition in the 1990s at the behest of rural women's anti-arrack movements, but then reversed it after a few years, citing lack of revenue. In 2006, there were four prohibition states and union territories, Gujarat, Lakshadweep, Mizoram and Nagaland, as indicated in Map 2.1⁷⁰.

⁶⁸ Gujarat, the birthplace of Gandhi, is the only state to have maintained complete prohibition since independence (Rahman 2002; Sinha 2006).

⁶⁹ In some instances, as in Andhra Pradesh where arrack continues to be banned, partial prohibition has been maintained, and several states have dry days, on which alcohol consumption is prohibited.

⁷⁰ For an overview of prohibition detailed by state, please see Appendix 1.

Map 2.1 Dry and wet states in India in 2006



Source: (Sinha 2006: 37).

The past few decades, marked by economic liberalisation, have seen a relaxation of regulations governing alcohol production and consumption as well as of social taboos related to drink amongst the urban middle-class (Rahman 2002), both of which will be explored in subsequent chapters.

This overview presented the long-term events that have framed the present trends of production, distribution and consumption, and suggests that the current contentiousness of alcohol and the complexity of the regulatory regime are rooted in previous periods of the country's history, particularly that of colonial rule. It was from practices begun during the British Raj that the following stem: distinctions between legal and illegal alcohol,

with the latter being demonised; the association of alcohol consumption with the West; sankritisation (and alcohol abstinence) as a means to obtain higher social status; the twofold governmental objective of appearing not to condone alcohol consumption, even as greater tax revenues are sought; and the restrictive regulatory regime. The next section considers the more recent political and economic events that have served as the backdrop for and facilitated greater manufacture, distribution and consumption of alcohol in India since the 1980s.

2.2 Political and economic backdrop: shift from a state-led to market-dominated model of development

Just as the move from mercantilism to manufacturing capitalism played a pivotal role in the rise to prominence of sugar in the English diet, the shift in India's economic policy between 1980 and 2000 from the state-led development model based on an industrial strategy of import-substitution to an increasingly market-dominated vision of the economy has been a crucial factor facilitating increased production, distribution and consumption of alcohol amongst the urban middle-class. Therefore, in order to appreciate the specific changes that have taken place in the alcohol sector, one must understand the broader political and economic conditions that have framed them, and so this section will offer a summary of the political and economic environment in which liberalisation took place from 1980 to 2000, focusing primarily on reforms that had implications for the alcohol industry.

Although Rajiv Gandhi is widely credited with introducing economic reforms, Kohli claims that it was Indira Gandhi who initiated the trend toward liberalisation in the early 1980s (1989: 308). However, according to Frankel, Mrs. Gandhi's government was hesitant to support reforms openly and to diverge from the socialist pattern of economy,

which had been the dominant paradigm in India since independence and which contributed to her party's "pro-poor" image (2005: 585). As a result, the primary purpose of reforms such as more liberal policies for the import of raw materials, spare parts and technology (Nayar 2001: 119), and for the entry and expansion of domestic firms⁷¹ (Roy 1995: 141) (which provided the impetus for limited deregulation and competition (Nayar 2001: 117-8)), was to indicate Mrs. Gandhi's support for the private sector as a means to inject vitality into the economy and for greater efficiency in the public sector (Frankel 2005: 585). Her reform measures were met with little resistance due to the incremental nature of the changes, the continuity of rhetoric, the depoliticisation of economic decisions, and the salience of other political issues, including regional conflicts in Assam and Punjab (Kohli 1989: 311).

Contrasting with his mother's "liberalization in small instalments by stealth" as well as of the socialist leaning of prime ministers before him, Rajiv Gandhi was an open proponent of liberalisation when he took office in 1984 (Nayar 2001: 120). His approach was to differ from his mother's liberalisation measures in its relative rapidity of pace of implementation, openness of acknowledgement, and its deeper commitment to economic reforms (Nayar 2001: 122), although an increase in political opposition would ultimately force his administration to resort to a strategy more closely resembling the piecemeal reform and socialist rhetoric prevalent during his mother's rule (Frankel 2005: 586-7; Kohli 1989: 313). His initial overt support of reforms was made possible by the circumstances behind his landslide victory, i.e. his mother's assassination and the ensuing electoral sympathy and fear of national chaos, which freed him temporarily from the political pressures of coalitions and interest groups (Kohli 1989: 312). Taking advantage

⁷¹ Measures included in the new industrial policy of 1982 were: automatic expansion of licensed capacity by one-third over the best production level in the last five years (an increase from one-fourth), an expansion of the list of industries accessible to industrial houses and Foreign Exchange Regulation Act (FERA) companies, the elimination of administered prices for pig iron, and partial price decontrol for cement (Nayar 2001: 119).

of the situation, his administration sought to move definitively from the state and import substitution dominated model to a more liberal one (Kohli 1989: 311). This was exemplified by his government's 1985/86 Budget, which shifted focus away from state-led development and strove to enhance the private sector's ability to act as the engine for growth through policies reducing industrial regulations; lowering corporate, wealth and personal taxes; relaxing restrictions on imports; and limiting public investment to essential infrastructure⁷². Regarding industrial licensing, as the aim was to remove barriers to entry and facilitate economies of scale by increasing capacity levels, initiatives included an increase in the limit for firms' assets under the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act (MRTP) from Rs. 200 million to Rs. 1,000 million⁷³ (Nayar 2001: 123). Tax concessions for corporations and for the urban middle-classes were implemented (Frankel 2005: 586). Policies governing trade were also relaxed in 1985 with the end goal of promoting Indian exports and de-restricted the import of capital goods, technology and raw materials⁷⁴ (Nayar 2001: 124).

Rajiv Gandhi's liberalisation measures received support from the middle-class (Kohli 1989: 318), market-oriented economists, the business press (Varshney 2000: 243), and business groups (Roy 1995: 143). The middle-class was largely supportive of Rajiv Gandhi's policies, as they often saw concrete benefits, such as a reduction in taxes; the elimination, for instance, of the Compulsory Savings Deposit scheme; and an increasingly

⁷² (Frankel 2005: 586; Nayar 2001: 123-4; Roy 1995: 142; Varshney 2000: 241).

⁷³ Other initiatives were as follows: delicensing of 25 categories of industries, 82 bulk drugs and related drug formulations; permission for MRTP companies to acquire licences for 27 industries without limitation by MRTP restrictions; delicensing of 22 industries for MRTP and FERA companies if located in "backward" regions; broadening the range of product mix for 28 industry groups remaining under the purview of the licensing regime; automatic permission for capacity expansion by one-third per year; the eradication of upper limits on capacity in non-consumer electronics; and liberal policies for import of technology and foreign collaboration in electronics (Nayar 2001: 123).

⁷⁴ The relaxation of trade policies consisted of several steps: specific licenses for the import of several types of industrial machinery were eliminated; customs duties levied on industrial machinery imports and capital goods imports for projects were reduced; the upper limit on the value of technology and computer systems imports for each case was increased from \$0.5 million to \$10 million; and foreign investment in electronics was welcomed (Nayar 2001: 124).

abundant supply of consumer goods (Kohli 1989: 318). Such measures have led Kohli to conclude that the Rajiv Gandhi government had decided to base its economic strategy on the buying power of these groups (1989: 318). His assertion has been echoed by Fernandes, who comments in her study of the cultural politics of globalisation in India that whereas the Nehruvian vision of development entailed dams and factories, that of Rajiv Gandhi's government was founded on commodities for the urban middle-class (2000a: 614). This contributed to a shift in mentality and lifestyle from the austerity condoned by Gandhi to more exhibitionist, consumerist ones. Rajiv Gandhi, who was regularly seen in Western branded items, such as Gucci shoes and Ray Ban sunglasses, was seen as embodying these principles, providing a stark contrast to previous Indian leaders, which Kulkarni contends had an impact on the tastes of the urban middle-classes (1993: 45).

In terms of business groups, scholars such as Kochanek and Roy have observed that although Indian business tended to be in favour of economic reform, its enthusiasm for liberalisation was tempered by concerns about the potential ramifications of decontrolling the prices of public sector services and raw materials (Kochanek 1986: 1304) and allowing foreign goods and capital to penetrate domestic markets (Roy 1995: 143). Different industries responded differently. For instance, business houses in import-substitution industries opposed relaxing import policies, while those producing for foreign markets did not (Roy 1995: 143). It is important to note that despite Rajiv Gandhi's efforts to reform what Kochanek terms the "permit-license-quota Raj" (1987) and decrease the prevalence of corruption in the relationship between the government and Indian business, which, under Mrs. Gandhi, had consisted of the former providing benefits to promote and protect specific business interests in exchange for contributions to

political parties and/or payoffs to individual bureaucrats (Kochanek 1987: 1284), this government-business nexus remained relatively unaltered (Kochanek 1987: 1293).

The economic liberalisation initiated by Rajiv Gandhi and his advisors was met with a great deal of resistance from within his own party, which was reluctant to endorse a definitive break with “socialist principles”, and from opposition parties, which criticised as “pro-rich” policies such as those cutting subsidies of key commodities including petroleum and petroleum products, food, and fertiliser (Frankel 2005: 586; Kohli 1989: 313). Critical economists, the intelligentsia, trade unions, poor people, and the urban middle-class voiced their opposition as well to, for instance, price increases of public sector goods (Kochanek 1986: 1305; Nayar 2001: 124; Roy 1995: 144). Consequently, despite his regime’s ambitions to implement far-reaching reforms, Rajiv Gandhi’s attempts at liberalisation eventually had to be scaled back, and the 1987 budget allocated greater funding to poverty alleviation programmes, reinstated pre-reform levels of fertiliser and food subsidies, and increased tariff rates on capital goods (Varshney 2000: 244).

The period of reform commencing in 1991, which strove to achieve systemic change, rather than the piecemeal liberalisation attempted in the 1980s (Kochanek 1986: 1299), has widely been hailed as a turning point in India’s economic history, marked by a paradigm shift or, according to critics, a U-turn, from the state to the market (Nayyar 2001: 386). The immediate trigger for liberalisation was the macroeconomic crisis in the early 1990s, which the new minority Congress government, with P.V. Narasimha Rao as Prime Minister, took as an opportunity to realise deeper reforms than had theretofore been attempted (Nayar 2001). They included eradication of most licensing controls and reduction of tariffs on imports; direct foreign investment up to 51 percent in a number of industries; and the modification of anti-trust legislation permitting capacity expansion of

large companies⁷⁵ (Nayar 2001: 130-1). Varshney has argued that the coalition government led by Rao and the Congress party was able successfully to implement more far-reaching reforms than the majority government of Rajiv Gandhi for the reason that in the later period issues of Hindu nationalism and communalism were of greater significance to opposition parties such as the lower-caste Janata Dal and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) than economic reforms (2000: 247). Despite their criticism of liberalisation policies in 1991 and 1992, neither the Janata Dal nor the BJP enforced voting along party lines on the budgets, which resulted in differential voting of Janata Dal and BJP members in 1991 and of BJP members in 1992. The lack of cohesiveness within the two parties as well as between them allowed the Congress-led government's budgets and their liberalisation measures to pass (Varshney 2000: 248). Following the demolition of the Babri mosque, as the Janata Dal became increasingly concerned about the necessity of keeping the Hindu nationalist BJP in check, its resistance to liberalisation appears to have eroded, and most of the party's members voted in favour of the 1993 reform budget, so that notwithstanding the BJP's votes against it, it was passed (Varshney 2000: 248). Thus, the Rao government's efforts to liberalise the economy were more successful than those of Rajiv Gandhi's, first because the macroeconomic crisis gave the former the political space to act relatively autonomously in the period prior to the 1994 and 1995 state elections, when political considerations weighed less heavily (Nayar 2001: 152), and second because religion and caste had become the predominant considerations in the forging of political coalitions (Varshney 2000: 248).

In an effort to explain the success of certain liberalisation measures over others, Varshney has made the distinction between elite and mass politics. He maintains that in

⁷⁵ Other measures included: devaluation of the rupee by twenty percent, full convertibility of the rupee against the capital account; abolition of industrial licensing except in fifteen strategically and environmentally key industries; opening up of all, but six, industries to the private sector; rationalisation of the taxation system; tax rate cuts; and banking reforms (Nayar 2001: 130-1).

India reforms most relevant to elite spheres such as devaluation of the currency, a restructuring of capital markets, relaxation of trade policy, and simplification of investment regulations, have been the deepest, because they affect the fewest number of people and have resulted in the least resistance (2000). On the other hand, the success of policies pertaining to mass politics depends on whether they have negative or positive political repercussions, so that, for instance, the lack of progress in Indian labour law reform can be attributed to the salience of the issue to groups such as organised labour (Varshney 2000: 249-55). Although organised labour tends to constitute a fraction of the overall labour force⁷⁶, their political clout exceeds their numbers, due to the fact that they are unionised and any strike action on their part can halt the operations of banks, railways, telecommunications, and coal and steel production (Varshney 2000: 254). His claims resonate with Nayar's observation that the programme of liberalisation launched under Finance Minister Manmohan Singh's stewardship was "cautious and gradualist" (2001: 151), and that incrementalism was necessitated by the nature of India's democracy, which obliges governments to formulate policy based on consensus, particularly in the case of a minority government, such as Rao's was when liberalisation was initiated. In the words of Manmohan Singh, "In a large democratic setup such as ours, the dilemma of a reformer is compounded in as much as he has to balance economic logic with political and social acceptability and carry out the tasks laid out" (as quoted by Nayar 2001: 151). Therefore, despite being heralded as a significant break with the past, the Rao government was obliged to proceed on the basis of consensus to avoid protest by crucial groups, such as organised labour (Nayar 2001: 152).

When the coalition government led by the United Front (UF) took the reins of government in 1996, it did so with partners, such as the Communist Party of India

⁷⁶ According to Varshney, whereas there were about twenty million people employed in the public sector, and eight million in the organized private sector in 1992, the unorganized and rural workforce was made up of 280-300 million people (2000: 254).

(Marxist), who had been vocally opposed to liberalisation, and with the integral support of the Congress Party, the architects of much of the liberalisation that had hitherto taken place. Consequently, the reversal of Congress' changes and future reforms were equally difficult to initiate for the UF, and it struggled to balance the two interests in its economic policies. Nevertheless, the UF-led government still managed to push through a reduction in corporate and income tax rates (met with approval by both the middle classes and industry); lowered tariffs for imports; and greater foreign investment in core and infrastructure sectors (Nayar 2001: 203-12). The UF's successor, the BJP government, which ruled for thirteen months in 1998-99 and was guided by *swadeshi*, or economic nationalist, principles, also espoused liberalisation, but criticised the Congress party for having prematurely opened the country to "external liberalisation" or globalisation, before "internal liberalisation" had been attained⁷⁷ (Nayar 2001: 234). Despite its nationalist rhetoric, in the end, the BJP coalition government reassured multinationals and deepened reforms by, for instance, phasing out quantitative restrictions on imports, including in the area of consumer goods (Nayar 2001: 248).

This summary indicates that since 1980 there has been a move in India from an inward-looking vision of the economy focused on the building of the national market with an interventionist state, toward an export orientation with a greater dependence on market forces. An integral aspect of this shift has been the rethinking of the roles of the public and private sectors. The realisation that a heavy reliance on the public sector and a highly regulated private sector would be unlikely to yield growth rates higher than the 3.5 to 4.0 percent that was the Indian average prior to 1980 (Ahluwalia 1995: 14), coupled with economic and political events and trends, including the assassination of Indira Gandhi,

⁷⁷ The BJP asserted that, after forty years of state controls, domestic industries required protection for ten to fifteen years to learn first to compete with each other. Foreign investment was perceived as desirable, but only inasmuch as it played a supplementary role to domestic capital and did not enter certain sectors, such as that of consumer goods (Nayar 2001: 235-36).

the macroeconomic crisis of the early 1990s, and the increasing political salience of religion and caste (to be discussed in the next section), have provided political leaders and parties with reasons for, and the opportunity to, implement economic changes⁷⁸, which in turn have led to an environment more conducive to further reform⁷⁹ by increasing the acceptability of liberalisation.

Although the alcohol industry continues to be a highly regulated industry, the specifics of which are to be discussed in the next chapter, the economic and political changes that have taken place between 1980 and 2000 have had a profound affect on the industry's growth by leading to looser regulations governing production and distribution and to more disposable income on the part of the urban middle-class⁸⁰. For instance, the elimination of the MRTP Act, which aimed to inhibit the growth of large business houses and the consequent concentration of economic power⁸¹ (Kathuria 1995: 167; Mookherjee 1995: 6), as part of the reforms initiated in 1992, has benefited the dominant Indian alcohol manufacturers, who have been able to expand production and take over smaller companies as a means to monopolise large segments of the industry. Additionally, lowered income taxes suggest that the middle-classes have an increased capacity to spend, which will be explored in Chapter 4. The increasing acceptability of liberalisation generally has in turn facilitated the possibility of reforms specific to the alcohol industry, despite its contentiousness, to be covered in the following chapter on the outside meaning

⁷⁸ Ahluwalia has asserted the need for state governments to follow the reform initiatives of the federal government in areas such as industrial policy in order to address the delays and corruption that are endemic in the process of private investors securing the permissions required to obtain access to, for instance, supplies of water, electricity, and other essential inputs, and in the interactions between private investors and government officials as the former attempt to comply with regulations governing issues including pollution, sanitation, and workers' welfare (2002: 72).

⁷⁹ Nayar states in reference to liberalisation under Finance Minister Manmohan Singh, "Once the economic policy reforms were implemented, even if only partially, they themselves had a profound impact by way of changing the mindset of the country" (2001: 149).

⁸⁰ Higher middle-class income is to be explored in Chapter 4 on the outside meaning of consumption.

⁸¹ Before liberalisation, the MRTP Act required industrial houses with gross assets in excess of Rs. 20 crore and "dominant" firms (defined as those commanding over one-third of market share) to obtain special approval to expand capacity by greater than 25 percent of existing levels (Kathuria 1995: 167; Mookherjee 1995: 6).

of production and distribution. Before concluding the chapter, we will consider the reasons for the increasing salience of religion and caste in politics.

2.3 The rise of religion and caste as political issues

As noted in the previous section, the added political significance of caste and religion from the 1980s onwards has facilitated economic reforms. Moreover, by enabling members of historically disadvantaged groups, such as Other Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, to access educational and occupational opportunities previously denied them, it has contributed to shifts in consumption behaviour. These in turn have had implications for alcohol consumption and the meanings attached to it, and so in this section we will briefly overview the factors that have contributed to the rise of religion and caste as political issues.

While endeavouring to develop a framework for understanding the rise of the Hindutva movement in India, Bose has observed that “caste has become firmly established as *the* organizing principle of contemporary Indian politics” (1997: 113). The reasons for the greater salience of religion and caste in politics have been the subject of much scholarly debate⁸², but they include the employment of religion as a vote-gaining tool by political parties, such as the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Indian National Congress Party (Congress-I)⁸³; reservations policies⁸⁴; and responses to the articulation of competitive constituent demands⁸⁵. Regarding the utilisation of religion as a vote-catching tool⁸⁶, in her analysis of the BJP’s changing identity, Basu draws attention to the party’s successful use of a communalist strategy, linked to Advani’s procession to

⁸² Due to space constraints, rather than covering the topic in detail, the aspects that are most relevant to our thesis will be considered in our brief summary.

⁸³ (Basu 2001; Manor 2002; Hasan 2002).

⁸⁴ (Nayar 2001; Omvedt 1993; Hasan 2002; Hansen 1999; Bose 1997).

⁸⁵ (Hansen 1999; Vanaik 1990; Hasan 2002).

⁸⁶ Palshikar has also emphasized the increasingly specialised nature of political parties, which tend to cater to certain interest groups rather than attempting to be “catch-all” in nature (2004: 1478).

Ayodhya in October 1990, to achieve great electoral gains in the following parliamentary elections (2001: 181). She further contends that rather than being limited to ethnic parties, such as the BJP, divisive electoral strategies have also been used by “mainstream” parties, such as the Congress-I (Basu 2001: 181). Similarly, Manor claims in his examination of the party system in India that in 1982, the Congress-I leaders began to adopt a confrontational attitude towards the Muslim National Conference party and Sikh groups as a means to appeal to Hindus in the Kashmir and Delhi elections and to undercut competition from right-wing parties, including the BJP and the Lok Dal (2002: 111, 114). In his study of pluralism in the Indian context, Hasan distinguishes between the BJP’s and the Congress-I’s employment of religious identities, maintaining that although the former put religious differences at the heart of their campaign, the latter’s platform included other issues as well (2002: 31-33). Nonetheless, the decision to use ethnic appeals as a political tool by parties, such as the BJP and the Congress-I, has undoubtedly contributed to the salience of religion in the political arena, particularly in conjunction with reservation policies.

Nayyar maintains that “reservations ultimately led to a politicization of caste” (2001: 389). They were implemented for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) to promote the social advancement of the historically disadvantaged groups and to alleviate the longstanding inequities that had prevented their members from being able to access the educational and vocational opportunities available to their upper-caste counterparts. To achieve these aims, the Kelalkar Commission, established in 1953, recommended the reservation of at least 25, 33.3, 40 and 40 percent respectively of government jobs in classes 1, 2, 3 and 4 as well as 70 percent of places in technical and professional institutions for SCs and STs (Radhakrishnan 1996: 205). The Mandal Commission, established in 1979, proposed extending reservation policies to apply to

people of Other Backwards Classes (OBCs). It advised that 27 percent of jobs in central services, nationalised banks, universities and colleges, and private firms receiving assistance from the government be reserved for OBCs, and that 27 percent of seats in all central and state government scientific, technical, and professional institutions be reserved for OBCs (Radhakrishnan 1996: 207).

In spite of the Mandal Commission's reference to "backward classes", rather than castes, opinions regarding its recommendations largely followed caste lines. According to Omvedt, lower-caste individuals, the targeted beneficiaries, supported the initiatives and viewed them as justification not only for economic and social improvement, but also for the necessity of political power (1993: 72). On the other hand, the measures were met by stiff resistance from upper-caste Hindus, who perceived them as considerably weakening their monopoly on government positions and places at higher educational institutions (Omvedt 1993: 69), instilling a sense of insecurity in the upper-castes. Political parties capitalised upon the different stands. For example, the Janata Dal's V.P. Singh had provided the impetus for the implementation of the reservations policies in order to strengthen its hold on backward castes, whereas the BJP attracted upper-caste votes by refusing to embrace reservation policies and by attempting to minimise caste differences through emphasis on the Muslim threat to Hindus⁸⁷ (Hasan 2002: 375). The success of these strategies linking religion and caste to politics was due to the parties' abilities to relate them "meaningfully with everyday anxieties of security, a sense of disorder, and more generally the ambivalence of modern life" (Hansen 1999: 11). It was the conflation of these elements that facilitated the communal violence of the 1980s centred on Ayodhya. Moreover, the perceived threats posed by Muslims and members of OBCs, SCs and STs converged at times in a 'symbiotic relationship', as exemplified by the case of

⁸⁷ Shah has underlined the BJP's more recent attempts to placate the backward castes and to promote alliances between members of different castes through the manipulation of economic and social interests (Shah 2004: 220).

Gujarat's anti-reservation protests evolving into anti-Muslim violence, and by the attacks on Muslims engendered by the upper-caste anti-Mandal agitations in 1990 throughout northern India (Bose 1997: 141-42).

Parties' manipulations of group identities have created expectations amongst their voters, thereby further promoting the increased salience of religion and caste in politics. Hansen has alluded to the increased expectations the electorate have of their representatives to "look after and favour their constituency, their faction, and their caste or community, and only incidentally work according to more universalist standards" (1999: 137). Vanaik has also noted the "overload" of expectations that burdens the Indian political system, as a result of the disparity between claims on the government articulated by the wide range of interest groups and the political system's ability to handle tensions caused by pressures from differing interest groups (1990: 70). Although Hasan has asserted that voters' decisions are not necessarily decided by caste or community, but by whom they believe will best promote their economic and social welfare (2002: 31-33), as individuals and groups become increasingly aware of the potential for gain by, for instance, identifying with a particular caste, it increases the stakes attached to voting along religious and caste lines. Presented with the expectations of their electorates, political parties at the local level often pander to them.

So, the actions of both political parties and voters have resulted in the greater political significance of religion and caste in India. By diverting opposition parties' attention away from liberalisation measures and, consequently, providing regimes, such as the coalition government led by Rao and the minority Congress Party, with the political space to implement greater economic reforms, this phenomenon has facilitated the economic reforms that have encouraged the growth of the alcohol industry and markets. Furthermore, by providing OBCs, SCs and STs with access to the educational,

occupational and income opportunities previously denied them, reservations policies have contributed to changes in consumption behaviour, including, ironically, a propensity for members of the Indian urban middle-class to consume along class, rather than religious or caste, lines. This has had consequences for alcohol consumption and the meanings attached to them, which will be explored in greater detail in Chapters 4 and 5.

2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, we offered a brief history of alcohol production and consumption in India as well as an overview of the political and economic events surrounding the country's shift from a state-led to a market-dominated model of development. We concluded with a summary of the factors contributing to the added political importance of religion and caste. The first section showed the origins of the complexity of attitudes and regulations pertaining to alcohol in India. The second section focused on the economic and political events that fostered economic reforms and liberalisation, which have had significant repercussions for the alcohol industry due to the more open regulative environment even in industries as politically and socially contentious as alcohol and due to the greater ability and propensity to spend amongst the urban middle-class. The rest of the chapter drew attention to the rise of religion and caste as political issues, which has facilitated economic liberalisation as well as changes in consumption behaviour. Both of these, in turn, have played an important role in the greater production, distribution and consumption of alcohol. With this background, the next chapter explores the manner in which the different institutions affecting various stages of the production and distribution process have developed, together with their impact on the alcohol industry and markets.

Chapter 3 – The Outside Meaning of Production and Distribution of Manufactured Alcohol in India

As discussed in Chapter 1, Mintz (1985) notes in his history of the rise to prominence of sugar in the English diet that the use and application of power underlie changes in a society's consumption habits. To examine shifts in sugar consumption as well as the changes in underlying power, he utilises the concepts of outside and inside meaning. "Outside meaning" refers to the political, economic and social conditions that have an impact on the set of consumption possibilities available to individuals, within which parameters people decide what, how, when and with whom to consume. It influences the ascription of "inside meanings" to the purchase, use and repercussions of consumption. In the case of Indian urban middle-class drinking, both the outside meaning of production and distribution and the outside meaning of consumption affect individual decisions of where, when and why to drink (or not). The outside meaning of consumption, to be covered in Chapter 4, has consequences for alcohol consumption possibilities through its effect on accessibility, conditioned by income, and on permissibility, shaped by social attitudes. In this chapter, it will be argued that the outside meaning of production has consequences for consumption possibilities through its effect on the availability of alcohol as determined by production and distribution, which in turn are conditioned by political and economic institutions, such as laws and regulations.

First, the chapter will briefly consider Mintz's method and the necessity of refining his analysis of supply through incorporation of an explicit political economy approach. We will justify and use one loosely derived from the social structures of accumulation school, since it emphasises the holistic nature of the structure of institutions regulating economic activity as well as provides a relevant framework for the systematic analysis of each of the individual institutions constituting the whole. Second, an overview

of the Indian alcohol industry⁸⁸ will be provided. Third, to gain an understanding of the structure of the legal alcohol industry, the following aspects will be considered: interfirm competition; the structure of supply of raw materials; management; modes of sales and marketing, including distribution networks and advertising; the composition of final demand; and tax.

3.1 Mintz and the political economy of production

As noted in Chapter 1, despite the appropriateness of Mintz's general method of outside and inside meaning for a study of the changing role of alcohol in the Indian urban middle-class, his treatment of production has a flaw. He fails to deal systematically with the various factors of production and instead privileges labour. While he recounts in detail the role of slave and free labour on the micro-level of the plantations in the British "sugar islands" (Mintz 1985: 38), such as Barbados and Jamaica, extrapolating to their role in the mercantilist and capitalist system, other factors of production, including capital (both land and finance) and technology, are only mentioned in passing in his story of the rise of sugar (1985). Furthermore, Mintz omits distribution. Consequently, the organisation of production and distribution remain obscure in his account. In our exploration of the Indian alcohol industry, rather than limiting our examination to labour, we will expand Mintz's focus by developing a political economy of production and distribution. The social structure of accumulation (SSA) approach may be adapted to provide an appropriate framing.

The SSA approach is premised on the idea that an effective social structure is a prerequisite for protracted periods of relatively rapid and stable economic growth (Kotz, McDonough and Reich 1994: 1). The concept of a SSA was developed in order to

⁸⁸ Please note that unless specifically stated otherwise, the term "alcohol industry" is used to refer to legal manufacturing.

investigate the unevenness of capital accumulation (Kotz, McDonough and Reich 1994: 1, 4; Gordon, Edwards and Reich 1994: 13). Rejecting work by Marxist scholars focusing on product market competition, which Gordon, Edwards and Reich assert “fail[s] to capture the breadth and complexity of the process of capital accumulation” (1994: 13), the SSA approach not only acknowledges that capitalist production is conditioned by external institutional factors, it also analyses their influences (Gordon, Edwards and Reich 1994: 13) without conflating the process with a catch-all invocation of the “environment” (Gordon, Edwards and Reich 1994: 15). The SSA approach necessarily encompasses political and social institutions as well as economic ones (Kotz, McDonough and Reich 1994: 3), and may be developed to include institutions that are regulated by the state and those that are not, such as gender and caste. In fact, as the SSA is premised on the assumption “that a long period of vigorous accumulation requires ‘*social stability*’” (Kotz 1994a: 55, emphasis mine) to mitigate the inherent class conflict and competition of capitalism, not only is it possible to examine SSA through non-state regulated institutions, it is essential.

According to Gordon, Edwards and Reich, the process of capital accumulation is composed of three logical steps: 1) the collection of the required inputs, during which phase profit-seeking capitalists invest money capital to obtain the raw materials, labour, machinery, and other factors necessary for production; 2) the production process, in which the initial inputs are organised to work together, resulting in the output of a given commodity; and 3) the sale of the end-products, through which capitalists are able to turn the factors of production under their control back into money capital, serving as the basis for the next round of capital accumulation (1994: 14). A SSA is composed of those institutions that have an impact on any or all logical stages of this accumulation process (Gordon, Edwards and Reich 1994: 14). The most significant elements of the SSA, they

argue, are money and credit, state involvement in the economy, and the nature of class conflict – due to their integral nature at all stages of capital accumulation (Gordon, Edwards and Reich 1994: 14). Most elements of a SSA are, however, specific to a particular stage in the process of production. For instance, Gordon, Edwards and Reich include the configuration of supply of raw materials, of labour, of technology, and of other intermediate goods amongst the structures relevant to the first step of the capital accumulation process, the accumulation of required inputs (1994: 14). The elements affecting the second stage, the production process, they identify as the management structure and the organisation of the labour process (Gordon, Edwards and Reich 1994: 14-15). In the final stage, the sale of end-products, the composition of final demand (e.g. consumer and export markets), the character of competition, and sales and marketing systems (e.g. distribution networks and advertising) are elements of the structure that have an influence (Gordon, Edwards and Reich 1994: 15).

SSA theory has been employed not only to examine national economies (McDonough 1994; Melendez 1994; Shoch 1994) and the role of certain institutions within them (Albelda and Tilly 1994; Wolfson 1994), but also to analyse specific sectors of an economy (Fairris 1994). While studies of the former two types have used the SSA approach to explain long waves in the capitalist history of specific nations, such as the U.S.A., and the institutions that have facilitated them, those focusing on particular sectors have explored the structure of various components of an economy. The significance of these sector studies arises from their ability to shed light on the building blocks of an economy, facilitating a greater understanding of the economy as a whole as well as the process of capital accumulation.

More recently, there has been debate on the emergence of a new SSA. It has been argued that the globalisation of financial markets and investment, facilitated by decreased

capital controls and improved modes of communication, have given rise to a global, transnational capitalist class (McDonough 2006: 13). This new capitalist class, the international diffusion of production processes, and what McDonough terms the “hyper-mobility” of capital have in turn encouraged the creation of a transnational working class (2006: 13). Therefore, theorists of a new international SSA no longer assume that a SSA is necessarily confined by the bounds of a nation (McDonough 2006: 16). Nevertheless, McDonough points out,

“it is almost certainly an exaggeration to say that the new SSA even if referred to as one of globalization is literally and effectively functioning on a global basis. American military writ for instance does not extend as far as Chechnya or Tibet. Much of sub-Saharan Africa has the character of a frontier area beyond effective inclusion by international powers. While ‘shock therapy’ has introduced neoliberalism and a democratic formalism to the countries of the former Eastern Europe, China is still pursuing a uniquely Chinese developmental path even though socialism plus Chinese characteristics appears to equal capitalism. These observations imply that identification of the borders of the new SSA if it exists is still an unresolved theoretical question” (2006: 17).

Since a global SSA is also not accompanied by a formally constituted global state, analytical attention is increasingly drawn to non-state regulated elements of the structure of accumulation. On the other side of the debate, O’Hara questions the proposition that recent changes in the institutional structure are an indication of a new SSA, while Kotz and Wolfson challenge the view that the current institutional arrangement will lead to a period of sustained expansion, thereby casting doubt on the emergence of a new SSA in terms of the original definition (McDonough 2006: 18). Even this debate, however, draws attention to the instituted nature of the production process, and it is this insight that will be developed in this chapter.

By refining Mintz’s method through an application of the SSA approach, we will conduct a structured and detailed analysis of the nature of the alcohol industry. Although the SSA method does not explicitly address single commodity sectors, by requiring the

systematic examination of the various factors of production and the institutional elements that have an impact on each phase or stage of the capital accumulation process (Gordon, Edwards and Reich 1994: 14), it ensures the incorporation of factors specific to the commodity of alcohol. The SSA approach focuses on institutions, a concept which was defined in Chapter 1, and this allows for a consideration of different vested interests and their part in motivating actors to strive to maintain or change the status quo. Moreover, such a method of analysis will permit us to investigate the role of specific alcohol producers and distributors, which Mintz fails to do in his history of sugar. The legal Indian alcohol industry tends to be dominated by large domestic firms: specific individual producers and distributors have considerable political pull, which shapes their interactions with different institutional elements. For instance, as large players in the industry, they may be able to negotiate more favourable access to raw materials from their suppliers, providing them with an advantage over their smaller counterparts. The SSA approach also has traditionally stressed the context-specific nature of capital accumulation as well as the inclusion of political and social institutions. These considerations are particularly important in an exploration of the alcohol industry in India, where cultural and social mores have a significant effect on alcohol production, distribution and consumption. Regarding the debate on the birth of a new SSA, as this research aims to shed light on the alcohol industry in India, even when looking at transnational elements of a SSA, such as international trade agreements, rather than considering the latter separately in their own right, our primary concern will be the specific repercussions they have for the Indian alcohol industry. Lastly, due to the predominance of regulation in the literature on the institutions affecting the alcohol industry and due to its highly regulated nature, which has important implications for growth, we have focused largely on the regulatory aspects of the structure of accumulation in the alcohol industry.

The rest of this chapter on the outside meaning of production and distribution will investigate the institutions that have facilitated accumulation in the alcohol industry. The structures to be examined include: interfirm competition; the organisation of supply of raw materials; management; modes of sales and marketing, such as distribution networks and advertising⁸⁹; and the composition of final demand. They have been drawn from the seminal work of Gordon, Edwards and Reich (1994: 14-15), who list these elements as those that play an important role in at least one of the three stages of capital accumulation. Tax will also be considered, because of its impact on potential profits and thus on accumulation. As the state is central to the SSA, the specific consequences of its interventions will be included in each section.

Despite its emphasis on accumulation, there is little discussion amongst SSA scholars of indicators of accumulation. Different studies employ different proxies; those used most regularly are profit (Gordon, Edwards and Reich 1994) and growth (Kotz 1994b; McDonough 1994; Wolfson 1994). In our analysis of the structures that facilitate accumulation by and within the alcohol industry, in most instances growth data (presented in section 3.3) will be used as a proxy for accumulation, because these can be applied at both the level of markets for different types of alcohol and of the industry, facilitating an understanding of the expansion of individual markets and their contribution to that of the industry. At the micro-level of the firm, however, due to the lack of growth figures, our proxy will be profit data⁹⁰.

⁸⁹ Due to the lack of official or “grey” information on industry finance, technology, and the organisation of labour, these components of the SSA await field investigation and have to be excluded from our analysis of the Indian alcohol industry.

⁹⁰ As a number of the dominant manufacturers of potable alcohol are large business houses who are engaged in a number of industries, accumulation by these firms not only provides accumulation possibilities for the alcohol industry, but also for the other industries in which they are engaged. For instance, the UB Group, which, as can be seen in Table 3.4, is the leading player in the Indian alcohol industry, also has aviation and fertiliser arms, which suggests that the expansion of alcohol profits opens up accumulation possibilities for the other branches of the company as well.

Before moving onto an overview of the alcohol industry in contemporary India and an exploration of specific elements of the SSA, a brief comment on the sources to be used needs to be made.

3.2 Sources

Due to the lack of academic literature on the alcohol industry in India and the institutions that affect the ability of individual capitalists and firms within the industry to accumulate, it has been necessary to rely on other types of sources, such as industry reports. Industry reports provide a snapshot of shifts in the alcohol industry and expected future trends based on statistics such as the total volume and total value of sales. Although they are not useful for an understanding of the political, economic and social context in which the industry functions, when considered in conjunction with other sources, including newspaper and journal articles as well as academic research on the political, economic and social contexts, the data contained in industry reports can be a source of valuable insights. For instance, differences in total volume and total value of sales between foreign and domestic manufacturers of alcohol reflect a political environment that favours the latter over the former. So, in our analysis of the alcohol industry and its key regulative institutions, we will draw on academic literature, newspaper and journal articles, government data and reports, and industry reports.

3.3 Overview of the alcohol industry

In this section, we provide a summary of the contemporary alcohol industry and discuss its overall growth in recent years, trends in imports, ownership structures, and regulations. As discussed in Chapter 2, there is evidence that fermentation and distillation took place in India as early as 2000 B.C., during the Indus civilisation, and that alcohol

continued to be produced and consumed through the Epic, medieval and colonial periods (NIMHANS and WHO 2003: 6). The manufactured alcoholic beverages that have been most commonly consumed by the urban middle-classes in contemporary India are Indian-made foreign liquor (IMFL)⁹¹ and beer. More recently, there has been diversification into flavoured-alcoholic beverages and wine, as can be seen in Tables 3.1 and 3.2. The past few decades have seen a steady, unparalleled expansion of the Indian alcohol industry (WHO 1999: 322). Compared to a growth rate of five percent in the 1980s, at the beginning of the 1990s the sector accelerated massively, at approximately twelve to fifteen percent (Isaac 1998: 153). From 2000 to 2005, the rate of growth of the industry's volume and value sales rocketed to 42.7 and 68.9 percent respectively (Euromonitor 2006a: 10).

This overall expansion has been mirrored in specific segments of the alcohol industry. Notwithstanding the fact that the wine sector has experienced the greatest growth with volume and value growth rates between 2000 and 2005 of 131.7 and 180 percent respectively⁹² (2005: 10; Euromonitor 2006a: 10), the market for IMFL remains the largest in terms of both volume and value, followed by that of beer, as can be seen in Charts 3.1 and 3.2. In the IMFL sector, distillation capacity has increased steadily since the 1980s, with the number of distilleries in India rising from 165 in 1986 to 302 in 1999⁹³. This expansion in production capacity has facilitated high growth rates of volume and value sales from 2000 to 2005, which were 46.5 and 69.9 percent respectively (Euromonitor 2005: 10; Euromonitor 2006a: 10), with volume sales reaching 910.9 million litres (Table 3.1) and value sales hitting Rs. 620,338.3 million (Table 3.2) in 2005. The beer industry's growth began even before economic liberalisation and is still

⁹¹ IMFL refers to the indigenously manufactured distilled spirits, including whisky, brandy, rum and gin, that were brought to India by European colonialists.

⁹² However, flavoured alcoholic beverages and wine still only constitute a negligible percentage of overall volume and value sales as can be seen in Charts 3.1 and 3.2.

⁹³ (Indiastat.com 2007: <http://www.indiastat.com>).

evident. According to the Indian government's Central Statistical Organisation, average monthly industrial beer production went from 12.3 million litres in 1980-81 to 17.8 million litres in 1991-92 to 36.3 million litres in 1998-99⁹⁴. From 1999 to 2005 total volume sales rose from 527.5 to 781.0 million litres (Table 3.1), while total value sales have gone from Rs. 42,485.10 million to Rs. 620,338.30 million, contributing to total volume and value growth rates of 37.4 percent⁹⁵ and 56.4 during this timeframe (Euromonitor 2005:10; Euromonitor 2006a:10).

Table 3.1 All India Sales of Alcoholic Drinks by Sector: Total Volume (million litres), 1999-2005

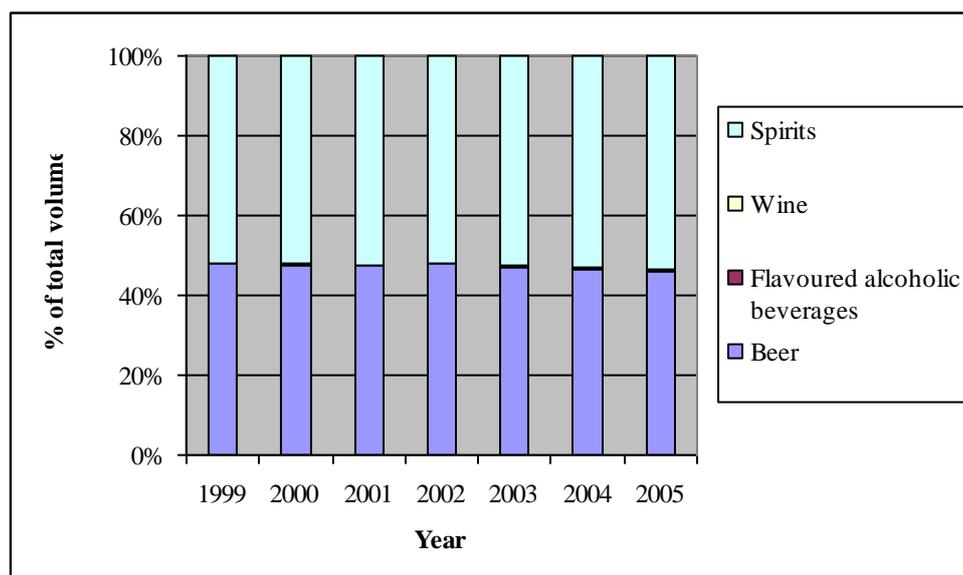
Type of alcohol	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Beer	527.5	568.3	611.0	673.9	701.4	740.7	781.0
Flavoured alcoholic beverages	-	-	-	0.7	3.1	3.8	4.9
Wine	1.8	2.2	2.6	3.1	3.7	4.3	4.6
Spirits	571.0	620.7	673.1	728.7	787.7	845.7	910.9
Alcoholic drinks	1,100.30	1,191.20	1,286.60	1,406.30	1,495.90	1,594.60	1,701.40

Sources: (Euromonitor 2005: 10; Euromonitor 2006a: 9)

⁹⁴ (INDIA. Central Statistical Organisation, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation 2001: 28, 1999: 27, 1998: 34; 1997: 23; 1996: 23, 1995: 23; Indiatat.com 2007: <http://www.indiatat.com>).

⁹⁵ Tea's total volume 2004/5 growth, 2000-05 compound annual growth rate, and 2000/05 overall growth were 3.5, 4.4 and 23.9 percent respectively (Euromonitor 2006f: 3).

