

Accepted, desired and ashamed: Images of female alcohol use and drinking- related gender orders described by Finnish women of different ages

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ABSTRACT

AIMS – The article deals with how Finnish women of different ages perceive acceptable and desirable images of female alcohol use as well as gender orders associated with drinking. A focus on women and differences between women is motivated by the fact that women's increased drinking is one of the most significant changes in the Finnish alcohol landscape in recent history. **DATA AND DESIGN** – The data consists of group interviews with women aged 50–60, 35–40 and 25. The images of female alcohol use adopted in these groups are analysed by studying what representations of women's alcohol use and what drinking-related gender identities women in different age brackets identify themselves with as they interpret the stimulus images of drinking situations shown in interviews. **RESULTS** – The analysis suggests that women in different age groups have different ideas of what kind of images of female alcohol use are considered suitable, acceptable and desirable. The different generations also express and repeat different drinking-related norms and attitudes. **CONCLUSIONS** – Overall, the analysis shows that women have achieved greater autonomy in their alcohol use and that the construction of women's gender identity in relation to drinking has expanded beyond traditional feminine values and become more varied and layered. Younger generations thus have access to a wider range of feminine imageries, norms and ways of being women.

KEY WORDS – drinking, women, femininity, gender, alcohol, generations

Submitted 06.07.2012

Final version accepted 05.11.2012

Introduction

Each drinking culture has its own understanding of acceptable and non-acceptable drinking habits and appropriate drinking behaviour (cf. Bruun, 1959). The normative dimension of alcohol use determines what is appropriate and desirable for women and men and what kind of femininity or masculinity is expressed through drinking. These perceptions which guide alcohol use vary in time, place and within

gender groups. This article examines the theme from the perspective of gender. Paying attention to gender in the Finnish studies of drinking habits has often entailed comparisons between men and women where the man has usually been the norm to which women's drinking has been compared. However, in addition to the differences between genders, it is also important to examine the differences within gender

groups. Because women have played a remarkable role in the change of drinking habits (Mäkelä et al., 2010) and drinking-related attitudes in Finnish drinking culture (Mustonen et al., 2001; Simonen, 2011), this article focuses on women and differences between them. In the following, then, special attention will be given to the ways in which femininity among various women's groups is expressed in drinking.

The examination of femininity related to alcohol use is based on the idea that gender differences in alcohol consumption reflect the way in which women's and men's roles are structured and regulated within society. Cultural differences in drinking norms will help to identify gender-specific behaviour that is considered normal in society (Wilsnack & Wilsnack, 1997), for alcohol is perceived as one of the most important symbols of gender roles and identities in many cultures (Holmila & Raitasalo, 2005). In this article, these themes are approached from the perspective of constructionism. Alcohol is seen as a window through which to study gender representations and gender relations expressed and constructed among different generations (Sulkunen, 1998).

By using focus group interview material, I will study what kind of gender representations – and especially what kind of images of female alcohol use – Finnish women of different ages identify with. This particular theme is tackled by analysing how these women describe and construct gender relations and gender-specific norms and attitudes of drinking. The analysis brings out drinking-related perceptions of female and male actors and genders as subjects and objects of alcohol

use. In this way, the article participates in the discussion on alcohol-related gender orders with which Finnish women in different age groups identify. Because Finnish studies have shown that the generational factor which defines and separates experiences is particularly important among women (Ronkainen, 1999), I will also examine how a generational effect occurs in experiences of approved and non-approved femininity attached to drinking and in adopting a gender identity that is drinking-related.

Women's drinking and the Finnish alcohol culture

By studying approved and non-approved images of female alcohol use through comparisons of women at different ages, it is possible to examine the attitudinal atmosphere towards alcohol and changes in Finnish drinking culture. The theme seems even more relevant when we bear in mind that until the 1960s, Finnish alcohol culture was built largely on masculinity. Women were excluded from men's drinking situations (Falk & Sulkunen, 1980) and acted mainly as a controller of men's drinking (Holmila, 1992). In the late 1960s and 1970s, women's drinking began to increase, and subsequently the role of women has changed remarkably in the Finnish alcohol culture. While women's share of total alcohol consumption stood at about 10 percent in 1968, it had risen to more than 25 percent in 2008 (Mäkelä et al., 2010). Measured in litres of pure alcohol per capita, Finnish women had increased their total alcohol consumption from one litre in 1968 to almost 6.5 litres per year in 2008 (Mäkelä et al., 2010). This change in consumption has been interpreted as