Chart 3.1 Sector contributions to all India total volumes sales (percent), 1999-2005⁹⁶



Sources: (Euromonitor 2005: 10; Euromonitor 2006a: 9)

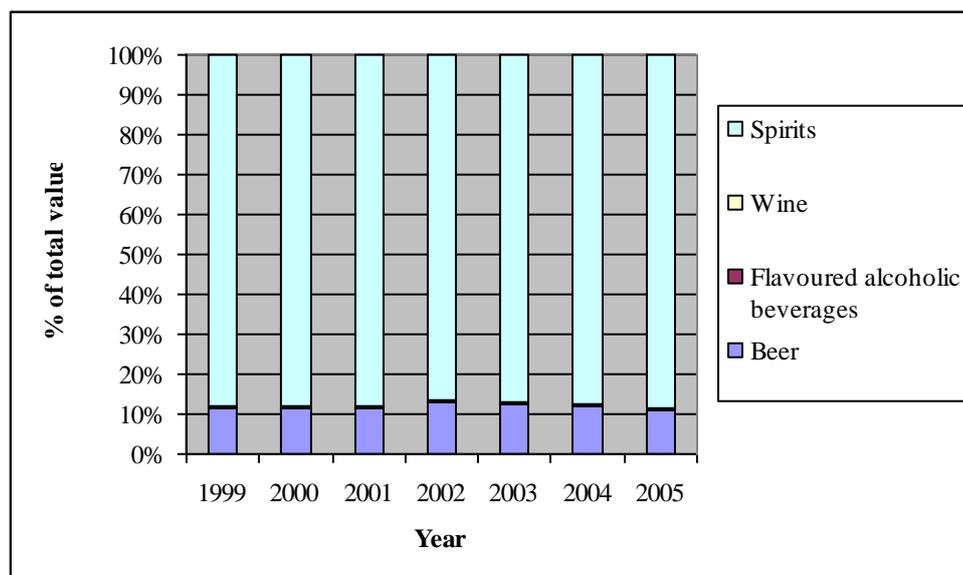
Table 3.2 All India Sales of Alcoholic Drinks by Sector: Total Value (Rs. Million), 1999-2005

Type of alcohol	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Beer	42,485.10	48,220.90	54,015.00	67,162.60	71,526.30	76,958.60	76,907.70
Flavoured alcoholic beverages	-	-	-	135.2	613.1	730.5	850.9
Wine	1,282.60	1,639.10	2,059.60	2,592.20	3,182.90	3,847.20	4,428.50
Spirits	324,354.50	364,667.70	407,882.50	456,440.50	508,274.70	564,991.90	620,338.30
Alcoholic drinks	368,122.20	414,527.70	463,957.10	526,330.60	583,597.00	646,528.20	702,525.40

Sources: (Euromonitor 2005: 10; Euromonitor 2006a: 10)

⁹⁶ Figures for flavoured alcoholic beverages are unavailable for 1999-2001, as they were introduced to the Indian market in 2002. Between 2002 and 2005, they increased progressively from 0.05 percent in 2002 to 0.29 percent in 2005, but still only accounted for a negligible proportion of overall volume sales. Similarly, the percentage of total volume sales of wine constituted between 0.16 and 0.27 percent from 1999 to 2005 (Euromonitor 2005:10; Euromonitor 2006a:9).

Chart 3.2 Sector contributions to all India total value sales (percent), 1999-2005⁹⁷



Sources: (Euromonitor 2005: 10; Euromonitor 2006a: 10)

From Table 3.1, it is evident that volume and value sales of flavoured alcoholic beverages and of wine also rose from 1999-2005 (Euromonitor 2005: 10; Euromonitor 2006a: 10).

The growth of each segment of the alcohol industry has led to the significant growth of overall volume sales, from 1,100.3 to 1,701.4 million litres between 1999 and 2005, and of value sales, which nearly doubled from Rs. 368,122.2 million to Rs. 702,525.4 million in the same time period. The relatively rapid and stable growth of the industry suggests that its accumulation has been made possible by the support of an effective SSA – the role that different components of the SSA have had will be explored in later sections of this chapter. Furthermore, as the expansion in volume has not matched that of value, it indicates three possibilities: 1) all types of alcohol have become more expensive, 2) sales of costlier types of alcohol have increased disproportionately, or 3) a combination of the two. All three point to a higher level of disposable income amongst

⁹⁷ As noted in the previous footnote, data on sales of flavoured alcoholic beverages is unavailable before 2002. In the period from 2002 and 2005 their value sales made up between 0.03 and 0.12 percent of total value sales of alcoholic beverages. Wine's value sales comprised between 0.35 and 0.63 percent of the alcohol industry's value sales from 1999 to 2005 (Euromonitor 2005: 10; Euromonitor 2006a: 10).

those who can afford branded alcohol, i.e. the upper-middle and upper classes, which will be explored in greater depth in Chapter 4 on the outside meaning of consumption.

3.3.1 Imports

Alcohol produced in India is complemented by the influx of imports facilitated by the government's 2004 decision to cut duties on alcoholic beverage imports in compliance with World Trade Organisation stipulations (Euromonitor 2006a: 3). As a result, the basic customs duty on liquors has been reduced to 150 percent, while that on beer and wine currently stands at 100 percent. There are also additional duties⁹⁸, which were imposed as countervailing duties in the place of state excise tax when quantitative restrictions were removed in 2001 (Euromonitor 2006a: 3). Moreover, each state imposes its own duties for excise, import and export⁹⁹ (Euromonitor 2006a: 2). In spite of these high duties, between 1999 and 2004 the total volume of whisky imports increased from 475.3 to 1,709.3 thousand litres; brandy and cognac imports from 12.4 to 98.2 thousand litres; vodka imports from 9.1 to 74.0 thousand litres; gin imports from 5.2 to 39.3 thousand litres; and rum imports from 5.4 to 25.8 thousand litres (Euromonitor 2006a: 29-30). The total volume of beer and wine imports has been more variable, as can be seen from Table 3.3.

⁹⁸ At the time of the report in May 2006, additional duties for spirits were as follows: 150 percent for imports priced below US\$10 per case of nine litres, 100 percent for those priced between US\$10 and \$20, 50 percent (a minimum of US\$53.20) for imports priced between US\$20 and US\$40, and 25 percent for those priced above US\$40 (Euromonitor 2006a: 3). For beer and wine, additional duties were: 75 percent for imports priced below US\$25 per case, 50 percent (a minimum of US\$37) for those priced between US\$25 and US\$40 per case, and 20 percent (a minimum of US\$40) for imports priced above US\$40 (Euromonitor 2006a: 3).

⁹⁹ For instance, in Andhra Pradesh, in 2004 beer per litre carried an excise tax of Rs. 5 for lager and Rs. 7 for strong beer, a Rs. 2 import tax, Rs. 2 other tax, and a 70 percent sales tax (Euromonitor 2006a: 4). Each litre of wine and spirits was charged Rs. 45-80 depending on the category, which was determined by cost per case, Rs. 2 import tax, Rs. 2 other tax, and a 70 percent sales tax (Euromonitor 2006a: 4).

Table 3.3 Beer and Spirits Produced in India and Imported (thousand litres), 1999-2004

Type of alcohol	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Beer – production	363,200.0	289,00.0	235,200.0	269,600.0	347,300.0	287,200.0
Beer – imports	1,700.0	1,900.0	4,000.0	3,900.0	1,800.0	1,900.0
Spirits – production	51,600.0	43,200.0	51,400.0	110,000.0	130,000.0	160,100.0
Spirits – imports	1,600.0	1,600.0	1,800.0	1,600.0	3,400.0	4,500.0
Wine – imports ¹⁰⁰	310.0	-	480.0	220.0	-	900.0

Source: (Euromonitor 2006a: 25, 29)

3.3.2 Ownership structures

The Indian alcohol industry has tended to be dominated by large, family-controlled enterprises such as the UB Group, Shaw Wallace and Mohan Meakin. More recently, lured by economic liberalisation, the industry's rapid growth, and estimates of a burgeoning middle-class¹⁰¹ with increasing disposable income, foreign companies have attempted to enter the Indian market, often initially through joint ventures with local companies. In 1994, for example, a licensing agreement between Stroh Brewery Company and Rajasthan Breweries permitted the latter to produce, distribute and market the former's beers India-wide (Market Brewery Age 1994; WHO 1999: 322). A joint venture between Anheuser-Busch and Bombay-based Shaw Wallace & Company Limited, India's third largest brewer at the time, was announced in 1995 for the manufacture of the beer brand Budweiser (Business Wire 1995; WHO 1999: 322). Allied-Domecq and Brown-Forman both had equal profit sharing ventures with Jagatjit Industries of New Delhi to produce spirits, such as Scotch whisky (Euromonitor 2005: 16; WHO 1999: 322). Some foreign companies have established wholly owned subsidiaries, as in the case of Seagrams, which established Seagrams India to manufacture a range of

¹⁰⁰ Due to lack of data, production figures for wine are not included.

¹⁰¹ The National Council for Applied Economics Research in India estimated that in 1998-99 the middle, upper-middle and high income classes comprised 13.9, 6.2 and 5.7 percent respectively of the overall population, and 22.6, 12.2 and 12.5 percent respectively of the urban population (2003: 7).

distilled spirits and juices and to provide the nascent wine industry with technological assistance (WHO 1999: 322).

3.3.3 Regulation

Regulation of the large and growing Indian alcohol industry is highly complex, primarily as a result of the fact that the federal and state governments issue licences for production units in conjunction with each other, while the individual states have responsibility for tax rates and retailing legislation (Euromonitor 2006a: 2). This has led to a confusing diversity of regulations from state to state. The system of regulations governing the industry is further complicated by state governments' attempts to promote simultaneously the two contradictory goals of discouraging, or at least not being perceived as promoting, alcohol consumption and of maximising tax revenues from the industry. It has also encouraged regulation of every aspect of the production and distribution of alcoholic beverages, from access to raw materials to distribution to advertising.

These details of the alcohol industry frame the analysis of the following institutional structures which shape production and of their roles in promoting the growth of the industry: interfirm competition; the configuration of supply of raw materials; management; modes of sales and marketing, including distribution networks and advertising; the composition of final demand; and taxes. Due to the differential impacts that the state has on all of the elements of the SSA, the specific consequences of state interventions for institutional stability will be included in the analysis of each phase of the process of accumulation.

3.4 Interfirm competition

Kotz has noted that capital accumulation processes engender conflict amongst competing enterprises striving to capture surplus value, and that although the form of competition manifests itself differently as capitalism evolves, so that, for instance price warfare tends to be avoided by companies, interfirm competition remains (Kotz 1994a: 55). In order for growth to occur, however, this interfirm competition, i.e. “the degree to which the elements of competition and monopoly are present” (Gordon, Edwards and Reich 1994: 15), must be regulated by the SSA in such a manner that it does not prevent accumulation (Kotz 1994a: 56). This is done through the fostering of systems and rules of engagement that do not hinder the accumulation process (Kotz 1994a: 56), and can be seen in the alcohol industry in India.

In the context of India, Kochanek has observed that the private sector tends to be dominated by a few large, family-controlled, business houses (1987: 1280). Table 3.4 shows that this is the case in the Indian alcohol industry, in which, as noted above, the leading players are large, family-controlled domestic firms, such as Shaw Wallace (prior to being acquired by the UB Group in 2005), Mohan Meakin, Radico Khaitan, and the UB Group. The latter has had and continues to have by far the leading volume share of alcoholic beverages in the market (Euromonitor 2006a: 14) with a 38.7 percent and 38.9 percent share of total volume in 2003 and 2004 respectively.

Table 3.4 Company Shares of Alcoholic Drinks in India by Global Brand Owner (percent total volume), 2003-2004

Company	2003	2004
UB Group (Mallya family) (India)	38.7	38.9
Shaw Wallace & Co Ltd. (Chabria family) (India, purchased by UB Group in 2005)	19.5	20.3
Mohan Meakin Ltd. (India) (Mohan family)	6.5	5.7
Radico Khaitan Ltd. (India) (Khaitan family)	2.6	3.5
Millennium Alcobev Ltd. (India, merged with UB Group in 2005)	2.9	3.4
SABMiller Plc (South Africa)	3.3	3.3
Pernod Ricard Groupe (France)	2.8	3.0
Jagatjit Industries Ltd. (India)	2.6	2.5
BDA Distilleries (India)	2.3	2.4
Foster's Group Ltd. (Australia)	0.8	0.9
Bacardi & Co Ltd. (Bermuda)	0.3	0.3
Shiva Distilleries Ltd. (India)	0.3	0.2
Diageo Plc (England)	0.1	0.2
Polychem (India)	0.3	0.1
The Brihan Maharashtra Sugar Syndicate Ltd. (India)	0.1	0.1
Empee Distilleries Ltd. (Purushothaman family) (India)	0.1	0.1
Others	16.5	15.3
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: (Euromonitor 2006a: 15)

The dominance of a single or few firms can also be seen in the different markets for beer, spirits and flavoured alcoholic beverages (FABs) and, in the case of the first two sectors, was strengthened through a series of consolidations in 2005. For instance, SABMiller took over Shaw Wallace's share in Shaw Wallace Breweries Ltd., while the UB Group merged with Millennium Alcobev Ltd. and brought in Scottish & Newcastle Plc as a strategic partner, with the multinational acquiring a 37.5 percent stake in UB Limited, the beer-producing arm of the UB Group (Euromonitor 2006a: 1). Imported brands only accounted for 0.5 percent of total volume sales in 2005, as a result of the high customs charges they faced (Euromonitor 2006b: 17). In spirits, the UB Group purchased its greatest competitor, Shaw Wallace & Company Limited, in 2005. Together with the

merger of its spirits entities, including McDowell & Company Limited, Herbertsons Limited, and Triumph Distillers and Vintners Limited, into United Spirits Limited, it has given the UB Group control of over 50 percent of value sales of spirits as well as advantages regarding production capacity, distribution synergy and promotional spending (Euromonitor 2006a: 1). The FABs market is controlled by Bacardi, whose Breezers command 86 percent of volume sales (Euromonitor 2006c: 1).

Wine is the only market not controlled by one firm, as can be seen from Table 3.5.

Table 3.5 Brand Shares of Still Grape Wine (Percent of total volume), 2003-2004

Brand (Global brand owner)	Company	2003	2004
Riviera	Champagne Indage Ltd.	10.7	11.0
Grover Vineyards	Grover Vineyards Ltd.	9.2	9.8
Sula Vineyards	Samanto Soma Wines Ltd.	3.6	9.1
Chantilli	Champagne Indage Ltd.	7.0	7.0
Vin Ballet	Champagne Indage Ltd.	2.5	2.6
Ivy	Champagne Indage Ltd.	2.0	1.7
Others ¹⁰²		65.0	58.8
Total		100.0	100.0

Source: (Euromonitor 2006a: 15)

In contrast to still wine, in the categories of champagne, other sparkling wines, and fortified wines, one or two companies command the bulk of market share. Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy (LVMH) hold 98.5 and 97.2 percent of the total volume sales of champagne in India in 2003 and 2004 respectively through its brands Moët & Chandon and Dom Pérignon (Euromonitor 2006e:6-7). Champagne Indage dominated the other sparkling wines market through its brands Marquise de Pompadour and Joie with a 61.7 percent share in 2003, which dipped slightly to 61.4 percent in 2004 (Euromonitor 2006e: 7). It was followed by Samant Soma Wines Ltd., whose sales of Sula Brut accounted for

¹⁰² This category was comprised of various domestic and imported brands, few of which had a presence in all major cities (Euromonitor 2006e: 2).

35.3 percent of the market in 2003 and 35.7 in 2004 (Euromonitor 2006e: 7). A similar trend could be seen in fortified wines, in which market sales of Champagne Indage's brand Figueira dominated the market with 99 percent of total volume sales (Euromonitor 2006e: 7-8).

Table 3.4 indicates that local firms have an advantage in their home markets, with Bacardi-Martini India Ltd.'s and LVMH's dominance of the FABs and champagne markets (Euromonitor 2006a: 15; Euromonitor 2006e: 6-7) respectively the only exceptions to this trend. This has been true even of the nascent Indian wine industry, in which domestic manufacturers commanded more than 45 percent of volume sales in 2004 (Euromonitor 2006a: 14-15), and can be explained by protective legislation and a complex tax system. Regulations governing the activities of multinational companies in the Indian alcohol industry have had an impact on interfirm competition, by preventing them from entering and establishing themselves with the same degree of success as their Indian counterparts. Politicians openly resist their entry, for fear of being tainted by association with alcohol, particularly during election years. For instance, in 1995, an election year, a *Times of India* article noted that the proposals of several foreign companies, such as Whyte & Mackay, Grant's (makers of Glenfiddich) and Brown-Foreman, seeking to enter the Indian alcohol sector were "stuck" (Mukherji 1995b). Opposition to their entry has slowly eroded, however. In 1996, a number of foreign liquor firms' applications that had been held up by the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) for over a year were cleared (Mukherji 1996a). The following year, pursuant to a similar decision concerning Bacardi, Pernod Ricard was granted permission by the FIPB to produce alcohol from molasses notwithstanding the objections of the Ministry of Food Processing, which contended that there was a molasses deficit (Mukherji 1997a; Mukherji 1997b). Then, in 1998 the FIPB approved International Distillers' proposal to increase its

equity in its joint venture from 60 to 95 percent (Joshi 1998). Moreover, under the reforms initiated in 1991, the limit on foreign equity investment has been pushed up from 40 to 51 percent (Agrawal, *et al.* 1995: 190; Ahluwalia 1995: 18).

Despite the liberalisation of regulations governing the activities of international manufacturers of alcohol in India, indigenous producers maintain their interfirm competitive advantage due to their greater adeptness at circumventing the myriad state-specific taxes and rules that apply to alcohol production and distribution (Euromonitor 2006a: 14). In order to avoid the taxes levied on alcoholic products exported to other states, Indian beer manufacturers have invested in the acquisition of existing breweries, the establishment of new production plants in various states, and the expansion of existing capacity, which strategies have allowed domestic companies to offer lower prices than their international competitors, thereby keeping the latter from gaining a foothold in the market (Euromonitor 2006b: 17). Finally, Indian producers exert their influence through well-financed regional and national associations, lobbyists promoting their causes, and campaign contributions (Kochanek 1987: 1281) to promote the implementation of policies that work to their advantage and to prevent those that undermine them. For instance, to be discussed further in the section on access to raw materials, Indian firms have lobbied for the ability to import Scotch concentrate, which they claimed would permit them to compete with international manufacturers entering the Scotch market (Mukherji 1997c), and have protested at the lowering of duties on imports (Sinha 2006: 68). Consequently, many foreign companies have chosen joint ventures and acquisitions as their means of entry into the Indian alcohol market, as in the case of SABMiller, which initially invested in a portion of Shaw Wallace's brewing business before purchasing most of the firm in 2005 (Euromonitor 2006a: 15).

So, the sector is characterised by the dominance of large Indian firms, and this has had consequences for the accumulation of individual companies, as can be seen in Table 3.6, which compares the profits of two segments of the UB Group, the industry's dominant firm, with Radico Khaitan, a smaller indigenous alcohol manufacturer¹⁰³.

Table 3.6 After-tax profits of Radico Khaitan and the UB Group's¹⁰⁴ McDowell & Company Limited and United Breweries Limited (Rs. million), (2001-02 to 2005-06)¹⁰⁵

Rs. Million	Radico Khaitan	McDowell and Company Limited	United Breweries Limited
2001-2	154.025	131.142	-
2002-3	185.793	157.994	-
2003-4	256.838	213.465	-
2004-5	358.555	267.265	140.407
2005-6	451.655	574.238	194.056

From Table 3.6, it is evident that McDowell & Company experienced a larger increase in its profits than its competitor Radico Khaitan in the period 2001-2 to 2005-6. As McDowell & Company constitutes one segment of the UB Group's spirits holdings¹⁰⁶, and as McDowell's profits were greater than the overall profits of Radico Khaitan, it suggests that the total profits of all of the UB Group's spirits holdings are significantly

¹⁰³ The profits of the Indian branches of multinational corporations were not available. As a result, it has not been possible to include an example.

¹⁰⁴ As beverage alcohol is one of several areas in which the UB Group operates and as a similar range of profit data was not available for all of the alcohol divisions, only the information for McDowell's and United Breweries is presented.

¹⁰⁵ Sources: (Radico Khaitan 2002: http://www.radicokhaitan.com/investor_center/financial_results.htm; Radico Khaitan 2003: http://www.radicokhaitan.com/investor_center/financial_results.htm; Radico Khaitan 2004: http://www.radicokhaitan.com/investor_center/financial_results.htm; Radico Khaitan 2005: http://www.radicokhaitan.com/investor_center/financial_results.htm; Radico Khaitan 2006: http://www.radicokhaitan.com/investor_center/financial_results.htm;

UB Group 2002: http://www.clubmcdowell.com/org/finance_main.htm;

UB Group 2003: http://www.clubmcdowell.com/org/finance_main.htm;

UB Group 2004: <http://www.clubmcdowell.com/mcdmicro/intro.html>;

UB Group 2005a: <http://www.clubmcdowell.com/mcd04-05/main.html>;

UB Group 2005b: <http://www.theubgroup.com/ubl2004-05/main.html>;

UB Group 2006a: http://www.clubmcdowell.com/org/annual_report2005_06/main.html;

UB Group 2006b: http://www.theubgroup.com/ubl_annualreport2005-06/main.html)

¹⁰⁶ They also include Shaw Wallace & Company Limited and Herbertsons Limited.

greater than that of Radico Khaitan. This can be explained in part by the near monopolistic and oligopolistic nature¹⁰⁷ of the Indian alcohol industry, which has significant implications for the profits and growth of individual companies, particularly the leading domestic firms. They are able to corner a greater proportion of the markets, as indicated by figures of volume share of alcoholic drinks in Table 3.4, thereby generating greater net profits. The revenues the leading domestic producers generate not only facilitate their growth and that of the industry, but also supply the state governments with essential funds. In turn, their provision of key state revenues provides the large indigenous alcohol manufacturers with the political leverage to successfully promote their interests. Regarding factors such as access to raw materials or the lowering of taxes, these interests overlap with those of other companies. Nevertheless, the structure of interfirm competition in the Indian alcohol industry suggests that it does not facilitate equal rates of profit and growth for all firms, but those of the dominant firms to a disproportionately greater extent, as exhibited in Table 3.6 by the differential profits of Radico Khaitan and the UB Group. Thus, the rules of engagement regulating interfirm competition have not hindered the growth of the Indian alcohol industry and have promoted the profits of, in particular, the dominant domestic manufacturers.

3.5 The structure of supply of raw materials

The configuration of supply of raw materials is an essential element in the growth of a firm and, consequently, of an industry, because it affects the procurement of the necessary quantity of raw materials at a predictable price (Gordon, Edwards and Reich 1994: 14). Without these needed materials, it is impossible for capitalists to progress onto the production and selling phases. For instance, in 2004, price hikes for the inputs

¹⁰⁷ The Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act, which aimed to inhibit the growth of large business houses and the consequent concentration of economic power, was eliminated as part of the “New Industrial Policy”, the implementation of which was begun in July 1991 (Kathuria 1995: 167; Mookherjee 1995: 6).

molasses and extra neutral alcohol¹⁰⁸ forced United Breweries' spirits division to cut back production of two economy brands, Vin malt whisky and Majestic rum and whisky, as the high costs of the raw materials made the two lower-priced brands unprofitable (Kurian 2004c). So, this section will consider the structure of supply of raw materials, including extra neutral alcohol, rectified spirit, molasses and Scotch concentrate, and the impact on the alcohol industry's growth¹⁰⁹.

Extra neutral alcohol (ENA), alcohol meeting certain quality standards, and rectified spirit, high concentration alcohol that has been purified through the process of rectification or repeated distilling, are integral raw materials for the production of potable alcohol. Molasses, an initial by-product from the manufacture of sugar which can be further processed to produce rectified spirit and ethanol and which is a key ingredient in certain types of spirits, such as rum, is also an essential input for the manufacture of alcohol. As all three are derivatives of sugar, developments in the sugar industry have significant repercussions for alcohol manufacturers.

The importance of the sugar industry for that of alcohol was exemplified by the 2004 drop of nearly 40 percent in sugar-cane availability, which led to a shortage of molasses and a five-fold increase in its price (Kurian 2004c). The UB Group's spirits division Chief Financial Officer Ravi Nedungade noted in 2004, "We anticipate the molasses impact on our companies to be around Rs. 100 crore¹¹⁰ this fiscal [year]" (Financial Express 2004a). As molasses constituted 27 percent of the cost of raw materials for Radico Khaitan in 2005 and eight to ten percent of final consumer prices for the UB Group (Financial Express 2005b), it is clear that any significant change in the

¹⁰⁸ The increase in the price of the two products was caused by drought and a decline in the acreage in the main Indian sugar-cane producing areas in Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu (India Business Insight 2004b; Kurian 2004c).

¹⁰⁹ Due to the lack of information on access to raw materials by the alcohol industry, this section will only focus on some of the most important elements such as extra neutral alcohol, rectified spirit and molasses.

¹¹⁰ A crore is ten million.

price of the commodity would have implications for the ability of the alcohol industry to accrue profits and, consequently, to grow. Accordingly, firms, including the UB Group, sought to import molasses from other countries and to raise the prices of their end-products as a means to compensate for the greater cost of procuring molasses (Balaji 2004; Financial Express 2004a). This example not only highlights the impact that the structure of supply of molasses has on the alcohol industry's growth, but also the differing interests of molasses and alcohol manufacturers. While high molasses prices benefited the sugar industry, it slowed the alcohol industry's rate of profit. The reverse was also true, so that in 2006 when a molasses surplus drove prices down, it proved to be advantageous for the alcohol industry, but not for that of sugar (Business Line 2006a).

The Indian sugar industry is highly fragmented and regulated. G.S.C. Rao, the executive director of Simbhaoli Sugar estimated in 2006 that there were approximately 500 sugar mills (Financial Express 2006a), and in Table 3.7, one can see that the sugar production of the major companies such as Balrampur Chini Mills, the second largest manufacturer in India, only accounted for between approximately seven and thirteen percent from 1993-94 to 2000-01.

Table 3.7 Sugar produced in India by company between 1993-94 and 2000-01
(thousands of metric tonnes)

Company	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01
Balrampur Chini Mills	61.7	120.8	170.9	209.3	257.2	167.3	291.2	370.8
Bajaj Hindustan	92.9	131.8	172.7	184.5	202.2	167.5	202.8	254.8
Bannari Amman Sugars	NA	100.6	109.4	110.1	74.9	146.0	163.4	207.0
Cauvery Sugars and Chemicals	22.3	38.4	*48.1	17.8	-	-	-	-
Dharani Sugars and Chemicals	-	56.7	72.9	56.4	38.6	80.0	122.8	107.2
Dhampur Sugar Mills	-	-	237.7	-	221.5	186.1	186.1	224.5
India Sugars & Refineries	-	26.2	25.3	-	-	-	-	-
Kothari Sugars and Chemicals	36.9	46.5	53.6	43.7	388.2	-	-	-
Ponni Sugars & Chemicals	31.6	47.2	46.6	71.6	55.9	-	-	-
Ravalgaon Sugar Farm	11.0	23.0	42.0	43.0	-	-	-	-
Rajshree Sugar	-	61.4	82.6	62.9	45.1	-	-	-
Sakthi Sugar	89.2	159.2	211.3	191.9	143.9	197.3	197.3	204.5
Simbhaoli Sugar Mills	72.5	75.3	-	-	-	-	-	-
South India Sugars	26.9	34.4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sree Kailas Sugars	4.2	6.7	7.3	-	-	-	-	-
United Provinces Sugar	NA	29.5	31.1	32.4	29.7	-	-	-
Upper Ganges Sugar	107.0	141.6	123.4	113.4	159.6	131.8	123.2	123.2
Vishnu Sugar Mills	18.2	33.4	31.4	34.3	38.0	28.0	-	-
Sri Chamundeswari Sugars	42.7	752.8	686.0	276.4	-	-	-	-
Thiru Arrooran Sugars	41.0	67.9	94.4	86.0	58.0	58.5	142.4	-
Total	658.1	1,953.4	2,198.6	1,533.7	1,712.8	1,162.5	1,429.2	1,492.0
% of all India total	6.69	13.34	12.58	11.76	13.33	7.52	7.86	8.06
All India total	9,830.0	14,640.0	17,480.0	13,040.0	12,850.0	15,452.0	18,193.0	18,510.0

Note: * = for fifteen months. Source: (Indiastat.com 2007:<http://www.indiastat.com>).

Mr. Rao explained that the fragmented nature of the industry resulted from the necessity of extracting the juice from sugar-cane within 24 hours of harvesting, compelling sugar mills to be located in close proximity to sugar cane farmers, particularly if road networks were poor (Financial Express 2006a). As sugar is considered an essential commodity in India, the industry is highly regulated at every stage of production. For example, the central government sets the prices that mills must pay farmers for sugar-cane (the state advised price); purchases a fixed amount of sugar to distribute through the public distribution system at controlled prices; and restricts the release of sugar into the consumer market (Nayak 2005).

Some larger sugar mills also produce ENA and rectified spirit (Bose 2001), complementing the output of distillers, a number of which also manufacture liquor, such as Radico Khaitan Ltd.¹¹¹ (Business Line 1998a). As the use of ENA, rectified spirit, and their derivatives, such as ethanol, is not limited to the alcohol industry, but also extends to the chemicals and renewable energy industries (Sinha 2006: 26), there is a strong demand for them. This has increased recently as a result of the central Indian government's September 2006 directive requiring oil companies to sell five percent ethanol blended gasoline or E5. As a result, the supply of ENA and rectified spirit to the alcohol industry is, at times, contested.

The acquisition of molasses is similarly disputed, due to its utilisation in the production of, for instance, cattle feed, fodder, and chemicals, such as citric acid (Sinha 2006: 102). Consequently, its use has been regulated by the central government under the Molasses Price Control Order, 1961 and the Ethyl Alcohol (Price Control) Order, 1971 in order to ensure that industrial alcohol units, and thereby the chemicals industry, had reliable sources of alcohol (Sinha 2006: 102). Under this system of regulation of supply,

¹¹¹ According to *Business Line*, Radico Khaitan Ltd. was India's largest exporter of ENA and rectified spirit in 1998 (Business Line 1998a).

the central government allocated a certain amount of molasses to each of the states, taking from surplus states to give to those with deficits based on the advice of the Central Molasses Board, which was comprised of the State Excise Ministers and representatives of relevant industry associations (Sinha 2006: 102). Delays in the system, wastage of molasses, excess capacity, and economic liberalisation led to the repeal of these orders in June 1993 with the Molasses Decontrol Order, which obliged all states to lift price and movement controls¹¹² (Sinha 2006: 102, Saran 1998).

Nevertheless, the supply of molasses to the potable alcohol industry remained a contentious issue, particularly for industrial alcohol units. In 1997, Mukherji claimed that due to the potable alcohol industry's willingness and ability to pay a considerably higher price for molasses, its diversion from the industrial alcohol industry was threatened (Mukherji 1997e). A *Times of India* article by Mukherji (1997e) stated that the effects of such a diversion were already visible in states such as Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra, where industrial alcohol units were said to be experiencing shortages of raw materials. In 2005, the Commerce Ministry lowered excise duties from Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 750 a tonne, further increasing the accessibility of molasses to the potable alcohol industry (Euromonitor 2006d:6). The change in duty has also facilitated the import of molasses from Pakistan, which has already become an important supplier of molasses for the spirits industry in India (Euromonitor 2006d: 6).

The issue of molasses supply sometimes has pitted different government departments against each other. For instance, in 1997, Mukherji reported that officials in the Ministry of Food Processing (MoFP) asserted that foreign liquor firms were permitted entry into India on the condition that they only produce liquor not requiring molasses

¹¹² Although most states complied with the removal of price controls, movement of molasses is still highly restricted by individual state governments (Saran 1998). Some of them have recently liberalised their policies, however, due to an excess supply of molasses, as in the cases of Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh, which decided to permit the export of surplus molasses stock in 2001 (The Times of India 2000b).

(Mukherji 1997b). Contrasting with their stand, the FIPB, which has a vested interest in facilitating foreign investment in India, approved Bacardi Rum and Pernod Ricard's manufacture of molasses-based alcohol in India (Mukherji 1997b). A representative of the FIPB stated, without offering any evidence, that "the argument that diverting molasses [to] potable alcohol adversely affects industrial alcohol is no longer valid" (Mukherji 1997b). The MoFP objected to these approvals, contending that they would allow capacity constraints on the production of potable alcohol to be ignored, and suggested that one "immediately revoke all manufacturing arrangements with units for manufacturing molasses-based alcohol" (Mukherji 1997b).

Another raw material that was the object of contention was Scotch concentrate, which is bulk vatted Scotch malt that can be mixed with water and alcohol to produce Scotch whisky (Mukherji 1997c). It is produced by multinational firms such as Seagrams and then imported to India for their use. Indigenous firms, such as the UB Group and Shaw Wallace, lobbied for the right to import it in 1997 so that they could produce Scotch in India and thereby challenge the entry and establishment of multinational corporations, such as United Distillers and International Distillers, in the Indian market (Mukherji 1997c). The Indian liquor manufacturers asserted, "To enable us to compete with the MNCs entering India with top Scotch brands, it is necessary for the Indian companies to be allowed the import of bulk vatted Scotch malt" (Mukherji 1997c). At the time, multinationals were allowed to import Scotch concentrate, which they then mixed with water and alcohol before selling (Mukherji 1997c). If permitted to import Scotch concentrate, the local firms would source the material from mid-sized British companies, such as Cutty Sark and Ian McLeod, and would sell their products at prices Rs. 200 to 300 lower than those offered by multinationals (Mukherji 1997c). In 2004 alcohol manufacturers, such as Apollo Alcobev, considered acquiring registered labels in

Scotland as a means to gain access to Scotch concentrate, which could then be imported to India for local bottling and distribution (Kurian 2004a). Apollo Alcobev intended to target the mid-range whisky market, which would permit them to compete with both multinational Scotch producers and Indian whisky manufacturers, whose products are molasses-based (Kurian 2004a).

The cases of ENA, molasses and Scotch concentrate indicate that the potable alcohol industry has benefited from a relaxation of the regulations governing raw materials and from preferential access to some inputs. They also shed light on several conflicting interests: those of producers of potable alcohol vs. those of industrial alcohol; of different government ministries with divergent aims; of indigenous and multinational companies; and of Indian companies producing similar products from different inputs. These tensions suggest that individuals and groups strive to maintain or alter different conditions, depending on their vested interests. Not all of their efforts have the same degree of effect, however, but vary depending on the amount of power that the person or group exerts. As discussed in Chapter 1, in our thesis power is defined as structural, in order to highlight instances in which power is applied to effect changes in the economic or political sphere, without necessarily being exercised over another person(s). In the case of access to raw materials, the potable alcohol industry, whose power stems from the essential tax revenues it provides to state governments, has had preferential access to molasses over its industrial counterparts, which has contributed to its growth since 1980. Despite its success in gaining access to raw materials domestically, the Indian potable alcohol industry has not had the same level of success in obtaining Scotch concentrate, which, in this instance, has allowed multinational companies to benefit. Hence, the structure of regulation of supply of raw materials has encouraged the growth of the

potable alcohol industry and, in the case of Scotch concentrate, specifically of foreign manufacturers of alcoholic beverages.

3.6 Management¹¹³

Management contributes to growth by ensuring the success of the production phase, in which the initial inputs, such as raw materials and labour, are combined to result in the output of an end-product that can be sold for profit in the final phase. Concerning management in the Indian alcohol industry, the lack of systematic research limits conclusions. One salient feature, however, at the executive level in the alcohol industry is the tendency for individual managers and owners to be from wealthy families. For instance, Vijay Mallya, head of the UB Group, is drawn from the business elite as the son of industrialist Vital Mallya, from whom he inherited the UB Group at the age of 28, and which he has spent the past two decades expanding into a multi-billion dollar enterprise¹¹⁴. Jagatjit Jaiswal, the son of liquor magnate L.P. Jaiswal, who in 2005 was a member of “The Billionaire Club”, a listing of India’s wealthiest individuals, also comes from the industrial elite. Karan Bilimoria, the founder of Cobra beer, was Rajiv Gandhi’s

¹¹³ Due to the paucity of literature on the organisation of labour within the alcohol industry, it is not possible to provide an industry specific overview of this aspect of the production process. Nevertheless, it is likely that in the alcohol industry, as in other manufacturing industries, the structure of formal labour exhibits certain rigidities. These are largely due to Sections 25(N) and 25(O) of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, which entitle Labour Commissioners to approve or veto labour reduction due to retrenchment or closure (Anant and Goswami 1995: 281). Consequently, whereas companies with fewer than 100 workers are allowed to let employees go, as long as they provide a month’s notice and, for those employed by the firm for longer than twelve months, compensation equal to fifteen days pay for each year employed by the firm, firms employing more than 100 (300 before 1984) cannot terminate the services of workers who have been with the firm for at least one year, unless granted permission by the state government (Anant and Goswami 1995: 281, Agrawal, *et al.* 1995: 192). If given permission, firms are required to provide three months’ notice and retrenchment compensation, based on the same conditions for smaller firms (Agrawal, *et al.* 1995: 192). Casual, temporary and substitute employees are exempt from these rules (Fallon and Lucas 1993: 243). Even “sick” firms (i.e. loss-making firms) are not permitted to close, but are provided with, for instance, subsidised credit so that they can continue operating (Agrawal, *et al.* 1995: 194). Firms’ inability to rationalise the permanent labour force encourages the use of casual labour (Agrawal, *et al.* 1995: 194) and/or engagement in activities, such as falsifying workers’ records to conceal continuity of employment (Fallon and Lucas 1993: 244). Although Fallon and Lucas claim that this is curbed by strong union opposition (1993: 244), Harriss-White states that only three percent of Indian workers belong to unions (2003). In light of the small number of unionised workers, it is likely that firms are able successfully to withstand union opposition to casualisation of the labour force.

¹¹⁴ (BBC News 2005: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4284006.stm).

playmate as a child, went on to obtain a law degree at Cambridge and then worked for Ernst & Young as an accountant before starting Cobra. He was also the first Parsi and youngest person to become a member of the House of Lords in the United Kingdom¹¹⁵.

This pattern of coming from privileged families, which can be seen repeatedly amongst the executive management of alcohol firms, has important implications for the creation of powerful political and economic networks and, thus, for the success of various stages of the production phase, such as access to raw materials, which is essential for the growth of individual enterprises and of the industry as a whole. Kochanek, in his examination of the relationship between the business elite¹¹⁶ and the Congress party governments from the 1950s to the 1980s, contends that the strict control and regulation of the private sector under the “permit-license-quota Raj” established following independence fostered “buyer-seller” interactions between the two groups (1987:1284). The government “sold” industry benefits that permitted “buyer” enterprises to establish and maintain monopolies and to ensure profitability (Kochanek 1987: 1284). In return, companies and individuals made campaign and political contributions to parties, and provided bureaucrats with financial kickbacks and employment (Kochanek 1987: 1287). Although, according to Kochanek, the political influence of Indian business has been constrained (due, for example, to the lack of cohesiveness amongst its elites), the financial resources and jobs at their command and their contributions to the increasing costs of elections¹¹⁷, have enabled them to cultivate relationships with key political and economic decision-makers (1987: 1300). The significance of these personal associations is clear when considered in light of Jenkins’ observation that in India uncodified

¹¹⁵ (HindustanTimes.com UK Edition 2006: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/news/specials/achievers/karan.shtml>; Times of India Online 2006: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/msid-161392,prtpage-1.cms>).

¹¹⁶ Kochanek defines the business elite as the small number of large, family-controlled firms that dominate the private sector, such as those of the Tatas and the Birlas (1987: 1281).

¹¹⁷ While elections costs in 1971 were placed between Rs. 100,000 and Rs. 750 million, by the end of the 1970s, they were estimated to fall between Rs. 1.7 billion and Rs. two billion (Kochanek 1987: 1290).

interactions between government, political parties, lobby groups and constituents have important repercussions for agenda-setting and decision making. As discussed in Chapter 1, Jenkins has drawn attention to the informal practices of political parties and the scope this offers individual politicians to forge relationships with a diversity of people both inside and outside political parties, providing opportunities to negotiate mutual understandings between representatives of different interests in their capacity as individuals rather than holders of a particular position (Jenkins 1999: 120). In the context of Indian business, it suggests that, as Supriya Banerji, head of the international department of the Confederation of Indian Industry commented in 2007, “In India, it’s still not what you know that counts. It’s who you know” (Huggler 2007). These informal relationships take on an added importance in the case of the alcohol industry due to its highly regulated nature. Accordingly, the family background of the executive managers of major domestic alcohol manufacturers suggests that they have strong connections with, or are themselves¹¹⁸, influential politicians, who are able to promote their interests. This capacity is further strengthened by the opportunities for bribes and corruption that are provided by the strict regulation of the alcohol industry (Kochanek 1987:1287), and state reliance on the excise taxes supplied by the alcohol industry. Hence, management must play a central role in promoting a political and legal environment that facilitates the success of the production phase as well as the growth of the Indian alcohol industry, especially for local firms whose heads are likely to have stronger ties with national and state politicians and government officials than their foreign counterparts.

¹¹⁸ Vijay Mallya is a member of Parliament in his home state of Karnataka.

3.7 Distribution

As products are usually not manufactured and sold in the same place, distribution is an essential step to ensuring consumers' access to products and, consequently, is a critical factor in the growth of a company and of an industry. Although the policies governing the distribution of alcohol have relaxed recently (to be discussed in this section), it remains highly regulated, which has significant implications for producers' and distributors' abilities to make their products available to consumers and for their potential profits. Sinha estimates that in India there are 2,830 wholesale and 110,370¹¹⁹ retail outlets (2006: 29). The management of retail channels follows one of three models, open, auction or government corporation, depending on the state. Table 3.8 details the characteristics of the three models.

¹¹⁹ Of these, 53,440 are country liquor vends (Sinha 2006: 29).

Table 3.8 Characteristics of the open, auction and government corporation retail models

	Open	Auction	Government corporation
Licences	No limit is placed on the number of wholesale and retail vends ¹²⁰ that can be established, and licences are granted for a set fee and duration.	At the beginning of each financial year, the government auctions off wholesale and retail shops.	The wholesale, and sometimes the retail, segment is controlled by state government agencies.
Distribution	Companies are allowed to appoint their own distributors in the state. Producers can also select distributors, who in turn can choose retailers.	Distributors must establish their own retail network and source products directly from liquor companies.	State agencies buy alcohol directly from liquor companies.
Pricing	Determined by the market.	Determined by syndicates.	Fixed by the state.
Advantages	Promotes competition, transparency and choice for consumers.		Curbs evasion of taxes, since all sales are through government corporations, and eliminates the necessity of bribes to officials and anti-social elements.
Disadvantages		Often results in cartelisation as well as significant and frequent changes in distributors and retailers.	Unreasonable price control and inefficient management of depots.
States and union territories	Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Goa, Jammu and Kashmir, Assam, West Bengal	Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana	Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Delhi, Karnataka, Orissa, Chandigarh

Sources: (From data in Sinha 2006: 29-30; Euromonitor 2006a: 17)

Within the open and auction systems, there are two primary modes of retail distribution of alcohol, through “on-trade” and “off-trade” channels. In “on-trade” establishments, alcoholic beverages are sold for consumption on the premises, while from “off-trade” outlets, alcohol is sold for consumption off the premises. Off-trade sales accounted for nearly 80 percent of total volume sales in 2005, with the exception of the wine sector, in which on-trade sales made up 35 percent of total volume sales (Euromonitor 2006a: 16). The high percentage of off-trade sales can be explained by consumer preference for cheaper products and the red tape that must be negotiated in

¹²⁰ There are, however, restrictions on location (Sinha 2006: 29).

order to obtain a licence for on-trade sales (Euromonitor 2006a: 16). In addition to licence fees, bar owners are widely alleged to be required to pay bribes, or “other duties”, to authorities and to provide free drinks to law enforcers (Euromonitor 2006a: 16). These fees are passed onto customers, pushing on-trade prices higher than their off-trade counterparts¹²¹. More recently, off-trade retailing has been facilitated by some state governments’ decisions to allow wine, beer and FABs to be sold in supermarkets (Euromonitor 2006a: 1).

Due to the contentious characteristics of alcohol in India, distribution of alcohol through off-trade and on-trade outlets is highly regulated, and restrictions are placed on the types of establishments that can sell alcoholic beverages, on opening hours, and on the legal drinking age. Although some states and union territories, such as Chandigarh, Delhi, Karnataka, Punjab, Rajasthan and West Bengal, recently have permitted the sale of alcohol in supermarkets¹²², only those fulfilling certain criteria can retail alcoholic drinks. For instance, in West Bengal, only department stores and supermarkets larger than 5,000 square feet¹²³ can apply for a licence (Euromonitor 2006a: 20), with which they can sell “safer” drinks containing lower alcohol content, such as beer, FABs and wine (Euromonitor 2006a: 17). Hence, specialist retailers still account for nearly all off-trade sales (Euromonitor 2006a: 20). With a near monopoly on the distribution of alcohol in each state, specialist retailers have played a particularly important part in the availability, popularisation and success of brands since the 1990s, due to the strict laws governing the

¹²¹ In some cases, high prices at on-trade channels were maintained by the outlets themselves, when lowered import duties were not passed onto customers. For example, in 2004 in Delhi, many of the five-star hotels chose not to reduce prices following a reduction of import duties (Bhattacharya 2004a).

¹²² According to Euromonitor, the majority of supermarkets tends to be concentrated in the major cities of Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Bangalore, and Chennai (2006f: 2).

¹²³ The average selling space of grocery retailers in India in 2006 was 39 square metres per outlet (Euromonitor 2007: 8). Together with the fact that hypermarkets (very large stores that sell groceries as well as, for instance, clothes and hardware), supermarkets, convenience stores and discounters only accounted for one percent of overall grocery retailing value sales in 2006 (Euromonitor 2007: 9), it suggests that the number of supermarkets with over 5,000 square metres of retail space accounts for a small proportion of grocery retailing.

advertising of alcoholic drinks (Chaudhury 1995; Euromonitor 2006a: 20). Consequently, producers offer retailers discount schemes, free gifts and branded storage units, such as refrigerators¹²⁴; these incentives are occasionally tied to high sales figures of a particular brand (Euromonitor 2006a: 20).

Distribution through military stores, or “canteen store sales” as they are popularly called in India, constitutes one of the most significant modes of distribution in terms of volume, outside of the specialist retailers (Euromonitor 2006d: 5). Companies sell products to these outlets at lower prices, as duty is reduced for brands being sold to these stores, which leads to a significant amount of diversion to other markets as military personnel resell beverages they purchase from canteen stores (Euromonitor 2006d: 5). Another increasingly important kind of off-trade outlet is duty-free stores, which are found in the international departure and arrival terminals of the major airports in India and operated for the Central Government in Delhi and Mumbai by the India Tourism Development Corporation and in other cities by the private firm Flemingo (Euromonitor 2006a: 7). The rise in the number of Indians travelling abroad has expanded duty-free sales; this has been further encouraged by the increase in the allowance from one to two litres for a passenger arriving in India (Euromonitor 2006a: 7). Premium spirits and wine, which are generally not sold through other off-trade outlets because of their high prices, account for most duty-free sales (Euromonitor 2006a: 7).

Regarding the opening hours of on-trade establishments, regulations vary from state to state and, in some cases, from city to city. Some on-trade channels open from 11:00 to midnight, while pubs open at 19:00, and bars in restaurants serve alcohol at lunch and dinner time, 11:00 to 15:00 and 19:00 to midnight respectively (Euromonitor 2006a: 6). In Bangalore, pubs, nightclubs and restaurants are required to shut at 23:30

¹²⁴ Although suppliers of the storage units insist that only their branded products be displayed in them, this is not always the case (Euromonitor 2006a: 20).

(Singh 2006). Higher-end establishments, such as five-star hotels, remain open much later. Recently, the Delhi government permitted one restaurant in all five-star hotels to serve alcohol 24 hours a day, which was accompanied by a doubling of the licence fee (Shukla 2006). According to Excise and Finance Minister A.K. Walia, “the government has taken the decision keeping in view the importance of Delhi as an international tourist and business destination” (Shukla 2006). Additionally, even wet states recognise certain dry days. In Delhi dry days include Republic Day, Independence Day, Gandhi Jayanti, and, in election years, the days directly preceding and following elections¹²⁵. The legal drinking age also differs from state to state. A number of states have set it at eighteen, which is also when one can vote, but in some, such as Maharashtra, it is 21, and in others, such as Delhi, 25. Nevertheless, the drinking age is not well enforced as age is rarely checked by proprietors for fear of losing customers (Euromonitor 2006a: 6).

Despite the myriad regulations that continue to govern the distribution of alcohol, they have liberalised, as evidenced by some states’ decision to allow the sale of certain alcoholic beverages, such as FABs, beer and wine, through non-specialist channels, such as supermarkets¹²⁶, and by decisions to increase opening hours (Shukla 2006). The relaxation of regulations has facilitated growth by both producers and distributors of alcohol. With regard to the former, this is a direct function of volume. Furthermore, the facts that off-trade sales comprised 80 percent of total volume sales in 2005 and that many imported brands tended to be found only in on-trade outlets suggest that the regulation of distribution differentially promotes the growth of the dominant domestic firms. As for distributors, despite the liberalisation of regulations regarding the types of distribution outlets permitted to retail alcohol, the near monopoly on distribution

¹²⁵ (The Hindustan Times 2004d; The Times of India 2004c).

¹²⁶ It is likely that the government’s decision to allow alcohol sales in supermarkets larger than 5,000 square metres will benefit the large leading retailing companies such as Pantaloon Retail India Ltd., who are the only retailers with selling outlets of this size (Euromonitor 2006f: 8).

exercised by specialist outlets has not been eroded and indicates that they have continued to benefit to a greater degree than non-specialist retailers from the growth of the industry.

3.8 Advertising and marketing

Although advertising and marketing are described by Gordon, Edwards and Reich as important factors in the final stage, the retail sales process (1994: 15), because they are the primary modes through which producers make potential consumers aware of their products, thereby increasing the possibility of profits through sales, there are few studies within the SSA school on them. They have been included in this study of the Indian alcohol industry, however, due to the prevalence of indirect advertising. The increasingly stringent regulations concerning the advertisement of alcoholic products in print media, radio, television and cable has encouraged inventive means to circumvent them. First, advertising in print media and on the radio was prohibited in the 1980s (The Hindustan Times Correspondent 1985d). Some cities, such as Delhi, reinforced this by banning liquor advertisements on billboards (Staff Reporter 1994). In 1995 four of the world's largest alcohol companies, United Distillers, International Distillers, Hiram Walker and Seagram's, attempted to pre-empt further regulations and obtain rights for "legitimate" advertising through formulation of their own code of conduct (D'Souza 1995; Mukherji 1995a). Nevertheless, in 1999 the Cable Television Networks Rule was instituted and took effect from 5 October (The Times of India 2000a). Rule 7(2) of the Cable Television Networks Rules 1999 states, "no advertisement shall be permitted which...promotes directly or indirectly production, sale or consumption of cigarettes, tobacco products, wine, alcohol, liquor or other intoxicants". Television or cable channels that air advertisements appearing to violate this rule may be subject to measures by the central

government, such as the confiscation of equipment (BBC News 2000; Euromonitor 2006a: 5).

Despite the various bans on advertising, many firms have continued to engage in indirect or surrogate advertising. Common practices have included: advertising without specifically identifying the product (The Times of India 1987d) and using the same advertisement for non-alcoholic and alcoholic drinks¹²⁷, as in the case of the Aristocrat advertisements that were used to promote both apple juice and spirits¹²⁸. Manufacturers have also used the advertisement of other products, such as non-alcoholic beverages¹²⁹, clothing¹³⁰, CDs¹³¹, playing cards (D'Souza 1994), crystal glasses (D'Souza 1994), ice accessories (D'Souza 1994), golf accessories¹³², and tourism (Vidyasagar and Bhusan 2005) as an indirect means to advertise alcoholic beverages. For instance, Smirnoff promoted t-shirts while Kelly's Crème Liqueur advertised ice accessories (D'Souza 1994). Alcohol producers have also sponsored sports events. Examples include Shaw Wallace's sponsorship of the cricket series between India and New Zealand in 1995 and the UB Group's sponsorship of the 1995 national sailing rally in Bombay (Murthy 1995a). Some companies have supported sports teams (Murthy 1995a), as the UB Group did by striking a three year deal with the West Indies cricket team, which stipulated that in exchange for the alcohol firm's funding, the liquor manufacturer's insignia would be displayed on the team uniform (Murthy 1995a). Other companies have turned to sponsoring cultural events (D'Souza 1994), as did Shaw Wallace, which sponsored an "antiquity festival" in Calcutta to promote their blended whisky Antiquity (D'Souza 1994). Finally, companies have also offered point-of-purchase promotions, such as free

¹²⁷ This tactic was used before alcohol advertising on television and cable were banned.

¹²⁸ (Roy (Times News Network) 2003; Times News Network 2003e).

¹²⁹ (Murthy 1995a; HindustanTimes.com 2006: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/news/1811805629,00110002.htm>).

¹³⁰ (Murthy 1995a; D'Souza 1994).

¹³¹ (HindustanTimes.com 2006: http://www.hindustantimes.com/news/181_1805629,00110002.htm).

¹³² (HindustanTimes.com 2006: http://www.hindustantimes.com/news/181_1805629,00110002.htm).

playing cards or coffee mugs (D'Souza 1994). Director's Special Whisky utilised such a promotion: every consumer who purchased two bottles of the whisky would receive a free pack of playing cards (D'Souza 1994).

More recently, however, enforcement of the ban on advertising has become stricter. For instance, in 2003, due to violations of the advertising code by companies which practiced surrogate advertising, the Indian Broadcasting Federation's subcommittee required liquor manufacturers to get their commercials approved at both the story-board stage and after production (Roy (Times News Network) 2003). The subcommittee also took up eighteen cases of indirect advertising, many of which involved large firms, such as Seagrams and Bacardi (Roy (Times News Network) 2003).

The growth figures for the alcohol industry indicate that the stringent regulations have not prevented alcohol firms from making consumers aware of their products. Regarding the brands of multinationals, as their consumption tends to be confined to consumers with a familiarity of the brand gained, for example, while travelling overseas and, hence, to a select group of the wealthiest drinkers drawn to such brands for their associations with sophistication, status and luxury, the attraction of such consumers does not require the same degree of advertising and marketing. Concerning domestic brands, it is likely that the modes of indirect advertising that the leading producers engage in to raise their public profiles and promote a certain image draws consumers to their beverages. For instance, the UB Group, producers of Kingfisher beer, aimed to be associated with a lifestyle described as the "King of good times" (Murthy 1995a). Additionally, it is probable that word of mouth and point-of-purchase promotions sway consumers who lack strong brand affiliations.

In light of the government's inability to prevent indirect advertising, its motivation for continuing to implement these policies has been questioned by some journalists, such

as Aiyar, who maintains that the impetus for the government's strict regulation of alcohol advertising has been the fact the "government deplores the sin but loves the benefits it provides" (2003). Thus, although the political environment has slowly liberalised since 1980, the state governments have often been pressured by, for example, women's groups to implement prohibition, which issue has provided individual politicians and political parties with an easy way to garner votes (Isaac 1998; Penna 1998). This has encouraged strict regulations governing every aspect of alcohol production and distribution, but not complete prohibition, primarily for fiscal reasons. As an important source of tax income (Kazmin 1996), state governments cannot afford to prohibit the industry entirely. The state governments that have tried prohibition, such as Andhra Pradesh and Haryana, have found it unsustainable due to the subsequent lack of state revenues¹³³. The governments' dilemma highlights the fact that in the case of the alcohol industry in India, the elements of the social structure of accumulation not only facilitate growth for the industry and, in particular, specific companies within the industry, but also facilitate revenue for the state governments.

3.9 Composition of final demand¹³⁴

According to Gordon, Edwards and Reich, "capitalists' success in realizing their profits depends upon the structure of final demand" (1994: 15), because it has repercussions for the selling stage, in which capitalists reconvert investments in labour and raw materials back into money capital through sale of the end-products. Even in instances where an industry is experiencing overall growth, as in the Indian alcohol industry, the rate at which growth occurs will differ from company to company depending

¹³³ (Iyengar (The Times of India News Service) 1996; Dogra 1997)

¹³⁴ Although the Indian alcohol industry does export some of its products, as they do not affect consumption within India by the urban middle-class and as it is a small proportion of total production, exports will not be considered by this thesis.

on the composition of final demand, as consumers' preferences for certain products over others will result in greater profits and, thereby, growth for the manufacturers of these items.

The Indian alcohol industry is segmented into four markets, spirits, beer, flavoured alcoholic beverages and wine. Regarding spirits, consumption of the "brown" types, including Indian whisky, brandy and dark rum, which brought in nearly 97 percent¹³⁵ of total spirits volume in 2005 and experienced growth rates of seven, seven and ten percent respectively, is far greater than that of their "white" counterparts such as vodka and gin (Euromonitor 2006d: 2). The consumption of the former is facilitated by their lower cost as well as perceptions of them as masculine, and dark rum as a "macho" beverage, particularly by young people, due to brand-building efforts by companies (Euromonitor 2006d: 2). Consequently, many young men who switch from beer to spirits start off with dark rum (Euromonitor 2006d: 2). Not all "brown" spirits are equally accessible. Single malt Scotch remains a beverage reserved for a small segment of the population, as a result of its high price¹³⁶ and its distribution through channels such as five-star hotels (Euromonitor 2006d: 2). So, consumers tend to drink blended malt Scotch, the demand for which is generated by men aged 35 and up from "the upper echelons of society" (Euromonitor 2006d: 2).

Contrasting with "brown" spirits, "white" spirits are a niche product consumed exclusively by urban drinkers and only account for 2.8 and 2.0 percent of total volume and total value sales of spirits respectively (Euromonitor 2006d: 2). White rum sales account for 0.3 percent, and vodka sales for less than 1.5 percent of total spirits sales (Euromonitor 2006d: 2-3), despite the recent dynamic increase in the consumption of the latter, with 23 percent volume growth in 2005, spurred by its popularity amongst young

¹³⁵ Unless stated otherwise, all figures reflect both rural and urban consumption.

¹³⁶ Even in the case of off-trade sales, a bottle of single malt Scotch retails for Rs. 2,000, which is prohibitive for most consumers (Euromonitor 2006d: 2).

people, drawn to vodka for its lack of strong smell and potential for mixing in cocktails (Euromonitor 2006d: 2). A steady premiumisation has also been evident, with a rise in demand for international brands, such as Belvedere and Smirnoff, primarily in on-trade outlets, where customers are willing to experiment (Euromonitor 2006d: 2). These trends have not extended to gin and white rum, which experienced more modest growth rates of eight and seven percent respectively in 2005 (Euromonitor 2006d: 3). Total volume sales of gin have expanded from 9.0 million litres in 2000 to 14.9 million litres in 2005, while total value sales have also experienced a rise from Rs. 3,758.0 million in 2000 to Rs. 7,153.2 million in 2005. The growth of gin, said to be favoured by women, was fuelled by consumption in smaller towns and cities in the major market states of Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh (Euromonitor 2006d: 3).

Beer sales have been also been increasing, with a rise of seven percent in volume sales and eight percent in value sales in 2005 (Euromonitor 2006b: 1). Despite characterisations of beer as a “lighter” alcoholic beverage in 1995 (when Wadhwa noted that it had become the “in-thing” for young people in Delhi due to its lower price relative to spirits and the minimal preparation required (i.e. no glasses, ice or soda) (1995)), currently in India, there is a significant preference for strong beers, defined as having alcohol content in excess of five percent (Euromonitor 2006b: 1). They commanded 60 percent of volume sales in 2005 (Euromonitor 2006b: 1). Regional variations are visible, however, concerning the preference for strong or mild beers, and in areas, such as in the southern city of Bangalore, where a greater number of women drink beer, sales figures for the latter are higher. This phenomenon can be explained by the fact that strong beer, with its higher alcohol content and more “bang for the buck”, is considered “masculine”, and mild beers “feminine” (Euromonitor 2006b: 1). Sales of draught beer are minimal (Euromonitor 2006b: 1). Domestic brands are favoured over imported brands, many of

which can only be found in on-trade establishments, are costlier, and have alcohol content below five percent (Euromonitor 2006b: 1, 18). The latter are preferred by individuals already familiar with them such as tourists and Indians who have travelled abroad (Euromonitor 2006b: 17).

Flavoured alcoholic beverages (FABs), or ready-to-drink alcoholic beverages, comprise the newest market. Since their launch in 2002, they have experienced strong growth mainly in urban areas, with rates of 24 and 27 percent in total value and total volume sales respectively from 2004 to 2005 (Euromonitor 2006c: 1). Although this expansion has been fuelled by young people and women's consumption, partly as a result of FABs' being marketed as "objects of desire" (Euromonitor 2006c: 5), the appeal to these specific portions of the FABs market has also been characterised as inhibiting further growth. The sweetness and low alcohol content of FABs has led to perceptions of them as a "feminine" drink, which an industry report describes as "the surest way to kill an alcohol product in India" (Euromonitor 2006c: 1). Moreover, despite characterisations as a "mild" beverage for women, it is subject to the same high level of taxes as spirits, pushing up the price of FABs (Euromonitor 2006c: 1).

Wine is also a relatively new segment of the alcohol industry in India, and has witnessed volume sales growth similar to FABs at a rate of 20 percent (Euromonitor 2006e: 1). Still wines accounted for the largest segment of the market in 2005 with a share of 90 percent of total volume sales, and red wine has been slightly more popular than white, due to the positive health benefits that have been attributed to the former (Euromonitor 2006e: 2). Sales of rosé, sparkling and port wines have remained low, primarily as a result of higher prices (Euromonitor 2006e: 2). The customer base for wine is primarily urban, with 80 percent of sales occurring in major cities, including New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Pune and Bangalore (Euromonitor 2006e: 2), and the

beverage is becoming increasingly popular, particularly amongst young people and women (Euromonitor 2006e: 2). The former are attracted to the drink because of the social status and image associated with it. Additionally, it is considered an acceptable alcoholic beverage for them to consume, due to its lower alcohol content relative to, for instance, spirits and due to the health advantages ascribed to it (Euromonitor 2006e: 2). Wine appeals to women because of its sophistication and its “healthiness” (Euromonitor 2006e: 2). It is believed to be an appropriate drink for them as well, because it has a sweet taste and is milder than hard liquor, particularly the “brown” spirits, such as whisky, rum and brandy (Euromonitor 2006e: 2). Sparkling wine, including champagne, was only consumed by an elite segment of the population and on an infrequent basis (Euromonitor 2006e: 3).

Although increased demand has generated growth for the Indian alcohol industry as a whole, the structure of demand has benefited manufacturers of “brown” spirits and strong beers, which cater to the largest market (i.e. that of middle- and upper-class men), over the producers of “white” spirits, FABs and wine, which serve the smaller markets of female and young drinkers. Moreover, the leading domestic manufacturers have done better than multinationals. This is a result of the greater availability and accessibility of the alcoholic beverages the former produce, which are sold in off-trade establishments, are offered at lower prices, and contain higher alcohol content (Euromonitor 2006b: 1, 18). Although the internationally branded products of multinational companies, characterised as “high-class” and sophisticated drinks, are sought by those who can afford them, their high price tags keep them out of the reach of most consumers. Consequently, the growth of the leading domestic manufacturers of “brown” spirits and strong beers has outstripped that of Indian producers of other types of beverages and foreign firms.

3.10 Tax

SSA theory views tax as an element hindering capital accumulation. According to Weisskopf, “the tax ratio...can be seen as in part a function of the power of the domestic citizenry to induce the state to levy taxes in order to support public spending on programs benefiting noncapitalists, which will be pitted against the power of capitalists to resist taxes whose ultimate impact is on profits and whose benefits do not accrue to themselves; thus [the tax ratio] becomes a negative function of the power of capital vis-à-vis the general public” (1994: 149). Tax is conceptualised as a negative element that diverts profit away from capitalists to the benefit of noncapitalists. The possibility that tax may also serve capitalists by providing them with the political leverage to obtain concessions from the government is not considered. This, however, is the case in the Indian alcohol industry.

Due to the contentious nature of alcohol in India, taxes on the commodity are high. Sinha asserts that they are used as a “double-edged weapon” to garner a significant source of state revenues and simultaneously to discourage consumption (2006: 2). He stresses the importance of a balance of incentives so that the two goals can be accomplished without encouraging either tax evasion or the illicit industry (2006: 4). Since this is technically difficult, the regimes are often confusing, consisting of a large number of components, including excise duty, licence fee, sales tax, brand/label registration fee, import/export fee, vend fee, gallonage fee and turnover tax (Sinha 2006: i). The complexity of the system is increased by the fact that the individual state governments determine and regulate the industry’s tax levels, so that they differ from state to state. Moreover, within each state, types of alcohol are taxed differently. For instance, in Maharashtra, wine carries a four percent sales tax and an excise duty approaching zero (Euromonitor 2006a: 3), which are lower than those placed on spirits.

However, in Andhra Pradesh, spirits and wine have the same level of duties (Euromonitor 2006a: 2). In short, each state has: an excise duty on the production of alcohol, an import duty on alcoholic products from another state, and an export duty on alcoholic products manufactured within the state for consumption in a different one (Euromonitor 2006a: 2).

International imports are regulated by a different regime, comprised of basic and additional customs duties (Euromonitor 2006a: 2). According to a 2006 report on the industry, the basic import duty was 150 percent for spirits and 100 percent for beer and wine on the cost-insurance-freight price¹³⁷ (Euromonitor 2006a: 3). Additional duties for spirits are set out in Table 3.9 and for beer and wine in Table 3.10.

Table 3.9 Additional duties for spirits imports per case of nine litres

<u><US\$10</u>	<u>US\$10-US\$20</u>	<u>US\$20-US\$40</u>	<u>US\$40<</u>
150%	100%	50% (minimum of US\$53.20)	25%

Source: (Euromonitor 2006a: 3)

Table 3.10 Additional duties for beer and wine imports per case of nine litres

	<u><US\$25</u>	<u>US\$25-US\$40</u>	<u>US\$40<</u>
Beer	75%	50% (minimum of US\$37)	20%
Wine	75%	50% (minimum of US\$37)	20%

Source: (Euromonitor 2006a: 3)

Recently, various government departments have suggested lowering taxes on alcoholic beverages. The MoFP has put forward a number of recommendations¹³⁸ to

¹³⁷ The cost-insurance-freight price indicates that the selling price includes the costs of goods, freight or transport, and marine insurance (Foreign Trade On-Line 2006: <http://www.foreign-trade.com/schedules.htm>).

¹³⁸ The Ministry of Food Processing's nine recommendations are: 1) to have a nationally uniform tax policy; 2) to use sales tax, rather than rental fees, to extract money from manufacturers and distributors; 3) to employ only excise and countervailing duties, sales taxes, license fees and label registration fees; 4 and 5) to collect as revenue approximately two-thirds, one-third and one-fourth of the maximum retail price of spirits, beer and wine respectively, primarily through excise duties and sales tax, with low license fees; 6) to levy an ad valorem, rather than fixed, excise duty; 7) to have a separate excise duty and sales tax, the latter

rationalise the tax regimes between states, to simplify them, and to lower rates (Sinha 2006). The Commerce Ministry has also proposed eliminating the additional customs duty on Scotch whisky (which is considered to be inconsistent with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) and reducing the basic customs duty on it from 150 to 75 percent (Euromonitor 2006a: 5-6, 21). If the latter were to take effect, it would likely provide the impetus for a lowering of the basic customs duty on other imported spirits as well, particularly as the current rates are seen as violating WTO requirements, which could potentially allow multinational companies to gain a firmer foothold in the different alcohol markets.

Nevertheless, the government has been and remains a proponent of high taxes on alcohol, which are estimated to constitute fifteen to twenty percent of states' total tax revenues (Benegal 2005: 1052). The arguments for and against prohibition put forth by the MoFP in its model policy taxation act for alcoholic beverages shed light on state governments' rationale. First, the prohibition argument questions the ethics of the government's raising funds through the sale of potentially harmful products (Sinha 2006: 1). This argument, however, is dismissed immediately by the author, who cites the difficulty of maintaining prohibition in an increasingly globalised world (Sinha 2006: 1). Also in favour of prohibition is the legal argument, which focuses on the Indian Constitution's directive for states to attempt to achieve the prohibition of alcohol. In contrast, the "freedom of choice" argument maintains that it is wrong to limit individuals' freedom to choose, as long as acts do not cause harm to others and he or she does not neglect his dependents (Sinha 2006: 2-3). Lastly, the revenue argument contends that prohibition fails to change people's behaviour, that it encourages growth of illicit liquor

of which should be higher in order to ensure states are able to get a larger proportion of revenues from foreign liquor; 8) to display a maximum retail price, based on the ex-factory price, duties and fees, the trade margin and any other relevant taxes, on the label; and 9) not to levy discriminatory duties and fees against other states (Sinha 2006: viii).

(Sinha 2006: 1-2), and that alcohol revenues are a “significant and buoyant source of revenue for the resource starved States which need ever increasing resources to finance their developmental activities” (Sinha 2006: 1). The data in Table 3.11, which details tax data for various states from 1981-82 to 2003-04, supports this claim. In the years in which Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh implemented prohibition (pink indicates complete prohibition, and yellow partial prohibition), their tax revenues either dropped or increased less rapidly than they had before prohibition. Within a couple of years of reversing dry policies, most of these states, including Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh, experienced significant rises in their tax receipts. Accordingly, the state governments have made attempts to extend their tax reach to raw materials as well as the finished product (although the Supreme Court ruled against this in a 1995 judgement (Krishna 1995b)).

Table 3.11 State tax revenues from 1981-82 to 2003-04 (lakh¹³⁹ Rs.)

State	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93
Andhra Pradesh	70,289	80,839	96,537	117,343	143,861	155,933	181,879	212,189	238,414	264,725	305,496	338,872
Assam	9,027	10,835	13,567	18,931	23,501	24,503	24,923	27,890	33,290	42,014	51,217	51,771
Bihar	33,812	38,148	44,149	46,414	57,550	65,871	76,053	83,083	92,481	114,150	130,959	156,386
Gujarat	66,062	76,303	87,905	98,002	107,500	126,421	152,557	187,101	215,973	239,983	289,344	345,655
Haryana	29,062	33,668	36,587	40,541	50,171	56,586	66,440	79,541	91,012	106,954	130,020	144,687
Jammu & Kashmir	6,026	6,189	7,144	7,890	10,345	11,830	12,329	13,815	13,290	16,312	16,440	20,674
Karnataka	60,704	67,410	75,952	90,940	107,557	120,598	141,466	169,879	193,224	233,212	290,020	309,781
Kerala	37,418	43,835	48,677	62,165	73,050	81,389	92,522	106,547	123,250	134,035	167,393	188,697
Madhya Pradesh	47,586	55,825	64,299	71,321	83,133	97,387	111,513	133,772	157,786	175,479	211,732	233,362
Maharashtra	138,368	164,798	182,249	196,622	237,715	279,184	321,904	382,274	440,076	511,970	595,430	656,093
Orissa	15,972	17,362	20,093	22,777	28,591	33,784	38,674	44,273	52,484	66,879	67,364	76,190
Punjab	43,218	49,047	54,413	56,652	67,023	80,317	91,589	104,104	122,750	129,141	154,295	175,875
Rajasthan	31,198	38,947	44,118	48,739	56,595	65,585	77,246	89,317	107,251	121,650	154,879	173,429
Tamil Nadu	84,240	101,153	114,524	129,757	154,753	175,706	176,196	199,423	248,901	312,405	373,411	416,206
Uttar Pradesh	82,283	92,930	99,210	114,018	129,140	152,860	198,866	206,574	244,858	316,212	349,738	388,634
West Bengal	61,609	63,788	76,863	93,694	112,373	121,892	144,856	173,510	193,817	213,369	244,975	260,882

Note: Pink indicates complete prohibition, and yellow partial prohibition.

Source: (Indiastat.com 2007:<http://www.indiastat.com>).

¹³⁹ A lakh is 100,000.

Table 3.11 State tax revenues from 1981-82 to 2003-04 continued (lakh Rs.)

State	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02 (Revised Estimates)	2002-03 (Budget Estimates)	2003-04
Andhra Pradesh	383,293	422,743	412,044	488,183	711,355	796,137	900,860	1,055,190	1,165,730	1,345,970	1,380,600
Assam	61,281	63,221	70,245	76,690	88,194	98,256	122,476	141,290	157,480	200,710	207,000
Bihar	174,840	183,599	197,327	225,083	239,040	267,156	363,756	293,480	244,240	281,370	336,100
Gujarat	394,172	474,286	532,287	606,595	659,106	761,578	816,173	904,680	949,770	999,930	1,117,300
Haryana	158,891	188,786	216,896	214,312	236,863	311,962	351,761	431,150	497,610	554,920	634,800
Jammu & Kashmir	22,465	24,369	28,479	28,927	36,741	43,660	57,764	74,810	85,750	93,550	115,200
Karnataka	381,234	428,931	527,393	576,784	641,187	694,304	774,437	904,270	1,011,550	1,188,710	1,257,000
Kerala	234,487	279,910	338,268	389,850	450,105	464,956	519,351	587,030	659,360	780,500	808,900
Madhya Pradesh	267,711	287,061	351,819	410,350	456,431	510,848	579,522	563,960	510,370	576,230	678,900
Maharashtra	769,620	945,462	1,093,445	1,171,497	1,371,926	1,420,236	1,726,495	1,972,430	2,324,850	2,573,600	2,516,200
Orissa	85,989	92,261	112,719	134,204	142,174	148,713	170,408	218,400	260,000	288,000	330,200
Punjab	214,964	259,906	265,099	273,466	304,467	326,248	394,747	489,520	496,340	619,230	614,600
Rajasthan	195,022	230,716	273,060	312,376	361,058	393,935	453,090	530,000	575,910	707,780	724,600
Tamil Nadu	480,137	583,376	715,120	798,345	868,564	962,530	1,091,893	1,228,230	1,297,480	1,494,370	1,594,500
Uttar Pradesh	413,201	487,831	546,892	630,597	699,796	791,011	940,091	1,098,000	1,150,200	1,342,720	1,360,100
West Bengal	291,294	373,027	413,287	425,891	451,677	477,446	510,083	591,760	730,790	859,510	876,800

Note: Pink indicates complete prohibition, and yellow partial prohibition.

Source: (Indiastat.com 2007:<http://www.indiastat.com>).

The policy document concludes that state governments can neither implement prohibition nor promote the consumption of alcohol directly or indirectly (Sinha 2006: 3), which circumstances together encourage state governments to view alcohol tax revenues as a “cash cow”.

In a country where tax evasion is rife (Raman 2006: 469) through avoidance and evasion¹⁴⁰ (Jairaj and Harriss-White 2006: 445), the alcohol industry is an easy target for state tax departments due to its size and its salience. Jairaj and Harriss-White note that large firms find it the most difficult to avoid paying taxes, because their reliance on public services allows triangulation with other departments and because the monitoring costs are lower than for smaller firms (2006). Furthermore, in the case of those lured by time-bound tax breaks to locate themselves on industrial estates, once the defined time period has passed, they are contractually required to pay the taxes from which they had been exempt (Jairaj and Harriss-White 2006: 451). Big firms also have an incentive to pay their taxes, because they are those which are in greatest need of infrastructure that only the state can provide¹⁴¹ (Jairaj and Harriss-White 2006: 455). Jairaj and Harriss-White’s research suggests that it would be difficult for the alcohol industry, which is dominated by large national and international firms, to evade and/or avoid taxes entirely. As well as the size of the industry, the controversial nature of alcohol encourages the state governments to levy high duties, as it contributes to public perceptions that they are

¹⁴⁰ According to Jairaj and Harriss-White, tax avoidance is achieved through legal means, such as “declared outputs below the tax threshold; transactions which are not taxable (i.e. are not first, last or second-point contracts), successful pressure for tax exemption or for tax levels disproportionately lower than their turnover; and the use of transfers between branches of firms to have profits arise in jurisdictions which minimize liabilities” (2006:451). Tax evasion is accomplished through the illegal under-reporting of output, attribution of non-agricultural earnings to agriculture, and bribery (Jairaj and Harriss-White 2006: 451).

¹⁴¹ Large companies are not only aware of such indirect benefits, but often expect them. For instance, in 2001 Om Prakash Dhanuka, the managing director of Riga Sugar Mills, stated, “...the industry in Bihar is paying a cane tax of Rs. 1.75 a quintal and also a zonal development levy of 17 paise a quintal. The money collected under these heads are supposed to be used for development of the cane economy, including a rural road network. Last year’s floods in Bihar washed away many roads and culverts. We are yet to see the State government doing anything about the damaged roads” (Bose 2001).

making an effort to prevent excessive consumption and simultaneously allows them to extract a significant amount of revenues.

The direct benefit of lower taxes to alcohol producers is clear. However, Jairaj and Harriss-White's research (2006) indicates that indirect benefits can also be derived from paying taxes, particularly for large alcohol manufacturers, since one incentive big firms have to pay taxes is that they require the infrastructure, such as electricity and roads, only the state can provide. As such facilities are integral for the production and distribution of alcohol, the leading alcohol companies have a vested interest in ensuring that the state has the funds necessary to fulfil their needs and those of downstream industries, such as that of sugar.

The interests of all alcohol companies are not always compatible, however; those of multinationals and domestic firms sometimes differ. These conflicting vested interests have come into play recently, in regard to the issue of taxes on Scotch (Euromonitor 2006d: 6). A recent report by the European Commission, compiled in response to complaints filed by the European Spirits and Wine Organisations, found that the imposition of additional duties were inconsistent with the requirements of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (Indo-Asian News Service 2006). Sources within the Scotch Whisky Association (SWA) accused Vijay Mallya, chairman of the UB Group and a politician representing the Janata Party in Karnataka, of preventing the removal of the prohibitive import duties, thereby keeping European Scotch manufacturers out of the Indian market (Indo-Asian News Service 2006). In the past, Mallya has claimed that the SWA¹⁴² has utilised its influence to prevent Indian whiskies from being sold in Europe (Indo-Asian News Service 2006). Hence, it is evident that the interests of international and national firms are not necessarily aligned.

¹⁴² It will be interesting to see how Mallya's relationship with the SWA changes in the future, with his 2006 acquisition of a Glasgow-based firm, Whyte & Mackay, owner of the largest selling Scotch brand in Scotland (Zachariah and Kalesh 2006).

Tax, therefore, does not facilitate the growth of the alcohol industry directly, but indirectly through the services that the government provides with the money gained through tax revenues. The incentives large firms have to pay taxes further suggests that the leading producers are the ones most likely to reap the benefits of paying taxes and, therefore, that these benefits have the potential to encourage their growth to a greater extent than that of their smaller counterparts. Lastly and, in the case of the alcohol industry, perhaps most importantly, tax smoothes the accumulation of revenue by governments. State governments have increasingly become aware of the fact that alcohol tax revenues are a fiscal necessity: a nation-wide survey in 1990 revealed that most states were reluctant to implement prohibition and to give up alcohol excise revenues (The Hindustan Times 1990). This has been accentuated by the experience of states such as Haryana and Andhra Pradesh, which experimented with prohibition only to have to overturn it due to the difficulty of finding an adequate replacement for alcohol tax revenues (Dogra 1997), resulting in a lack of state funds. Consequently, state governments have an incentive to promote the growth of the alcohol industry, which, in conjunction with pressure from multinational companies and national governments, has encouraged the consideration of lower tax regimes, as in the case of Scotch whisky.

3.11 Conclusion

This analysis of the ways in which institutional structures affect the alcohol industry highlights their role in the growth of the industry, particularly for the dominant domestic players. The structure of supply of raw materials has repercussions for growth through its impact on the procurement of the inputs required to produce alcoholic beverages, such as extra neutral alcohol and molasses, to which the potable alcohol industry has been shown to have preferential access over its industrial counterparts. The

examination of the organisation of the supply of raw materials, thus, shed light on the tensions that underlie the structures, due to the differing, and sometimes conflicting, interests of various players. The example of access to Scotch concentrate provided a further example of conflicting interests, in this instance between indigenous and multinational firms. Regarding management, although the lack of literature makes it difficult to arrive at definitive conclusions, the privileged social background of executives in the alcohol industry suggests not only that they may have important political connections, but that these relationships may be leveraged to promote their interests, thereby facilitating the growth of the industry.

While the overall growth of the industry has benefited the sector as a whole, the composition of final demand has encouraged greater growth amongst the leading domestic companies. In terms of interfirm competition, the near monopoly exercised by the dominant indigenous manufacturers permits them to continue to solidify their position, as their growth increases their power and their consequent ability to obtain the necessary raw materials and to lobby for or against legislation affecting their activities. The structure of distribution also encourages the growth of the prevailing Indian firms, as the products of their multinational counterparts are more costly and tend to be distributed through higher-end outlets, such as five-star hotels and restaurants, thereby limiting their availability. In contrast, the alcoholic products of Indian companies are sold through a number of off-trade retail outlets, such as specialist retailers and supermarkets, decreasing their price and increasing their accessibility. Conclusions regarding the influence of advertising and marketing on growth are more difficult to draw, as direct advertising is prohibited. Nevertheless, it is likely that indirect advertising raises consumers' awareness of the firms that practice it. It also exposes the governments' dilemma regarding the alcohol industry: although state governments are fiscally dependant on alcohol tax

revenues, individual parties and politicians are often pressured politically by, for instance, women's groups to implement prohibition. This encourages state governments to endeavour to appear to be placing stringent regulations on the alcohol industry through acts of law such as that banning advertising of alcoholic beverages. The same dilemma largely governs the state governments' attitudes towards tax and acts as an impetus for high taxes on the alcohol industry. Despite the fact that lower taxes would further facilitate the growth of the industry, the benefits of paying tax also accrue to the alcohol industry, as the payments they make provide the state with funds that can be utilised to build essential infrastructure, such as roads, which would, for example, facilitate distribution.

The exploration of the institutional structure supporting the growth of the alcohol industry has highlighted the fact that tensions between different interests, such as those of state governments, local firms, and multinational companies, suffuse each of the structures. For example, national and international producers often have diverging interests, particularly because the former benefit from the tendency of state governments' policies to favour already established players and from the strong relationships that exist between individual alcohol executives and bureaucrats. Nevertheless, in some instances the interests of local firms and multinational companies converge, as in the acquisition of raw materials, and unite them against other industries, as in the case of industrial alcohol, and against state governments, as in the fight for universally lower taxes on alcohol.

This latter mutually dependent relationship between alcohol firms and state governments defines the industry in many ways. State governments are important to manufacturers and distributors, because of the formers' pivotal role in the formulation and enforcement of rules and regulations. The interest of state governments in regulating the industry to such a high degree stems from the industry's great fiscal significance to

them. It is an integral means of revenue accumulation for them as well as for various alcohol companies. The provision of essential tax revenues to state governments as well as the kickbacks that are likely to be offered to individual bureaucrats to “buy” benefits, as discussed in the section on management, provides the alcohol industry with a significant amount of political influence that is used to promote policies favourable to it, such as greater distribution through retail outlets. In turn, these policies increase the availability and accessibility of alcohol for consumers. For these reasons, although government departments sometimes find themselves at odds with each other regarding, for instance, the industry’s access to resources, prohibition is no longer considered by most states, and regulations have gradually liberalised, which has had consequences for the production and distribution of alcohol. These changes have occurred slowly, however, largely as a result of the controversial nature of alcohol in India, which requires state governments to appear that they are not promoting alcohol production, distribution or consumption. For this reason, the liberalisation of regulations has been accompanied by a careful public justification of their fiscal necessity by states, such as Andhra Pradesh. Prior to reversing prohibition in 1996, the ruling Telugu Desam government found it necessary to “prepare the ground” by ensuring the state’s fiscal crisis was widely advertised (HT Correspondent 1996c). It is essential to note that in this context the contentious nature of the industry is what makes it valuable in the eyes of the state governments, which are supplied with an indisputable argument for placing high taxes on the industry’s products.

In conclusion, despite the fact that alcohol remains a contested issue in India and state governments continue to be reluctant to be associated with the industry, the political and, consequently, legal environment has shifted in such a way to incentivise greater production, distribution and, hence, consumption. The availability of alcohol has

increased, particularly as a result of the loosening of regulations, including those governing capacity restrictions on manufacturing units and the type of outlets permitted to sell alcohol, which has been facilitated by states' fiscal needs. Underlying this process have been the different interests of government, indigenous firms, and multinational companies, which have compelled the different actors either to strive to maintain or alter the status quo. Their success in achieving their different aims has been dependent on the degree of structural power they have been able to leverage in order to effect or prevent shifts in the economic and political spheres. There is a constant tug-of-war taking place, due to the synergistic relationship between the state governments and the industry: the former need the tax revenues from the latter to survive, and the industry requires the cooperation of the state governments in order to be able to continue to grow.

This brings us to the end of our consideration of the increased availability of alcohol through an exploration of the outside meaning of production and distribution. In the next chapter, we will address the two means by which the outside meaning of consumption impacts drinking decisions, namely increased accessibility and increased permissibility.

Chapter 4 - The Outside Meaning of Indian Urban Middle-class Alcohol Consumption

As defined in Chapter 1, outside meaning refers to the political, economic and social conditions that delineate the parameters within which individuals' consumption decisions are made and, thus, inside meaning is formulated. Referring back to our thesis argument, in the case of Indian urban middle-class alcohol consumption, both the outside meaning of production and the outside meaning of consumption influence the decision to drink (or not to drink). Chapter 3 argued that the outside meaning of production shapes alcohol consumption possibilities through its impact on availability, as determined by production and distribution, which in turn is affected by political and economic institutions, such as laws and regulations. In this chapter, we argue that the outside meaning of consumption delineates alcohol consumption possibilities through its effect on accessibility, which is conditioned by income, and on permissibility, which is influenced by social attitudes. Accessibility through income is further shaped by social institutions such as class, religion, caste and gender, while permissibility through social attitudes is determined by the same social institutions as well as by that of the print media, which has the capacity to shape conceptions of acceptable consumption practices. These aspects of outside meaning are processed by members of the Indian urban middle-class to formulate their individual attitudes towards the purchase and use of alcohol and to decide if, why, where, when, what, how and with whom to drink.

To explore the outside meaning of consumption and deconstruct "demand", this chapter will begin with a brief summary of recent trends in the consumption of alcohol. Second, changes in the accessibility of alcohol by the Indian urban middle class will be analysed through income and consumption and the impact of social institutions on employment opportunities and consumption. Third, changes in social attitudes towards

alcohol and, thus, permissibility will be analysed by investigating the manner in which alcohol-related issues have been depicted since 1980 in the newspapers *The Hindustan Times* and *The Times of India*. The gendering of social attitudes and permissibility is explained through an examination of the women's magazines *Femina* and *SAVVY*. Social attitudes will then be related to social institutions in order to gain an understanding of how the latter condition the permissibility of drinking.

4.1 Alcohol consumption

At present, the main categories of alcoholic beverages consumed by the Indian middle-class are Indian-made foreign liquor (IMFL), beer, wine and flavoured alcoholic beverages (FABs)¹⁴³. There has been a steady rise in alcohol consumption in the past few years, suggested by the increase in production and sales covered in Chapter 3. Subramanian, *et al.* estimate that per capita consumption has increased 115 percent since 1980 (2005: 830), while the WHO approximates that between 1970 and 1996, Indian alcohol consumption increased by 106.67 percent (WHO 1999: 14), similar to that of Sudan and Cyprus, which experienced positive changes of 108.33 and 106.57 percent respectively (WHO 1999: 13-14). The urban alcohol market accounts for 65.5 percent, despite comprising only 30 percent of the population (Euromonitor 2004: 14). Moreover, in a country where 34.7 percent of the population have a dollar¹⁴⁴ a day on which to survive and 79.9 percent have two dollars a day (United Nations Development Programme 2005: 228), a bottle of beer¹⁴⁵ costing a dollar is far out of the range of many peoples' incomes. So, the data on the growth of the alcohol industry, presented in Chapter

¹⁴³ (Sesikeran and Jagadeesan 1997: <http://www.ceche.org/publications/monitor/vol-5/5-2.htm#AlcoholDrinking>).