being a part of a broader historic change in the role and life of Finnish women that has extended into a wide range of areas such as education, sexuality, motherhood, professionalism and work. As a result, the criteria which define women's actions and choices have changed in almost all areas of life (Ronkainen, 1999). The increase in labour market participation in particular, which has changed women's lifestyles and social status and made them stronger actors in areas of public life (cf. Lovell, 2004) has been offered as an explanation for women's increased alcohol consumption. This augmentation has also been interpreted as a means for women to achieve a higher social status and cultural capital associated with men (Holmila & Raitasalo, 2005).

Overall, the growing prevalence of women's drinking is one of the single most important changes in Finnish alcohol culture in recent history. Over a period of 40 years, women's alcohol consumption has increased almost six-fold while men's alcohol consumption has doubled (Mäkelä et al., 2010). However, this development does not mean that women have simply adopted masculine drinking habits or that women and men would connect the same practices and meanings to drinking (Demant & Törrönen, 2011; Simonen et al., forthcoming 2013; Törrönen & Maunu, 2007; Maunu & Simonen, 2010). Finnish studies carried out in the 1980s strongly emphasised the separation between the feminine and masculine worlds of drinking (Holmila, 1988). The feminine world was usually determined by self-control, where drinking was associated with sociability and good manners. At the same time, drinking among men could be unre-

strained and break the norms of everyday life (cf. Mäkelä & Virtanen, 1987; Pyörälä, 1991; Pyörälä, 1995). Several studies have linked the differences in the worlds of drinking between genders precisely to the inequality in drinking control. It is considered to be typical that women are able to maintain self-control and thereby their femininity even while drinking (Pietilä, 2001, also Pietilä, 2006). In recent decades, however, women's and men's worlds of drinking have been perceived as showing signs of convergence (Paakkanen, 1995; Bergmark, 2004; McPherson et al., 2004), and during the early 2000s, the drinking of adult women, and especially the binge drinking of young women, has continued to grow (Mustonen et al., 2009, Raitasalo & Simonen, 2011). It has therefore been questioned whether gender equality has emerged in an undesirable way, whether women, and young women in particular, have embraced behaviour previously seen as masculine (Julkunen 2010). Few studies have concentrated on examining the significance of this change or the attached meanings.

Thanks to surveys on drinking habits, we have a fairly accurate picture of the changes in Finnish women's drinking and the explanations provided. However, the question of how Finnish women of different ages relate drinking to their self-understanding and desired femininity has, with the exception of young women (Pietilä, 2006; Nykyri, 1996; Jaatinen, 2000), only rarely been in the focus. The explanations offered for women's drinking tend to hide the fact that the change in drinking habits is also fundamentally about a shift in norms and attitudes on what is considered acceptable and desired drink-

ing behaviour. For example, in a Swedish study the moral norms of drinking varied between different female cohorts: drinking attitudes were strict and negative among women born before 1920, but more liberal among younger cohorts (Abrahamson, 2012; see also Abrahamson, 2009). Female drinking norms and their changes relate to the attitudinal atmosphere of drinking in a given society. Studies show that norms and expectations towards women's drinking are generally stricter than towards men's drinking (Bogren 2011; Abrahamson, 2004), even to the extent that a double standard is said to prevail (deVisser, 2012).

Conceptual framework: gender order and images of female alcohol use

I have applied Judith Butler's (1990) concept of gender order in the theoretical framework of studying accepted and desired femininity and images of female alcohol use. Butler relates the concept to heteronormativity. This is generally understood as describing any kind of lifestyle norms which result in people falling into distinct and complementary genders (man and woman) with natural roles in life. In such a world, men have a higher hierarchical position than women and heterosexuality is the normal sexual orientation.

In this article, I use the term in a special way. Instead of the general understanding, which relates the concept to gender dualism and one dominant hierarchical structure of gender relations, I am interested in differences inside heteronormativity and between perceptions of gender orders among different women's groups. In place of one hierarchical structure, I suggest that

drinking involves different gender orders and gender relations. I thus use the concept of hetero norm as a reference to the idea of different relations between two genders. In this context, the concept does not refer to sexuality, and the discussion of the existence of various genders is thus left out of this article.