¹⁴⁴ The current exchange rate is 39.3 rupees to a dollar (XE.com 2008: <http://www.xe.com/ucc/>).

¹⁴⁵ The four cheapest domestic lagers at the time of the 2005 Euromonitor report, Kingfisher Diet Beer, Amberro Mild, Golden Eagle Lager, and London Pilsner, are 30, 40, 45 and 45 rupees respectively (Euromonitor 2005: 51).

3, not only suggests the growth of urban alcohol consumption, but more specifically urban middle- and upper-class alcohol consumption. Some factors contributing to greater middle-class alcohol consumption are changes in income and social attitudes.

4.2 Accessibility: changes in middle-class income

As laid out in our thesis argument, the two elements of the outside meaning of consumption affecting individuals' decision to drink (or not to) are accessibility through income and permissibility through social attitudes. This section takes up the issue of accessibility. It will first examine shifts in middle-class income and the statistical relationship between income and alcohol expenditure, before briefly exploring the impact that social institutions have on employment opportunities.

In the past couple of decades, the wealthiest third of India's population has found itself attaining unforeseen levels of prosperity and material affluence¹⁴⁶, facilitated by economic reforms, particularly under Rajiv Gandhi, such as the lowering of personal taxes and by the recent growth of the credit industry¹⁴⁷. This is evident in Tables 4.1 through 4.3 detailing the distribution of households by income and the growth rates of each income group in the pre- and post-reform periods. It indicates that the percentages of urban households falling into middle-, upper middle-, and high-classes have been expanding since 1985-86.

¹⁴⁶ (Ghosh 2004a: <http://www.networkideas.org>; Ghosh 2004b: <http://www.networkideas.org>).

¹⁴⁷ (The Times of India Online 2006: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/msid-242767.prtpage-1.cms>).

Table 4.1 Distribution of Households by Income (percent), 1985-86 and 1989-90 (Pre-reform period)

Annual Real Income (Real Rs.) at 1998-99 prices	Income Class	1985-86		1989-90	
		Urban	Total	Urban	Total
<=35,000	L	42.1	65.2	37.1	58.8
35,001 – 70,000	LM	35.8	25.2	34.8	26.9
70,001 - 105,000	M	15.2	6.9	17.9	10.1
105,001 - 140,000	UM	3.9	1.5	6.5	2.7
>140,000	H	3.1	1.1	3.8	1.4
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: L-low, LM-lower middle, M-middle, UM-upper middle, H-high. *Source:* (NCAER 2003: 6).

Table 4.2 Distribution of Households by Income (percent), 1992-93, 1995-96, and 1998-99 (Post-reform period)

Annual Real Income (Real Rs.) at 1998-99 prices	Income Class	1992-93		1995-96		1998-99	
		Urban	Total	Urban	Total	Urban	Total
<=35,000	L	38.4	58.2	27.9	48.9	19.0	39.7
35,001 - 70,000	LM	33.0	25.4	34.9	30.7	33.8	34.5
70,001 - 105,000	M	16.1	10.4	20.3	11.9	22.6	13.9
105,001 - 140,000	UM	7.6	3.7	9.6	5.0	12.2	6.2
>140,000	H	4.9	2.3	7.3	3.5	12.5	5.7
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: L-low, LM-lower middle, M-middle, UM-upper middle, H-high. *Source:* (NCAER 2003: 7).

Table 4.3 Average Annual Growth Rates (percent)

Income Class	Pre-reform period (1985-86 to 1989-90)			Post reform period – I (1992-93 to 1995-96)			Post-reform period – II (1995-96 to 1998-99)		
	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total
	L	0.93	-0.20	-0.01	-7.03	-3.03	-3.72	-10.83	-4.51
LM	3.34	4.91	4.33	5.46	10.22	8.59	0.91	7.71	5.63
M	8.53	17.82	12.72	11.96	3.11	7.01	5.32	7.82	6.63
UM	18.52	16.39	17.83	11.90	12.25	12.06	9.91	8.61	9.33
H	9.52	13.90	10.65	18.22	15.68	17.14	21.50	14.31	18.62
Total	4.14	2.04	2.61	3.50	1.44	2.01	1.69	1.29	1.41

Note: L-low, LM-lower middle, M-middle, UM-upper middle, H-high. *Source:* (NCAER 2003: 7).

Table 4.4 Average Ownership of Durable Products per Household by Income Class and Product Group (Urban)

Year/Product Group	Income Class					
	L	LM	M	UM	H	All
1989-90						
Group I	2.04	3.90	5.24	6.14	6.84	3.71
Group II	0.38	1.00	1.56	1.94	2.23	0.99
Group III	0.09	0.37	0.95	1.59	2.21	0.52
Total	2.51	5.27	7.75	9.67	11.28	5.22
1993-94						
Group I	2.81	4.75	5.62	6.58	7.72	4.49
Group II	0.71	1.45	1.84	2.25	2.89	1.38
Group III	0.16	0.55	1.17	2.20	3.14	0.78
Total	3.68	6.75	8.63	11.03	13.75	6.65
1995-96						
Group I	2.87	4.65	5.46	6.33	7.30	4.67
Group II	0.73	1.48	1.84	2.19	2.81	1.51
Group III	0.12	0.49	1.34	2.86	4.52	1.08
Total	3.72	6.62	8.64	11.38	14.63	7.26
1998-99						
Group I	3.90	5.27	5.93	6.13	5.98	5.35
Group II	0.87	1.48	1.74	1.87	2.08	1.54
Group III	0.18	0.64	1.55	2.53	3.02	1.29
Total	4.96	7.39	9.22	10.54	11.08	8.19

Note: L-low, LM-lower middle, M-middle, UM-upper middle, H-high.

Group I is comprised of pressure cooker, pressure pan, bicycle, wrist watch (mechanical), wrist watch (Quartz), radio/transistor, electric iron, ceiling fan, table fan, walkman, and mono cassette recorder.

Group II consists of TV set B&W (small), TV set B&W (regular), geyser (instant), geyser (storage), sewing machine, vacuum cleaner, mixer grinder, two-in-one-mono, and two-in-one-stereo.

Group III is made up of CTV (small), CTV (regular), VCR, VCP, scooter, moped, motor cycle, refrigerator, washing machine, music system, and car/jeep (NCAER 2003: 29).

Source: (NCAER 2003: 31).

The increase in disposable income experienced by the Indian middle-class has translated into greater consumption as well. Table 4.4 provides an indication of the expansion in consumer spending, as reflected in average ownership per household of durable items from three groups of products. For the middle-class, the greatest rise occurred in Group I products, the least costly durables, followed by that in Group II,

durables in the middle price range. In the case of the upper middle-class, the average declined for Group I and Group II, but increased for Group III. As Group III includes the most expensive durables, such as colour television, scooter, moped, motorcycle, refrigerator, washing machine and automobile, the rise in average household ownership of these items implies a higher propensity to spend by the middle- and upper middle-classes.

4.2.1 Changes in alcohol expenditure between 1983 and 2004: statistical analysis

Against this backdrop of greater affluence and propensity to spend, in this section we will explore statistically the relationship between urban income and alcohol expenditures in 1983 and in 2004. The datasets we use are from the 38th and 60th rounds of the Indian National Sample Survey Organisation's (NSSO) yearly consumer expenditure survey¹⁴⁸. The NSSO collects consumption information on over 500 food and non-food items for a 30-day recall period from a random, representative selection of households in the Indian states and in union territories. The 1983 and 2004 datasets consisted of 198,320 and 10,656 urban households respectively. In addition to consumption data, information on household characteristics such as monthly per capita expenditure, caste and religion were obtained. These are incorporated into our analyses to shed light on some of the factors affecting alcohol expenditure. The years 1983 and 2004 were chosen because they allow us to examine alcohol expenditures before and after the phase of economic liberalisation initiated in 1991 by Finance Minister Manmohan Singh in response to India's macroeconomic crisis, which is commonly viewed as the

¹⁴⁸ To collect the data for its consumption expenditure survey, the NSSO employed a stratified multi-stage design, in which the first-stage units were the urban frame survey blocks, and the final stage units were households from these blocks. In the cases of large blocks, there was an additional intermediary stage of sub-block formation (NSSO 2004: 2).

watershed moment when India moved decisively from a state-led to a market-dominated model of the economy (Kochanek 1986: 1299).

4.2.1.1 The datasets

In her study of prohibition and of the addictive consumption of alcohol in India, Rahman has noted some drawbacks to using the NSSO's consumer expenditures surveys including the inability to distinguish household members who drink from those who do not and the difficulty of discerning the frequency of consumption (Rahman 2002: 6). Moreover, the WHO has contended that self-reported figures on alcohol consumption collected as part of national surveys have tended to be 40 to 60 percent lower than estimates derived from sales data (2000: 28). Potential reasons for this shortfall include seasonal variations in drinking behaviour, the difficulty of pinning down drinkers for household surveys, incorrect estimates of drink sizes, forgetfulness, intentional under-reporting (WHO 2000: 28) or reporting of alcohol expenditures under a different category (Rahman 2002: 7). The last two are likely to be exacerbated in the Indian context due to the continued perception of alcohol consumption by some segments of the population as being "taboo". Rahman has further observed the lumpiness of alcohol consumption in India, which is often associated with special occasions, such as celebrations, and which the 30-day recall period may fail to capture or on the other hand may exaggerate, depending on the household and the timing of the survey (2002: 7). So, it is important to emphasize that our statistical analysis is limited to households that reported alcohol consumption for the 30-day recall period for which the NSSO collected data and that, as a result, it is not representative of the Indian context generally. Nonetheless, despite the discrepancy between self-reported and sales figures on alcohol consumption, in their study of the impact of youthful drinking on the probability of college matriculation in the

U.S.A., Cook and Moore contend that a correlation exists between self-reported figures and actual drinking behaviour (1993: 416). Therefore, notwithstanding the problems associated with survey-generated alcohol consumption figures, analysis of the NSSO's datasets (which are one of the only sources of yearly alcohol expenditure information in India), will enable us to obtain an indication of the nature of the relationship between alcohol expenditures and total consumption expenditures, our proxy for income.

In our cross-section datasets of households reporting consumption of one or more of the types of alcohol included in the NSSO's survey, namely toddy, country liquor, beer, and foreign or refined liquor, the mean household size dropped slightly from 5.01 in 1983 to 4.57 in 2004¹⁴⁹. Regarding real monthly per capita expenditures (mpce)¹⁵⁰, our proxy for income, the mean real mpce rose approximately 50 percent from Rs. 1,018.64 in 1983 to Rs. 1,529.20 in 2004. As the magnitude of the difference in real mpces at the 25th, 50th and 75th percentile increases from Rs. 509.66, Rs. 739.07, and Rs. 1,176.01 in 1983 to Rs. 691.27, Rs. 1,036.49, and Rs. 1,762.06 in 2004 (see Table 4.5), the average mpce at higher income levels has grown to a greater degree than at lower income levels. This confirms evidence from the previous section on the greater affluence and propensity to spend amongst the middle- and upper-classes. In terms of caste, the only significant shift between 1983 and 2004 has been the increase in the reported percentage of "other backward castes", from 0.75 percent in 1983 to 39.25 in 2004, and the decrease in the category of Other from 64.66 to 25.83 percent. This may be explained by the extension of reservation policies¹⁵¹ to members of other backward castes, which came into force following the recommendations of the Mandal Commission established in 1979, and

¹⁴⁹ According to 2001 census results, the mean size of Indian households is 5.3 (Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India 2001: http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Census_Data_2001/India_at_glance/glance.aspx).

¹⁵⁰ All 1983 mpce and alcohol expenditure figures have been inflated to 2004 rupees using inflation data from the International Monetary Fund (2007: <http://www.imf.org>).

¹⁵¹ Reservations policies were discussed in Chapter 2.

under which a certain proportion of government jobs and seats at educational institutions are reserved for members of “other backward castes”, thereby providing an incentive for more people to claim to be of these castes. With regard to religion, there has been no significant change, with Hindu households comprising the vast majority in both 1983 and 2004 and accounting for 84.74 and 86.44 percent respectively of drinking households, followed by Islam, with 4.61 and 4.75 percent, and Christianity, with 5.70 and 4.43 percent¹⁵². Table 4.5 gives details of the characteristics of households that reported alcohol expenditures.

Table 4.5 Characteristics of households consuming alcohol

Household characteristics	1983	2004
Household size (mean)	5.01	4.57
MPCE (Real 2004 Rs.)		
Mpce - 25th percentile	509.66	691.27
Mpce - 50th percentile	739.07	1,036.49
Mpce - 75th percentile	1,176.01	1,762.06
Mean	1,018.64	1,529.20
Caste (%)		
Scheduled tribe	8.28	5.66
Scheduled caste	26.31	29.27
Other backward caste	0.75	39.25
Other	64.66	25.83
Religion (%)		
Hinduism	84.74	86.44
Islam	4.61	4.75
Christianity	5.70	4.43
Sikhism	2.71	2.64
Jainism	1.35	0.02
Buddhism	0.07	1.65
Other	0.75	0.07

¹⁵² 2001 census results indicated that Hindus constitute 80.5 percent of the population, Muslims 13.4 percent, and Christians 2.3 percent (Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India 2001: http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Census_Data_2001/India_at_glance/glance.aspx).

4.2.1.2 Statistical model

To test the income elasticity of expenditures on toddy, country liquor, beer and foreign or refined liquor in our cross-section datasets through changes in β , and to compare the 1983 and 2004 results as a means to shed light on shifts in the tendency to spend on alcohol, we used multivariate logarithmic regressions, controlling for religion and caste. Religion and caste were included to determine the influence of their proscriptions on drinking (e.g. as in the case of Muslims and Brahmins, for whom alcohol consumption is forbidden), both of which we hypothesise will be less strictly observed in 2004 than in 1983. The model applied to the 1983 and 2004 data was:

$$\ln Y = \alpha + \beta_1(\ln X_1) + \eta_1 R_1 + \eta_2 R_2 + \eta_3 R_3 + \lambda_1 S_1 + \lambda_2 S_2 + \lambda_3 S_3,$$

where Y is alcohol expenditure; X_1 is mpce; R_1 , R_2 and R_3 , are dummy variables for religion with Hinduism, Islam and Christianity respectively = 1 and other = 0. S_1 , S_2 and S_3 are dummy variables for caste with scheduled caste, scheduled tribe and other backward class respectively = 1 and other = 0.

4.2.1.3 Results

Table 4.6 Results of logarithmic regressions of alcohol expenditure in 1983 by type of alcohol (dependent variable) against mpce, religion and caste

	Coefficient (standard error)	R-square	Number of observations
Total			
Mpce	0.512 (0.028)**	0.126	2962
Hinduism	-0.266 (0.074)**		
Islam	-0.248 (0.126)*		
Christianity	-0.112 (0.093)		
Scheduled tribe	-0.233 (0.065)**		
Scheduled caste	-0.034 (0.044)		
Other backward class	-0.103 (0.173)		
Toddy			
Mpce	0.491 (0.083)**	0.079	535
Hinduism	3.244 (0.194)**		
Islam	2.955 (0.305)**		
Christianity	3.418 (0.245)**		
Scheduled tribe	-0.085 (0.199)		
Scheduled caste	0.088 (0.094)		
Other backward class	(dropped)		
Country liquor			
Mpce	0.459 (0.037)**	0.089	1922
Hinduism	-0.254 (0.086)**		
Islam	-0.145 (0.136)		
Christianity	-0.117 (0.121)		
Scheduled tribe	-0.268 (0.073)**		
Scheduled caste	-0.027 (0.053)		
Other backward class	-0.082 (0.181)		
Beer			
Mpce	0.146 (0.127)	0.058	110
Hinduism	0.206 (0.318)		
Islam	-0.352 (0.691)		
Christianity	0.365 (0.379)		
Scheduled tribe	-0.230 (0.257)		
Scheduled caste	0.254 (0.219)		
Other backward class	(dropped)		
Foreign liquor or refined liquor			
Mpce	0.444 (0.066)**	0.133	395
Hinduism	-0.166 (0.133)		
Islam	0.313 (0.323)		
Christianity	-0.107 (0.166)		
Scheduled tribe	-0.244 (0.256)		
Scheduled caste	-0.090 (0.152)		
Other backward class	-0.921 (0.125)**		

Note: Two and one asterisks indicate statistical significance at the one and five percent levels.

Table 4.7 Results of logarithmic regressions of alcohol expenditure in 2004 by type of alcohol (dependent variable) against mpce, religion and caste

	Coefficient (standard error)	R-square	Number of observations
Total			
Mpce	0.412 (0.046)**	0.101	1056
Hinduism	-0.258 (0.128)*		
Islam	-0.214 (0.182)		
Christianity	-0.056 (0.154)		
Scheduled tribe	-0.111 (0.112)		
Scheduled caste	0.020 (0.088)		
Other backward class	-0.081 (0.077)		
Toddy			
Mpce	-0.183 (0.223)	0.104	40
Hinduism	-0.668 (0.906)		
Islam	-1.462 (1.000)		
Christianity	-0.504 (0.930)		
Scheduled tribe	(dropped)		
Scheduled caste	-0.282 (0.281)		
Other backward class	-0.492 (0.392)		
Country liquor			
Mpce	0.431 (0.080)**	0.082	543
Hinduism	-0.327 (0.215)		
Islam	-0.276 (0.270)		
Christianity	-0.081 (0.253)		
Scheduled tribe	-0.211 (0.164)		
Scheduled caste	0.103 (0.128)		
Other backward class	-0.114 (0.117)		
Beer			
Mpce	0.247 (0.125)*	0.066	95
Hinduism	0.289 (0.374)		
Islam	0.593 (0.558)		
Christianity	0.128 (0.422)		
Scheduled tribe	0.306 (0.327)		
Scheduled caste	0.357 (0.291)		
Other backward class	0.130 (0.195)		
Foreign liquor or refined liquor			
Mpce	0.211 (0.070)**	0.044	378
Hinduism	-0.178 (0.172)		
Islam	-0.090 (0.249)		
Christianity	-0.067 (0.209)		
Scheduled tribe	0.050 (0.180)		
Scheduled caste	-0.076 (0.136)		
Other backward class	-0.080 (0.117)		

Note: Two and one asterisks indicate statistical significance at the one and five percent levels.

The outcomes of the multivariate logarithmic regressions in Tables 4.6 and 4.7 reveal a statistically significant log linear correlation between the independent variable of mpce, the proxy for income, and the dependent variable of alcohol expenditure in 1983 (with the exception of beer) and in 2004 (with the exception of toddy). The regression results indicate that in 1983 a one percent increase in mpce led to a statistically significant rise of 0.51 in total alcohol expenditures, of 0.49 percent in that on toddy, of 0.46 percent in that on country liquor, and of 0.44 percent in that on foreign liquor or refined liquor. In 2004, our results demonstrate that a one percent rise in mpce ensued in statistically significant increases of 0.41 in overall alcohol expenditures, in 0.43 percent in expenditures on country liquor, of 0.25 percent in that on beer, and of 0.21 percent in that on foreign liquor or refined liquor. Comparison of our results from 1983 and 2004 show that the elasticities of total alcohol expenditures and of expenditures on toddy, country liquor, and foreign or refined liquor have decreased. The downward shift in elasticity may be explained by the increase in income experienced by the middle- and upper-classes since the 1980s (highlighted by our mpce data above as well as in the previous section), which has been accompanied by greater alcohol expenditures, as suggested by the great expansion of the domestic industry (covered in Chapter 3). As alcohol expenditures have increased, any additional changes in income may be expected to lead to smaller changes in the elasticity of alcohol expenditure. Regarding toddy, whose negative coefficient in 2004 reveals that it has become an inferior good, greater income appears to have led to shifts in peoples' drinking preferences towards more expensive types of alcohol in comparison to 1983. In contrast, spending on beer has become more elastic, so that positive changes in income are more likely to result in greater beer expenditures.

Although the relationship between income and alcohol expenditures has remained statistically significant between 1983 and 2004, our results shed light on the diminishing

influence of religion and caste. For instance, while the religious and caste dummy variables were found to be statistically significant for total alcohol expenditures as well as those on specific types of alcohol in 1983 (with the exception of beer), the results from 2004 reveal that the influence of religion and caste on alcohol expenditures have waned. This indicates that these social institutions do not dictate alcohol expenditures, despite the proscriptions some of them place on certain groups (e.g. Islam and Hindus for Brahmins), which in turn suggests that in addition to the greater accessibility of alcohol, the permissibility of its consumption has also increased (to be further explored in sections 4.4 and 4.5). Our statistical analyses have thus shed light on the statistically significant relationship between income and alcohol expenditures, the shift in consumers' preferences for more expensive types of alcohol, and the diminished role of religion and caste in the sphere of drink.

4.3 Employment opportunities, consumption and social institutions

Due to the lack of evidence on the nexus between income and social institutions, in order to understand the relationship between the accessibility of alcohol by the Indian urban middle-class and social institutions, this section will focus on employment opportunities and consumption as affected by gender, religion and caste. In Chapter 1 the impact that social institutions can have on individuals' access to resources, employment opportunities and, consequently, ability to consume was theorised. Rather than acting uniformly, however, each of them may be expected to have differing consequences for different people. Moreover, social institutions are not static, and as they change over time, so do their effects. This section will provide a brief overview of the differential effects of – and changes within – the social institutions, which have increased the significance of class considerations with regard to employment opportunities and consumption. First,

employment opportunities will be explored in relation to gender, religion and caste, followed by a discussion of consumption and social institutions.

In terms of gender, women's employment opportunities are said to have expanded through the growth of the service and private sectors (Fernandes 2000b: 101), as well as through the opening of fields which were previously male domains, such as banking, market research, advertising, the civil service, police and armed forces, and IT and communication related areas (Budhwar, Saini and Bhatnagar 2005: 181). Yet, Budhwar, Saini and Bhatnagar posit in their study of women in management in India that the opportunities primarily benefit educated women resident in metropolitan areas (2005: 179). Jhabvala and Sinha confirm that these positions are most accessible to women who already have high levels of income and skills (2002: 2037). Hence, since educated, urban women with a high level of income and skills are best placed to take advantage of the new employment opportunities, and since they are most likely to be women from affluent backgrounds, such as the urban middle-class as defined in Chapter 1, it seems that class considerations are important determinants in women's access to employment opportunities, which in turn affects their income and their access to alcohol.

Regarding caste, economic and consumption differences can be found amongst Hindus, and these distinctions do not always accord neatly with caste, particularly in the urban context. Ramu (1989) and Jayaram (1996) refer to the erosion of traditional occupational divisions based on caste, while Panini asserts that occupational diversification has taken place in all castes (1996: 31). B eteille's consideration of caste amongst the urban middle-class underlines the fact that for such people, the moral compulsion to take up a traditional caste profession is largely absent, and the link between caste and employment is weakening (1996). For the Indian urban middle-class, he claims that the obligation to pursue traditional caste vocations has been replaced, in the

cases of engineers, doctors, scientists, civil servants and managers, by the duty to pursue the profession of one's father (Béteille 1996: 162), so that, for instance, children of engineers are likely to become engineers.

Factors that are considered in the literature to have contributed to the weakening of caste as the determining element of a means of livelihood include reservation policies and the rise of new occupations and economic sectors. Srinivas attributes the increasing disconnect between caste and traditional occupation in urban areas to reservation policies¹⁵³, which have benefited members of scheduled castes (SCs) and scheduled tribes (STs) by offering them educational and occupational opportunities that would otherwise be denied them (1996: xxxii). For example, in 1996, 50 percent of Union Government and Central Public Sector Undertaking positions were reserved for persons of lower caste (Srinivas 1996: xi-xii). In some states, such as Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, the percentage reserved for backward castes/classes, other backward castes/classes¹⁵⁴ and most backward castes/classes was as high as 70 (Srinivas 1996: xi-xii). Industrialisation and bureaucratisation have also played a part in the disjunction between caste and profession by facilitating the creation of new types of employment based on individual merit and achievement (Alam 1999a; Ramu 1989: 188). These positions are not associated with any particular caste, so that economic success is separate from the interests of caste (Béteille 1996).

Despite the lesser direct relevance of caste for occupation, caste continues to have indirect effects on employment opportunities due to the historical advantages of certain caste groups regarding access to education and due to the structuring economic role of caste networks. Srinivas argues that mobility has increased in India since independence

¹⁵³ As discussed in Chapter 2, reservation policies were implemented to “create conditions for the social advancement of the historically disadvantaged groups, their integration into mainstream society, and participation in its opportunity structure on equal terms with the advanced groups” (Radhakrishnan 1996: 203).

¹⁵⁴ Other backward castes are also referred to as the middle-castes.

(1996: xxv). Simultaneously, the attainment of higher level government posts has become more competitive, and the recruitment process tends to favour urban middle- and upper-class persons, as, for example, interviews are held in English (Srinivas 1996: xxv). Caste plays a significant role in determining access to education, which is now an integral factor in occupation and income (Ramu 1989: 190), especially since a heavy emphasis is placed on individual merit and achievement (Ramu 1989: 188). According to Ramu, because Brahmins' historical access to education was greater than those from other castes, they were and have been better placed to take advantage of new employment opportunities, including white-collar and professional jobs (1989: 190). Consequently, "The succeeding generations of Brahmins enjoy...a relative advantage over others because of their commitment to values and skills useful for success in an upwardly mobile urban-industrial society" (Ramu 1989: 190). He found in his study of an industrial city in the state of Karnataka that notwithstanding the admission quotas in professional schools and in employment, the presence of lower-caste members was much less significant than those of their middle- and upper-caste counterparts (Ramu 1989: 197). Ramu ascribes this to the fact that Untouchables were denied education by the British during the colonial period and continued to lack access to education until the implementation of reservation policies following the 1955 report of the Kelalkar Commission¹⁵⁵, whereas Brahmins and other upper-caste groups were not (1989: 193). Even for those individuals from STs, SCs and other backward castes who have obtained higher education, recent studies of the recruitment processes of Indian companies¹⁵⁶ have noted the prevalence of discriminatory practices, such as employers questioning credentials obtained through reservation policies and basing employment decisions on the educational and employment backgrounds of

¹⁵⁵ Please see footnote 12 in this chapter.

¹⁵⁶ (Deshpande and Newman 2007; Jodhka and Newman 2007; Madheswaran and Attewell 2007; Thorat and Attewell 2007; Thorat and Newman 2007).

applicants' families, which disadvantage members of these groups even at the stage of interviews.

Caste also has consequences for employment opportunities through networks. The advantages derived from a caste network are access to insiders' information about economic opportunities, knowledge of relevant skills, and a support base, both human and material (Panini 1996: 39), which sometimes result in nepotism and "casteism" (Ramu 1989: 193, 197). The assistance offered by caste networks is important because it provides a safety net, in case of failure – or the possibility thereof (Shivani, Mukherjee, and Sharan 2006:8). Hence, for the Indian urban middle-class, although caste continues to be important in determining access to resources and to employment opportunities, it no longer acts as a constraint that rigidly dictates occupation and, for instance, limits members of lower castes to low-paying employment. This has consequences for their consumption possibilities generally as well as specifically with regard to alcohol, in which areas class considerations appear to supersede those of caste.

In relation to religion, due to the egregious gap in the literature on differences in access to employment opportunities within non-Hindu religious groups in India, such as Muslims, Parsees and Christians, only a tentative picture can be painted. Although in Chapter 1, it was noted that Muslims, for instance, are more likely to be economically disadvantaged in terms of access to resources in comparison with Hindus, there is a great degree of economic stratification amongst Muslims (as well as Hindus as discussed above). Khalidi has drawn attention to this phenomenon in his study of Muslims in India, in which he examines their participation in different sectors of the Indian economy and the resultant economic differentiation (1995). Panini identifies class differentiation amongst Muslims and posits that a strong middle-class element can be found amongst Muslims who are upwardly mobile (1996: 51). Additionally, despite the fact that

scriptural Islam calls for equality amongst followers, it has been argued that caste-like stratification exists among Indian Muslims¹⁵⁷ as well as differentiation based on sect, *biradri* (industrial/occupational guilds), and region (Harriss-White 2003: 144). Harriss-White notes that in the West Bengal town of Siliguri the creation of socioeconomic categories with new economic meanings distinguish the wealthy, educated minority from the poor majority and contribute to internal economic and cultural differentiation amongst Muslims (2003: 145-46). As for stratification amongst Christians, Harriss-White contends that while the descendants of a minority of *dalit* or Untouchable converts to Christianity, who relied on education and regional networks of Christian contacts in order to become doctors, professors, advocates, engineers and higher level government officials, have become an “urban, propertied, educated, salaried and professional elite”, other Christians have gained employment in lower-status sectors such as mechanised fishing, chain beauty parlours and dry-cleaning (Harriss-White 2003: 153-54). Although the lack of literature makes it difficult to draw any conclusions about religion and employment opportunities, in light of the stratification known to be found amongst Muslims and Christians, and of the greater significance of class in regards to gender and caste, it is probable that for members of different religions as well, class considerations play an important role in determining access to employment opportunities, which have consequences for income and access to alcohol.

As for consumption, because there is little literature on differentials within the social institutions of religion, caste and gender, only a brief account can be provided. Although middle-class social attitudes and culture are difficult to generalise as a result of the heterogeneity of the middle-class as a social institution (Panini 1996: 51), Panini contends it is possible to identify some common characteristics, two of which are

¹⁵⁷ (Bhatty 1996; Fuller 1996; Jamous 1996; Vatuk 1996; Harriss-White 2003).

materialism and consumerism (1996: 53). Both traits have become significant symbols of success. Contrasting with earlier generations of the middle-class, whose values were more touched by Gandhian ideals stressing a simple, frugal lifestyle, the present materialism encourages the attainment and display of consumer goods, which are valued not only because they assist people in dealing with the demands of daily life, but also because of the prestige derived from them (Panini 1996: 53; Van Wessel 2004). In her exploration of the tensions created by the disconnect between the moral discourses of consumption emphasizing community and frugality and the new middle-class consumer culture in the Gujarati city of Baroda, Van Wessel claims that due to the disparities within caste groups that have arisen in the past few decades, individuals seek social equality with their class, rather than caste, counterparts (2004: 97). Consequently, she revealed that for members of the middle-class, it has become necessary to consume at the level considered appropriate to maintain the standard of living enjoyed by their income equals (2004: 97). In light of the rise of materialism and consumerism amongst the middle-class, it is likely that Van Wessel's observation holds true regardless of religion and gender as well, which suggests that the vast majority of middle-class individuals are likely to consume at the level of their income peers, rather than their religious or caste counterparts.

This brief overview highlights the economic and consumption variability to be found within the social institutions of religion, caste and gender, which has contributed to the rise of a heterogeneous middle-class (Panini 1996: 51). However, despite this heterogeneity, the preceding discussion of the preponderance of income and status considerations over those of gender, caste and religion in respect to employment opportunities and consumption suggests that for Indian urban middle-class members, class is not only an increasingly significant factor in terms of access to resources, profession and consumption, but also in the social attitudes that determine what is to be

valued regarding consumption. They will be discussed in relation to drinking in the following section.

4.4 Permissibility: Indian urban middle-class social attitudes towards alcohol consumption

The previous section analysed one aspect of the outside meaning of consumption: the role of income in determining the accessibility of alcohol. As laid out in our thesis argument, the other element of the outside meaning of consumption is the permissibility of drinking, as determined by social attitudes. This section will investigate shifts in the permissibility of alcohol consumption through an exploration of the manner in which Indian urban middle-class social attitudes towards drinking have changed – as depicted in the English language media. The chapter will conclude with a look at the effects of the social institutions of religion, caste and gender on these social attitudes.

4.4.1 Media: English language newspapers and women's magazines

The media are a crucial element of the outside meaning of consumption. As discussed in Chapter 1, in India the English language press, despite its bias toward the perspective of the upper-class, upper-caste, urban male, has been described by Anand (2003) as a significant source of definitions of social reality for the middle-class, contributing to the shaping of the mental frameworks that members use to process and understand the world, which in turn has consequences for the conceptualisation of acceptable consumption practices and aspirations. Fernandes states, “Idealized images of the urban middle class in the print media and television contribute to the production of images of an affluent customer, who has finally achieved the ability to exercise choice through consumption” (2000b: 88). These images influence the consumption aspirations

of, for instance, white collar workers, who seek to attain the lifestyle of the “new rich”, such as young urban professionals (Fernandes 2000b: 91). The power of the images is such that even when white collar workers are unable to achieve the same standard of living as the “new rich”, they continue to hold the conviction that the broad range of consumption possibilities they enjoy is beneficial (Fernandes 2000b: 102). Thus, it appears that the media has a bearing on consumption aspirations through the images it offers of an ideal urban middle-class lifestyle, which are internalised and used by its readers to confirm the benefits of, for instance, a greater choice of consumer goods.

The rest of this chapter will be concerned with shifts in the permissibility of alcohol consumption through an exploration of the manner in which Indian urban middle-class social attitudes towards drinking have changed – as well as the effect of the social institutions of religion, caste and gender on these social attitudes. This will be done, as discussed in the section on methodology in Chapter 1, through theme analysis of the alcohol related articles that have appeared between 1980 and 2005 in the English language newspapers *The Hindustan Times* and *The Times of India* and the women’s magazines *Femina* and *SAVVY*. As noted above, English-language newspapers in India tend to reflect the views of urban middle-class males, and so women’s magazines have been included in our study to analyse the gendered nature of the process of permissibility. Due to the male bias of English-language newspapers and due to the lack of availability of anything comparable to women’s magazines, men’s magazines have been excluded from our study.

4.4.1.1 Newspapers

The 306 articles related to alcohol in the Delhi editions of two of the most circulated dailies, *The Hindustan Times* and *The Times of India* over the quarter century

1980-2005, were analysed using theme analysis¹⁵⁸ (Patton 1990: 381; Moser and Kalton 1993: 414). They have been categorised into three broad categories: health, politics and social behaviour. Under each category, the articles are examined first by decade, before conducting a comparative analysis.

Health

In the area of alcohol and health, there were 36 articles, and the majority of them were written in the 2000s. The number of articles experienced a significant recent increase from nine in the 1980s, eight in the 1990s, to nineteen in the 2000s. They discuss the negative and positive health consequences of drinking. The negative effects include accidents, alcoholism and harmful health effects, while the primary positive health impact relates to alcohol's ability to mitigate heart problems. The articles from the 1980s largely cast alcohol in a negative light, associating it with plane and car accidents (Jayaram 1986; The Times of India 1986d), the problem of alcoholism (Aggarwal 1981; The Hindustan Times Correspondent 1988f), and harmful health effects¹⁵⁹. The one exception is an article linking moderate drinking to the lowered risk of a heart attack (The Times of India 1980r). In the 1990s, the articles looked at the rise of alcoholism in areas such as the Northeast of India (Chinai 1997); different approaches to rehabilitation programmes, including Alcoholics Anonymous (Foderaro 1995; Staff Reporter 1999); and the negative health consequences of drinking, such as lowered life expectancy and weight gain

¹⁵⁸ Theme analysis is content analysis based on themes, and involves the systematic analysis of the content of communication media, such as newspapers and magazines, through meaningful categories that reveal the essential patterns (Moser and Kalton 1993:414). As discussed in the methodology section of Chapter 1, we conducted our theme analysis of the relevant newspaper and magazine articles through the following steps. Firstly, we culled out the few, such as, "Rats too love liquor" (The Hindustan Times 1984) and "Geese guard whisky warehouse" (The Times of India 1985c), that do little to elucidate changes in the alcohol industry or in urban middle-class social attitudes towards alcohol in India. Then the remainder of the newspaper articles were classified into 29 theme categories, which were later grouped under the broader headings of industry, health, politics and social behaviour.

¹⁵⁹ (The Hindustan Times 1982c; The Hindustan Times Correspondent 1983d; The Hindustan Times 1987b).

(Bhandari 1996; Leary 1995). The only positive correlation between alcohol and health is made by an article positing the benefits of red wine not only for the heart but also for the prevention of cancer (Dutt 1997). The articles between 2000 and 2005 have highlighted similar issues as those from the 1980s and 1990s, including the increased likelihood of automobile crashes after drinking (Mohan 2004), causes and remedies for alcoholism¹⁶⁰, and the ill health that can result from drinking, including digestive and heart problems (Agarwal 2004; Panicker 2003b). Contrary to the two previous decades, however, more articles have positively linked alcohol and health. According to one, “the definitive word on alcohol and health is out: Whether you drink the exotic wines, the expensive Scotch or the desi brew, the protective effect of alcohol on the heart is the same. In short, all those who drink regularly, but moderately, are less likely to die of heart diseases” (Jain (Times News Service) 2003). The other three positive articles support this assertion.

The greater number of articles since 2000 implies that the connection between alcohol and health has become a more salient topic for the English language dailies *The Hindustan Times* and *The Times of India* in the past few decades. The types of issues have not changed drastically, although the greater number of articles making a positive correlation between moderate drinking, particularly of wine, and good health indicates that the potential benefits of alcohol consumption are increasingly recognised. Moreover, the media has made the distinction between moderate and heavy drinking: moderate drinking can be beneficial, whereas heavy drinking can result in dangerous health conditions, such as alcoholism.

Politics

¹⁶⁰ (Jha 2000; Karmakar 2004; John (Times News Service) 2003; Suri 2003).

Regarding alcohol and politics, there have been 115 articles since 1980, and the significant recent increase seen in the area of health has not been mirrored in this area, with 42 articles from the 1980s, 51 from the 1990s, and 22 from the 2000s. The topics covered by the articles in this category include alcohol's role in corruption, the influence of the liquor lobby and mafia¹⁶¹, and prohibition. The articles from the 1980s reveal the role of alcohol in the political manoeuvring of both individual politicians and political parties and discuss prohibition. For instance, throughout the 1980s a number of government officials were embroiled in scandals, in which they were accused of "undue favours" in their distribution of liquor contracts, as in the case of Mr. Hazarilal Raghuvanshi, the Madhya Pradesh Home Department Minister, who was found to be related to the winners of a liquor contract in Hoshangabad district (The Hindustan Times 1982a), and in the case of an unnamed official who permitted 21 distilleries to supply liquor to government shops in violation of excise rules (The Hindustan Times Correspondent 1986d). Government officials were also charged with ignorance of violations (The Hindustan Times Correspondent 1987c) and of corruption (HT Correspondent 1989c). Yet, only one article highlighted the influence of the "liquor lobby", whose influence was so considerable in Karnataka that the government sought to "tame" it (Mohan 1989). Many focused on prohibition. Against prohibition it was claimed that alcohol consumption is an economic necessity for state revenue¹⁶², even compelling enough to result in the overturning of prohibition, as in the case of Rajasthan (The Hindustan Times Correspondent 19811). In some instances, the media has shown how the state attempted to balance the negative social and health effects on their citizens with revenue needs by using contradictory policies. For instance, in Karnataka, the social and

¹⁶¹ Please note that our use of the term "liquor lobby" refers to the legal industry, while "liquor mafia" pertains to the illicit industry. In some articles, the two are used interchangeably, and in such instances, we will clarify their use.

¹⁶² (Pal 1980; The Times of India 1980h; Staff Correspondent 1984).

health wings informed the population of the “virtues of abstinence”, while the excise department in Dakshina Kannada district ordered wine shops and bars to sell at least 125 litres, excluding beer, *feni*¹⁶³, and wine made from grapes, under penalty of licence cancellation (Fernandes 1987). At the national level, the central prohibition committee suggested that one percent of government revenue earned through liquor be utilised to fund alcohol and drug abuse awareness programmes (The Times of India 1985d). On the other hand, articles in favour of prohibition asserted, for instance, that prohibition was a “must” for public health (The Hindustan Times Correspondent 1985a).

The 1990s continued to see coverage of alcohol’s role in political manoeuvring and of the prohibition debate. In terms of political manoeuvring, although in some instances liquor was alleged to be offered in exchange for votes (Upadhyay 1996; Viswanath 1999), most politicians and political parties attempted to distance themselves publicly from alcohol consumption. So, foreign liquor firms’ proposals for entry into the Indian market were delayed by the national government in 1995, because allowing them to enter in an election year could result in a “bad image” (Mukherji (Business Times Bureau) 1995b). In the 1990s it appears, therefore, that alcohol’s association with a politician or a political party was considered injurious. This association was intensified by the fact that Mahatma Gandhi spoke out against alcohol, and his stand was often evoked as an argument for prohibition. According to one article,

“Gandhiji could not think of an independent India without prohibition. While finalising the Gandhi-Irwin pact the Mahatma made it clear that picketing of liquor shops will continue, pact or no pact. For him prohibition was an integral part of the freedom movement. Gandhiji categorically declared that if he was appointed dictator of the country for one hour, his first action would be to close all liquor shops without paying compensation. He believed that nobody could save a country from ruin, if its citizens take to the drinking habit. He was so emphatic in his observations and assertions that he was even prepared to let the people go

¹⁶³ Feni is a liquor distilled from the cashew fruit, called *feni* or *fenny*, that was developed in Goa in colonial times by Portuguese monks and remains the most popular drink in the region (NIMHANS and WHO 2003:9).

without education, if that was the price to be paid for introducing prohibition. He considered revenue from liquor as a tainted money” (Singh 1995).

Consequently, individuals and parties tried to cultivate an anti-alcohol image by supporting prohibition or regulations. In the Indian state of Haryana, Bansi Lal’s implementation of prohibition was “To some...a matter of an over-enthusiastic political activity in connection with the financial resources of the State, but to most...total prohibition is the fulfilment of a long cherished dream and an urgent social need” (HT Correspondent 1996b). Another describes Haryana’s chief minister’s announcement of total prohibition as “a gift to the electorate” announced at a press conference immediately after taking office (The Times of India News Service 1996a). In some instances, politicians and parties engaged in political hypocrisy by appearing to support prohibition, as in the case of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the latter 1990s, when “Senior party leaders were aghast that while on the one hand the BJP has repeatedly advocated prohibition, its party controlled Delhi Government was moving towards a liberal liquor policy” (Bhargava 1996).

Moreover, a prohibition platform offered an easy way to garner votes from participants of anti-alcohol movements, usually spearheaded by women¹⁶⁴. As a result, “Mr. N.T. Rama Rao took out a yatra and gave a solemn promise of prohibition and got the votes of Andhra women in profusion” (Singh 1995). The article goes on to comment, “Knowing full well that consumption of intoxicating drinks and drugs is injurious for the individual and society, how is it that the political parties and the Governments wake up only when their vote bank is affected?...Now with the new awakening especially among rural women who are the worst sufferers, those States alone are coming forward to

¹⁶⁴ (Iyengar (The Times of India News Service) 1993; Iyengar 1994; Mishra 1996; Nailwal (The Times of India News Service) 1996; Suraiya 1996a; Kumar 1996a; Kumar 1996b; Raj 1996).

introduce partial or total prohibition, where without introducing it there is a real danger of losing the woman vote” (Singh 1995).

Nonetheless, all the states that had implemented total prohibition have repealed it, with the exception of four states and union territories, Gujarat, Lakshwadeep, Mizoram and Nagaland. Andhra Pradesh (HT Correspondent 1996c) and Haryana¹⁶⁵ were two states that overturned prohibition in the 1990s, the former after three years and the latter after two years¹⁶⁶. The necessity of state revenues led to the reversal of prohibition policy in both states. One article notes, “Mr. Naidu is in a dilemma as he had fiercely defended the policy imposed by N.T. Rama Rao in January last year. At one stage, he had even gone to the extent of suggesting that it should be implemented throughout the country. At the same time, he has admitted in public that the financial situation was so bad that the government was finding it difficult to pay salaries to the staff” (Iyengar (The Times of India News Service) 1996). Haryana’s government faced a similar predicament, where one found “It’s a catch-22 situation. Having gained a social face with the ban of liquor, the Government finds that it has to make up the Rs 600-crore loss from the liquor trade with fresh taxes” (Dogra 1997). A nation-wide survey in 1990 discovered “that almost all states are unwilling to do away with their lucrative excise revenue from liquor trade, and hence are averse to introducing prohibition laws” (The Hindustan Times 1990).