The examining of images of female alcohol use in women's groups of different ages also makes it visible how heteronormativity and gender order come true in relation to gender-tied practices, obligations and rights of women and men (Julkunen 2010). In this sense, the idea of gender order comes close to what Hirdman has argued and thus has a connection to the second-wave feminist theorists (see Julkunen, 2010; Hirdman, 1990; 2002; 2007). However, in the article I understand these concepts and ideas in a constructionist way. Rather than analysing gender-based "natural identities" or sex-segregated practices, I concentrate on examining the hetero norms Finnish women produce and relate with, the kinds of positions and expectations women create for themselves and for men and women in general while discussing drinking. This entails an analysis of the nature of images of female alcohol use and drinking-related gender orders women of different ages identify with. The process also highlights what kind of feminine and masculine gender identities the interviewed women attach to drinking.

Gender identities are produced in social institutions, in everyday practices and discourses by repeating and varying the male and female cultural norms, acts and styles (West & Zimmerman, 1987; Butler, 1990). In the article, gender identities are thus understood as constructions and perfor-

mances (see Beynon, 2002; Butler, 1990; Shields, 2002).

While using alcohol and discussing drinking, the interviewees express and do gender through repetition of drinking-related attitudes and practices. What is important, however, is the way they carry forward the repetition, because they can also shape, avoid, deny, resist, highlight and challenge certain practices which are considered characteristic of women and men (cf. Tolonen, 2008).

The article sheds light on what kind of alcohol-related attitudes and gender relations as well as gender performances and repetitions in relation to drinking the interviewed women identify with. It can be assumed that the images of female alcohol use and the ways in which the drinking-related gender orders are described differ in groups of women at different ages. To what extent these groups show differences and similarities will be discussed in the following analysis.

The examination of images of female alcohol use: data and methods

Groups of women of different ages as representatives of generations

The images of female alcohol use and drinking-related gender orders are examined by using group interview material on drinking habits. The material was collected in Finland in 2007 as part of the project “The cultural position of drinking and its changes” (funded by the Academy of Finland). The material consists of interviews with six groups, which included a total of 38 women. The interview groups were formed on the basis of age and education (secondary or post-secondary).

Highly educated refers to a post-secondary education. Women born during the period 1947–1957 are represented by one highly-educated group (interview 7, 60 years, 9 persons) and two lower-educated groups (interview 9, 60 years, 9 persons; interview 4, 50 years, 5 persons). Women born during the period 1967–1972 are represented by one highly-educated group (interview 2, 35–40 years, 5 persons), while women born in the period 1981–1983 include one highly-educated group (interview 5, 25 years, 5 persons) and one lower-educated group (interview 13, 25 years, 5 persons).

The formation of the groups is based on the idea of generations, which arise from socio-economic developments within the Finnish society as well as from changes in drinking culture and alcohol policy in their respective periods (cf. Mannheim, 1952/1928). The oldest interviewed group, the women aged 50–60 years, are regarded as “baby boomers”, whose lives are characterised by the era of the welfare state and increasing urbanisation (Julkunen, 2010). Because of the growth in alcohol consumption and the rejection of abstinence, this generation has been called the “wet generation” (Sulkunen 1980). This cohort lived their childhood in a patriarchal, male-dominated gender order, but the welfare state’s ideology of gender equality and women’s growing participation in the labour market has gradually begun to erode and change the traditional gender roles in the last decades (Hirdman, 2002; Julkunen, 2010).

The second oldest group, consisting of women aged 35–40 years, can be described as the suburban generation of rising welfare and improving education (Julkunen, 2010). The political climate for questions

regarding alcohol was controversial in the youth of this age group, marked by a tough stand towards alcohol in the 1970s and early 1980s and the liberalisation of attitudes in the late 1980s (Tigerstedt et al., 2004). Unlike the oldest generation, these women became used to the principles of gender equality already at an early age. The women-friendly welfare state continued to grow during the youth of this generation, with the aim of guaranteeing equal opportunities for both genders in all sectors of society (Julkunen, 2010).

The youngest interviewed group, the generation of young adults aged 25 years, has experienced the recession of the early 1990s, the reorganisation of welfare services and the new alcohol policy in the wake of Finland's EU membership (Julkunen, 2010). This age group has grown in a liberal drinking culture and in a society which offers the same possibilities for both sexes (Julkunen, 2010).