The alcohol industry itself put pressure on states. One article cites the case in Karnataka where “Industry sources said that powerful liquor barons in the State appeared to have prevailed upon the Government to drop the move to impose total prohibition” (Murthy 1996). The liquor lobby exerted pressure on the Haryana government as well: “...the liquor lobby is learnt to have worked upon a multi-optional approach to scuttle the Government’s reformative designs at the initial stage” (HT Correspondent 1996b). Some

¹⁶⁵ (The Times of India News Service 1998; Kalia (The Times of India News Service) 1998; Mukherji (Business Times Bureau) 1998b).

¹⁶⁶ (Mukherji (Business Times Bureau) 1996c; Rana 1996; The Times of India News Service 1996a).

articles insinuate that the relationship between the liquor lobby and individual politicians and political parties also benefits the latter two, as in Haryana: “the liquor mafia¹⁶⁷ is also said to have succeeded in getting the help of certain non-ruling political parties. Having consolidated political patronage in the future, the liquor mafia is reported to be confident of an onslaught to the Government at some critical juncture. Perhaps that is why the political observers do not rule out the possibility of a liquor lobby sponsored entrance of the defectors from any major opposition party, but only aimed at toppling the present Government and thus reversing the prohibition plan” (HT Correspondent 1996b). Hence, “Political experts foresee an active collaboration between the liquor lobby and the power hungry politicians in the times to come” (HT Correspondent 1996b). Another article asserts “...the states have been guilty of encouraging alcohol consumption – apart from revenue, the liquor lobby is also a major source of political funding. There is enough evidence to establish a nexus between the liquor mafia¹⁶⁸ and unscrupulous politicians which has resulted in criminalisation of politics” (Agnivesh 1996).

Various industries, such as tourism and hotels, claimed that prohibition was taking an economic toll on them as well. According to one article, “Prohibition imposed by the Bansi Lal government merely two years ago led to a sharp decline in the growth of tourism and related industries” (Anand (Business Times Bureau) 1998). The article quoted several industry leaders, who articulated their dissatisfaction with prohibition. Ms. Neeraj Ghei, president of the Travel Agents Association of India, asserted, “I doubt that it has helped the cause of preventing drunkenness. Instead it has certainly hurt the tourism sector,” and that she “welcomed the move of the state government to review the policy and hoped that it would lift the dry laws” (Anand (Business Times Bureau) 1998). She

¹⁶⁷ “Although the author uses the term “liquor mafia”, he seems to be talking about the liquor lobby, as it is the latter that benefits from the overturning of prohibition, when legal alcohol is permitted.

¹⁶⁸ The context of the article suggests that once again the author is employing “liquor lobby” and “liquor mafia” interchangeably. Nonetheless, the mention of state revenue indicates that the article is about the legal industry and, thus, the liquor lobby.

stated that ever since Haryana went dry, “hotel occupancy had fallen 30 to 50 percent; restaurants have seen up to 50 percent decline in food business and at least three hotels projects have been put on hold” (Anand (Business Times Bureau) 1998). Mr. Ravindra Seth, a travel analyst, also expressed his disagreement with prohibition: “The need in India is to prevent drunkenness, not drinking. It makes absolutely no sense to go in for blanket prohibition, as Haryana did” (Anand (Business Times Bureau) 1998). He continued to posit that “there was no point in punishing overseas travellers for whom drinking was a part of etiquette and food habit and it was really embarrassing for hotels, restaurants and holiday resorts to decline serving them on request” (Anand (Business Times Bureau) 1998).

Notwithstanding the economic costs of prohibition, some of the articles convey uncertainty as to whether banning alcohol had benefited the poor people whose suffering it was meant to alleviate, “Reports about prohibition in Haryana indicate that while women had earlier wailed that their menfolk were wasting their time and money on booze, they are now crying because their menfolk are sometimes absent for days in nearby ‘wet’ states” (Baig 1997). Another article says that “Prohibition alone could not bring about dramatic changes in the liquor habits of our people, particularly workers and the poor who lived under environments where they found little relief otherwise” (Mahajan 1996). Furthermore, even with prohibition alcohol continued to be readily available in many instances, due to the difficulty of implementation¹⁶⁹. For example, in Andhra Pradesh, a senior ruling party member and former Telugu Desam group leader in Parliament acknowledged: “liquor is available at many places. For politicians and others it has become an easy source of illegal earning” (HT Correspondent 1996c). Other arguments against prohibition include the loss of employment (The Times of India 1996a)

¹⁶⁹ (Mahajan 1996; Baig 1997; Iyengar 1996).

and the opportunities for corruption which it provides (Baig 1997; Iyengar 1996). One article suggests that “Clearly, a direct assault on malnutrition, investment in improved public health and the pursuit of policies which raise the standard of living of people ought to be the more important concerns of any government, rather than the more limited agenda of prohibition...A rational policy would encourage the production of low alcoholic beers, wines and aperitifs, discourage distillation of hard liquor, strictly restrict all sales – both the location of outlets and their working hours, enforce adherence to regulations relating to age of consumer, and so on” (The Times of India 1996a). The author further asserts that such a “rational” policy would be more effective than blanket prohibition, as the latter often leads to illicit brewing and crime (The Times of India 1996a). Despite the strong incentives for lifting prohibition, it was necessary for governments to justify such actions, so that prior to reversing prohibition in Andhra Pradesh, the Telugu Desam Government “prepared the ground” by asking party members to “create an atmosphere to show that it was not possible to implement the prohibition policy and thus the urgent need to scrap it. A media blitz was launched to highlight the financial crisis the State faced on account of prohibition and other populist schemes” (HT Correspondent 1996c).

Even if states have found total prohibition unfeasible, many have maintained partial prohibition with the intention of restricting the access to alcohol of the most impoverished persons, since “The threat that alcoholism poses to the likes of the rural poor can hardly be exaggerated. Money that should go to food, medicine and education is siphoned away to purchase alcohol... Alcoholics regularly borrow money from village moneylenders at exorbitant rates of interest and end up mortgaging their lands and other assets” (The Hindustan Times 1999). Drinking by poor persons was also considered as resulting in domestic violence (Singh 1995) and a rise in the crime rate (Agnivesh 1996).

This class-based argument was often utilised to justify prohibition for the most impoverished people: “‘Drinking is a problem in villages where men overspend on liquor, ruin their families and beat up their wives. Here, people gather to talk and socialise over a peg or two. Prohibition is good for them, not for us,’ said an official of the Chancellor Club” (Srivastava 1996b). The same sentiment was echoed by Dr. D.R. Singh, a resident of the village of Carterpuri, named after former United States president Jimmy Carter, who visited it in the 1970s, “Drinking is a habit of the affluent classes, copied sometimes by villagers who can’t afford it...” (Srivastava 1996b). For such reasons, the Karnataka government continued to ban arrack, even after overturning complete prohibition (Murthy 1996). Similar opinions prevailed amongst the Andhra Pradesh media, who “favoured the lifting of prohibition though some wanted the ban to remain on arrack, the poor man’s drink, while exempting IMFL” (HT Correspondent 1996c). Amongst higher classes drinking was not only acceptable, it was characterised as a necessity, “In high social areas would it be possible to honour Prohibition?...service of liquor is an integral part of these social gatherings and meetings to encourage the flow of technology and resources that Haryana and for that matter any other State needs badly” (Mahajan 1996). Due to the role of alcohol in the socializing of the upper-classes, the “new higher middle class...is highly luxuriant and antithetical to any reformative measure or legislation as total prohibition” (HT Correspondent 1996b).

The role of alcohol in corruption and political manoeuvring has remained under the newspapers’ scrutiny between 2000 and 2005. It has continued to be reported as playing a role in riot making: Raina reported that alcohol was being employed as a means to incite people to participate in the communal violence in Gujarat in 2002¹⁷⁰ (2002). It also has served as a means of bribing officials (Noorani 2003; The Times of India

¹⁷⁰ The article states that alcohol and cash were used to encourage people to participate in communal violence, but there is no indication as to the quantity of alcohol and cash.

2003t¹⁷¹). Politicians and political parties still attempt to cultivate an anti-alcohol image by supporting prohibition or regulations (The Hindustan Times 2004d; The Times of India 2004c), since “Nothing makes politicians in India appear more saintly than when they hold forth about the evils of liquor” (The Hindustan Times 2004d).

The examination and comparison of the articles from the three decades shows a long-term media preoccupation with the same issues, such as prohibition and the role of alcohol in corruption. Nevertheless, the political characterisation of alcohol seems to be shifting. During the 1990s, anti-prohibition sentiment in the two newspapers was more salient than in the 1980s. Arguments against prohibition included its detrimental effect on state finances as well as on industries, such as alcohol and tourism. One member of the tourist industry claimed that prohibition was “embarrassing” for hotels, restaurants, and holiday resorts unable to serve their foreign clients (Anand (Business Times Bureau) 1998). In addition to the economic effects of prohibition policies, they were faulted for being ineffective and unable to achieve their aim of reducing drinking among lower income individuals. The latter criticism brought class distinctions to the fore. Poor individuals had to be prevented from drinking, so that they did not “squander” their income (HT Correspondent 1996c) and/or engage in crime (Agnivesh 1996) and domestic violence (Singh 1995). On the other hand, members of higher classes were able to enjoy a social drink (Srivastava 1996b). Hence, the articles from the 1990s characterise alcohol consumption by poor people as harmful, because they engage in heavy drinking to the detriment of themselves and their families. In contrast, people of higher income are portrayed as being able to consume moderately in social settings, so that alcohol enhances enjoyment and relaxation. It is interesting to note that neither religion nor caste, both of

¹⁷¹ Although the first article fails to mention the amount or type of alcohol involved, the second refers to a bottle of wine.

which often have direct proscriptions regarding alcohol, is mentioned throughout this period in either paper, and this will be discussed in the final portion of the chapter.

Since 2000, the unfeasibility of total prohibition appears to have been accepted. Several articles more recently have expressed their disagreement with partial prohibition that is maintained through, for example, dry days¹⁷² or days when alcohol is not sold. One article has questioned the rationale for dry days: “The idea of marking out days on which one can’t procure liquor is based on very dodgy logic...one simply buys the booze from a neighbouring state (Haryana, UP and Punjab have three dry days) or drops by at one’s favourite bootlegger. The plan to cut down on dry days will need political will and courage...The real incentive for reducing dry days is to boost the revenues of the cash-strapped government” (The Hindustan Times 2004d). The same arguments that had been used in the context of total prohibition are now used in regards to regulations. Consequently, an examination of the articles regarding alcohol and politics in *The Hindustan Times* and *The Times of India* since 1980 indicates that moderate drinking among the upper income groups has come to be characterised as politically acceptable.

Social behaviour

A total of 155 articles were written on alcohol and social behaviour between 1980 and 2005, and there was a marked increase in the number of articles in the 2000s, with 29 in the 1980s, eleven in the 1990s, and 115 in the 2000s. Topics included increased levels of drinking, even amongst youth; the greater social acceptability of alcohol consumption; and negative social effects, such as violence and crime. More recently, celebration, sociability, sophistication, and sport have also been associated with alcohol.

¹⁷² In the case of Delhi, there are 21 dry days: Republic Day, Independence Day, Gandhi Jayanti, and the days directly preceding and following elections (The Hindustan Times 2004d; The Times of India 2004c).

In the 1980s several articles discussed the higher levels of drinking in India. One article states, “The consumption of alcohol has been universally increasing over the past few decades. According to rough estimates, about 23-82% of adult Indian males consume alcohol and the habit is fast spreading to urban educated women” (Sarin 1987). The reason given for the greater incidence of drinking was that “Alcohol can serve as an effective drug in relieving anxiety, and decreasing the pressures of modern society” (Sarin 1987). States, such as Punjab (The Hindustan Times Correspondent 1982a; The Times of India 1980n) and Gujarat, the only state to have remained dry since independence, also saw “liquor flowing freely” (The Hindustan Times 1981b). Alcohol consumption was linked to societal deterioration (Kohli 1982), violence (Staff Reporter 1983d; The Times of India 1987e), and crime¹⁷³. Drinking and driving was treated as a crime as well in one case (The Times of India 1988e). By way of contrast, champagne was associated with celebration (The Hindustan Times 1986a).

Articles in the 1990s continued to cover similar topics, such as higher levels of drinking, even amongst youth; the increased social acceptability of alcohol consumption; and negative social effects, such as violence and crime. Two discuss the results of a market research poll taken among 1,585 adults, half of which were women, in the cities of Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta, Madras, Bangalore and Hyderabad on public attitudes towards alcohol (Balakrishnan 1995; The Times of India 1995a). According to one, “Practically all of the respondents (93 percent) agree that liquor consumption is increasing in India - not a surprising conclusion, considering that more whisky is being sold today in India than is produced in the whole of Scotland. Interestingly, however, the survey shows a great divide in regard to the ‘social acceptability’ of liquor consumption - with Bombay, Delhi and Bangalore leading a liberal trend, and Calcutta, Madras and Hyderabad being

¹⁷³ (The Hindustan Times 1986b; The Hindustan Times Correspondent 1985c; Staff Reporter 1980f).

very conservative in their attitude” (Balakrishnan 1995). 91 percent of interviewees in Delhi, 72 percent in Bombay, and 67 percent in Bangalore considered it socially acceptable to serve alcoholic drinks at parties and wedding receptions, while in Calcutta, Madras and Hyderabad approximately 60 percent or more of respondents believed it improper (Balakrishnan 1995). “More significantly, over 60 percent respondents in Delhi, Bombay and Bangalore consider it acceptable for women to join in ‘social drinking’, but 91 percent in Madras and 84 percent in Calcutta frown at it. In Bangalore, where ‘pub culture’ has taken a firm hold, 85 percent think drinking among college students is acceptable, while as many as 88 percent in Calcutta and Madras consider it is not” (Balakrishnan 1995). Reasons for the changing trends are reported as including “economic liberalisation”, consumerism, changing lifestyles, easy availability, and peer pressure (Balakrishnan 1995; The Times of India 1995a).

Despite the greater social acceptability of alcohol consumption in certain cities, segments of the population continued to have reservations about drinking. For instance, “That the poorer classes suffer serious hardships due to widespread alcoholism is well-recognised, but what is revealing is that a significant majority of the middle-class respondents consider that the boom in the liquor industry is not a welcome development” (Balakrishnan 1995). Regarding prohibition, although 76 percent of the men and 91 percent of the women “welcome the fact that prohibition has come to force as an election issue”, a significantly lower proportion (46 percent) supported total prohibition. Forty-five percent favoured the implementation of regulations to discourage drinking, such as a ban on alcohol consumption in public places, including bars, pubs, clubs, restaurants, parties and receptions; higher taxes; and more dry days (Balakrishnan 1995). So, although the idea of prohibition as a political issue appears to have appealed to a significant share of the population, it was equally divided over its merit.

Amongst young people, a rise in alcohol abuse was said to have taken place in the 1990s (The Times of India 1995a). One article attributes the increase in drinking among young people to easy availability and peer pressure (The Times of India 1995a). In terms of availability, “Even among middle class families it has become the ‘in’ thing to store and serve alcoholic beverages in the house...Children are so exposed to alcohol through film and television advertisements, he [Mr. K. Krishnakumar, a bank executive] added” (The Times of India 1995a). Furthermore, not all beer bars refused to serve their underage customers so that “In several beer bars, which illegally sell hard liquor in pint bottles, and pubs, it is not an uncommon sight to see teenagers consuming alcohol. Some of the bars are located close to schools and colleges” (The Times of India 1995a).

The consumption of alcohol by young people was also associated with higher levels of crime. One article notes, “With an increasing number of young people with over-active imaginations reaching for bottles of beer under the assumption that it’s not hard liquor, street crimes reach new dimensions” (Chaudhury 1996). The author’s comment highlights the fact that alcohol is conceptualised as contributing to youth crime, regardless of whether “soft” alcohol, such as beer, which is often considered less harmful, or “hard” alcohol, such as liquor is consumed. The link between drinking and crime has not been limited to young people. A more general relationship is posited as well: “The list is endless. While the incidents may differ the one common factor that tie them together have been confessions of those accused: that they have been under the influence of alcohol. Violence and street crime are on the rise in Delhi and the experts attribute this to the increase in the consumption of alcohol. Drinking is obviously what’s in as shown by the figures available from government records” (Chaudhury 1996).

In the years since 2000, there has been a massive proliferation of press coverage on alcohol and social behaviour. Some of the topics covered in previous decades have

continued to be highlighted, such as the greater social acceptability of alcohol consumption, young people's drinking, and the association between alcohol and crime. The increased permissibility of drinking at, for instance, parties and weddings (Basu (Times News Network) 2004; Suraiya 2005) has led to phenomena, such as "having a bartender who would juggle, shake and flame your drink" (Basu (Times News Network) 2004). Another characterises drinking as an entitlement and expresses disgust at India's strict regulations on distribution: "Aren't those brainy high-flyers entitled to a beer in a bar after finishing a 10-hour shift at midnight?...Where they can hang out for a drink or a burger? In contrast, advanced economies have bars which open specially at night or at dawn to cater to shift workers" (Kala 2004). Furthermore, "It's laughable, for instance, that the Delhi government has extended bar timings for restaurants by just one hour from 11 p.m. to midnight. Contrast this with Beijing where nightclubs, restaurants and bars remain open till 3 a.m. on weeknights and till 5 a.m. on Friday and Saturday nights. Japan has beer-vending machines accessible for 24 hours. In England, you can drink on the street as long as you aren't disorderly" (Kala 2004).

Young people's consumption of alcohol has also remained a topic of discussion. The article "Young and high, 60 percent of school kids drink" discusses a study that discovered that 60 percent of urban children under the age of seventeen drinks and that 20 percent of them do so regularly (Khan (Times News Service) 2003). Many start as young as eleven or twelve, so that by the age of seventeen or eighteen, "it's part of their lifestyle" (Khan (Times News Service) 2003). Alcohol consumption among young people was cause for alarm for the reason that "Early drinking is often heavy drinking because at that age they drink only to get high. Most of them drink to keep up with the hip crowd and cement ties with their peers. If that isn't alarming enough, beer is often not the preferred drink. According to gastroenterologist Rahul Gupta, the new entrants to the

drinking culture – youngsters from the nouveau riche and middle classes – are kicking it off with hard liquor and ending up with inflamed stomachs or bloated livers at an early age” (Khan (Times News Service) 2003). The author concludes that “Moderate social drinking is better than clandestine binging. Hopefully, this liberal attitude will also take away some of the stigma attached to drinking” (Khan (Times News Service) 2003).

Although drinking by young people was considered problematic generally, “What’s more startling is that girls are equally into it” (Khan (Times News Service) 2003). Jyoti Bosh, the principal of Springdale School asserts, ‘Youngsters today are hitting the bottle much earlier. For girls, it’s an assertion of their independence. For boys, it’s part of a macho image they want to create’” (Khan (Times News Service) 2003). A different study found that peer pressure is the primary motivation for girls drinking alcohol (The Times of India 2004m). In certain contexts, such as sport, for boys it was considered acceptable to consume alcohol. When the national hockey team won the Junior World Cup in Australia, the president of the Indian Hockey Federation rewarded them with “The boys can have a beer” (The Times of India 2001).

Regarding alcohol consumption by adult females, a woman buying liquor is viewed as, “A woman! Single! She must be game for anything! So women in general don’t buy liquor alone. ‘At the most, I buy a Bacardi Breezer. It’s not looked upon as a loose woman’s drink,’ says Nidhi Rohtagi, a lecturer” (Subramanian and Sinha (Times News Network) 2003). “Pubbing” or attending a bar alone was met with even greater reservation, “No way, say the girls. Ahuti Gora sums it up: ‘I did it once as a dare - while my boyfriend sat at another table. One beer was all I could order. Before I was through half a glass, I had two ‘admirers’...” (Subramanian and Sinha (Times News Network) 2003). In the North, women employed in liquor vends and outlets were stigmatised. “Pubs, discos and bowling alleys that are a way of life in Bangalore, and increasingly in

Chennai, continue to be a rarity in the north, again largely because of the stigma attached to such places. One of the commonest sights in Bangalore and Chennai is of traditionally-attired women casually dispensing alcohol at liquor outlets - something unimaginable even in the north's most happening place, Gurgaon" (The Times of India 2003i).

Drinking has also been linked to crime in the 2000s (Pandey (Times News Network) 2003). Rather than as a facilitator, in some cases alcohol consumption in and of itself was considered a crime. One article states, "Suspects not only languish in jail for bailable offences, but can also end up dead in custody for crimes such as robbery, theft, or even drinking alcohol in public places" (The Hindustan Times 2005). In addition to crime, it has been associated with criminal or "undesirable" lifestyles, as in the case of conmen (Mohan 2003), prostitutes (Patel 2003), homosexuals (Bhandare 2004; Doctor 2004), or vagrants (Times News Network 2004i). Yet, one article argues that "Facts... demolish a myth that late-night public drinking leads to crime...Considering this, why do Delhi's excise and police oppose bars staying open longer?...Their pay-offs from allowing bars to work beyond legal closing time dries up when the bars remain legally open" (Kala 2004). According to this journalist, therefore, rather than preventing crime, early closure of bars encourages corruption.

Contrasting with the two previous decades, since 2000, alcohol has also come to be associated with several other aspects of social life, including celebration, sociability, sophistication and sport. Regarding celebration, champagne or "bubbly" was always mentioned. The terms were also used metaphorically to denote success, a cause for celebration¹⁷⁴. For instance, one article articulated reservations about the phenomenon of business process outsourcing and what it meant for the Indian economy, and so it stated,

¹⁷⁴ (De 2005; HT Corporate Bureau 2004; The Hindustan Times 2004w; Joshi 2003; Bhattacharjee 2003; Suraiya 2003b; The Times of India 2003n; The Times of India 2003o; The Times of India 2003q; The Times of India 2003s; Joshi (Times News Service) 2003; The Times of India 2004h; Times News Network 2004h; Sengupta 2004; The Times of India 2004j).

“Before popping the BPO bubbly, spare a thought for the morning after – and the hangover that it will certainly bring” (The Times of India 2004h). Sharing a drink also appears to play an important role in sociability¹⁷⁵. In terms of sophistication, champagne and wine have often been mentioned in the context of the “high” life, linking one or both with successful stockbrokers (Bamzai and Kumar 2003), expensive meals (Krishnan 2003b), wealthy people (Singh 2004e), elite restaurants and clubs (Singh 2003; Baruah and Walia 2003), costly imports (Sahai 2003; Dash/TNN 2004), business and first class flights (Sharma 2003), exclusive events (Singh 2004), and multiculturalism (Kazmi 2004). Finally, the relationship between alcohol and sport has been noted. Not only has, for instance, beer drinking been a preferred activity to engage in by spectators while watching and players while celebrating (Murali 2003; Anand (Times News Network) 2004), alcohol sales have been an important source of funds for athletic clubs and associations (HT Correspondent 2004b).

Analysis and comparison of articles since 1980 reveal that, as in the case of articles on alcohol and politics, similar issues pertaining to alcohol and social behaviour have remained under media scrutiny throughout the decades. Nonetheless, the manner in which alcohol is depicted seems to be changing. In the 1980s there was said to have been an increase in consumption universally (Sarin 1987) and in specific states (The Hindustan Times Correspondent 1982a; The Times of India 1980n). Articles from the 1990s commented on the greater social acceptability of alcohol in certain cities, such as Delhi, Bombay and Bangalore, and in certain contexts, including parties and weddings (The Hindustan Times Correspondent 1982a). Women’s drinking was accepted as well by the majority of those polled in the cities of Delhi, Bombay and Bangalore (The Hindustan Times Correspondent 1982a).

¹⁷⁵ (Singh 2004b; Hazra 2004; Wadekar 2004).

The articles since 2000 not only portray alcohol as more socially acceptable at, for instance, weddings where one can now find juggling bartenders (Basu (Times News Network) 2004), but as an entitlement, for example, after a long day's work (Kala 2004). Thus, it appears that alcohol is increasingly represented as an integral part of life, which is also indicated by the number of articles that mention alcohol as an aspect of celebration, sociality and sport. Regarding women's drinking, although it is accepted, there are informal rules that must be followed. For instance, women either buying liquor or attending a bar alone has connotations of looseness and promiscuity (Subramanian and Sinha (Times News Network) 2003). Furthermore, "soft" alcohol, such as a Bacardi Breezer, is considered more appropriate for women, because it is not "a loose woman's drink" (Subramanian and Sinha (Times News Network) 2003). Accordingly, despite the fact that women are not prohibited from consuming alcohol, if the "rules" are not followed, their drinking is viewed negatively. In addition to making the distinction between different types of alcohol, that between moderate and heavy drinking is established in the media. In the area of alcohol and social behaviour, as in that of alcohol and politics, there was a noticeable silence in the articles reviewed on the social institutions of religion and caste. They will be considered in the discussion at the end of the chapter.

It is interesting to note that in the 2000s there were not only more articles that focused on the topic of alcohol, but that also used alcohol in metaphors. The two most common metaphors were "old wine in new bottles" and champagne as a symbol of celebration. The former was often utilised in connection to politics, usually as a criticism against regimes attempting to repackage and sell longstanding rhetoric or policies as new. For instance, one author expressed his criticism of the Shiv Sena's attempt to resurrect an old political campaign, "Mumbai for Mumbaikers", by saying "It is old wine in an old

bottle” (Anandan 2003). Champagne was used in any context to signify a reason for celebration, such as success, as it was in an article discussing the rise of the Indian art market, “In the Indian art mart, it’s champagne time” (Sengupta 2004). The widespread employment of metaphors involving alcohol suggests that the vocabulary of alcohol has become pervasive in English-language newspapers to the extent that such language is considered “normal”. The utilisation of alcohol-associated vocabulary in the two newspapers, particularly the ubiquitous use of champagne as a symbol of celebration of success, implies that in certain contexts, such as times or events of celebration, alcohol has not only come to be tolerated but is expected. This examination of the articles concerning alcohol and social behaviour in *The Hindustan Times* and *The Times of India* shows that the negative social consequences of alcohol consumption are being less highlighted over time and that alcohol is characterised as an increasingly integral part of various aspects of social life. Now that we have analysed newspapers, next, we turn to women’s magazines.

4.4.1.2 Women’s Magazines

Due to the noted male-bias of English language media (Joseph and Sharma 1994:17), two women’s magazines have been included in our analysis in order to show the gendered nature of the process of permissibility¹⁷⁶. *Femina* and *SAVVY* were chosen because they cater to “well-educated, middle- to upper-middle-class female urbanites”¹⁷⁷, making them ideal for our study of Indian urban middle-class drinking. The 92 articles from the women’s magazines, *Femina* and *SAVVY*, relating to alcohol do not consider

¹⁷⁶ As a result of English language newspapers’ bias towards the male perspective and of the lack of media comparable to the women’s magazines under scrutiny, men’s magazines have been excluded from our analysis. Also due to reasons of availability, it has not been possible to examine religion or caste in the same manner as gender.

¹⁷⁷ This information was obtained directly from the editor of *SAVVY*, Andrea Costabir, in an informal interview on 18 October 2005.

politics at all and so have been arranged under the categories of health and social behaviour. As with the newspaper articles, theme analysis was the methodology employed to analyse the magazine articles. The discussion here will take the same format as that of the newspapers, so that under each category, the magazine articles first will be examined by decade, and then a cross-decade comparison will be done.

Health

Regarding the area of health, the causes and consequences of excessive drinking were the primary topics of discussion in the sixteen articles from the women's magazines. In the 1980s, one article linked alcohol consumption to reduced sexual desire (Femina 1981), while the remainder of the four articles discuss women's alcoholism. One article examines the experiences of several female alcoholics (SAVVY 1987). Alcoholism is described as a disease in which one is unable to control one's drinking, so that "That *one* drink triggers off the whole chain reaction whereby they cannot exercise that control. That control is completely gone, lost, and this is what categorises alcoholics from social drinkers - social drinkers *can* exercise that control, to stop whenever necessary" (SAVVY 1987).

Although one in seven alcoholics was supposed to be female, alcoholism was often considered a male domain, as reflected in the following query, "What drives Indian women to hit the bottle - the traditional all-male succour to stress?" (SAVVY 1987). Consequently, they were stigmatised to an even greater degree than their male counterparts, due to the fact that "in India, the woman is idolized to the extent, that normally it's unheard of for a woman to drink or smoke or use bad language. So women alcoholics exist under cover; they drink on the sly, on the quiet, in secret, even concealed from their near and dear ones..." (SAVVY 1987). As a result, "women alcoholics" was

“another term for embarrassment and shame which their families and friends tried to brush under their carpets” (SAVVY 1987). One of the recovering-alcoholic interviewees commented, “Women are more tolerant about men drinking but men are not so tolerant about women drinking” (SAVVY 1987). She continued, “That’s because, in India, equality between men and women is just not appreciated - on any level, more so at the drinking level...Anywhere abroad, a woman could just pick up a cigarette or a glass and be alright, but in India, it’s considered a terrible, ‘shameless’ thing. At a party, nobody ever invites a woman to drink...But the majority of women don’t drink, and even if they do, and this fact is overlooked, they don’t bother about it” (SAVVY 1987). Another female interviewee supported this assertion, “Women alcoholics, especially, do get shunned by society; they pinpoint fingers at us, look at us in a different way” (SAVVY 1987). Only one of the interviewees disagreed, observing, “No, I didn’t really find the attitude of people towards me very different from how they treated men alcoholics” (SAVVY 1987). The causes given for female alcoholism include drinking as a result of unhappiness and an inability to “handle emotions” (SAVVY 1987).

The five articles from the 1990s covered topics, such as the negative consequences for newborns of pregnant women’s drinking (Femina 1995a), the danger of addiction (Femina 1997c), and female alcoholism (Bijlani 1995). Regarding women’s alcoholism one article remarks, “Although excessive alcohol consumption has largely been confined to men, current trends indicate that more women are consuming alcohol and that they are starting to drink at an earlier age” (Bijlani 1995). The article also suggests, “Alcohol is probably the most popular and widely used as well as abused drug of all” (Bijlani 1995). The article goes on to distinguish between moderate and excessive drinking: “In excess, alcohol is a toxic and addictive drug. However, most of us who enjoy the occasional drink will not get addicted. On the contrary, a daily glass of wine

(particularly red) may actually be associated with a reduced risk of heart disease. But anyone who drinks so much that it interferes with health, relationships and work has a drink problem which may develop into alcoholism” (Bijlani 1995).

Since 2000, the seven articles found in *Femina* and *SAVVY* on alcohol and health have highlighted the higher incidence of drinking among women, both the negative and positive effects of drinking, and the effects of young women’s consumption in particular. One article comments, “In the earlier times, drinking alcohol was reported to be more common among the older women in India. Today, not only is it on the rise, it is also found to be getting more common among the younger women, on whom alcohol related reproductive problems can have a greater impact” (Reddi 2005). Limiting alcohol consumption is recommended in order to promote a “steamy sex life” (Tarneja and Khanna 2005), higher energy levels (Mahtani 2005), and a flat stomach (Setalvad 2005). Female alcoholism continues to be discussed as well. According to one article, “we need hardly say that the stigma around a woman alcoholic is much greater than around men...It is much harder for a woman to admit to alcoholism than a man, and even more difficult for her family and society to accept a woman alcoholic” (Rao 2004). Additionally, it is pointed out that “Like in men, amongst women too, alcoholism is a disease that cuts across all socio-economic barriers” (Rao 2004). A major motivation for women’s consumption of alcohol is “Drinking for peer acceptance...A drink in hand has become a status symbol for the upwardly mobile” (Rao 2004). Not all alcohol consumption was considered harmful, however. Wine was often lauded for its “therapeutic value” due to the “widespread awareness of the French paradox” (Dasgupta 2005).

Analysis of the articles relating to alcohol and health in *Femina* and *SAVVY* between 1980 and 2005 reveals a shift in the characterisation of alcohol. Although associations between alcohol and ill-health were made in all three periods, since the

1990s, the distinction between moderate and heavy drinking has been made, as well as that between different types of alcohol. Therefore, since 1980, alcohol has been represented in a progressively more nuanced way, so that rather than viewing drinking as leading only to health problems, the benefits of moderate consumption, particularly of wine, have been highlighted. Consequently, wine in moderation has come to be perceived as promoting of health (Dasgupta 2005). Female alcoholism remained a salient topic in all three decades and was always depicted as problematic. However, more recent articles on women's alcoholism represented women's drinking as not only more acceptable, but more desirable, due to its role as a "status symbol for the upwardly mobile" (Rao 2004). Next, we turn to the articles on alcohol and social behaviour in *Femina* and *SAVVY* since 1980.

Social behaviour

Under the category of social behaviour, the main topics of discussion in the 76 articles relate to women's drinking, entertaining, and celebrities. In the 1980s several of the eleven articles, focused on women's relationship to alcohol. One queries women's reasons for drinking (Mathur 1983c). Another responds to a woman's question, "Do I drink if we are serving cocktails?" with the answer, "A drink or two is good for you (as long as you can hold your drinks!) You are giving true company" (Femina 1988a). In terms of entertaining, four articles provide recipes for making wine (Dixit 1988) or accompaniments to cocktails¹⁷⁸. Celebrities are also associated with cocktails (Femina 1988c). Despite the seeming acceptability of female alcohol consumption under certain conditions, serving alcohol as an occupation appears to be heavily stigmatised. In the words of one writer, "What kind of woman would want to serve alcohol in a bar, you

¹⁷⁸ (Bhatia 1983; Philip 1983; Femina 1988b).

probably wonder with more than a tinge of contempt” (Deep 1988). Even the women who engaged in such employment felt that the “very phrase ‘Beer Bar’ has a bad connotation” (Deep 1988). An interviewee from the article shared that, even after two years of employment in a bar, her children are still unaware of her job in a bar and believe that she works in an office in the evenings (Deep 1988). One bar girl “after some persuasion admitted that often her duties extended beyond simply serving the alcoholics...or should we say beer drinkers?” (Deep 1988). Another professed she knew “that there will be some problems but never even dreaming of the way they behave with you...” (Deep 1988).

Articles in the 1990s numbered nineteen and were also about the subjects of women’s drinking, entertaining, and celebrities. In 1995, the Bangalore Le Meridien, a luxury hotel, experimented with a women-only bar (Pillai 1997a). Initially, the hotel opened a women-only bar for a week, during which time men were not allowed to enter unless in the company of women. Due to the “excellent response”, the hotel’s bar made it a weekly offering, maintaining the women-only policy on Fridays. The general manager of Le Meridien explained, “Contrary to what people think, this festival was not conducted to encourage women to drink more...” (Pillai 1997a). Instead, it was to permit a woman to “enjoy her drink in peace, without feeling inhibited and without having other people regarding her as a freak,” says Santem Sen Gupta, assistant manager, food and beverage, Le Meridien” (Pillai 1997a). In other bars, ““When a woman enters a pub alone heads are bound to turn, a few catcalls are heard and even physical advances are made” (Pillai 1997a), whereas in Le Meridien’s women-only bar this was not the case. When the assistant manager, food and beverage, of the hotel was queried, “Are women liquor literate?”, he responded, “Most of them are alcohol friendly...” (Pillai 1997b). He observed the maximum number of drinks women had was two. Moreover, he noted that in

terms of “holding her liquor”, a woman could match men in this respect only if she had been drinking as long as her male counterpart (Pillai 1997b).

Numerous articles offer recipes for alcoholic beverages and accompaniments¹⁷⁹. One provides the cocktail recipes of a celebrity. The article exhorts, “Get high this party season with Ashok Rajad Nyaksha’s exotic and lethal cocktails. Concocting drinks with a variety of alcoholic beverages is his hobby and yes, he is Shobha De’s¹⁸⁰ brother!” (SAVVY 1995). It states, “Years of practice have honed his hobby to a fine art and any lover of the intoxicating spirits will vouch for the fact that one of his joys in life is a well-made, good-looking drink that appeals to the palette” (SAVVY 1995). Hence, making cocktails has been elevated to the status of a “fine art”. Wine is mentioned in two articles, the first includes wine as part of a seduction scene (Femina 1993a), while the second discusses wine-tasting (Femina 1999a). A negative picture of alcohol is painted by only one article on a tribal women’s movement for prohibition in the Andhra Pradesh village of Peddamullapuram, in which the president of the women’s group declared, “We will destroy any bad influence and this includes arrach [sic], before it destroys our village” (Penna 1998).

Since 2000, there have been 46 articles relating to alcohol and social behaviour in *Femina* and *SAVVY*, and they have continued to examine similar topics, including women’s drinking, entertaining and celebrities. Regarding women’s drinking, one article encourages, “Pick up a pint, girl – beer’s ‘in’” (Femina 2001b), while another affirms “ALCOHOL. Okay, get this: The equation of women drinking = bad is non-functional these days. Today, savouring some amber liquid ambrosia is not exactly committing a cardinal sin. Drink what you can hold” (Femina 2005d). The article then cautions women not to drink and drive (Femina 2005d). Another states, “...several women enjoy a drink

¹⁷⁹ (Femina 1993b; Femina 1994; Femina 1995b; Femina 1995c; Femina 1997b; Femina 1998; Femina 1999b).

¹⁸⁰ Shobha De is a prominent Indian columnist.

or two. Nothing wrong with that. But problems start when they go overboard. If you are the type of woman who feels that you have to catch up with men in everything, think again” (Reddi 2005). The same article criticises women’s need to “be like a man” in every respect: “Unfortunately, the popularisation of western culture in India and the Indian cinema have led to far reaching damage on the psyche of Indian women, nudging them into drinking alcohol to be part of the hip culture. In addition, the need to be like a man has driven several women to hit the bottle, as they consider drinking alcohol to be a symbol of power and equality” (Reddi 2005). Similar to the 1990s, although women’s drinking is characterised as increasingly acceptable by the two women’s magazines, employment in the alcohol industry remains a largely male domain, as detailed in the article on Kiran Mazumdar Shaw, India’s first female brew master (SAVVY 2001).

In relation to entertaining, several articles provide recipes for cocktails¹⁸¹ and wine (SAVVY 2000b), while two offer recipes for food accompaniments (Femina 2000a; Femina 2004b). Alcohol is also an ingredient in a couple of food recipes (Femina 2005a; Dasgupta 2005). Other types of advice consist of means to make beer taste better (Femina 2005g) and recommendations for stocking a bar (Femina 2005j; Femina 2005i). Several articles give alcohol etiquette suggestions ranging from the proper way to “nurse a drink” (Femina 2003c) to appropriate alcoholic gifts for hosts of parties (Femina 2004c) to the management of one’s alcohol consumption at office parties (Femina 2004d). Alcohol is depicted as a part of romance as well¹⁸². One article describes an ideal romantic evening: “The evening thus far had been perfect: Sade crooning about heartbreak, pasta washed down with a glass of champagne, crème brulée on its way” (Nadkarni 2005). Drinking also appears to be a much more integral aspect of dining out in the 1990s (Shridhar 2005;

¹⁸¹ (Femina 2000a; Femina 2004a; SAVVY 2000a; SAVVY 2004).

¹⁸² (Femina 2005f; Femina 1993a; Nadkarni 2005).

Ravindran 2002). One article reviewing Delhi's best brunch places mentions each restaurant's alcoholic offerings, particularly that of wine (Shridhar 2005).

The number of articles on wine has been much greater than in either the 1980s or the 1990s. Subjects include the "tenets of wine tasting" (Femina 2003b), trying wine in Italy (Femina 2003e), new Indian wines (Dasgupta 2005), and choosing the right glass for different kinds of wine (Femina 2005n). One article gives detailed explanations for the proper enjoyment of wine and encourages readers to "Be adventurous and experiment. That's part of the fun" (Dasgupta 2005). It asserts that "More and more Indians are certainly quaffing gallons of the stuff (red, naturally!)" (Dasgupta 2005). It goes on to observe, "We in India are in the infancy of wine drinking, so we are not hamstrung by either tradition or patriotism" (Dasgupta 2005).

Celebrities have continued to be associated with alcohol consumption in the women's magazines. Several highlight promotional events at which celebrities or corporate executives could be seen representing a particular brand of alcoholic beverage and/or simply enjoying themselves with a beer, cocktail, or glass of wine in hand¹⁸³. Alcohol has also been linked to athletes and their partners, as in an article on the partners of the South African cricket team (Chakravarty 2005). A large number of these articles picture celebrities with alcoholic drinks¹⁸⁴.

The only two articles that have characterised alcohol negatively have to do with marital rape (Mitra 2005) and with a tribal women's prohibition movement in Kaduchiwadi in Maharashtra (Rao 2002). The article on marital rape looks at the experiences of several women, some of whom describe the manner in which their husbands would abuse them when under the influence of alcohol (Mitra 2005). The article on the women's prohibition movement considers the hardships women in Kaduchiwadi

¹⁸³ (Femina 2005b; Femina 2005e; Femina 2005h; Femina 2005k; Femina 2005m).

¹⁸⁴ (Femina 2005b; Femina 2005e; Femina 2005h; Femina 2005k; Femina 2005m; Chakravarty 2005).

suffered due to the drinking of their men, "...the rampant alcoholism that plagued men for generations took its toll on the womenfolk. Paths would be strewn with drunkards, street fights were common and wife battering topped the list...When the Mahila Arthik Vikas Mahamandal and Bank of India started a rural savings scheme for women last year, they realised that their hard earned money was being squandered away by their husbands in buying bottles of liquor" (Rao 2002). Therefore, "After decades of being scared, submissive and shy, they finally decided to put an end to the single biggest bane of their lives – liquor" (Rao 2002).

Analysis of the articles on alcohol and social behaviour from *Femina* and *SAVVY*, show that in these two magazines, although women's drinking began to be more socially accepted even in the 1980s, as exemplified by one article's suggestion that a social drink or two is "giving true company" (Femina 1988a), in the 1990s and the 2000s, it seems increasingly to have been represented as an integral part of life for women. Accordingly, not only is the topic of a women only bar covered (Pillai 1997a), other articles from the 1990s encourage readers to "get high" with a celebrity's cocktail recipes (SAVVY 1995) and depict wine as part of romance (Femina 1993a). Similarly, articles since 2000 remind women that the "equation of women drinking = bad is non-functional these days" (Femina 2005d) and that they should "pick up a pint" because beer is "in" (Femina 2001b). Despite the greater acceptability of women's drinking, consuming "like a man" (Reddi 2005) continues to have negative connotations, and women who engage in such behaviour are described as going "overboard" (Reddi 2005). Not only has consuming alcohol become more acceptable for women, serving it in the context of private entertaining has as well. In fact, alcohol appears to have become an essential aspect of entertaining. As a result, numerous articles from the 1990s and 2000s offered recipes for cocktails and accompaniments. Articles from the 2000s provided women with a far

greater range of advice than those from the 1990s regarding suggestions for stocking a bar (Femina 2005j; Femina 2005l) and drinking etiquette, such as the proper way to “nurse a drink” (Femina 2003c) and the correct choice of glasses to enhance enjoyment of wine (Femina 2005n). Finally, although celebrities were associated with alcohol in the 1990s and the 2000s, there have been a greater number of articles linking the two since 2000. Moreover, these are more likely to be accompanied by photographs of celebrities with a drink in hand. Therefore, since 1980 alcohol has come to be characterised as an integral part of social life, even for women, by *Femina* and *SAVVY*.

4.5 Social attitudes and social institutions: implications for the permissibility of drinking

Examination of alcohol related articles from *The Hindustan Times*, *The Times of India*, *Femina*, and *SAVVY* reveal that the manner in which alcohol is characterised has liberalised since 1980. Although the general permissibility of drinking appears to have increased, many informal distinctions are made in the media. As a result, there seem to be myriad informal “rules” governing an individual’s consumption of alcohol, depending on factors, such as gender and socio-economic background. Based on the examination of articles from the previous section, this part of the chapter will consider the characterisation of alcohol in regards to the social institutions of class, religion, caste, and gender, in order to discern the implications for the permissibility of drinking.