The material and analysis

The focus group method is well-suited to analysing group negotiations through which collective understandings of specific phenomena are established (Demant & Törrönen, 2011). In doing this, the interviewees use their own experiences and draw on broader societal discourses and cultural images circulated by the media. In this way, the group interaction reveals how specific phenomena are identified and attain shared recognition and are established as collective truths in the group (Demant, 2008).

All focus groups were formed from natural groups in which the participants knew each other. In the project group, we co-created principles for data gathering,

which I was responsible for. I received the contact details of those who fulfilled our criteria from trade unions. First, a letter that introduced the background to the ongoing data collection was sent to randomly selected individuals according to their year of birth, sex, occupation and place of residence. These persons were then called and asked whether they would be willing to participate in the research and form a peer group with a similar educational background. The only other criterion in the group formation was that at least most of the participants had experience in alcohol use. Before all focus groups were recruited, hundreds of letters had to be sent and over a hundred calls made; there were thus refusals, too. Fortunately, once the groups were formed, there were hardly any dropouts.

The interviews took place at the Institute for Health and Welfare (THL), the National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health (STAKES), which was one of THL's predecessors or at the workplace of the participating group in Helsinki and the surrounding areas. The interview format was an informal debate in which coffee and snacks were served. Two researchers were involved in each interview, one directing the group discussion towards the desired themes and the other taking care of the audio and video recording of the interviews. The duration of the interviews ranged between 50 and 90 minutes and all the audio material was transcribed.

The interview procedure consisted of questions on the participants' drinking habits and any changes in them, forming a continuum from childhood memories to experiences of the present day. In addition, 16 stimulus pictures were shown

that presented stereotypical drinking situations, which were used to motivate participants to reflect on their own drinking habits and drinking-related moral ideals. The same method has been used in other studies as well (see, for example, Demant & Törrönen, 2011; Simonen, 2012b).

The pictures portrayed drinking situations from eight different categories: meal drinking, hanging out, drinking at mass events (festivals, etc.), a picnic, drinking alone, partying, heavy drinking and problem drinking. The pictures worked as a clue and provocative stimulus which the interviewees could use to reflect on the described situations and events and link them to their own living contexts and social relations (Törrönen, 2002; Maunu, 2008). The targets of the analysis are not the images as such, but the debate which arose on women's suitable alcohol behaviour and the gender relations in drinking situations. Three questions were linked to the pictures shown in the interviews: 1) What is happening in the picture? 2) Is the situation familiar to you, and 3) How will the situation continue?

Three pictures were selected for further analysis of the approved and desired femininity attached to drinking. They were chosen because their provocative nature effectively raised a discussion about the limits of the norms attached to drinking; what kinds of alcohol-related behaviour are permissible or desirable and which are not. The pictures described three different types of female representations, which acted as mirrors to the interviewees' drinking habits and values adopted in drinking. The first picture showed a woman as a pleasure-seeking alcohol consumer and a man doing domestic tasks. The picture stimu-

lated a discussion on traditional gender roles in drinking and their relevance to the interviewees' own experience. The second picture presented women as having fun together in a restaurant ladies' room and men being left outside of female celebration, sitting alone at the restaurant table. The scene encouraged participants to discuss women as independent alcohol users and actors celebrating together as well as the habits and limits of drinking approved for women. The third picture presented a man who had passed out on the table and a woman supporting the drunken man. This situation prompted the interviewees to comment on women's role as a controller of men's drinking and to discuss drunkenness and excessive drinking.

By examining and comparing the stories built around the pictures, I was able to study the gender orders and the images of female alcohol use adopted by the interviewed women. In the analysis of the reception of stimulus pictures in groups of women of different ages, special attention is paid to two aspects. First, 1) how gender relations are described and how women and men are placed as subjects and objects in drinking situations. Second, 2) what kind of drinking-related femininity or different ways of being a woman are perceived as desired and accepted.

As noted above, the analysis applies the idea of gender as a construction and a performance (West & Zimmerman, 1987; Butler, 1990; Shields, 2002). This method is linked to the stimulus material used. The interviewees produce gender both in relation to the presented pictures and to those who are present in the interview situation.

The data was analysed by examining what kind of gender representations the

The woman as an independent and pleasure-seeking alcohol user



Picture 1. A man in the kitchen and a woman on the couch.

interviewees identified with or distanced themselves from. In addition, the interviewees state what kind of gender representations they consider impossible. This becomes evident when the women situate themselves in relation to the analysed pictures. They either identify with the female representations shown or distance themselves from them. Thus the construction of gender not only indicates what is considered desirable behaviour in terms of alcohol use, but also shows the gender-specific norms and values which guide us in conceiving certain behaviours as desired.

While assessing the female representations in the pictures, the interviewees place women and men as interdependent but categorically different groups. As a consequence, genders are articulated, either directly or indirectly, in relation to each other.

The interviewee's anonymity is protected in the quotes in accordance with the general principles of research ethics: their names have been replaced by covert names. The quotes have been marked with

the interview number and the age and educational level of the interviewees (lower education, higher education). In the following section, I proceed to the analysis of the images of female alcohol use.

In the first picture to be analysed, a man is about to place dishes on the table while a woman is lying on the couch wearing a short dress and taking a drink directly from a wine bottle. The picture stems from an advertisement of Finnish Arabia tableware called Illusion (Illuusiat). A caption asks: "only an illusion?" The picture challenges the stereotypical drinking-related gender representations by reversing the "traditional" gender order. The picture arouses different reactions in the discussions of the groups of women of different ages. Among the representatives of the oldest age group, consisting of women aged 50–60 years, the picture evokes disbelief.

Kerttu: That picture is a bit absurd. That kind of service could...

Leila: We don't recognize that

Seija: [continues Kerttu's sentence]...be bought with money

Kirsti. This is the way things are nowadays, a woman lies on the sofa and a man...

Seija: If a woman lies on the sofa and drinks from the bottle, her husband doesn't do that; he's being bossed about

Leila: A man replying to an "afternoon coffee" ad [seeking company]

Seija: Yes

Kirsti: This is nowadays you see. A woman drinks and a man... odd situation

Leila: Look, it has been taken in Finland 'cause that's Arabia tableware

Auli: I don't understand that kind of picture at all. Can't be possible

I: Can't be possible?

Auli: Can't be, at least not my husband

Seija: And I wouldn't even like to pursue that, I think that's not worth pursuing

(Interview 9, 60 years, higher education)

The 50–60-year-old women do not identify with the picture but distance themselves from it by using the phrase *this is nowadays*, clearly stating that it is not of their time. The women of this age group do not connect their own experiences to a situation in which the woman consumes alcohol and the man does housework. The interviewees probably disapprove of presenting a woman in a sexist way. However, when they pay more attention to the man in the picture, the older women experience that the reversal of the traditional gender order is more significant than combining femininity to sexuality. Taking distance from the picture, the women stress the traditional gender order and identify with traditional gender-based routines and responsibilities. As lying on the sofa seductively and consuming alcohol are not connected to the functions which are considered typical or desirable for women, so a representation of a male doing housework is not attached to the cultural image of a man adopted in this age group. The man in the picture is not seen as a free, independent subject; he is not a husband but a lackey.

The commitment to traditional gender roles indirectly implies domestic and family responsibilities and also taking care of a spouse, all traits which are considered to be characteristic of femininity

and which are clearly connected to appropriate female behaviour (Holmila, 1988). The image of a woman lying on the couch and drinking alcohol could not be further away from a representation of traditional femininity. Instead of responsibility, the image openly underlines freedom, pleasure, sexuality and crossing borders. To distance oneself from the picture can be interpreted as a sign of the interviewees' identifying with traditional feminine role expectations. The femininity expressed in the picture is not deemed desirable at all and is met with feelings of shame. Presenting a woman as an independent, sexual, pleasure-seeking subject of alcohol use is rejected: *[this] can't be possible*.

The classification of the gender representations as "not possible" also reflects the way in which the pictures are read in the group. The situation in the picture is read realistically, through seeking reference points and meanings that are consistent with reality. Because such reference points are missing, the situation is rejected as absurd and the way in which the picture plays with gender roles is not recognised. Similarly, in the second group of the same age, playing with roles does not invite the participants to identify with the presented gender representations. Once more the picture is interpreted realistically and the reversal of gender roles is situated firmly outside of reality.

Saara: That's a daydream

Saara: It's not reality

Meeri: Yes, plus it's still only an ad that doesn't exist

Meeri: Just nonsense

Mervi: It would, by the way, be rather difficult to stay on the couch. Like “did you also remember to put the herrings on the table?”

I: But if this happened, how would it continue?