Class-based differences were used to depict alcohol consumption as more acceptable by some than by others in the 1990s. For instance, prohibition was often described as a measure to protect poor individuals, usually male, from drinking away their money (HT Correspondent 1996c) and inflicting harm on themselves and those around them through crime (Agnivesh 1996) and domestic violence (Singh 1995). This is

further exemplified by the fact that populist prohibition movements mentioned in both the newspapers and the magazines tended to be spearheaded by poor people, usually women who had suffered due to a family member's consumption of alcohol¹⁸⁵. On the other hand, members of higher classes are portrayed as being able to engage in moderate social drinking (Srivastava 1996b). This sentiment was most clearly expressed by an official of an exclusive club, who stated that problem drinking was confined to village men, who engaged in domestic violence and caused the ruin of their families by drinking away their money (Srivastava 1996b). In contrast members of the upper-classes gathered for a "harmless" social drink (Srivastava 1996b). Such beliefs are reflected in laws as well, as seen in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. Although it banned arrack, the "poor man's drink", it continued to permit three- and five-star hotels to serve alcohol (Iyengar (The Times of India News Service) 1993). The one exception was an article on alcoholism featured in SAVVY, which stated, "Like in men, amongst women too, alcoholism is a disease that cuts across all socio-economic barriers" (Rao 2004). Nevertheless, the newspaper and magazine articles examined indicate that the permissibility of higher class members engaging in drinking has come to be depicted as more acceptable.

In relation to gender, women's drinking generally seems to have become more accepted since 1980, particularly as mention of alcohol in social contexts has become commonplace in women's magazines, which Croteau and Hoynes maintain offer women clues on how to become the "perfect" woman (1997: 190). Benegal, et al. have also noted the tendency for well-off, educated urban women to drink in social settings, such as at restaurants, parties and with spouses, colleagues and friends, as well as in more normalised settings, such as with meals at home (2005: 117). Interestingly, they found that women's drinking amongst this group is more permissible, regardless of whether or

¹⁸⁵ (Singh 1995; Mishra 1996; Nailwal 1996; Penna 1998; Rao 2002).

not it is condoned by men (2005: 117). Nonetheless, my media research discovered that the acceptability of obtaining and consuming alcohol is conditional upon certain factors. For instance, women attending a bar, or even buying a drink, alone were described as “game for anything” (Subramanian and Sinha (Times News Network) 2003). Furthermore, “soft” alcoholic beverages, such as a Bacardi Breezer, were considered more appropriate for women than “hard” drinks, such as straight liquor, because in the former case, rum was diluted with juice. Lastly, drinking “like a man” was criticised (Reddi 2005). Hence, women’s drinking is governed by rules that encourage the “feminine” consumption of alcohol, i.e. engaging in moderate drinking of “soft” alcohol, such as mixed drinks or wine, in social settings.

It is notable that religion and caste, which are invoked in the proscription of drinking - as in the case of Muslims and Brahmins - failed to be mentioned in any of the articles pertaining to alcohol. A possible explanation for this omission is the erosion of the notions of purity and impurity as hierarchical determinants (Ramu 1989:188). Jayaram claims that in recent decades both the idea and practice of pollution have been weakened by the influx of Western ideas as well as the requirements of modern life (1996: 81). Béteille also maintains that the meaning and importance of caste customs relating to ritual, purity, pollution and taboos that had been observed in the past have been diminishing amongst educated urban Indians (1996: 158). Those who continued such practices at school and/or at work faced ridicule by those who did not (Béteille 1996: 158). The waning significance of religious and caste practices, including the avoidance of “impure” foods, such as alcohol, have likely encouraged the decreased salience of religion and caste in alcohol-related articles and contributed to the greater permissibility of urban middle-class drinking, regardless of religion and caste. Additionally, as mentioned in the section on employment opportunities, consumption and social

institutions, Van Wessel contends that due to the disparities within caste groups that have arisen in the past few decades, people seek social equality with their class, rather than caste, counterparts (2004: 97). Consequently, the erosion of religious and caste customs together with the increasing precedence of class considerations of social equality over those of religion and caste have probably contributed to the greater permissibility of drinking amongst the Indian urban middle-class, regardless of religion and caste.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter set out to investigate shifts in the outside meaning of consumption by analysing changes in the accessibility of alcohol and the permissibility of drinking. For this, radically different sources of evidence have been brought together: NSSO surveys and key texts from the print media. Shifts in accessibility were examined by considering changes in income amongst the middle- and upper-classes and by relating income econometrically to consumption, while changes in permissibility were investigated through an examination of social attitudes towards alcohol emerging in the print media. The impact of the social institutions of class, religion, caste and gender on all of these factors was investigated as well. Regarding accessibility, the greater levels of income and propensity to consume experienced by the urban middle-class have contributed to increased alcohol expenditures, regardless of religion or caste. Our statistical analyses underscore the weakening of the institutions of religion and caste as determinants of alcohol expenditures; and our consideration of religion, caste and gender in relation to employment opportunities and consumption for the urban middle-class, highlights how the increasing stratification within, in particular, religions and castes encourages individuals to consume at levels similar to their *class*, rather than religious or caste, peers.

In relation to permissibility, it was revealed that the manner in which alcohol is characterised by the English-language print media has liberalised. In Chapter 1, it was noted that print media has been characterised as a dominant source of definitions of social reality for both individuals and groups (Anand 2003: 2) and as capable of changing people's consumption behaviour (Velacherry 1993: 247-48). Accordingly, it is likely that these shifts in the representation of the permissibility of alcohol for members of higher classes have had an impact on urban middle-class social attitudes towards drinking, making drinking by such individuals, including women, more acceptable. However, this liberalisation of attitudes has not extended to people of lower-classes, whose drinking is characterised as problematic. These depictions imply that the effect of religion and caste is diminishing in the area of drink, while that of class is not, so that alcohol consumption is increasingly acceptable to all urban middle-class individuals, regardless of religion and caste.

In conclusion, the changes in both the accessibility of alcohol and the permissibility of drinking indicate that the outside meaning of consumption has altered in such a way to encourage the decision to drink by members of the Indian urban middle-class. This has increased the acceptability of purchasing and using alcohol, thereby facilitating the rise in alcohol consumption noted at the beginning of the chapter. Now that we have examined the outside meanings of production, distribution and consumption, in the next chapter we will explore the inside meanings of alcohol consumption ascribed to the purchase and use of alcohol by Delhi-area university students.

Chapter 5 – The Inside Meanings of Indian Urban Middle-class Alcohol Consumption

In this thesis, whose objective is to explore the outside and inside meanings of an ambivalent commodity, alcohol, “outside meaning” refers to the economic, social and political conditions against which individuals make consumption decisions regarding where, when, why and with whom to consume, and attribute “inside meanings” to these decisions. Inside meaning, which may take the form of intensification or extensification¹⁸⁶, relates to the manner in which people incorporate substances with which they are unaccustomed into their lives and the meanings they ascribe to the various uses to which it is put. Chapter 3 analysed the outside meaning of production and its repercussions for alcohol consumption possibilities through its impact on availability. The greatest beneficiaries of the considerable growth the Indian alcohol industry has experienced in recent years were shown to have been the dominant local manufacturers and the state governments, which in turn have increased their incentive and ability to promote the greater availability of alcoholic beverages.

The outside meaning of consumption was the topic of Chapter 4, which examined shifts in alcohol’s accessibility, as shaped by income, and permissibility, as conditioned by social attitudes. The chapter highlighted that amongst the urban middle-class, religion and caste are weakening as determinants of occupation, which has contributed to increasing class stratification across religious and caste groups. Consequently, middle-class individuals are more likely to seek social equality with other members of the middle-class, rather than their co-religionists or their caste peers. Together with an increased materialism and consumerism, which are considered symbols of success, these trends have resulted in the greater accessibility of alcohol for the Indian urban middle-

¹⁸⁶ As defined in Chapter 1, intensification stems from the emulation of others’ consumption patterns, while extensification arises out of new uses that are not a result of imitation.

class. The exploration of alcohol-related newspaper and magazine articles from 1980 to 2005 conducted in Chapter 4 also suggested that religious and caste proscriptions, which in the case of Muslims and Brahmins have prohibited drinking, are playing a declining role in preventing the permissibility of alcohol consumption amongst the educated urban middle-class in India. As our analysis of changes in the accessibility of alcohol indicated, class-stratification across religions and castes has encouraged middle-class individuals to seek social equality with members of their class, which in turn has increased the permissibility of alcohol consumption amongst the urban middle-class. The greater acceptability of alcohol consumption has not extended to poor people, however, and individuals of lower classes have been regarded as requiring protection from alcohol in order to prevent them from drinking away their money and inflicting harm on those around them. Even amongst members of the urban middle-class, there are informal “rules” that apply to alcohol consumption. For instance, although drinking by urban middle-class women appears to have become more acceptable, it is only true if they occasionally consume alcohol in a “feminine” manner, i.e. drink “soft” alcoholic beverages, such as mixed drinks or wine, in the company of other people.

This chapter will investigate the “inside meanings” with which people endow various uses of alcohol, relying on data from 32 individual interviews with middle-class students from Delhi University (DU) and Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and one group interview with ten middle-class JNU students¹⁸⁷. Bourdieu has argued in his book *Distinction*¹⁸⁸ that educational capital (in the form of academic qualifications) is significant not for the specific competence it formally guarantees (e.g. an engineering degree), but for possession of a “general culture” that it informally assures (1989:25).

¹⁸⁷ All of the individuals who participated in the group interview were also interviewed separately.

¹⁸⁸ His findings are based on extensive survey data regarding practices and opinions in areas, such as art, sport, newspaper reading, interior decoration, food consumption, linguistic habits, and body aesthetic, from 1,217 respondents from Paris, Lille, and a small provincial French town (Bourdieu 1996:503).

This “symbolic imposition” works through a tacit agreement by which holders of specific degrees are expected to obtain the qualities commensurate with their status (Bourdieu 1989:25), and acts as a means to delineate “legitimate” practice (Bourdieu 1989:25). The academic classifications encourage a collectively recognised and supported belief in the differences, which become manifested in “real” differences (Bourdieu 1989:25). Teachers and peers play an important role in the process of differentiation through their expectations and the pressure they place consciously or unconsciously on individuals (Bourdieu 1989:26). Hence, in Bourdieu’s words, “This allocation effect and the status assignment it entails doubtless play a major role in the fact that the educational institution succeeds in imposing cultural practices that it does not teach and does not even explicitly demand, but which belong to the attributes attached by status to the position it assigns, the qualifications it awards and the social positions to which the latter give access” (1989:26). In the Indian context, Bêteille has noted with respect to elite schools that “...the educational institutions (particularly the more exclusive schools and colleges) not only recruit people, but also transform them by imposing on them their own values and styles of life. The culture of these exclusive schools is of vital importance to the character of the elites we are here considering, and it is not entirely an indigenous culture. It is a culture in which the hierarchical values of caste are largely superseded by those of a different kind” (1969:209). Hence, caste becomes “ambiguous” and “irrelevant”, supplanted by considerations of, for instance, ideology (Bêteille 1969:211). An important implication of caste being overshadowed by other factors is the creation of “fundamental cleavages within each and every caste” and of status groups that cut across caste (Bêteille 1969:211). The assertions of Bourdieu and Bêteille resonate with our findings in the previous chapter and will be explored in further depth at the micro level through analysis of the data collected through interviews with students of DU and JNU. Before moving

onto a presentation and examination of our interview data, however, we will first discuss the methodology used for this chapter's analysis.

5.1 Methodology

In his documentation of the rise to prominence of sugar in the English diet between 1650 and 1900, Mintz draws on various sources such as cookbooks, medical texts, and historical accounts to illustrate changes in the uses and meanings of sugar. Although he uses these sources to elucidate the inside meanings ascribed to different uses of sugar by both the upper and working-classes, because the majority of the sources are authored by upper-class individuals, the inside meanings from the perspective of working-class people largely remain obscured. In our research, to understand the manner in which drinking and its ramifications are perceived *by the students themselves*, and the influences that shape these experiences and their repercussions, our interviews focused on the emic viewpoint. As this has largely been overlooked in research on drinking in India¹⁸⁹, particularly regarding the urban middle-class, rather than forcing etic or outside categories upon the respondents to make sense of alcohol consumption and its consequences, our questions were as open-ended as possible.

Moreover, as the meanings attached to, for instance, drinking for the first time and continued consumption often differ, to capture the changing meanings of drink, our interview questions were concerned primarily with students' history of alcohol consumption. Some questions probed the respondent's family history of drink, as family

¹⁸⁹ One exception is Bennet, et al.'s 1998 study in Bangalore, which discovered that drinkers consider "normal" drinking as taking place on special occasions, which occur no more than once or twice a week, and as entailing "the consumption of small quantities of alcohol that do not interfere with a person's responsibilities" (Bennett, *et al.* 1998:249). Conversely, "harmful" drinking was described as consuming *arrack* or hard liquor regularly and to the extent that it caused the drinker personal and/or work problems (Bennett, *et al.* 1998:249). Reasons for drinking included the reduction of unpleasant feelings such as pain, pressure, anxiety, fatigue and boredom; the lifting of the drinker's mood; and the provision of a "kick" to facilitate euphoria, greater activity, and lowered inhibitions (Bennett, *et al.* 1998:249). People who had imbibed "quite a lot" were characterised as either *mathu*, drunk with a negative connotation, or *masthi*, drunk and experiencing negative consequences (Bennett, *et al.* 1998:249).

members' attitudes and experiences of alcohol tend to have a significant impact on the conceptualisation of drink and, in some cases, on alcohol consumption practices. A few questions included outside categories, such as moderate vs. heavy drinking and social vs. unsocial drinking. Rather than an attempt to force outside categories on the students being interviewed, however, these categories, common in the literature, were used to investigate the inside meanings related to the bounds of acceptable and unacceptable drinking behaviour. Our theme analysis then sought recurring regularities in the content of people's responses in order to establish categories corresponding to the inside meanings ascribed by the students to the social, health and economic consequences of drinking as well as the employment of alcohol to distinguish between certain groups and blur the boundaries between others.

In the remainder of this chapter, we will overview the interview material, which broadly falls into two categories: personal and family history of alcohol consumption and individuals' opinions on various aspects of drinking. To explore the changing meanings of drink, the summary will be ordered according to the chronology of the interviewees' drinking histories, so that we will begin with a consideration of the first drink and progress onto students' experience of alcohol consumption after the first drink. Second, the views of non-drinkers will be reviewed, followed by a discussion of family members' alcohol preferences and practices, and the consequences of alcohol consumption. Third, respondents' understanding of moderate vs. heavy drinking, social vs. unsocial drinking, and prohibition and regulation will be presented. Fourth, inside meanings based on the processes of intensification and extensification will be discussed. The chapter will conclude with a comparison of our findings from analysis of the interviews to those from our exploration of the media.

5.2 Evidence from interviews

5.2.1 Interviewee Demographics

Table 5.1 Gender breakdown of interviewees

Gender	Female	Male
Drinkers	11	16
Non-drinkers	4	1
Total	15	17

Table 5.2 Religious breakdown of interviewees

Religion	Hindu - Unknown caste	Hindu – Scheduled Caste	Hindu – Other Caste¹⁹⁰	Hindu – Brahmin	Christian	Sikh
Drinkers	2	5	11	1	7	1
Non-drinkers	-	-	3	1	1	-
Total	2	5	14	2	8	1

As indicated in Table 4.1, the interviewee group consisted of fifteen females, eleven drinkers and four non-drinkers, and seventeen males, sixteen drinkers and one non-drinker. The religious breakdown for drinkers was as follows: nineteen Hindus, the majority of whom were of a caste other than Scheduled or Brahmin; seven Christians, and one Sikh. The non-drinkers were composed of four Hindus, one Brahmin and three individuals of other castes¹⁹¹, and one Christian. The ages ranged from eighteen to 31, with the bulk of students being between 21 and 25. The interviewees hailed from Bihar, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Mizoram, Nagaland, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

¹⁹⁰ Please note that we have used the term “other caste” to denote all those castes under the *jati* classification that are neither Scheduled Caste nor Brahmin.

¹⁹¹ Refer to footnote 7.

5.2.2 Interviewees' experiences of alcohol

5.2.2.1 The first drink

Although JNU officially condemns alcohol, it often comes to play an important part in students' educational experiences¹⁹². Twenty-seven of the 32 student interviewees had tried alcohol by the time of their interviews¹⁹³. Nineteen of them had done so for the first time in the company of one or more friends. Four individuals had their first taste of alcohol in the family context as children (15FHOC¹⁹⁴, 20MHOC, 21FHOC, 33MC). However, they did not begin to drink more regularly until trying it again as teenagers or adults, so when discussing their reasons for trying alcohol, reference is to the latter instance. Two respondents had their first drink with their family, after which instance they continued to consume alcohol (8FHOC, 23MC). One person's first experience with alcohol on an "individual level"¹⁹⁵ was also in the presence of friends, but the drink was offered to him by the uncle of a peer (3MS), rather than someone of the interviewee's age group. One individual failed to explain the context in which her first drink took place (29FHOC).

When asked what reason(s) motivated them to try alcohol for the first time, eight respondents cited curiosity, six an occasion of celebration, six opportunity, four peer pressure, and three the wish to have fun. Students who acted out of curiosity stated, for example: "Had never done it before, so tried it out" (32MHU), "To taste since didn't taste before, curiosity" (36FHB), "I wanted to know about the taste" (17MHSC), "I wanted to taste something new" (1MHSC), and "decided to taste...just to know what it is"

¹⁹² It is likely that DU's official stand on alcohol consumption is equally prohibitive.

¹⁹³ All interviews took place between 14 September 2005 and 2 December 2005. See Appendix 4 for the interview schedule.

¹⁹⁴ Please note that in order to preserve the anonymity of the interviewees, they are referred to in a coded manner. The number indicates place in the order of interviews, so that "1" refers to the first interview conducted. The "F" or "M" following the number stands for female or male, while the letter immediately after the gender signifier denotes religion, with "C" for Christian, "H" for Hindu, and "S" for Sikh. In the case of Hindu students, the next letter indicates caste. "B" is used for Brahmins, "SC" for Scheduled Caste members, "OC" for individuals of any other caste, and "U" for people whose caste was not revealed.

¹⁹⁵ He also had had his first taste of alcohol with a family member (3MS).

(30MHSC). Seven individuals mentioned as their primary reason for consuming alcohol the first time an occasion of celebration, such as the last day of school (2MHSC, 20MHOC), a birthday party (25FC, 10MHOC, 21FHOC), and a Christmas celebration (19MC). Six said lack of opportunity had prevented them from drinking and when the appropriate moment presented itself, they decided to try alcohol (19MC, 1MHSC, 3MS, 31MHOC, 4MHU, 34MHOC). The “right” opportunity was characterised by: the availability of alcohol; peer consumption (19MC, 1MHSC, 3MS, 31MHOC, 4MHU, 34MHOC); the acceptability of the interviewee’s consumption, indicated by someone offering them an alcoholic beverage (19MC, 1MHSC, 3MS, 4MHU); and a living situation that did not involve staying with family (31MHOC). It was only when such conditions were met that, in the words of one student, “He had an urge to drink” (19MC). Peer pressure drove four to try alcohol when a friend or friends “suggested me to drink” (17MHSC). Three other interviewees had similar experiences: “Everyone was having it. A very close friend of mine, he said ok you can try it” (8FHOC); “they forced me, told me” (16MHOC); and “you have many friends...they are rigorously insisting that you try it” (18MHSC). Another three stated that they tried alcohol “just for fun” (10MHOC, 35FHOC, 9FC).

Although only six students mentioned lack of opportunity as the reason for not having tried alcohol, upon questioning it became clear that for many of the interviewees several factors affected their decision to consume alcohol for the first time. In 23 of the 27 cases, the first drink was taken in the company of drinking peers. The decision to have alcohol was either made collectively with a group of friends or made individually when one was offered a drink. No instances were reported of an individual reaching the decision to drink and then seeking it out alone. The first drink was often taken in a

context distanced from family: in a few instances this was at school, but in the majority of cases, it was during university.

The meanings ascribed to the first drink included a new experience, adventure and excitement, fitting in, “proving” oneself, bonding, maturity and “breaking a taboo”. In two cases, the first drink was described as a novel experience (32MHU, 36FHB). Despite the fact that consuming alcohol was a new experience for the other interviewees as well, their responses indicated that their first drink meant more than that. Two students felt excited and adventurous (19MC, 18MHSC). One perceived consuming alcohol as a means to fit in with his peers. Therefore, he drank because he wanted “to belong to that group” and not to “become alienated” (2MHSC). The desire to “prove” herself to two female friends who were hardcore drinkers and teased her about not drinking was the motivation for a female upper-caste Hindu student to try alcohol (21FHOC). For one person, consuming alcohol for the first time symbolised bonding with others, particularly as on that occasion most of the people present were also drinking for the first time, resulting in everyone talking about individual experiences late into the night and in the feeling that “[w]e were a complete group” (30MHSC). In the case of another student, the first drink was related to maturity. He said, “You’re beginning a new life” and “can handle a drink that’s for adults” (20MHOC).

For several people, the feelings accompanying the consumption of alcohol for the first time were related to the fact that they were “breaking a taboo”. Hence, for the individual who felt mature upon drinking for the first time, this “[f]eeling came because doing something that’s taboo” (20MHOC). Of the two people who experienced excitement and adventure, one person ascribed such sentiments to the fact that by drinking, he was breaking “boundaries” (18MHSC). According to him, “Many boundaries on many things, so if break boundaries, excited also a part of whole thing

without doing what other people used to do” (18MHSC). Thus, breaking the boundaries established by family and other elements of his background led to feelings of excitement for this individual. By using the phrase “what other people used to do”, however, which upon further enquiry was revealed as referring to the “drunk posture”, i.e. drinking and engaging in behaviour, such as “abusing each other, shouting at each other”, the student makes the distinction between acceptable and unacceptable drinking behaviour (18MHSC). Even when one is “excited”, one must not behave inappropriately. Another student (3MS) “got excited” the first time he consumed alcohol in the tenth standard at the age of fifteen or sixteen, because it presented him with the opportunity to “free” himself of the restrictions placed on him at school and at home. In contrast to his peers, drinking and “breaking a taboo” were accompanied by feelings of guilt for one interviewee, who felt “very bad” after consuming alcohol for the first time, because he had never before tried alcohol (17MHSC).

5.2.2.2 After the first drink

Following their first drink, four of the 27 student interviewees did not drink again, while one consumed alcohol for a while and then stopped. Seven individuals had periods of abstention in their drinking histories, and sixteen have continued to consume alcohol without any breaks. All of the students who have stopped consuming alcohol are female, two of whom are Christian and two upper-caste Hindus. Two respondents offered no reason for discontinuing drinking (25FC, 11FHOC), while one Hindu student and one Christian student in this group gave health and social reasons for stopping. In the case of the Brahmin interviewee, she stated that she “thought it would not do any good to my health” and, thus, decided not to consume alcohol (36FHB). The Christian respondent gave social reasons for no longer drinking. After her first try of alcohol she had continued

to drink occasionally on, for instance, holidays such as Christmas, but she decided to stop as a result of parental pressure and the unpalatable post-drinking social behaviour she had witnessed (22FC). According to her, “I stopped drinking for two reasons –1) it disturbed my parents to know I liked wine (they were afraid I might get addicted) and 2) I have seen drunk women and men at nightclubs and among my friends and I find their behaviour disturbing and a little ugly” (22FC). Family pressure seems to have been the stronger of the two reasons, as she also mentioned earlier in the interview, “The glass of wine at Christmas is a social thing, when we go to my grandmother’s house for a party and then most of my cousins, aunts, uncles have a glass or two as well. However, in recent years I have stopped even that much because my parents don’t really like my drinking at all. (Even though they haven’t actually told me to stop it)” (22FC).

The six individuals, one Christian female and five Hindu males, who abstained for a period asserted they did so as a result of the health effects or of a lack of time, money or interest. Health reasons prevented one individual from drinking for a period of three months. Due to jaundice, he refrained from consuming alcohol for several months, and then decided to recommence drinking, because “[o]ne day, I felt like having a drink” (1MHSC). This may have been influenced by the fact that he also likes the “atmosphere” surrounding drinking and believes that “Alcohol relaxes, of course” (1MHSC). Another said his choice to stop drinking was not based on a particular reason as was his decision to recommence consuming alcohol (16MHOC). However, since that time, he has drunk with his friends when, for instance, he has nothing else to do or when he wants to engage in self-reflection, as “I become more introspective when I drink” (16MHOC). In the case of a third student, although he drank occasionally during his first degree in engineering, when he was at home in between his first and graduate degrees, he did not consume alcohol because if his family were to know that he drank, they would “scold” him

(30MHSC). When he came to JNU for his second degree, he started to consume alcohol again on special occasions, such as New Year's Eve, and does so "just to enjoy three to four hours", since "[d]uring that period, you enjoy a lot" (30MHSC). Two interviewees in this group stated that they abstained for a while due to the fact that they "didn't feel like drinking" (20MHOC) and "just thought would quit" (24FC). Peer pressure, what he referred to as a "call from the friends" (20MHOC), induced the former to start consuming alcohol again, while the latter (24FC) gave no reason for why she recommenced drinking. The last person in this group, who associated drinking with the intimacy between close friends, stated that he stopped drinking for about a year when he first came to JNU, "to get away with it" (i.e. to get away from it), because he did not know people yet and was trying to transition into a new place (2MHSC). The "group factor" (2MHSC) later compelled him to begin drinking again.

The group of sixteen people whose drinking histories were not marked by any breaks consisted of five females and eleven males. Their religious backgrounds were one Sikh, four Christians, and eleven Hindus, of which two did not specify caste, two were Scheduled Caste, and seven were upper caste. The respondents cited two types of reasons for consuming alcohol: health and social. Seven students claimed they consumed alcohol for the physical and psychological health effects, including enjoyment, relaxation, a change of routine, and lower inhibitions. For instance, one female Hindu interviewee contended she only likes to drink in discs (clubs), because the alcohol keeps her going through the night. "Alcohol helps me to dance," and she loves dancing. She also "like[s] feeling of being high" (15FHOC). At times, she also used alcohol to "loosen myself...when I feel like indulging in a little physical intimacy", although she specified that sexual intercourse never took place (15FHOC). A male Hindu respondent also stated, "it's nice to get a high once in a while" (32MHU), while a male Christian student liked to

consume “till I get tipsy” (23MC). One respondent asserted that he drank for enjoyment, reflected in his statement that he consumed alcohol “to enjoy that moment only” (17MHSC). Relaxation was given as the impetus for drinking by one individual. Another student said she “will drink when want time for myself”, and that when “I drink, I feel very cosy”. (8FHOC). Furthermore, she stated, “[t]hat little bit of sweet, high feeling, really like it” (8FHOC). One male Hindu interviewee of unknown caste said he drank on occasion, rather than abstaining completely, because of “the idea of doing something new” (4MHU). A male upper-caste Hindu liked the lowering of inhibitions that followed drinking. Although he asserted regarding his alcohol consumption that there’s “no reason as such. If my friends say let’s go clubbing and all...”, still “it’s more fun when have special feeling” (10MHOC). His explanation was that when he drinks, he acts differently, more confidently. At RPM, the club he regularly attends, he knows almost everyone, but will not always speak to everyone when he’s sober. On the other hand, when he drinks, he will even talk to people he doesn’t know well (10MHOC).

The remaining ten respondents whose drinking histories were continuous gave social reasons such as peer pressure, intimacy and bonding, and special occasions for consuming alcohol. One female upper-caste Hindu student claimed, “I’m just a social and occasional drinker” (35FHOC), while another female upper-caste Hindu interviewee replied when asked if she had continued to drink, “Not applicable really, I am asthmatic and have respiratory allergy so I don’t take it except few sips when friends have it” (34FHOC). Peer pressure or the “group programme” compelled one person to consume alcohol; if there is a party or if friends call, he cannot refuse (18MHSC). Another liked the bonding aspect of alcohol consumption, as “it gives us an opportunity and space to hang out, be together and check interesting folks out (at the club/pub/bar)” (33MC).

Three students maintained that they only drank on special occasions. For one female upper-caste Hindu, parties and birthdays, which occur about once a month, are occasions on which she drinks (9FC). A male upper-caste Hindu respondent said he usually consumes alcohol “to enjoy” on occasions, such as the freshers party or when seniors give a party, which takes place approximately once a month or once every two months (31MHOC). In the case of one female upper-caste Hindu, she consumes alcohol every once in a while during holidays, such as Diwali, “for an occasional pleasure” and “for the event” (21FHOC). This past Diwali, for example, she shared with her brother and mother a bottle of French wine, which she had brought back from a recent trip to Paris (21FHOC). Her last drink prior to this occasion was during a scholarship dinner where wine was being served. As it was assumed that she drank and a glass was poured for her, she had a few sips (21FHOC). She drinks “for this social thing also” (21FHOC).

Amongst those individuals who have continued drinking, their alcohol consumption has at times been curtailed for various reasons, such as lack of funds (33MC, 3MS) and lack of opportunity (17MHSC). Two individuals asserted that there were periods when they were unable to drink, “usually when I’m short on cash” (33MC). For instance, the male Sikh interviewee stated that when he had not been earning, which occurred five times for a total of twenty months between the years 2001 and 2005, he became dependent on others for alcohol and as a result often stopped drinking (3MS). One respondent claimed that before coming to JNU when still living in Patna, where he did not “have such type of friends as here”, opportunities to drink were limited (17MHSC). His desire to drink was also dampened by the fact that his father lived there (17MHSC).

Nearly all students experienced alterations in their reasons for drinking during the course of their histories. In contrast to initial motivations of curiosity, celebration and

opportunity, which were linked to meanings of a new experience, adventure and excitement, the incentives cited by those who continued to drink were associated with positive psychological health and social effects, including enjoyment, relaxation, the lowering of inhibitions, intimacy and bonding. For a few interviewees, alcohol consumption became associated with negative circumstances, such as in the case of one male Christian student, who when he began to consume alcohol at the age of twenty, would get together with his friends “whenever there was an occasion”, about once a month or once every two months (19MC). “It was part of recreation, enjoyment” (19MC). There was a time, however, when rather than being enjoyable, alcohol consumption was a means to drown his sorrows pursuant to breaking up with a girlfriend. During this period, “actually I was very disturbed” (19MC). Consequently, sometimes he drank every day for a week (19MC). He also consumed alcohol frequently when he went to pursue a masters degree away from his family, but this was due to the fact that he had “[m]ore freedom. Nobody there to stop you. Can keep drink in your room” (19MC). Hence, for this particular individual, drinking began as a way to mark special occasions, but was later employed as a coping mechanism during times of distress and as a means to exercise freedom.

Similarly, in the case of the male Sikh interviewee, he began to drink occasionally in tenth standard with a friend who had managed to sneak some alcohol out of his father’s liquor cabinet for “only sake of excitement” (3MS). Upon his arrival at JNU after the twelfth standard, his drinking was limited to occasions when alcohol was offered to him. The respondent’s drinking gradually become more habitual, and eventually, he and his friends began to pool money to purchase alcohol on special occasions such as hostel day and campus elections, which were “like carnival, festival time for us” (3MS). When the student began working for an organisation, sharing drinks with his colleagues became a

regular practice and helped to strengthen his relationships with them. Then, during the course of his graduate degree at JNU, family pressures stemming from his brother's upcoming marriage to a girl from a different religious background caused him to consume alcohol as a means "to relieve myself of tension and pressure" (3MS). These examples highlight respondents' changing reasons for drinking and the different meanings alcohol consumption takes on at various points in their drinking "careers". Additionally, comparison of these meanings reveals that alcohol gradually becomes increasingly related to integral aspects of people's lives, such as the constitution, maintenance and even destruction of social relations.

5.2.2.3 The non-drinkers

Five interviewees had not tried alcohol by the time of the interviews. This group was comprised of one upper-caste Hindu male, two upper-caste Hindu females, one Hindu Brahmin female, and one Christian female. Lack of opportunity, fear, and childhood upbringing were the reasons cited for not having consumed alcohol previously. In the case of the one male who had not yet tried alcohol, he said, "The main thing is the money matter" (6MHOC). Despite being curious about the feeling accompanying drinking, he was reluctant to spend the money his parents sent on alcohol, particularly as his father had explicitly told him that drinking is only acceptable when he earns his own money. Thus, to use the money his parents sent would not be "good" (6MHOC). Moreover, as he lived with his uncle in Delhi, he did not feel comfortable drinking, as his uncle might think "ok, [he's] come to study and now he's drinking" (6MHOC). The respondent had had opportunities in the past to consume alcohol at, for instance, weddings, but had always declined out of fear of his parents' reaction. Although he stated that lack of his own spending money was the main reason for not drinking, it appeared

that his fear played a large part in his decisions not to drink, and stemmed from his inexperience with drinking and from the warnings his parents had given him about loss of control after consumption (6MHOC). Hence, he seemed to be afraid of the potential consequences of drinking. Regarding the latter, on several occasions, he had witnessed individuals throwing bottles and using “loud words” after consuming alcohol (6MHOC). When he saw this, he had asked his mother what they were doing, because “I can’t understand this thing” (6MHOC). His mother had replied, “They are not good people. Don’t go there” (6MHOC). The respondent also remembered once witnessing drunk men in a car harassing girls and telling them to get into the car. Upon recollection of this particular incident, he said that to “create that kind of environment very bad” (6MHOC) and that only illiterate people acted that way. He went on to say that although his uncle and people he knows at JNU consume alcohol, they do not “make sounds” (6MHOC). Therefore, in this student’s view, it was possible to drink responsibly, although his mother maintained that his uncle’s drinking was “bad” too (6MHOC).

The influence of her family and her childhood upbringing also influenced one of the upper-caste Hindu female respondents not to consume alcohol. Regarding the drinking habits of her family, “My father doesn’t drink at all. Even my mother’s side. I’ve never seen my family drinking or partying in that way” (7FHOC). Thus, “Even when guests come, it’s not that they’re offered alcohol” (7FHOC). In fact, “Father very averse to smoking and drinking” (7FHOC). On her mother’s side of the family, her grandmother’s brothers used to drink. They were from a poor family and would spend all their earnings on alcohol, so that her grandmother witnessed the “deterioration” of her brothers and “what harm it causes in family” (7FHOC). As a result, this student declared, “My upbringing made me say no to [alcohol]” (7FHOC). Although she had stuck to her decision not to consume alcohol, she admitted that there had been times when she had

been curious. She had never, however, indulged this curiosity not only because of her upbringing, but also because of her fear of becoming addicted. The interviewee feared that if she were to like drink, she might feel compelled to consume alcohol whenever it was available, thereby resulting in the case that she “might not come to know that addicted to it” (7FHOC). For instance, a close male friend of hers “has to drink each time there is alcohol. He doesn’t see that he’s into it” (7FHOC). Additionally, she disliked the smell of alcohol. Nonetheless, her choice to refrain from drinking had not prevented her from spending time with individuals who did consume. On the contrary, some of her closest friends as well as her two sisters drank, and she asserted that she did not mind hanging out with drinkers “as long as space is maintained”, and they did not misbehave or “tease people in a manner which people might not like” (7FHOC). She claimed, “I never thought anything negative about them” (7FHOC). Her curiosity concerning drinking also extended to people’s motivations for consuming alcohol, and she said that she occasionally attempted to figure out in what situations individuals drank. In her eyes, two types of drinkers existed: those who consumed alcohol for fun, and those who drank to forget or to release stress (7FHOC). The former she considered to be a legitimate excuse, but the latter she questioned: “Why do you have to take up such a thing to get out of stress?” “How could your drinking fix these problems?” (7FHOC). The interviewee believed that using alcohol to address problems was the root of addiction, as people who consumed alcohol for fun would never seek it out (7FHOC). Contrasting with drinkers, non-drinkers articulated a greater fear of the potential consequences of alcohol consumption, the origins of which could be traced back to beliefs that had been instilled in them by family member(s) or directly observed. As a result, rather than focusing on moderate consumption and/or the positive effects of drink, they emphasised the negative repercussions of heavy drinking, which they had witnessed firsthand.

5.2.2.4 Consequences of drinking

When asked about the consequences of drinking, the interviewees' responses fell into three main categories, economic, health and social effects. The economic consequences brought up during the interviews were largely negative: the direct costs of drinking, which ranged between Rs. 25-1500 per month^{196, 197}, were characterised as a "waste of money" (30MHSC) and the indirect costs were derived from the impairing effect on one's ability to work (3MS). Regarding the latter effect, one student stated that if one drinks frequently (e.g. four consecutive days), particularly during the work week, one does "not do justice with your work, whatever it is" (3MS). Perceived health effects were both physical and psychological. The physical health effects mentioned were largely negative and included breathlessness (34MHOC), vomiting (1MHSC, 2MHSC, 10MHOC, 21FHOC), and hangover symptoms, such as headaches (32MHU, 30MHSC, 21FHOC), drowsiness (3MS), and lethargy (31MHOC). The one exception was a respondent's assertion that a positive effect of alcohol consumption was sleeping well (2MHSC).

Psychological health repercussions were also discussed and were both negative and positive. The three negative psychological effects brought up were loss of control (in one respondent's words the feeling that "consciousness goes down" (30MHSC)), self-consciousness (16MHOC, 20MHOC), and feelings of guilt (21FHOC, 31MHOC). An upper-caste Hindu male asserted that his first drink resulted in a "heady feeling" and "for a moment you felt like you had something different", so that one "did feel you were out of place for some time" (20MHOC). Concerning guilt, an upper-caste Hindu female confessed that when she first tried alcohol, she experienced guilt, because her mother had

¹⁹⁶ The majority of interviewees were unable and/or unwilling to provide estimates on expenditures: only nine respondents offered this information.

¹⁹⁷ In contrast, the students spent between Rs. 1,000 to 3,000 on food per month, which constituted between ten and 30 percent of monthly expenditures.

always told her it was “bad” (21FHOC). A similar sentiment was expressed by an upper-caste Hindu male who initially stated that he felt guilty when he drank greater than a certain amount (31MHOC). When asked the question again, he stated “drinking is drinking” regardless of the amount, implying that he experienced guilt each time he consumed alcohol (31MHOC).

The positive psychological repercussions that came up were “positive” feelings (23MC, 15FHOC, 1MHSC, 19MC), relaxation (1MHSC, 18MHSC, 4MHU), a sense of liberation (3MS, 31MHOC, 21FHOC), a lowering of inhibitions (1MHSC, 10MHOC, 16MHOC, 21FHOC, 4MHU), and the ability to escape one’s troubles (17MHSC, 3MS, 9FC). Regarding positive psychological feelings, one upper-caste Hindu woman stated that when the full effect of drinking settled in, she “got a little zing” (15FHOC). A Scheduled Caste Hindu male said that his first drink was accompanied by a “feel good effect” (1MHSC), while a Christian male interviewee said that alcohol made him feel “good” (23MC). Another Christian male said that when he had tried alcohol for the first time, he had been “happy” (19MC). In regard to relaxation, one student claimed that alcohol “relaxes my mind” (1MHSC), while another also contended that he “feel a bit relaxed” after drinking (18MHSC).

Concerning a sense of freedom and lowering of inhibitions, one upper-caste Hindu female professed she “felt free” in the sense that although normally she had “so many inhibitions when express myself”, after her first drink, she had felt “very free to speak anything” (21FHOC). This sentiment was echoed by another interviewee who said that pursuant to consuming alcohol “You feel nobody’s pressure and feel quite liberated” (31MHOC). One Hindu male said that alcohol “in a way helped me to break my shell” (4MHU), so that he became less introverted. Another upper-caste Hindu male stated that drinking “remove fear” (16MHOC). Finally, alcohol’s role in the drowning of sorrows

was mentioned by three respondents. According to one respondent, “Before drinking if I have some problem...I’m in trouble. After drinking, I feel there is no problem. I enjoy. I forget the problems at the time” (17MHSC). Similarly, a female Christian interviewee stated that alcohol consumption made her feel as if “you are in your own world” and are “not bothered with anyone” (9FC).

The third type of consequences discussed was social ones. These involved changes in interpersonal or group dynamics and could be either positive or negative. Positive ramifications had an impact on interactions between individuals through increased gregariousness (20MHOC, 30MHSC), joviality (3MS, 31MHOC), and truthfulness (31MHOC). One student commented that he had observed shifts in a group’s atmosphere after the consumption of some alcohol. Two respondents stated that alcohol consumption led to gregariousness, so that in their experience after a few drinks, “everybody was talking more than usual” (20MHOC), sometimes even revealing their secrets (30MHSC). A couple of respondents asserted that alcohol consumption ensued in greater joviality, so that, for instance on one occasion despite the fact that some people had chosen not to consume alcohol, “everybody very happy after” and enjoyed teasing one another (3MS). Drawing on his experience, another student stated that when drinking, he and his friends “think at that time, we are enjoying” and “occasionally...we tend to sing loudly” (31MHOC). Lastly, an individual claimed that he has noticed that alcohol changes a group’s dynamics by encouraging people to “share their inner thoughts” (31MHOC).

Numerous interviewees stated that alcohol helped them to bond with their friends (20MHOC, 1MHSC, 16MHOC, 30MHSC, 3MS, 31MHOC, 4MHU). Amongst these seven individuals, there was general agreement in their accounts regarding the reasons alcohol facilitated bonds between people, namely factors of solidarity and time. A

common drinking pattern shared by several students was that of tending to consume alcohol with the same group of people. One Scheduled Caste male had been drinking with the same group, composed of his girlfriend and two Brahmin male friends, for the past two years (1MHSC). The consequent ramification had been that “our friendship has grown stronger”, to the extent that they “are able to read each other’s thoughts” (1MHSC). Another respondent expressed the belief that because one tended to drink alcohol more slowly than, for instance, a can of coke, one ended up spending extended periods of time with the people with which one consumes alcohol. According to this student, “Alcohol because of this time factor makes you get to know people better” (20MHOC). A similar belief was expressed by a Hindu male, who posited that amongst eighteen to 30 year olds, “They become closer those who take alcohol in a group”, and “they think, ‘we are friends’” because of the long periods of time, three to four hours, spent drinking together (30MHSC). He had also experienced this phenomenon and believed that it was generally true of students (30MHSC). Several interviewees stated that because one could not necessarily drink with everyone, there was a feeling of solidarity that bound people who consumed alcohol together. Hence, one person stated, “no doubt alcohol brings people closer” (16MHOC). Such statements were questioned by some individuals who felt that alcohol did not play a special role in facilitating bonds between people. A male Hindu respondent suggested that rather than being a characteristic particular to alcohol, with his friends, “Even tea becomes something” (4MHU). It is interesting to note that the respondents who felt that alcohol encouraged stronger bonds between fellow drinkers were all male. This was also expressed by a female respondent who stated that “alcohol was part of being a man”, so that two men together will inevitably drink (21FHOC).

Several negative social repercussions of alcohol consumption, such as “inhuman” behaviour, interpersonal conflict, and violence, were also brought up by the interviewees. According to one respondent, alcohol consumption encourages individuals to reveal their true nature, and occasionally, “Some people after drinking, act inhuman” (17MHSC), engaging in behaviour, such as throwing bottles (6MHOC), using “loud words” (6MHOC), offering “abuse” (3MS), harassing women (6MHOC), teasing people in an antagonistic fashion (7FHOC), and being “non-veg” (i.e. speaking explicitly about sexual matters) (8FHOC). Drinking was also reported as leading to conflict between people in a romantic relationship. One student stated, “Alcohol between boyfriend and girlfriend means problems” (16MHOC). His explanation was twofold: that there are more men than women on campus who drink, and that girlfriends usually dislike when their boyfriends consume alcohol (16MHOC). Therefore, not only was it rare for couples to drink together, but “Most of the time alcohol in private lives means trouble” (16MHOC). Although he had yet to experience this, the student articulated the presentiment that “In my personal life alcohol will make problems, I am sure” (16MHOC). Finally, numerous students mentioned instances in which alcohol consumption resulted in violence. In the words of one respondent, every hostel had parties that were “occasions where drink, dance and beat each other” (19MC). Other students had seen drink ensue in “quarrels” and “scuffles” at, for example, the yearly campus event hostel lights (18MHSC) and birthday as well as other types of celebrations (30MHSC, 3MS). One student referred to an instance in which people who had only consumed two drinks began to shout at and quarrel with each other (1MHSC). He expressed disbelief that so few alcoholic drinks could result in such behaviour. It was to be expected after heavier drinking, such as six or seven drinks, which he had also witnessed two or three times a year at the on-campus *dhabas* or snack stands (1MHSC). These incidents were often related to the opposite sex,

including dissatisfaction with a girlfriend's actions, or the interference of a third party in a man's attempts to woo a female student (1MHSC). According to this student, 99 percent of these violent occurrences involved males (1MHSC). The violent actions students discussed were not limited to on-campus happenings; some interviewees linked drinking and domestic violence (17MHSC and 19MC). It was said to be particularly problematic in the rural context: "In India in villages...the husbands always beat his wife...Especially in patriarchal society where men greater than women" (17MHSC). Only one student admitted to a family member engaging in domestic violence – he had seen his uncle beat his wife (34MHOC). This investigation of the ramifications of alcohol consumption and their characterisation suggests that myriad informal rules apply to drinking by different groups, which were also brought up by respondents in the context of prohibition and regulations (to be covered in section 5.2.2.8) and are to be explored at greater length later in this chapter (in section 5.3 on the intensification and extensification of meanings).