Saara: That doesn’t happen in real life

Meeri: Do you see now, five wives declare that it doesn’t exist

Mervi: And if that was real, it would continue that you would fall down on the floor and wake up and notice that dirty dishes are on the table and everybody has left and collecting dishes is my task again

Meeri: And then the Biedermeier couch is some shabby old leather couch

Mervi: our dog’s couch where it always sleeps

Meeri: (...) So the admen should keep the sci-fi pictures to themselves

Alli: Or then it can be that some man imagines that some woman thinks that this would be a woman’s dream

I: Would it be?

Alli: Certainly not

Meeri: No

(Interview 4, 50 years old, lower education)

The conclusion that it is impossible to reverse gender roles is unanimous in the group: *Five wives declare that it doesn’t exist*. The situation in the picture is declared absurd, because in the interviewees’ experience, housework is a female area. The women’s discussion in fact reveals that being responsible for the home is not only desired but also considered to be an obligation for a woman. Securing the continuity of everyday routines, generally

considered to be the woman’s domain, is deeply rooted in the group.

By shaking up gender roles in an implausible way, the picture raises mainly irritation among the interviewed women. This reaction is even stronger in the groups with lower education. The more highly educated group considered the picture *nonsense* (Aulikki, interview 7), *unpleasant* (Hilkka, interview 7) and *really tasteless* (Saara, interview 7).

Among the 35–40-year-old women, the picture does not raise similar reactions. The situation presented in the picture is not considered impossible, nor is the female representation rejected.

Taina: (...) sometimes at home it’s that way that someone else cooks and does the dishes, very often actually, but seldom I do that other thing

Kati: But I say that this woman is there on a Friday having a G&T [gin & tonic] on the couch after work, I think that’s rather “good”. Then the weekend begins and [you are in a] good mood and [all stress] is forgotten. But how wonderful if you can just lie on the couch and have one [alcoholic drink] and you don’t need to take care of anyone

Taina: I think there is a clear impression that, (...) I have that kind of feeling that this woman lies there totally..

Kati: ...that she is drunk

Taina: Even though it could really be as you said that “Now I have one drink”

Kati: you wouldn’t need to do anything

Eeva: I don’t know. Still I think that it raises a question if it is okay for a woman to just be like that, even though, I don’t know

(Interview 2, 35–40 years old, higher education)

For the oldest age group, the picture mainly stirred up a discussion on the gender order and its divergence with the participants' own experiences, while the pictured woman's drinking was ignored because of the absurdity of the image. In contrast, the younger age group describes the picture specifically in relation to alcohol use, not questioning the reversal of the stereotypical gender identities. Also, they do not identify with the traditional gender order but rather talk about drinking habits and the quantity of drinking of the woman portrayed. Relaxing on the couch and enjoying alcohol is seen as an accepted and, with certain restrictions, also as a desired behaviour: *But how wonderful if you can just lie on the couch and have one*. The interpretation clearly differs from the sentiments of the older age group where the female representation was considered inappropriate and shameful. This divergence also pertains to the change in Finnish alcohol culture; as drinking has become more prevalent among women, alcohol use has also spread to homes (see Mustonen et al., 2009).

Among women aged 35–40 years, the acceptance of the female representation does not relate to the question of alcohol use itself but the way that alcohol is used. Having one drink, which can be interpreted as a symbol of moderate drinking, is perceived as acceptable and desirable, whereas being drunk is considered inappropriate. This group identifies with an independent and pleasure-seeking alcohol consumer. It is important to note, however, that drinking behaviour still calls for control.

The 35–40-year-old women may relate to the picture, but the idleness of the woman combined with alcohol use nevertheless leads to some hesitation in the group, as is exemplified in Eeva's question: *Is it okay for a woman to just be like that... I don't know*. Hesitation when faced with a figure who is open about her pleasure and idleness can implicitly be interpreted as referring to the other values prominent in the group, such as being responsible for the domestic sphere and the woman's role in taking care of home and family (see Holmila, 1988).

In the youngest group, with 25-year-old women, the identification with the female representation causes no hesitation at all.

Laura: Does the woman drink some booze there alone?