5.2.2.5 Family members' attitudes towards alcohol and their drinking practices

From the accounts of the non-drinkers, it is evident that different family members' attitudes towards alcohol and their drinking practices play a large role in shaping the respondents' views of alcohol as well as their decisions to drink (or not). However, different family members' attitudes toward alcohol could sometimes conflict, and resulting tensions were experienced and mentioned by several individuals. In various instances, if, for example, the mother considered alcohol to be "bad", the particular respondent would often have similar feelings towards drinking, for the drinking of other members, such as brothers and even fathers, were not sufficient counterweights to the mother's disapproval. Nonetheless, the censorious views of one or more family members in regard to alcohol consumption generally and/or to the interviewee's drinking

specifically were usually not compelling enough to prevent respondents from drinking, so that under the influence of the university environment, students' conceptualisation of alcohol and their drinking practices were often transformed. The hypothetical question posed by a female non-drinker is pertinent here, "If ten people are drinking and smoking, how can you isolate yourself?" (7FHOC). This exemplifies Bêteille's observation, discussed at the beginning of this chapter, that at elite schools in India, the culture of, for instance, the university comes to take precedence over that of other institutions, such as that formed through caste practices. Even amongst the non-drinkers, their perceptions of alcohol appear to have liberalised during their time at university, so that they find responsible drinking permissible.

Notwithstanding, in most cases, a shift in drinking preferences and practices, the impact of family members' opinions could not be escaped completely and was experienced in ways such as an unwillingness to spend money that parents had sent for educational expenses on alcohol (3MS), the concealing of their alcohol consumption from their families (30MHSC, 24FC, 3MS, 31MHOC, 4MHU, 18MHSC), and reluctance to drink before family members (1MHSC). One student hid his drinking from his parents because, "if they come to know, they'll think it's nasty", and "[t]hey would get very much angry" (31MHOC). Furthermore, as he did not want his family to know about his alcohol consumption, he claimed that he would stop drinking when he moved back to where his family was and began to work (31MHOC). Another Hindu male stated his parents were unaware of his drinking. If they were to discover he consumed alcohol, they would be upset as they believed that "drinking is bad" (4MHU). When asked whether her parents knew of her drinking, one Hindu female replied, "No they do not know. Will not approve" (36FHB).

The drinking of other family members was often looked upon with disapproval as well. One student asserted that the fact his father “takes drink” occasionally, displeases his mother. The respondent went on to specify that although his father does not consume alcohol regularly and never alone, when he does drink, he is a “chain drinker” causing him to become unbalanced and impairing his ability to speak (6MHOC). Another interviewee relayed a story about his uncle he remembered from his childhood: one night when he was six or seven years old, his uncle returned home from a social gathering where he must have consumed alcohol, as his eyes were red (31MHOC), and his aunt yelled at him for coming home drunk, as “children will see effects” (31MHOC). A third student recalled an incident concerning his father’s brother, who was beaten by his elder brothers because he would “abuse” everyone using “slang language” after drinking heavily (30MHSC).

Even for respondents whose family members were not against drinking and/or whose parents knew of their alcohol consumption, it was unacceptable to drink in the presence of their elders (1MHSC, 32MHU, 34MHOC, 35FHOC). According to one Scheduled Caste Hindu male, who never drank before his parents, particularly his father, despite their knowledge of his alcohol consumption, “I cannot drink in front of my father. I’ve never smoked in front of him” (1MHSC). Although he ascribed this to the following: “Respect, social structure, maybe this age old tradition has impact on my thinking” (1MHSC), his reluctance may also have been affected by his father’s abstention from alcohol. In several cases, an individual’s drinking was kept from certain family members, usually mothers, and not others. For example, one Christian male student asserted that despite the fact that the rest of his family knew he consumed alcohol, his mother did not, because if she were to find out, “she’ll die” (19MC). The respondents’ answers indicate that mothers tend to condemn alcohol consumption more than other family members,

which may partly be explained by Bayly's observation that "Correct conduct often matters more than ever in these 'modern' environments, especially in the demands it places on women...even where women are themselves employed outside the home, it is still primarily the task of wives and mothers to counteract the inescapable pollutions which afflict their households..." (1999:347). Two respondents were open with their families about their drinking (20MHOC, 29FHOC).

The transformation of students' alcohol preferences and practices and their degrees of comfort with their own alcohol consumption varied depending on the extent to which family members' attitudes and practices agreed or disagreed with their own. Respondents who came from families in which no members were opposed to alcohol tended to experience little change in their drinking practices and preferences. For example, for the two Christian males whose families drank openly as part of dinner or other social events (23MC, 33MC), neither their alcohol consumption patterns nor their conceptualisations of drinking seemed to have altered significantly during the course of their drinking histories.

In contrast, many other interviewees experienced shifts in both attitudes toward alcohol and drinking practices. Amongst these individuals, some had a family member or members who drank (3MS, 4MHU, 8FHOC, 9FC, 17MHSC, 18MHSC/ST, 19MC, 21FHOC, 24FC, 30MHSC) as well as one or more members who were either against alcohol consumption generally or against that by the student specifically (3MS, 4MHU, 8FHOC, 18MHSC/ST, 19MC, 21FHOC, 22FC, 24FC, 30MHSC, 31MHOC, 36FB). Drinking family members usually included the father (9FC, 17MHSC, 21FHOC, 30MHSC), and sometimes a grandfather (3MS), an uncle (21FHOC), sister(s) (8FHOC, 24FC), and/or brother(s) (4MHU, 18MHSC, 19MC, 24FC). For students with family members who drank as well as others who were against alcohol, drinking was often

accompanied by feelings of guilt and by a careful justification of their alcohol consumption based upon perceived distinctions of class and education. In the case of a Scheduled Caste male who drank primarily on special occasions, one reason why alcohol was perceived as negative in his family and why the student supported prohibition to prevent uneducated people from indulging in drink was because of his uncle's heavy drinking and subsequent abuse of those around him (30MHSC). This interviewee justified his drinking practices and preferences by stressing his ability to drink moderately and without causing harm to others, which he related to the fact that he was educated, in contrast to his illiterate uncle. It is interesting to note that as he and his uncle were of the same social origin, the student employed education, rather than class, to differentiate his drinking behaviour from that of his uncle.

Some individuals went from drinking to not drinking as a result of practices in their families, as in the case of a female Christian student. She began consuming alcohol at the age of eighteen, when she tried it at a friend's party, and continued to drink occasionally at Christmas, when she and the rest of her extended family would have a glass of, for instance, home-made ginger wine at her grandmother's house (22FC). However, after her father gave up drinking for health reasons, her parents' became increasingly critical of her alcohol consumption as well. Although they never explicitly told her to stop drinking, their strong disapproval of her having even the occasional glass of wine with the rest of her family to celebrate Christmas induced her to give up alcohol. This respondent's experience with drink highlights the strong pull that family values can continue to exert on individuals with regard to alcohol. As her parents' drinking behaviours and attitudes towards alcohol became more conservative, they caused the interviewee to give up the little celebratory drinking she did at Christmas, despite its status as a longstanding family tradition.

5.2.2.6 *Moderate vs. heavy drinking*

The distinction between moderate and heavy drinking, etc categories commonly used in the literature¹⁹⁸, was only brought up by one student when talking about the social repercussions of alcohol consumption. When each of the interviewees was explicitly asked to define moderate and heavy drinking, there was no consensus. They based their definitions on six criteria: context, frequency, quantity, intention and consequences. One respondent stated that moderate and heavy drinking are contextual, so that if one is taking two or three drinks, in contrast to others' intake of eight or nine, one is drinking moderately (18MHSC). On the other hand, if one is consuming two, whereas others are only having one, one can be considered a heavy drinker (18MHSC). Frequency and quantity were indicated as ways to discern moderate and heavy alcohol consumption. Two interviewees indicated that moderate drinking "is not consuming daily" (19MC and 3MS). Another student stated that to be a moderate drinker, one must neither consume alcohol regularly nor become addicted (9FC). Heavy drinking was defined in the following manner: "Heavy drinking is like drinking everyday" (19MC). This statement was echoed by two other individuals (33MC and 3MS). For another interviewee, "eating alcohol in a week" (i.e. consuming alcohol every week) fell under the category of heavy drinking. Quantity was also used to delineate moderate and heavy drinking. Six respondents characterised moderate alcohol consumption as two drinks (1MHSC, 9FC, 10MHOC, 15FHOC, 16MHOC, 24FC). One drink or less was described as "hardly drinking" (25FC), "very moderate" (35FHOC), and minimal (9FC). Heavy drinking was defined as more than five or six drinks by one student (18MHSC) and more than six or seven drinks by another (1MHSC).

¹⁹⁸ (WHO 2007: http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/terminology/who_lexicon/en/).

Moderate and heavy drinking were also defined by the motivations for and repercussions of consuming alcohol. A few students contended that moderate drinking was done “just for fun” (9FC) or “for sake of enjoyment, not for sake of drinking” (19MC, 16MHOC). A female non-drinker characterised moderate drinking as consumption in which “you never plan things” (7FHOC). If “people have this every week they have to drink” and “make arrangements, save money for it” (7FHOC), she does not consider this to be moderate drinking. Rather, in her view, moderate drinking is when one decides to have a drink or two once a month or once every two months as a change from daily life (7FHOC). The same student characterised a heavy drinker as someone who “can’t live without it” (7FHOC). Heavy alcohol consumption was also defined as drinking without worrying about the effects, such as being able to work the following day (16MHOC).

Finally, the ramifications of alcohol consumption were employed to define moderate and heavy drinking. One interviewee claimed, “Moderate is when the drink does not start influencing you” (20MHOC). A similar statement was made by another respondent, who contended that moderate drinking “must not be associated with someone’s behaviour – funny things” (1MHSC). A third student asserted that moderate drinking is a “very subjective thing” (4MHU), after which “You don’t lose control of yourself and remain awake, conscious” and “remain in normal state of mind” (4MHU). Another male student declared that if one is able to walk back to one’s room, one has consumed moderately (2MHSC). Excessive consumption was characterised by physical and psychological consequences. Regarding physical repercussions, heavy drinking was said to result in an individual going to sleep immediately afterwards and waking up with a headache (1MHSC), while another stated that the only time he engaged in heavy drinking, he became sick, which led to him “not having fun” (10MHSC). Heavy drinking

was also characterised as when “the amount of alcohol you have is something” and “you get drunk simply” (4MHU). Psychologically, heavy drinking was described as “the drink influencing you”, so that one talks “nonsense” (20MHOC). Several criteria were often utilised together to define moderate and heavy drinking. For instance, one student stated that moderate drinking was the consumption of two or three drinks at a party about once a month or once every two months (30MHSC). Therefore, in this case, moderate drinking was characterised by quantity, context and frequency.

5.2.2.7 Social vs. unsocial drinking

When asked to define social and unsocial drinking, terms that are also commonly used in the literature¹⁹⁹, the respondents based their definitions on intention, context and consequences. In terms of intention, according to one student, social drinking was moderate drinking (1MHSC), not more than three drinks in his case, and was more about chatting with someone with a glass in hand than about consuming alcohol (1MHSC). In the words of another student, “Social drinking – drinking just to give company to others during get-togethers” (35FHOC). A third Hindu interviewee characterised social drinkers as those who do not disturb others and “drink for yourself, not to show that has drunk” (16MHOC). The Sikh respondent expressed the opinion that social drinking “is that when we are drinking in a group of two or three people or more than that...trying to socialise” (3MS). Unsocial drinking was also defined by intention by three students. One male Hindu who had yet to try alcohol described unsocial drinking as instances in which “people drinking on sadness and unhappy” and “don’t invite anyone” (6MHOC). A male Christian drinker asserted that unsocial alcohol consumption was “perhaps when it’s just you and the bottle for the bottle’s sake” (33MC). Drinking alone was also viewed as

¹⁹⁹ (WHO 2007: http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/terminology/who_lexicon/en/).

unsocial drinking by another male Christian interviewee, who said that unsocial drinking was when one “just take alone. For sake of drinking, gone mad” (19MC). In contrast to views that unsocial drinking occurred alone, one interviewee believed that it could take place even when in the company of others. For example, when “you’re drinking, but you’re drinking as a formality...Trying to fulfil norms of society without actually participating in it” (20MHOC). Thus, instances in which people “go, exchange pleasantries, drink to satisfy themselves” were unsocial according to this male Hindu respondent (20MHOC).

Context was also a factor in determining social and unsocial drinking, and the two types of drinking were defined in various, sometimes contradictory, ways. Three students considered drinking with close friends to be an important element of social drinking (19MC, 10MHOC, 34MHOC). One indicated that social drinking is when “I’m having fun with friends” (10MHOC), while another characterised it as “drinking with a set of people whose joys I can share and understand when they are high and when they are not” (34MHOC). A third male student distinguished between social drinking that takes place “when I go to parties, I drink but never enjoy because talking to people don’t know” and social drinking that occurs in the company of his spouse and/or close friends, which is marked by the fact that “some kind of closeness is there” (19MC). The same belief was also expressed by a non-drinker to whom social drinking implied that “it is with friends only” and never occurs with family, unless one comes from a very liberal one (7FHOC). On the other hand, for one male respondent, social drinking meant sharing a drink with family members at an event, such as a wedding (30MHSC). In six cases, however, rather than being defined as a function of intimacy, social drinking was described simply as drinking that occurred in the company of other people (15FHOC, 2MHSC, 3MS, 4MHU), whether at a party or a wedding (9FC, 18MHSC). Concerning unsocial drinking, four

interviewees indicated that drinking alone was unsocial (19MC, 15FHOC, 10MHOC, 9FC). One student stated rather unusually that not being able to drink with one's family or to reveal one's alcohol consumption to them was unsocial (30MHSC).

In addition to intention and context, the repercussions of alcohol consumption were used to delineate social and unsocial drinking. Social drinking was characterised as not resulting in others' disturbance (16MHOC) or harm (17MHSC). One student stated that social drinking was not only "when you get to interact more with people", but also when one "gets to do things which are common and beneficial to society" (20MHOC). According to him, when he and his friends drink together, they often discuss issues, such as education. If they believe that there is potential for positive change and there is a consensus on the best means to effect such change, they will organise an on-campus debate to facilitate discussion and/or present the issue to the appropriate authorities (20MHOC). Unsocial drinking was considered to be drinking that led to loss of control (9FC, 3MS), so that one "makes a ruckus" (19MC, 18MHSC) and/or "abuses" friends and people in one's environment (17MHSC, 6MHOC, 18MHSC). Similarly, another interviewee stated that unsocial drinking was when "a person is not under control. Can do anything at that moment", such as "misbehave with people" (7FHOC). The male Sikh interviewee asserted that unsocial drinking is when "after drinking...you're not in your senses...you do whatever you want to do. If you want to bash someone, you bash someone...If you want to molest women, you molest women" (3MS). Contrasting with his peers, a male Hindu respondent viewed abstaining from drink completely as unsocial (2MHSC).

5.2.2.8 Prohibition and regulations: gender and class distinctions

The students were also asked whether alcohol consumption should be legal and if yes, whether there should be rules and regulations governing it. Twelve answered in the affirmative to the former, while five endorsed the legality of alcohol by expressing their scepticism about the state governments' ability to enforce prohibition. One respondent was ambivalent, and one was for prohibition. Regarding prohibition, in the view of one interviewee, individuals who wished to drink should be allowed to consume alcohol. In his opinion, despite the perception that those who drink are "enjoying more", upon trying alcohol, it is possible that people may not wish to continue drinking, because "It's not that only with drinking, life can continue" (2MHSC). Another student contended, "It has to be seen in the context. A government doesn't have a universal reason to impose prohibition. Sometimes it is justified, sometimes it is not" (34MHOC). A third viewpoint was expressed by another student: "Don't agree with prohibition – stems from my larger conviction that prohibiting anything makes one want that thing more" (33MC). A fourth male student believed that alcohol should not be prohibited because "I think alcohol is nice to enjoy as an experience. But it shouldn't be a habit" (31MHOC). A few students drew on tradition to argue against prohibition. For instance, one respondent indicated that alcohol was mentioned even in the ancient Sanskrit text *Bhagavad Gita* (1MHSC), while another pointed out that alcohol was traditionally consumed by certain northeastern tribal groups after a day of hard work in the jungle without causing anyone harm (17MHOC). Five students expressed scepticism as to the state governments' ability to enforce prohibition (4MHU, 8FHOC, 19MC, 32MHU, 33MC), due to bootleg and black market liquor (22FC). The one individual who supported prohibition gave the reason that many families are "ruining because of alcohol" (30MHSC); his uncle's family was an example. Suggestions made by students regarding regulation included the prohibition of illicitly

brewed alcohol (17MHSC), drinking and driving (17MHSC), and underage drinking (36FHB, 20MHOC, 1MHSC, 31MHOC).

Distinctions along gender lines were brought up in this context. It was acknowledged during the group interview as well as during various individual interviews that women who drink are more likely to be criticised than their male counterparts, particularly amongst the lower-classes (5G). A female student argued that in contrast to attitudes at JNU, where alcohol consumption by both men and women was acceptable, the thinking in Indian society tended to be “when boy starts drinking, he must have bad company” (7FHOC). Even if people were to disagree with such behaviour, however, for men “at a certain level a certain acceptance come” (7FHOC). On the other hand, she maintained that alcohol consumption by women is not as easily accepted outside of campus (7FHOC).

The permissibility of women’s drinking on campus only appeared to extend to cases of moderate, and not heavy, consumption. A couple of male Hindu respondents (16MHOC, 2MHSC) expressed their disapproval of excessive alcohol consumption by women. One stated that he is comfortable with women trying alcohol, but that he “does not want to see it”, should drinking become a habit whereby they consume everyday or even every weekend (2MHSC). Another male interviewee echoed his feelings. This student had seen women in Delhi drinking at parties, and in his view, the “intelligent women” consumed drinks with low alcohol content, such as Bacardi Breezers (16MHOC). Contrasting with his male peers, another male Hindu student believed that it is “ok for everyone to drink”, regardless of gender and religious background, as long as they are not, for example, too young (4MHU). There was a single instance of a female respondent commenting on men’s drinking behaviour. She expressed her disgust with

people who drink for the “wrong reasons”, as in the case of men who drink in the company of women for the reason that “I’m a man and, therefore, I drink” (21FHOC).

In addition to those regarding gender, there appeared to be distinctions based on education and class as well. Similar to the findings in the previous chapter concerning the class distinctions made in regard to alcohol consumption, the interviews also revealed that individuals of lower socio-economic backgrounds and with less education were seen as needing “protection” from alcohol. The problem was explicitly stated by one interviewee: “Alcohol consumption has completely different meaning in lower class”, as they have no other forms of entertainment besides drinking, wife beating and the sexual harassment of women (21FHOC). In addition to domestic violence (17MHSC, 35FHOC), lower-class drinking was said to act as an economic drain on indigent households (16MHOC, 31MHOC). One respondent argued that restrictions on alcohol are needed, because once an impoverished person began to drink, it would become a habit (16MHOC). “That creates problems”, as individuals below the poverty line, “after drinking cannot get food” (16MHOC). In his words, “Don’t give a pistol to a child” (16MHOC). He continued to assert that literate people are aware of the potential harmful effects and will avoid them by, for example, eating properly afterwards, whereas indigent people will not (16MHOC). It is interesting to note that this interviewee perceived the poor and illiterate, i.e. uneducated, as one and the same group. This was not true of his peers, many of whom cited class, the rural/urban divide and education without explicitly conflating them. For instance, one student characterised villagers as the problem, since “In India in villages...the husbands always beat the wife”, which made him conclude that alcohol “use must be controlled by government” (17MHSC). One male Scheduled Caste student believed that lack of education led to problems regarding alcohol and offered the example of his illiterate uncle, who verbally abused people after drinking (30MHSC).

There were also various interpretations of “lower-classes”. Two individuals described them as the lower-middle class (19MC, 3MS), while three others characterised them as the “workers” (8FHOC, 3MS) or the “labour class” (31MHOC). According to one female Hindu interviewee, drinking was more problematic amongst the lower classes due to the fact that poor people, “such as autodriviers”, were more likely than their wealthier counterparts to consume alcohol on a daily basis (8FHOC). She had once queried a couple of rickshaw drivers as to why they drank, and one replied that alcohol consumption was the only relief he had after a long day spent driving patrons in the heat. Moreover, drink also alleviated the anger and helplessness he felt due to the fact that he could only keep a portion of his earnings, since it was necessary to give a percentage to the rickshaw’s owner, which prevented him from helping his family (8FHOC). The female student claimed that the autodriver had said he consumed alcohol “to be happy for a few moments, for a few hours, I drink, I sleep”, while the other autodriver she had spoken to had stated that he consumed alcohol, because he “feels very light when drink alcohol” (8FHOC).

Although alcohol was considered a problem amongst persons of lower socio-economic backgrounds, the reverse was true for individuals of higher status. During the group interview, the students agreed that as one moves up the socio-economic ladder towards the upper-middle class, a certain status is tied to drinking (5G). The status also increases with the price of the alcohol being consumed (5G). An interviewee who did not take part in the group interview also pointed out that attitudes towards drinking are only opening up amongst the higher classes (15FHOC). One female JNU student noted, “In high society culture like Delhi, women comfortable with glass” and “actually drinking and smoking has become fashion now” (7FHOC). Hence, she contended that if one does not smoke or drink in these circles, “people will make faces” (7FHOC). She offered an

example of a friend of her sister, who does not smoke, but will light up and hold a cigarette when in certain company to avoid being teased for “not walking with the modern society” (7FHOC). A female DU student indicated that alcohol was linked to status on campus, so that people will drink “to prove that part of high class” (8FHOC). Some of these individuals, who tend to dress “hip hop” if male or “hip hip” if female, go to clubs such as RPM²⁰⁰ from 1:30 to 6:30 in the afternoon to drink and dance. Alcohol was also cited as playing an important role in the business dealings of the upper classes. One interviewee explained that business in India is often conducted in an informal manner and that during his time as a business development manager, “most of the deals I struck were done over a glass of beer or wine” (20MHOC).

5.3 Inside meanings: intensification and extensification

The interviews bring to light the meanings that the students ascribe to drinking through the processes of intensification and extensification. As discussed in Chapter 1, the former refers to the meanings attached to uses of an item that stem from emulation of others’ consumption patterns, while the latter refers to the meanings associated with uses that do not arise from imitation. Concerning the meanings associated with intensification, there were three types: health, economic and social. Alcohol and bad health were linked by several students (7FHOC, 16MHOC, 3MS, 21FHOC, 22FC). One drinker stated, “I know it’s not good for health” (3MS). The negative association between the two also led a non-drinker to worry about the health of a friend who she felt drank too much. Only negative correlations were made between alcohol and physical health, whereas alcohol

²⁰⁰ On 25 October 2005, we accompanied this respondent to RPM around 3:30 in the afternoon. The club was packed at the time with people between the ages of seventeen and 23. Our interviewee informed us that at most a few males would be near the upper age limit. The girls were dressed far less conservatively than most women on the street usually are; they were clad in tight tops, tank tops and short skirts. Many were drinking. Most were also dancing. Several couples in dark corners were engaging in physical intimacy. All of this was striking because much of this behaviour is not openly accepted in Indian society, and because it was taking place during the day.

was cited as abetting psychological health by, for instance, facilitating relaxation. Economically, alcohol was described as a waste of money. In addition to acting as a direct drain on income for students and for others, such as auto drivers who sought oblivion from hard work in alcohol, drinking was also said to have an impact on a person's ability to work.

Socially, many students explained that alcohol continued to be deemed "taboo" by their families, in some cases, and by Indian society more generally, so that although drinking was not legally prohibited, drinking before older family members, such as parents and uncles, and appearing drunk were frowned upon (5G). In the group interview, the students observed that rather than speaking openly about alcohol consumption, it was often referred to in a coded manner, and drinking was done discreetly (5G). Faced with these taboos, alcohol consumption incited contradictory feelings in drinkers. For example, in a couple of cases, it was followed by guilt as well as a sense of freedom. The forbidden nature of alcohol and the "danger" related to it also led to meanings related to adventure and maturity, resulting from an individual's ability to deal with alcohol by drinking responsibly.

New meanings were created through unimitative extensification as well. Contrasting with the largely negative meanings attached to alcohol use through intensification, extensification appeared to result in meanings positively linked to phenomena, such as business, celebration and modernity. Not only was alcohol characterised as playing an important role in business negotiations, it also appeared to be an integral element of celebration, whether for an accomplishment, a birthday or a holiday. Moreover, alcohol acted as a signifier of status in two ways. First, it indicated that one was "modern", and second, the kind of alcohol consumed was a reflection of factors such as gender and drinking experience. Some categories of alcohol such as beer

or alcohol pops were considered, particularly by men, to be “soft” drinks and, therefore, less harmful, which made them more appropriate for women and for individuals who were neophytes to alcohol.

Hence, the greater permissibility of alcohol consumption has generated concepts of unacceptable and acceptable drinking behaviour. Students’ descriptions of social and unsocial drinking revealed that consuming alcohol by oneself was generally considered unacceptable drinking behaviour, as was engaging in behaviour that offended or bothered people. One female interviewee complained that after a few drinks, her friends’ language altered, so that after consuming alcohol, they were more sexually explicit, which she described as acting “like animals” and “indecent” (8FHOC). Although social and unsocial alcohol consumption were not linked to moderate and heavy drinking by any of the respondents, the importance placed on behaviour after alcohol consumption in the context of social and unsocial drinking also carried over into the discussion on moderate and heavy consumption. The interviewees’ answers indicate that the latter two categories are seen as relative, so that moderate and heavy drinking can both be acceptable, depending on how one acts after consuming, which belief was explicitly expressed by one of the respondents (6MHOC). Therefore, rather than deeming alcohol and alcohol consumption as unequivocally negative, distinctions were made depending on, for instance, context, intention and consequences.

Another significant meaning linked to drinking was social closeness. Consuming alcohol with others facilitated bonding in two ways: by allowing individuals to cultivate a deeper sense of intimacy with people they knew well or by permitting them to share a “special” experience with persons to whom they were not already close. During this process, it appeared that “traditional” boundaries based on religion and caste began to be blurred, so that, in the words of one student “[w]hen drinking with people who are

drinking, of religion of drinking” (16MHOC), which he clarified as meaning that when one consumes alcohol, the religion and castes of the individuals with whom one drinks become irrelevant, as the act of alcohol consumption overshadows these considerations. In this context, the students’ responses indicate that drinking was most acceptable when it was done with a group of close friends to celebrate a special occasion, such as a birthday or holiday, and did not result in behaviour that antagonised or harmed other people.

Regarding gender, despite the fact that a few students occasionally drank in mixed groups, indicating a greater acceptance of women’s drinking, the replies concerning prohibition shed light on the informal restrictions that were utilised to develop a “modern” conception of femininity. For instance, a male interviewee expressed his disapproval of women’s reasons for consuming alcohol as he perceived them. He attributed the rise in alcohol consumption amongst women to the fact that “feminism is coming up”, i.e. that women now sought equality with men, which in the case of alcohol consumption implied that they drank for the sake of being “equal” to men, and went on to say, “I think this is bad” (16MHOC). According to him, there was a difference between, for example, women drinking and men smoking, as the latter was “natural” and because men, who are “hard”, had a greater level of tolerance than women, who are “soft” (16MHOC). Therefore, this “creates problem” (16MHOC). Nevertheless, he stated that if “your choice, I have no problem” as long as one “let yourself be comfortable with that” (16MHOC). This student’s answer together with the responses of his peers to questions pertaining to prohibition suggest that despite the general acceptability of female alcohol consumption on campus, there are informal rules women must adhere to when drinking. “Intelligent” women are expected to limit consumption to occasionally drinking beverages with low alcohol content, such as Bacardi Breezers, in social contexts. Such beliefs echo the findings from the previous chapter, which revealed that although female

alcohol consumption is characterised as more acceptable by English language newspapers and women's magazines, there are a myriad of subtle restrictions governing female drinking.

In contrast to the bonding element which drinking appears to be for the middle-class students who were interviewed, alcohol is an important basis of differentiation from people of lower-classes and from less educated persons. McDonald has observed that in many Western countries,

“An important early feature of the moral and political perceptions of danger...was the fact that it was groups perceived to be essentially different or threatening to the established social majority who were visibly consuming alcohol. In general, the more the working classes (or 'Negroes', Catholics, Irish immigrants, and so on) were seen to drink, the more drink and drinking became defined as a problem; but the more the middle classes were themselves to have drinking problems, the more these problems became amoralistically defined” (1994:4).

The interviews confirm similar phenomena occurring amongst the Indian urban middle-class, whose members depict alcohol consumption by their lower-class counterparts as “dangerous”, even as they carefully justify their own drinking. Furthermore, whereas students' answers demonstrate that the meanings they attach to the purchase, use and alcohol are varied and complex, their characterisations of drinking by members of lower-classes was less nuanced: it was assumed that poorer individuals always drank irresponsibly and heavily with destructive repercussions for themselves and others. The respondents indicated sentiments that resonated with media depictions discussed in the previous chapter, of drinking by poor people, who were portrayed as childlike, as acting as a drain on family finances and ensuing in domestic violence. Consequently, it was claimed that restrictions on lower class peoples' access to alcohol were needed. On the other hand, drinking amongst people of the higher classes was not only considered acceptable, it was considered a social and economic necessity, due to its role in establishing status and lubricating business negotiations.

5.4 Conclusion

The preceding presentation and analysis of evidence from interviews shed light on the different inside meanings, summarised in Figure 5.1, that Indian urban middle-class students in Delhi attribute to various uses of alcohol through the processes of intensification and extensification. They support the observations of Bourdieu and B eteille that for members of elite educational institutions, the latter’s “culture” comes to supersede other considerations such as, according to B eteille, religion or caste. Although our findings in this chapter largely resonate with those of the previous one, which illuminated the diminishing influence of religion and caste on consumption decisions and the increasing role of class and, in this chapter, education, we found differences between emic and etic roles of alcohol as well, which may be compared through the summaries in figures 5.1 (emic) and 5.2 and 5.3 (etic: through our analysis of the media).

Figure 5.1 The reasons for and meanings of drinking

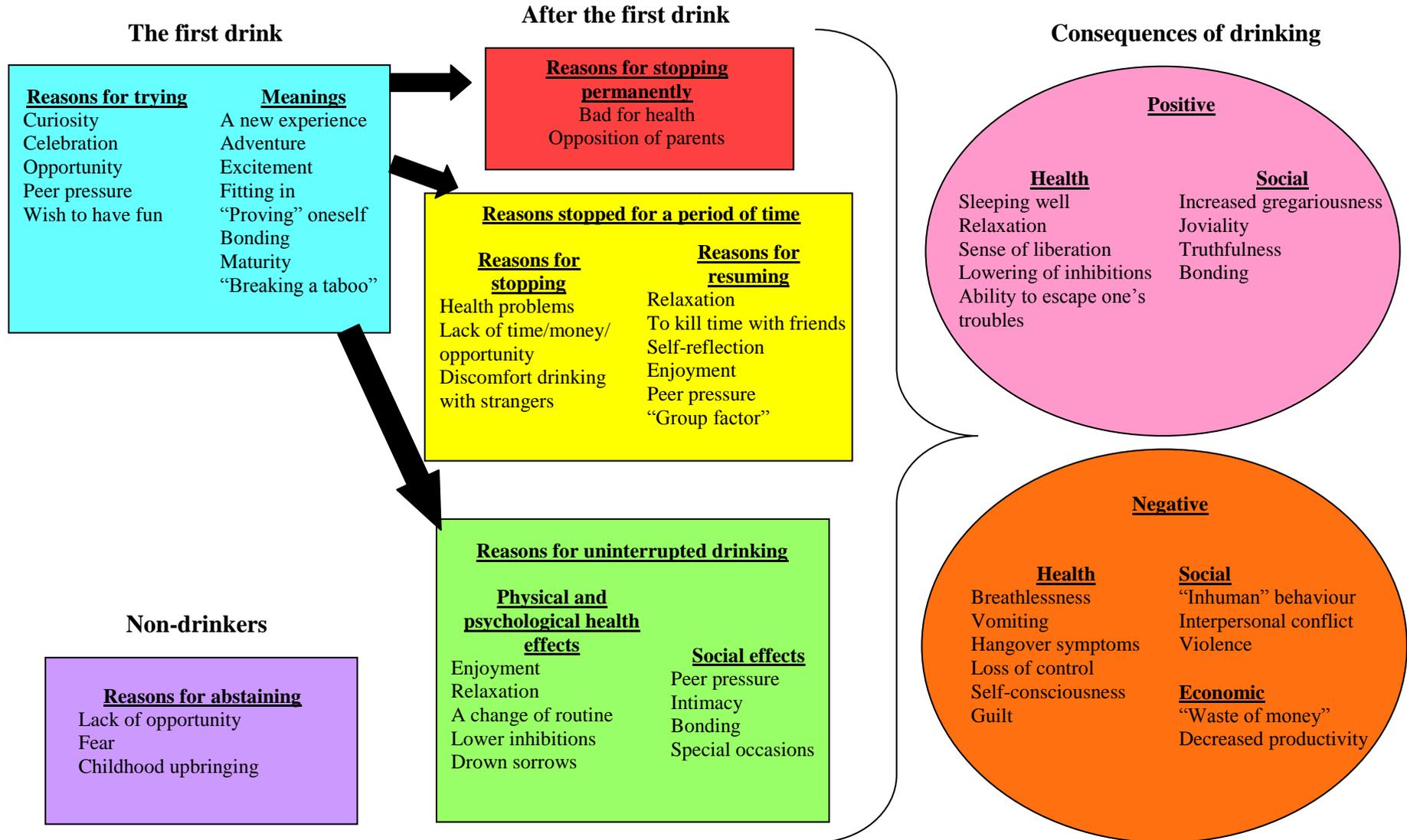


Figure 5.2 Media representations of individuals' attitudes towards alcohol

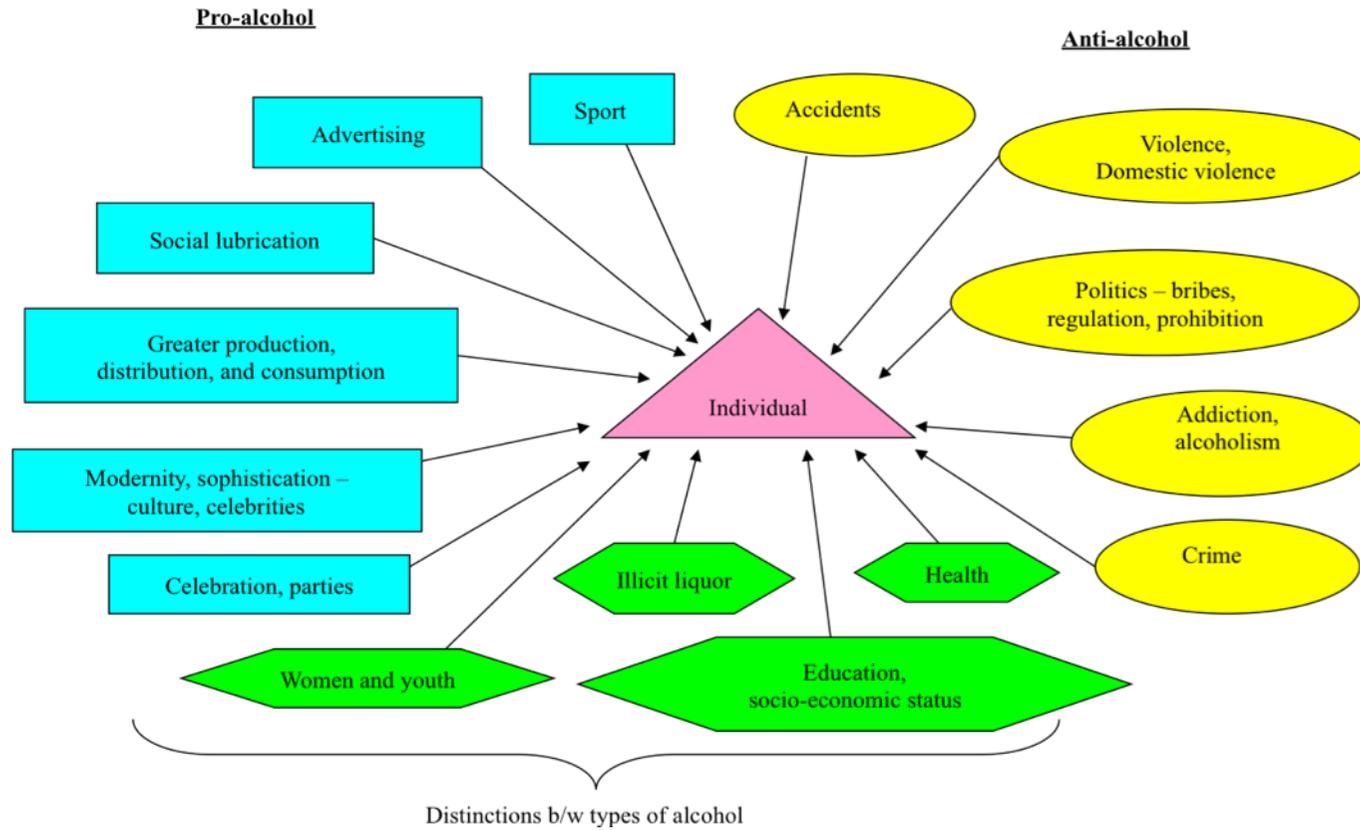
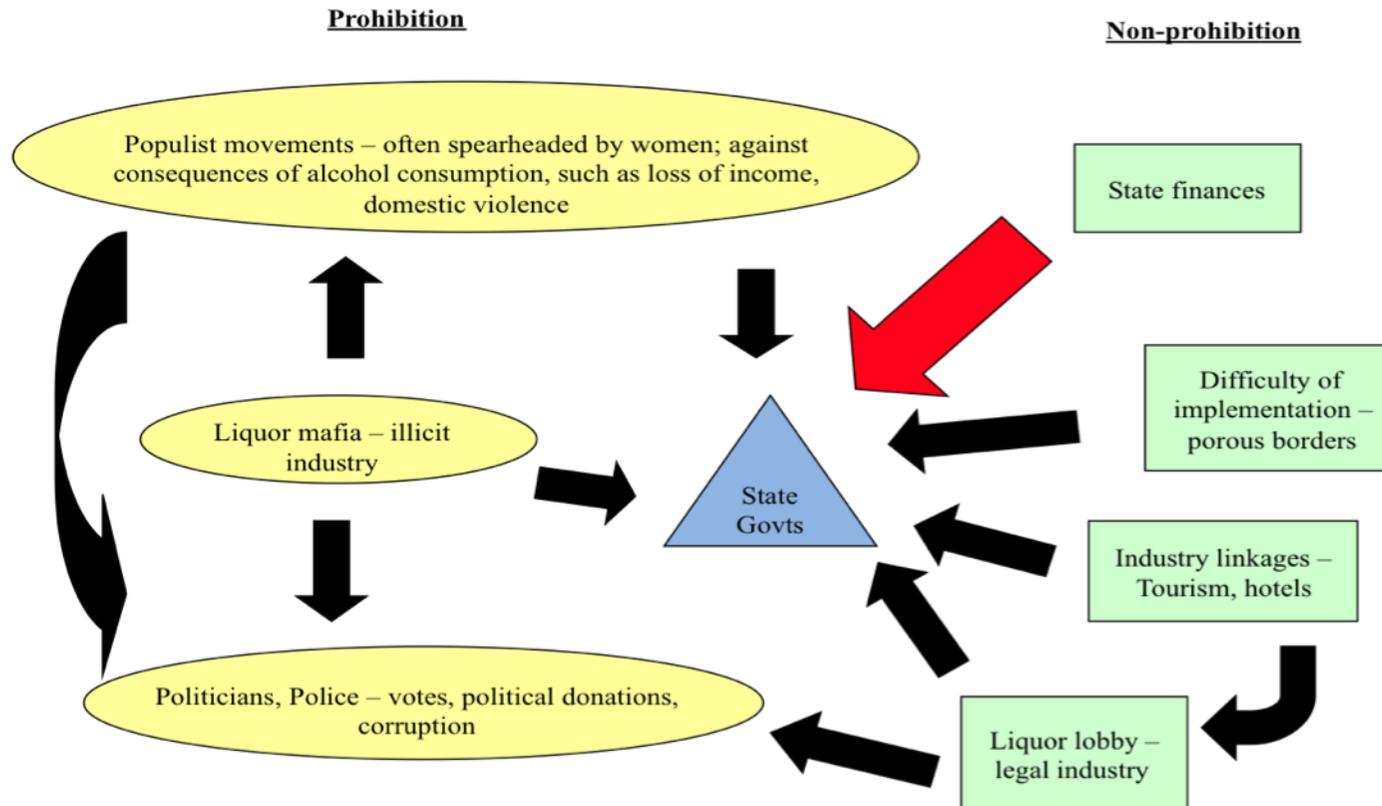


Figure 5.3 Media representations of national and state governments' attitudes towards alcohol



First, for instance, the *economic* repercussions of alcohol brought up by some students emerged from media accounts analysed in Chapter 4 only in reference to poor individuals for whom alcohol was said to act as a financial drain with dire repercussions for themselves and their families. The responses of our middle-class interviewees reveal, however, that they also consider their drinking to be both a direct economic drain, i.e. “a waste of money”, and an indirect one by impeding an individual’s ability to be productive the day after drinking. Second, there were differences between the media’s and students’ depictions of alcohol with respect to health and social behaviour. Whereas the former made some positive associations between moderate drinking and the beneficial physical health effects, the interviewees generally linked alcohol consumption with negative physical health consequences, such as vomiting and hangover symptoms. The psychological ramifications cited by the respondents such as relaxation, a sense of liberation, the lowering of inhibitions, an ability to escape one’s troubles, loss of control, self-consciousness and feelings of guilt were more mixed. Third, in terms of social behaviour, in contradiction of the media characterisations of alcohol consumption as increasingly permissible amongst the urban middle-class, several of the middle-class students interviewed described alcohol as still being “taboo” in Indian society, regardless of whether or not one adhered to social norms. Nonetheless, the continued perception of alcohol as “taboo” did not prevent interviewees from drinking. Instead, it gave rise to meanings having to do with freedom, adventure and maturity, and to a careful justification of respondents’ alcohol consumption, based on class and religion, as in the media, as well as on education. Fourth, although the media characterised alcohol as an integral part of romance, a number of interviewees claimed that drink was a cause of tension between a man and a woman in a romantic relationship. Lastly, in contrast to the longstanding media preoccupation with alcohol’s relationship to politics and government,

the respondents' mentioned the latter only when specifically asked about prohibition. Their answers echoed arguments in the media regarding the necessity of "protecting" poorer people through prohibition.

Despite these differences, our findings from analysis of the interviews generally reflect those from the media. Examination of the interviews revealed that, as in the newspapers and magazines, drinking is associated with positive social events or interactions related to celebration, business, status and intimacy, and to negative interactions such as interpersonal conflict and violence. Alcohol was characterised as an important element of celebration and of business by lubricating deals through social interaction, and the type of drink consumed often served as a status symbol. Furthermore, several students, most of whom are male, claimed that alcohol promoted intimacy and bonds of friendship, because people tended to spend several hours together drinking and sharing an experience that they could not necessarily have with everyone. Similarly, drink was claimed to exacerbate tensions between two men competing for a woman's attention, which could even result in violence.

Both the media and the interviews also highlighted the class and gender distinctions that were used to determine for whom alcohol consumption was permissible and under what circumstances, so that drinking was unacceptable for impoverished individuals, whose uncontrolled consumption led to harmful ramifications, and women's drinking was permissible as long as it was done in a "feminine" manner (i.e. consuming small quantities of a "soft" alcoholic beverage in the company of other people). The gendered social norms governing drinking tended to be voiced by men, many of whom expressed their disapproval of women consuming types of alcohol such as hard liquor on a regular basis. The experience of several women, however, indicated that it was not uncommon for them to begin drinking hard liquor and to continue consuming it during

the course of their drinking “careers”. A single female respondent articulated her disapproval of a male friend’s alcohol consumption, due to his health problems. Students’ answers suggest that for urban middle-class men, drinking is cause for worry or disapproval when it causes health, social or economic problems, whereas women’s consumption of alcohol is frowned upon, particularly by men, if it does not conform to the “rules” that govern it. In contrast to their silence on the gendered norms of drinking, some female interviewees drew on class distinctions to contend that alcohol consumption by lower-class persons was problematic.

While analysis of the media’s representations of alcohol provide greater insight into governments’ rationale for promoting the greater production, distribution and consumption of alcohol, examination of evidence from the interviews shed light on the internal processes that are involved in individuals’ experiences. The interviews indicate that, although outside meaning helps to delineate alcohol consumption possibilities through its effect on the availability, accessibility and permissibility of alcohol, the manner in which alcohol and drinking are experienced by individuals varies greatly; that the meanings they attach to them are far more complex than implied by media characterisations of drinking; that the same person can hold many different, and sometimes conflicting, views of alcohol; and that meanings change over time. For example, for the interviewees, alcohol’s increasing importance in the areas of sociability and intimacy was a result of various factors, including peer pressure or a wish to fit in, and alcohol’s psychological impact, which lowered inhibitions, thereby increasing individuals’ gregariousness, joviality, and truthfulness as well as their ability to enjoy themselves and to relax. Moreover, our comparison of the social meanings attached to the first drink with those at later stages in respondents’ drinking histories demonstrates that students’ perceptions and experiences of alcohol evolve to become an increasingly pivotal

element in their social behaviour. By unpacking the underlying reasons for the increasing social significance of alcohol, one finds that changes in the outside meaning of consumption do not translate immediately into corresponding inside meanings, but that the latter are also shaped by an individual's mental framework and practical experience. Where a new experience, preference or practice is in discord with an individual's established framework, efforts are made to justify and, therefore, resolve the difference. This relationship between the outside and inside meanings of alcohol will be further probed in the next, and final, chapter, in which we summarise the findings of this thesis and draw some more general conclusions.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion

In his social history of alcohol in East Africa, Justin Willis has observed, “It has been said that alcohol is the dye of the social sciences, for it reveals patterns of behaviour, authority and interaction. Yet alcohol is more than dye; for it participates in the very processes which it helps to reveal” (Willis 2002: 1). In our thesis, through an examination of the outside and inside meanings of alcohol, we sought to make use of this dye to: 1) obtain an understanding of the political economy of urban middle-class alcohol production, distribution and consumption in India, which provide the state governments with essential funds; 2) explain the underlying power structures; and 3) elucidate the meanings individuals attach to the purchase, use and social consequences. The outside meanings of production, distribution and consumption were defined as those institutions shaping the availability, accessibility and permissibility of alcohol, with an impact on the consumption possibilities available to members of the middle-class. Given these possibilities, we explored the consumption decisions that Indian urban middle-class individuals make regarding whether or not to drink, what, why, when and with whom. We analysed the inside meanings they attach to the purchase, use and consequences of consumption through the processes of “intensification” (alcohol preferences and practices stemming from emulation of others’ practices) or “extensification” (alcohol practices and preferences not arising from imitation).

This research has required the use of several different kinds of evidence, apart from the secondary literature, including industry reports, texts from carefully selected press sources, statistical data from the Indian National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO), and first-hand structured interviews. In Chapter 1, we discussed the necessity of drawing on several disciplines and the ambidextrousness that is required in order to paint as complete a picture as possible of the production, distribution and consumption of

alcohol in India. We believe that by drawing on different types of sources and research from a number of relevant disciplines, including development studies, political economy and anthropology, we have been better able to explore the macro- and micro-complexities of the alcohol industry and its markets as well as individual consumption, and to reveal the power structures related to alcohol and their workings at both individual and group levels. In this fashion, we have been able to shed light on those who have benefited most from alcohol consumption and on the wider implications of the development of this sector, all of which are to be covered in greater detail in this chapter.

The method of this explanatory research was as follows. Chapter 2 provided a historical overview of alcohol production and consumption in India; of those political and economic circumstances due to economic liberalisation which have had ramifications for the growth of the alcohol industry; and of the rise of religion and caste as political issues, which has contributed to the creation of an Indian urban middle-class cutting across religious and caste lines. While in Chapter 2 we looked at the broader economic and political trends in India since the 1980s, Chapter 3 examined changes in the specific institutions affecting the processes of production and distribution, including interfirm competition; the structure of supply of raw materials; the management of the industry; modes of sales and marketing, including distribution networks and advertising; the composition of final demand; and tax. By examining the impact of these processes on the availability of alcohol, we demonstrated that: liberalisation of the regulations governing these institutions has contributed to the growth of the alcohol industry, every step of the manufacturing and distribution process is marked by competing interests, and the greatest beneficiaries of the expansion of production and distribution have not been international corporate business, but instead the dominant Indian manufacturers and state governments.

The outside meaning of consumption was the focus of Chapter 4, in which reasons for the increased accessibility and permissibility of drinking for the Indian urban middle-class were probed in two different ways, using NSSO statistics on the one hand and content analysis of selected texts from the press on the other. Shifts in the accessibility of alcohol have been facilitated by the higher average income experienced by the urban middle-class since the 1980s as well as by a greater propensity to spend. Against this backdrop of higher income and consumption levels, statistical analyses of 1983 and 2004 consumer expenditure data collected by the Indian central government's NSSO revealed that the elasticity of alcohol expenditures in relation to monthly per capita expenditures (mpce), our proxy for income in the analyses, had decreased (with the exception of beer), so that regardless of changes in mpce, real alcohol expenditures were less likely to alter in 2004 than in 1983. In addition to the statistical analysis of the economic accessibility of alcohol, Chapter 4 also investigated the permissibility of drinking through the content analysis of alcohol-related articles from two English-language dailies, *The Hindustan Times* and *The Times of India*, and two women's magazines, *Femina* and *SAVVY*. The permissibility of drinking has increased amongst the Indian urban middle-class, and although caste and religion appear from a variety of evidence to be weakening as forces regulating consumption, informal rules based on class and gender are much more persistent²⁰¹.

The inside meanings of alcohol were considered in Chapter 5, in which the meanings that members of the urban middle-class attach to the purchase, use and consequences of drinking were investigated through a further type of source: interviews with Delhi area university students. The accounts of their drinking histories as well as those of their families shed light on the reasons compelling middle-class individuals to

²⁰¹ Interestingly, as discussed in Chapter 4, there was no mention of religion or caste in any of the alcohol-related articles.

drink or to abstain, the meanings they associated with their and others' alcohol consumption, the influence of family members drinking preferences and practices, and the transformations that take place in many students' behaviour and attitudes pertaining to alcohol. The findings from the interviews resonated closely with those from Chapter 4 and suggested that although drinking by members of the Indian urban middle-class is increasingly acceptable, certain informal distinctions based on class, education and gender are made, which characterise drinking by lower-class, uneducated individuals as harmful and dictate that women's alcohol consumption adheres to rules of "femininity".

In this chapter, we will compare our findings on the outside meanings of production, distribution and consumption with those on inside meanings, and extract the implications of our work, thereby highlighting the contribution of this research. This will be achieved by first considering in greater detail the findings from the chapters on the "etic", outside meaning of production, distribution and consumption and discussing them in the context of the concepts of power and of institutions as defined in Chapter 1. Second, the findings from the chapter on "emic", inside meanings will be reflected upon and also related to the concepts of power and of institutions. Third, the relationship between the outside and inside meanings will be examined and considered in relation to commodities. Fourth, the general implications of our study will be laid out extrapolating back to the etic in this final chapter and highlighting our main contributions.

6.1 The outside meaning of production and distribution

Chapter 3 drew attention to the manner in which the outside meaning of production and distribution has facilitated alcohol consumption through its impact on the availability of alcohol, as determined by production and distribution, conditioned in turn by political and economic institutions. It not only revealed the growth that the alcohol

industry has experienced since the 1980s, but also the main beneficiaries of the industry's expansion as well as the underlying tensions between different constituent groups. The section on interfirm competition demonstrated the dominance of large local producers in every sector of the alcohol industry, with the exception of the flavoured alcoholic beverages and sparkling wine markets. The success of the leading domestic manufacturers has been encouraged by the complexity of the regulatory framework, which they are able to circumvent more skilfully through practices, including investment in the acquisition of existing breweries, the establishment of production plants in various states, and the expansion of existing capacity. Moreover, their advantageous position has been strengthened through the influence of national associations, lobbyists, and party political campaign contributions, which have helped to ensure the greater profitability of the dominant national producers.

Regarding the structure of supply of raw materials, including extra neutral alcohol, rectified spirit, molasses, and Scotch concentrate, we highlighted the conflicting interests of the potable alcohol vs. industrial alcohol industries, the alcohol industry vs. other industries, Indian firms vs. multinational companies, and different government departments. The interests of the potable alcohol industry were at odds with those of other industries, such as industrial alcohol, chemicals and renewable energy, as they competed for the same essential inputs of extra-neutral alcohol, rectified spirit and their derivatives, as well as molasses. The alcohol and sugar industries also had conflicting interests, as the former benefited from lower sugar prices, while the latter did not. Additionally, tensions could be found within the alcohol industry itself, as Indian firms sought the import of Scotch concentrate in order to produce beverages to compete with multinationals' products. Lastly, the alcohol industry's access to resources caused conflict between government departments, as, for instance, the Foreign Investment Promotion Board,

which has a vested interest in promoting foreign investment, contested the claims of the Ministry of Food Processing, which stated that foreign enterprises' entry into the Indian market had been conditional upon manufacture of liquor not based on molasses.

Our analysis of the role of management in the growth of the industry shed light on the importance of the relationships cultivated and maintained by Indian alcohol executives with key political and economic decision-makers, which they are able to leverage to obtain industry benefits. In terms of modes of sales, the relaxation of regulations governing distribution have proven to be most advantageous for national producers, whose lower priced beverages can be found in a larger number of distribution outlets, including specialist retailers and supermarkets, in contrast to their multinational counterparts, whose products tend to be sold primarily through high-end outlets such as five-star hotels. The section on the composition of final demand, showed that individual manufacturers and distributors have simultaneously overlapping and competing interests, because even as they all benefit from the growth of the industry, each seeks to maximise this benefit by attracting the greatest number of consumers to its products or outlets. Our examination of tax drew attention to the importance of alcohol tax revenue, which, as noted in Chapter 1, is said to constitute fifteen to twenty percent of states' total tax revenues. States' revenues needs are directly incompatible with the interests of the alcohol industry, which reaps greater profits from lower tax rates. In spite of their differing motivations, however, the state governments and the alcohol industry, particularly dominant local producers, have developed a cooperative relationship, because of their shared aim of promoting the growth of the alcohol industry for the reasons of revenue and profit respectively. In the case of state governments, it has been necessary for them to balance the necessity of tax revenues against other political considerations, such as the prohibition movements often spearheaded by women (Isaac 1998: 168).

The findings from our exploration of the outside meaning of production and distribution suggest that the interests of different groups vary depending on the issue, that different reasons may prompt similar aims or practices, and that constituencies often juggle a number of different interests simultaneously. These observations not only resonate with Mintz's finding that the use and application of structural power are at the heart of shifts in a society's food consumption habits (1985), but also reveal the role of the exercise of individual power. As discussed in Chapter 1, rather than being defined in interactional terms, structural power is the organising force of the political economy and moulds the "field of action", thereby facilitating certain types of action rather than others. The increased availability of alcohol has been made possible by changes effected through the structural power of both the alcohol industry and the state governments. The reason the former has been able to promote shifts in the outside meaning of production and distribution is the fiscal importance of its tax revenues for the state governments²⁰², which it is able to leverage in order to agitate for the loosening of regulations governing each step of the production process. The latter have been able to bring about changes in the outside meaning of production and distribution because of the fact that the regulation of alcohol production and distribution is largely a state, and not federal, responsibility, providing states with the authority to liberalise regulations. The exercise of structural power by the alcohol industry and the state governments, both of which stand to gain from the continued expansion of the former, has resulted in the liberalisation of the regulation of production and distribution, which has led to the greater availability of alcohol, stimulating demand and consumption.

Our deconstruction of the institutional structure supporting the alcohol industry and markets also reveals the role of the exercise of individual power in the constitution

²⁰² Please see section 3.10 and Table 3.11.

and exercise of structural power. Because the interests of different groups converge on different issues, it suggests that for any given issue a number of individuals and companies will be lobbying for the same changes. Therefore, it is the collective actions of individuals driven by their vested interests (which align differently depending on the issue) that shape structural power, so that the creation of outside meaning takes place simultaneously at both the micro- and macro-levels, which we also found evidence of in the outside meaning of consumption, to be discussed in the next section.

6.2 The outside meaning of consumption

The chapter on the outside meaning of consumption shed light on the roles that higher income levels and propensity to spend have played in the increased demand for, and accessibility of, alcohol, as well as on the impact of shifts in attitudes towards alcohol on the greater permissibility of drinking amongst the Indian urban middle-class. Statistical analyses of consumer expenditure data revealed that the elasticity of expenditures on alcohol decreased between 1983 and 2004 so that real alcohol expenditures were less likely to vary with changes in income in 2004 than in 1983. In light of the sales data presented in Chapter 3, this result suggests that spending on drink has become increasingly commonplace. My investigation of alcohol-related texts from English-language media, including two dailies (*The Hindustan Times* and *The Times of India*) and two women's magazines (*Femina* and *SAVVY*), called attention to the greater salience of drink and its association with an increasing range of aspects of social and economic life, including celebration and special events such as weddings; entertaining; romance; sports; celebrities; relaxation and enjoyment after a hard day's work; and business negotiations. It also highlighted the invisibility of religion and caste in this context, in spite of the direct proscriptions that religions such as Hinduism (for certain

castes) and Islam place on drinking. Although religion and caste did not appear to be important factors influencing the conceptualisation of alcohol consumption, class, age and gender proved significant, working through informal “rules” governing drinking. In terms of class, “civilised” drinking by members of the upper-classes was not only condoned, but characterised as essential to business relations. On the other hand, the consumption of alcohol by individuals of lower classes was widely described as harmful, with negative consequences for the drinker and his family, such as the draining of limited household funds and domestic violence. Alcohol consumption by young people was depicted as a problem as well, particularly among girls, due to their perceived tendency to binge-drink. It was even associated in press reports with higher crime rates. Women’s drinking seemed to have become increasingly acceptable, as long as certain norms of behaviour were followed. For instance, women were expected never to attend a bar, or even to buy a drink, alone, and to restrict their consumption of alcohol to limited quantities of so-called “soft” beverages, such as Bacardi Breezers or wine.

Our analysis of alcohol-related texts also shed light on the dilemma of politicians, political parties and state governments with regard to the alcohol industry, and the careful process of justification that has accompanied liberalisation of its regulatory framework. Individual politicians and political parties, for whom links to drink are politically damaging, have been careful to underline the fiscal importance of alcohol tax revenues whenever there has been a relaxation of regulations, as in the case of the Telugu Desam government in Andhra Pradesh²⁰³.

Returning to our definition of institutions in Chapter 1, which we defined as “enduring structured processes of interaction that act as a guide for the formulation of people’s aspirations, thoughts and actions, depending on their vested interests”, our

²⁰³ As noted in Chapter 4, in the 1990s the Telugu Desam “prepared the ground” for the reversal of prohibition through a media blitz drawing attention to the financial difficulties faced by the state due to the lack of alcohol excise revenues.

discussion of the invisibility of the institutions of religion and caste and the informal rules governing drinking illustrate that different institutions serve as reference points in different arenas. Whereas with respect to alcohol consumption, class and education are stressed, with respect to party politics, religion and caste are emphasised²⁰⁴. Furthermore, these institutions are used not only to draw distinctions between different groups, but also to physicalise the domination of certain groups. In the case of alcohol in India these are educated upper-class men. This domination has implications for the outside meaning of consumption. Although the education and class-based distinctions regarding drink do not directly prohibit drinking by certain segments of the population nor determine a person's actions, they contribute to an outside meaning of consumption that discourages drinking by poor, uneducated people. These shifts in the outside meaning of consumption can in turn have an effect on the outside meaning of production and distribution, particularly as the upper-classes are constitutive of the groups with structural power such as those in elite positions in state governments and the dominant alcohol producers, so that the regulations and policies governing the production and distribution of the types of alcohol most commonly consumed by poor people are tightened. Indeed, this occurred in Karnataka, where arrack continued to be banned even after complete prohibition was overturned in the late 1990s. So, our conclusions pertaining to the outside meanings of production, distribution and consumption indicate that institutions, such as state governments, the media and elite social groups, including leading alcohol manufacturers and members of the upper-class, have an important effect upon the consumption habits of other social groups through their impact on the conceptualisation of consumption – as well as on the

²⁰⁴ In contrast to the waning of religion and caste in the sphere of consumption, both took added political significance from the 1980s onwards. The reasons for their greater significance in politics have been the subject of much scholarly debate, but they include the employment of religion as a vote-gaining tool by political parties (Basu 2001; Manor 2002; Hasan 2002), reservations policies (Nayar 2001; Omvedt 1993; Hasan 2002; Hansen 1999; Bose 1997) and responses to the articulation of competitive constituent demands (Hansen 1999; Vanaik 1990; Hasan 2002). These are discussed briefly in Chapter 2.

physical availability – of alcohol. This evidence suggests that institutions and power are intricately intertwined and that structural power is simultaneously exercised by several different groups on both individual and group levels. The latter underscores the role of human agency, through the collective actions of individuals, on the creation and maintenance of institutions. It is in this context of the outside meanings of production, distribution and consumption, that the inside meanings of alcohol consumption were considered.

6.3 The inside meanings of consumption

Interviews with middle-class students from Delhi University and Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) called attention to the myriad reasons respondents have for drinking and the new meanings they ascribe to it through the processes of intensification and extensification. There were three types of meanings created through intensification that reflected “traditional” attitudes towards alcohol. They were health, economic and social: alcohol was linked with bad health, characterised as an economic drain, and described as socially taboo in some contexts, such as when it was consumed in the presence of elders or resulted in drunken behaviour. These taboos gave rise to meanings related to a sense of freedom and maturity, due to an individual’s ability to deal with responsibly drinking.

Extensification engendered new, unimitative meanings, related to celebration and business, which suggested the increasingly pivotal role played by alcohol in the social and economic lives of the Indian urban middle-class. Its consumption also served as a signifier of status by indicating that one was “modern”, while certain brands, particularly foreign ones, served as markers of high socio-economic status. The type of alcohol consumed reflected gender and drinking experience, and some were considered more

appropriate for certain groups, as in the cases of “soft” drinks such as beer and alcohol pops for women and unseasoned drinkers. These new meanings have resulted in notions of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour: drinking alone and offensive drunken behaviour are frowned upon, while alcohol consumption facilitating social closeness is not. The “rules” governing drinking highlighted distinctions based on class, education and gender, mirroring those made in the media. For example, alcohol consumption by poor people was compared to a “gun in the hands of a child”. It was maintained that impoverished persons’ lack of education encouraged excessive consumption, which was unsafe for the health of the drinkers and for that of their family members, due to their increased propensity to engage in dangerous behaviour, such as domestic violence. In contrast to this bleak picture, drinking by educated members of the upper-classes was associated with high status and depicted as playing an important part in the lubrication of business dealings. When recounting the “bad” drinking behaviour of family members, respondents often explained disparities between their and their relatives’ actions in terms of educational differences. Conceptualisations of gender-specific drinking behaviour were also evident – women were expected to consume alcohol in a “feminine” manner, i.e. occasionally drink beverages with low alcohol content in public.

Our analysis of the inside meanings of alcohol revealed the importance of family members’ drinking preferences and practices for those of interviewees’. Individuals from families in which one or more members looked upon alcohol consumption (generally and/or by the respondent) as negative resulted in internal tensions. However, our research demonstrated that the censorious views of these family members were not a sufficient counterweight to the influence of the university environment, so that most students experienced a transformation in their drinking preferences and practices. Nonetheless, they exhibited an inability to escape the influence of family members’ attitudes towards

alcohol, which was manifested in ways such as a reluctance to spend money from their parents on drink, the concealment of their alcohol consumption from their families, and a careful justification of their drinking on the basis of perceived class and education distinctions.

The absence of religion and caste and the salience of class, education and gender in the shaping of both the outside and inside meanings of consumption highlight the changing meanings of these institutions, and, as discussed earlier in this chapter in the section on the outside meaning of consumption, the predominance of different ones in different arenas. In Chapter 4, the increasing propensity by members of the urban middle-class to consume similarly to their class, rather than their co-religionists or their caste equals was explained by the increasing economic differentiation within religious and caste groups. Our interview data brought to light the role of the educational environment in the development of shared consumption aspirations. It was noted in the previous chapter that at the elite educational institutions, students tend to adopt the institutions' cultural values. In the case of JNU students, despite the university's official prohibition of alcohol, the values of the student culture, which favours drink, prevail over the university's official view of alcohol, thereby encouraging students to experiment. Even those whose families are opposed to alcohol consumption are tempted to consume alcohol. So, whereas in party political arenas, the institutions of religion and caste supersede those of class and education, when it comes to alcohol consumption, the situation is reversed.

Referring back to our definition of institutions, this is due to the fact that people's vested interests vary depending on the arena, which underscores the role of human agency. In our case study, we found that students are likely to have similar goals and job prospects, regardless of their background, and the significant alteration in alcohol

consumption behaviour visible in the histories of many of the interviewees indicates that during their time at university, students' consumption habits shift to correspond more closely to those of people who work in the types of jobs that they are likely to take up upon completion of their degrees (the ideal being positions in corporations). Hence, the period at university prepares students for the next phase of their lives not just intellectually, but also socially in terms of acceptable and desirable consumption behaviour. In this way, new norms are created and institutional change is facilitated. The change in students' drinking preferences and practices indicates that although institutions shape the "field of action", they do not determine peoples' actions. Individuals make decisions based on human agency, which is conditioned by their body of experiences and psychological disposition. Their actions can in turn have repercussions for institutions, which suggests a synergetic relationship between outside and inside meaning.

6.4 Linking outside and inside meanings

Our exploration of the outside and inside meanings of alcohol has revealed certain themes, which shed light on the relationship between outside and inside meanings. The summary of our findings from the outside meanings of production, distribution and consumption drew attention to the variability of different groups' and individuals' vested interests depending on the arena, and the necessity of juggling a number of interests. These factors highlighted the workings of structural power at both the macro- and micro-levels. Our conclusions about inside meanings similarly highlighted the differential significance of various institutions in different areas of peoples' lives and demonstrated the role of individual agency. These findings suggest that institutions work through human agency in two ways: as discussed in the section on the outside meaning of consumption, they are created and maintained through the collective actions of people

motivated by vested interests, and their impact is conditional upon individual interpretation.

Although outside meaning shapes a person's opportunities for consumption, and institutions act as points of reference for the formulation of consumption aspirations and decisions, neither of these determine action. Alam has observed in his consideration of the success of democracy in India that,

“Modernity may, as it is alleged, enforce normalization – everybody made to live by the same standards and norms and an origin which is not indigenous – but it is not conformist in any sense. Modernity allows for a great deal of autonomy of persons. It does so, first, by giving rise to an objective, historical process of individuation – making persons bound up within communities into (self-referring) individuals and by putting a high premium on individual choices for lifestyles and self remaking. It permits me to become different from my surroundings and to live at a certain distance from the communities out of which I may have emerged” (Alam 2004: 87).

The data from the interviews with middle-class students reflect both this homogenization and differentiation: students' consumption habits adjust during the course of their time at university to match more closely those of their peers, behaviour which reflects individual, rather than family, preferences. Their decisions have been facilitated by changes in the outside meaning of production, distribution and consumption, which have led to the increased availability, accessibility and permissibility of drink. These shifts have not meant, however, that outside meaning has translated immediately into compatible inside meanings. Rather our research has demonstrated the contested nature of the transformation of consumption habits, which are also shaped by human agency, as conditioned by an individuals' psychological disposition and practical experience. Furthermore, it was shown that where discord exists between a person's established framework, endeavours are made to justify the new preference or practice and to resolve any differences. Hence, even as outside meaning – and the institutions that help to determine it – exert their influence on people (through the various views and actions of

individuals and groups with structural power, each of whom is striving to maintain or alter outside meaning according to their vested interests), these influences are filtered through the lens of individual experience. Moreover, they are constantly juggled in the process of the creation of inside meaning. Inside meanings also have an effect on outside meaning, which has repercussions for the success of endeavours by individuals and groups with structural power to alter outside and inside meanings to their advantage – as well as for those lacking it.

6.5 General implications

Having presented our conclusions, we seek to extrapolate from the case study to a broader perspective, and, based on our findings on the outside meanings of production, distribution and consumption and the inside meanings of consumption, to draw out the general implications of our research and thereby to clarify our primary contributions. Our research sought to shed light on: 1) the political economy of urban middle-class alcohol production, distribution and consumption in India, 2) the underlying power structures, and 3) the meanings individuals attribute to the purchase, use and social consequences of alcohol, thereby broadening the focus of the largely epidemiological body of research on alcohol in the Indian context.

In investigating the outside and inside meanings of alcohol, our research has shed light not only on the potential developmental role of commodities but also of their role in the creation and maintenance of power structures. In the case of alcohol in India, we have shown that the commodity of alcohol serves several functions. It acts as an important source of revenue for its manufacturers and distributors as well as for the state governments, which provides these groups with the motivation and capacity to promote the growth of the industry. Alcohol is also an important basis of distinction between

groups such as the upper- and lower-classes, so that the latter are characterised as uneducated and incapable of drinking with restraint, with dire repercussions for themselves and their family members. In contrast, alcohol is said to facilitate positive social interactions for the former. This differentiation on the basis of alcohol consumption resonates with Appadurai, who, as mentioned in Chapter 1, has noted that even as people define the value of commodities, commodities are deployed to define the value of people. Evidence of this two-way process was also found in our interview data, which revealed that the purchase and use of alcohol not only mean a number of different things to different individuals, but that for many of them, alcohol is a significant basis of distinction and of similarity, depending on the context. The various roles of alcohol underscore the complexity of commodities, which, as we discussed in Chapter 1, tend to be overlooked by development theory in three ways: 1) by failing to explicitly address them, 2) by treating them in an aggregate fashion, and 3) by conflating their purchase, use and social consequences. Our research has demonstrated the necessity of explicitly addressing the commodity of alcohol, whose taxes are an important source of revenue for state governments and which plays an increasingly important role in class- and education-based social stratification. Additionally, by examining the purchase, use and social consequences of alcohol separately, we were able to obtain an understanding of the manner in which alcohol is incorporated into peoples' lives and of the meanings that individuals attach to these acts, the general implications of which are to be considered in the remainder of this section.

Our study has drawn attention to the role of dominant groups such as state governments and alcohol manufacturers, at both the micro- and macro-levels in the shaping of other constituencies' consumption decisions. This implies that the alcohol industry has grown not only with the complicity of the state governments, but with their

active participation, and has important ramifications. It suggests that, despite claims citing the developmental necessity of alcohol tax revenues, which are said to provide state governments with otherwise unavailable investment opportunities, the interests that are served by expansion of the alcohol industry are not only those of the state governments, but also those of the industry, which reaps greater profits, and those of the middle- and upper-classes, which have access to a greater range of commodities for consumption. The interests of the lower-classes are sidelined in two ways. Firstly, there is no guarantee that alcohol excise revenues will be spent on development programmes that benefit poor people. In fact, in our section on tax in Chapter 3, we noted that one incentive big companies have for paying taxes is the investment in services and infrastructure they themselves are able to leverage from the government with the status derived from tax revenue compliance. Secondly, the distinctions that we showed are made by members of the middle-class on the basis of class and education can be linked to the creation of a new discourse which has important repercussions extending beyond the arena of drink.

In this chapter, we called attention to the changing role of institutions, specifically in relation to consumption behaviour and drinking. The contrast between the roles of religion and caste in politics and in consumption decisions highlights the fact that people's instituted material interests vary depending on the context. For instance, a middle-class individual seeking social mobility through reservation policies and access to greater educational and employment opportunities has an incentive to stress religion and/or caste in the political realm. The same incentive does not exist in terms of consumption, particularly in light of the increasing occupational, educational, income and lifestyle differentiation within religious and caste groups (Sheth 2004: 161). Together with the erosion of the salience of notions of purity and impurity, it further indicates that

people choose to highlight different aspects of their identity in different social contexts²⁰⁵. However, different elements of an individual's identity are intricately linked, and gains from emphasising one in a certain arena may enable gains in another elsewhere. In our example of the middle-class person who could benefit from reservation policies, it is only by stressing religion or caste politically that she may have the opportunities eventually to consume along class lines, which enables her to "remake" herself through lifestyle choices that diverge from those of her background (Alam 2004: 87). Such remaking of identity was attested to by students' willingness to make alcohol consumption decisions that contradicted the views of at least one senior family member, and could be linked to the creation of a new discourse in which religion and caste are being replaced by class and education (Hansen 1999; Sheth 1996: 257). Hansen has remarked,

"The official discourse of caste as a thing of the past has become integrated into everyday language, not least in upper-caste educated families. But other discourses on caste... frequently break through these narratives... One might say that the conceptual grammar of caste seems to continue as the reproduction of logics of differentiation and hierarchical separation... The meanings of certain practices, boundaries, and caste myths have within the last few decades increasingly become inscribed into changing surfaces of democratic competition between groups and communities, and of competitive access to jobs, business and education. As the signification of caste has changed, the signified – the hierarchy of differences – has also been transformed and extended from ritual purity toward civic conduct, Oxford degrees, or NRI (non-resident Indian) status" (Hansen 1999: 145-6).

So, although religion and caste no longer regulate middle-class drinking, the process of separation and differentiation continues, with class and education as the new criteria.

²⁰⁵ According to Manor, "this sociocultural complexity and heterogeneity have contributed to a strong tendency among Indian citizens to shift their preoccupations from one to another of the many identities which they have available to them – often and with great fluidity. Depending on the circumstances and recent events, they may fix for a time on their jati, jati-cluster, varna, or other caste identities, on their local, subregional or national identities, on their class, linguistic, communal identities, or on sectarian identities which fragment Hindu, Muslim, and other communal identities, etc. But they seldom fix ferociously and tenaciously on any one of these" (Manor 2001: 81).

The application of these new distinctions even by members of traditionally disadvantaged groups, such as SCs, as we saw from our interviews in Chapter 5, shows how educational experience works as a means to underline equality with their peers at university and, in the area of consumption, to distance themselves from their religious and caste counterparts. The part that alcohol consumption plays in the process of achieving equality with peers stems from its physical as well as symbolic effects, which reflects Willis' observation (quoted at the beginning of this chapter) that alcohol not only acts as a dye exposing power structures, but is also constitutive of them. The physical impact of drink is not dependent on institutions, such as religion, caste, or class and, thereby, acts as a social solvent. Symbolically, its consumption amongst members of upper-classes is associated with high status and sophistication. This association does not extend to lower status drinks, such as toddy, arrack or any type of illicit alcohol, which tend to be consumed by low-class people and are considered harmful. This distinction helps to explain why SC interviewees attempted to dissociate themselves from "lower-class" drinking. It is interesting to note that, for the most part, the SC middle-class students interviewed chose to adopt consumption behaviour that was considered high-class rather than high-caste, contrary to well-established modes of sanskritization, because, as Shah has maintained, the upper castes no longer provide the sole model (1999: 252-3). In this context, higher status is associated with certain kinds of drink, rather than with abstention, or "purity".

The process of individuation in conjunction with the deployment of a discourse based on class and education has implications for religious behaviour and caste relations. If access to opportunities due to reservation policies are largely confined to middle-class members of beneficiary groups, who reap individual rewards, such as degrees or a position with a multinational, and do not convert them into some type of group benefit,

such as strengthened group networks, the possibility of improvement for the group as a whole is impeded. The adoption of a discourse emphasising the products of these opportunities facilitates this process by permitting a person to distance herself from the group whose affiliation was pivotal in obtaining access to educational and employment opportunities in the first place. Consequently, reservation policy does not lead to collective identities within castes or to group mobility, particularly given the increased competition for the reserved advantages amongst those eligible (Sheth 2004: 170). Instead, it leads to social advancement for the middle classes of the “backward” groups (Weiner and Katzenstein 1981: 5). Our research is consistent with this argument. It has underscored new patterns of consumption amongst the urban middle-class in India and their contribution to the establishment and maintenance of greater stratification within caste groups and of class alignments that cut across caste in the area of consumption. These hinder the ability of the poorest groups to benefit from collective economic and social advancement.

6.6 Policy implications

Our research leads us to consider development policy repercussions for the alcohol sector. The alcohol industry has the potential to play a pivotal role in India’s development for several reasons. Firstly, it is a rapidly expanding industry that attracts a high level of foreign investment. Secondly, it is linked to several upstream and downstream industries, such as those of sugar, bottling, restaurants, hotels and tourism. Thirdly, it is an essential source of revenue for state governments. However, due to the negative externalities associated with its consumption, it is necessary to weigh the potential developmental gains against its negative effects. The fiscal dependence of state governments on the alcohol industry needs to be examined in light of questions such as

whether or not it is of importance that state-led development is sourced by industries that have significant negative externalities. In other words, does it matter from where the state governments obtain their funds? The answer should be contingent on the social benefits and disadvantages of production, distribution and consumption; the possible diversion of critical resources from competing industries; and the availability of other revenue sources.

Public action clearly needs to be taken in the realm of consumption to encourage knowledge about, and practices of, responsible drinking, particularly as India lacks an established drinking culture, which in countries such as France and Italy, helps to prevent the problems associated with excessive consumption. As many of India's states already have stringent regulations governing the accessibility of alcohol, the rigorous enforcement of these laws would help to prevent drinking by persons more susceptible to excessive consumption, such as youth. However, as suggested by our analysis of newspaper articles in Chapter 4, until corruption is tackled, enforcement power will remain weak. Additionally, campaigns to raise people's awareness of the health, economic and social dangers of heavy drinking would aid the promotion of responsible drinking. It is important for such campaigns to work outside the discourse characterising alcohol consumption by uneducated members of the lower-classes as unacceptable, in contrast to drinking by their higher-class counterparts, so that educated, upper-class individuals are conscious that they are not impervious to the negative effects of extreme alcohol consumption.

Appendix 1 – Prohibition policy by state, 1983-2001

State	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Andhra Pradesh											Gold	Gold	Red	Red	Red	Gold	Gold	Gold	Gold
Arunachal Pradesh																			
Assam																			
Bihar																			
Gujarat	Red																		
Haryana													Red	Red	Red				
Himachal Pradesh																			
Jammu and Kashmir																			
Karnataka																			
Kerala													Gold						
Madhya Pradesh																			
Maharashtra																			
Manipur									Red										
Meghalaya																			
Mizoram															Red	Red	Red	Red	Red
Orissa												Red	Red						
Punjab																			
Rajasthan					Gold	Gold	Gold												
Tamil Nadu	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red			Gold										
Tripura																			
Uttar Pradesh		Gold	Gold								Red	Red	Red	Red	Red				Gold
West Bengal																			

Note: Gold refers to partial prohibition policies, and red to complete prohibition.

Sources: (Rahman 2002)

Appendix 2 - Tables detailing the growth of the alcohol industry in India

Table a Number of distilleries in India per state, 1986-1999

State	1986	1989	1992	1993	1997	1999
Andhra Pradesh	20	21	24	24	24	25
Assam	1	1	1	1	1	1
Bihar	8	10	13	13	13	13
Gujarat	8	8	9	11	10	10
Goa and Daman and Diu	3	3	5	4	6	7
Haryana	3	4	4	5	5	7
Jammu and Kashmir	3	5	7	7	7	7
Himachal Pradesh	2	2	2	2	2	8
Karnataka	20	20	24	25	29	29
Kerala	4	6	7	7	8	8
Madhya Pradesh	8	16	21	21	21	21
Maharashtra	30	43	48	51	65	67
Nagaland	1	1	1	1	1	1
Orissa	4	4	7	7	7	8
Punjab	4	4	4	5	8	8
Rajasthan	4	5	7	7	7	8
Sikkim	1	1	1	1	1	1
Tamil Nadu	9	9	19	21	22	24
Uttar Pradesh	28	32	35	37	42	43
West Bengal	4	4	7	6	6	6
India	165	200	244	256	285	302

Source: ([Indiastat.com](http://www.indiastat.com) 2007: <http://www.indiastat.com>)

Table b Average monthly industrial beer production in India (kilolitres), 1980-81 to 1997-98²⁰⁶

Year	Quantity
1980-81	12.283
1985-86	17.033
1990-91	16.937
1991-92	17.804
1992-93	18.609
1993-94	25.439
1994-95	23.307
1995-96	30.748
1996-97	35.457
1997-98	36.090
1998-99	36.271

Source: (INDIA. Central Statistical Organisation, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation 2001: 28, 1999: 27, 1996: 23, 1995: 23; [Indiastat.com](http://www.indiastat.com) 2007: <http://www.indiastat.com>)

Table c All India Sales of Alcoholic Drinks by Sector: Percent Total Volume Growth, 1999-2004

	2003/4 % total volume growth	2004/5 % total volume growth	2000/05 compound annual growth rate	2000/05 % total volume growth
Beer	5.6	7.1	6.6	37.4
Cider/perry	-	-	-	-
Flavoured alcoholic beverages	22.6	27.1	-	-
Wine	17.5	16.9	18.3	131.7
Spirits	7.4	7.5	7.9	46.5
Alcoholic drinks	6.6	7.4	7.4	42.7

Sources: (Euromonitor 2005: 10; Euromonitor 2006a: 10)

²⁰⁶ According to Euromonitor's Indian analyst, despite minimal import of beer into India, the government's figures on beer production tend to be lower than Euromonitor's beer sales figures, because production by official bodies is often under-reported and because some companies do not report their production numbers to the Ministry of Statistics (direct communication with Euromonitor's London office).

Table d All India Sales of Alcoholic Drinks by Sector: Percent Total Value Growth, 1999-2004

	2003/4 % total value growth	2004/5 % total value growth	2000/05 compound annual growth rate	2000/05 % total value growth
Beer	7.6	8.3	9.4	56.4
Cider/perry	-	-	-	-
Flavoured alcoholic beverages	19.1	23.9	-	-
Wine	20.9	19.6	22.9	180.0
Spirits	11.2	9.4	11.2	69.9
Alcoholic drinks	10.8	9.4	11.1	68.9

Sources: (Euromonitor 2005: 11; Euromonitor 2006a: 10)

Appendix 3 – Interview questions

Background

Individual:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| 1) Name: | 2) Sex: | 3) Age: |
| 4) Religion: | 5) Caste: | |
| 6) Occupation: | 7) Approximate income: | |
| 8) Relation to the head of household: | | |

Family:

- 9) Where is your family from? Have they migrated? When? Why?
 10) How many members does your family have?
 11a) How many members are male? 11b) How many are female?
 12) Please fill out the following table, indicating the relationship to you of any “Other” (brother, sister, etc.).

	Father	Mother	Other	Other	Other	Other	Other
Age							
Occupation							
Approximate monthly income							
Amount contributed to the household each month							

- 13) How much are those with no paid occupation allowed to spend?
 14) Who pays for these expenses?
 15) Are there any fluctuations during the year?
 16) Do any members drink?
 17) What do they drink?
 18) Approximately how many drinks per week do they consume?
 19) Approximately how much do they spend per week on alcohol?

History of alcohol consumption

Individual:

- 20) Please describe the first time you consumed alcohol, including details of when, where, and with whom it took place (how many people, males/females, their religion, number of drinkers vs. non-drinkers); what and how much was consumed; and the effect on you and the group.
- 21) Why did you decide to try drinking on this particular occasion?
- 22) After that first time, did you continue drinking? Please describe the circumstances under which you continued or continue to consume alcohol including details of how often, when, where, and with whom it occurs (how many, males/females, their religion, number of drinkers vs. non-drinkers); what and how much is consumed; and the effect on you and the group.
- 23) Why did you continue drinking?

24) If you did not continue, why did you choose to stop drinking completely? Did or do you still hang out with drinkers? Why or why not? Please describe the context, including details of when, where, and with whom.

25) Have there ever been periods of time when you stopped drinking? When and why?

26) If you stopped and started again, please describe the circumstances under which you started drinking again including details of how often, when, where, and with whom (how many, males/females, their religion, number of drinkers vs. non-drinkers) it occurs; what and how much is consumed; and the effect on you and the group.

27) Has your drinking ever affected others? How? Has/does others' drinking ever affected/affect you? How?

28) Would you describe the amount you drank as moderate or heavy? How would you define moderate drinking? Heavy drinking?

29) Would you say you were engaging in social drinking or unsocial drinking? How would you define social drinking? Unsocial drinking?

30) Have you ever heard of violence resulting from moderate drinking? Heavy drinking? What were the circumstances?

31) How much did or do you spend per month on alcohol? On food? On housing? On transport? On books and studies? On clothes? On recreation? Was or is alcohol a regular expense? Have you ever borrowed or do you ever borrow to purchase alcohol? How much? How often?

32) What do you think of prohibition? Why do you think the government imposes prohibition? Do you agree? Do you think alcohol consumption should be legal? Should there be any restrictions?

Family:

33) If family members drink, when was the first time you realised that they consume alcohol? Please describe the circumstances including details of when and where it took place; who was present (how many people, males/females, their religion, number of drinkers vs. non-drinkers); what and how much was consumed; and the effect on the group.

34) What did you think of this?

35) If you drink, is your family aware of this? Why or why not? What is their opinion?

36) If you drink at home, at what age did it become acceptable? Please describe the circumstances under which drinking in the family context takes place including details of when it takes place, who drinks, and what and how much is consumed.

37) Is drinking on special occasions something liked and appropriate to your caste? Please explain.

Appendix 4 – Interview schedule

Interviewee identification code	Interview date
1MHSC	23 September 2006
2MHSC	14 October 2006
3MS	15 October 2006
4MHU	16 October 2006
5G (Group interview)	13 October 2006
6MHOC	24 October 2006
7FHOC	24 October 2006
8FHOC	24 October 2006
9FC	25 October 2006
10MHOC	25 October 2006
11FHOC	25 October 2006
15FHOC	26 October 2006
16MHOC	26 October 2006
17MHSC	30 October 2006
18MHSC	2 November 2006
19MC	4 November 2006
20MHOC	4 November 2006
21FHOC	4 November 2006
22FC	5 November 2006
23MC	5 November 2006
24FC	5 November 2006
25FC	6 November 2006
26MC	6 November 2006
27MHOC	6 November 2006
28FHB	7 November 2006
29FHOC	7 November 2006
30MHSC	7 November 2006
31MHOC	15 November 2006
32MHU	29 November 2006
33MC	29 November 2006
34MHOC	30 November 2006
35FHOC	30 November 2006

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