Iina: And the man does the dishes

Sini: Yes, that's how women relax

Laura: Lying on the couch

Eija: The roles have been switched here

Laura: Reversed, yes, true, that the wife drinks to get drunk

Iina: Rather a trite ad I think, in that way (...), I don't see that anymore in the family life of people of my age, [I mean] turned the other way round, that a man would lie down and drink beer and a woman would do the housework. Rather trite for people of my age

Katja: That's sort of a bad joke, an old joke

(Interview 5, 25 years, higher education)

In the youngest group of women, the female representation is fully accepted, as is evident in the laconic expression: *That's how women relax*. A drinking behaviour that expresses hedonistic enjoyment

and pleasure is considered appropriate (Nykyri, 1996; Paakkanen, 1995; Simonen, 2007; Simonen, 2011; Simonen, 2012a). The picture is interpreted in a similar way also in the second group of young women. The young women's descriptive narration implies that the picture resonates with their own experiences. The young women identify with the gender order presented in the picture and distance themselves strongly from the role of the homemaker. This does not necessarily mean that in real life these young women would pursue or even follow this kind of behaviour. For the interviewed young women, the picture more likely symbolises new kinds of freedoms and pleasures which are possible for women. The narrative they use also shows that the pictures are read in a metaphorical way in the group, interpreted as advertisements: efficient and symbolic reflections of the surrounding culture which bear little resemblance to the realistic reading of the picture adopted in the oldest age group.

The provocative way of reversing traditional gender roles, however, raises irritation also in the youngest age group albeit for a completely opposite reason than in the groups of women aged 50–60. The women in the oldest group became irritated because of the impossibility of the reversal of gender roles, while the young women take offence at the way in which the picture presents conservative gender ideals as still existing. The gender order predominant among women aged 50–60 appears as both unfamiliar and old-fashioned:

Iina: I think these roles are irritating. This has been made as if it still existed the other way around. 'Cause they look quite

young, could be if there were some older [people]

Katja: [It's] a bit like the advertisement company doesn't get it

(Interview 5, 25 years old, higher education)

The traditional gender division of alcohol use is not accepted in the group either. This indicates how strongly alcohol use is a part of the young women's self-understanding and the feminine imagery adopted in this age group (Simonen, 2011).

In the second picture, men are sitting at their restaurant tables looking bored while women are chatting, drinking and having fun together in the ladies' room. The picture stems from an advertisement of Helmi liqueur (Pearl liqueur), with a caption "Girl talk", referring to women's sociability. An interpretation of the picture is challenging for the oldest generation of women, as it does not relate to the interviewees' own experience.

Aulikki: It's unnatural

Elina: But one thing that is true is that there is always a queue in the ladies' room, so there in the corridor you end up in that situation. But this seems as if women voluntarily have come there and left the men alone

Ritva: They have left the men alone at the table

Aulikki: These men look rather grim, so what a weird situation it is

Hilkka: This is also some kind of ad, 'cause this isn't from real life

I: Why did you say unnatural?

Kaisu: Well, not everyone can go to the ladies' room at the same time

Women as collectively celebrating alcohol users



Picture 2. Women are having a good time together; men are waiting on their own at the tables.

(Interview 7, 60 years old, higher education)

The extract shows that the picture raises confusion in the group. Once again the situation is interpreted literally, through a realistic way of reading pictures, *not everyone can go to the ladies' room at the same time*, and the symbolism of women's intended togetherness accompanied by drinking does not convey itself to this group. When the women in this age group were young, restaurants were not part of the women's realm: *in the 60s, women were not allowed to go to the restaurant alone* (Kerttu, interview 9, 60 years old, women, lower education).

The fact that the picture is felt to portray a strange situation and is interpreted literally implies that, in this group, the culturally and socially accepted image of femininity is not associated with the presented female representations, which are drinking and celebrating together separately from men. This is understandable in relation to Kerttu's previous statement of life in the 1960s when women were

connected to home rather than a restaurant and when they were dependent on men. The way the picture breaks the traditional gender-specific power composition by linking women with alcohol, bringing them from the private to the public sphere (from home to a restaurant), and describing them as independent from men is not familiar to this age group.

Also, in the lower-educated groups in particular, the women in this picture are interpreted as easy to get.

Kerttu: Gentlemen sit there with wallets in their back pockets and pretty women are there a bit more to one side

Leila: They [men] have a thick wallet and young girls are standing by the door

(Interview 9, 60 years old, lower education)

Mervi: Are they businessmen sitting and having lunch?

Alli: No, this is some fine party, even a suit-party

Meeri: I would have said also that all the gigolos have gone in search of company

Alli: Why do those men just sit at the table?

Meeri: 'Cause they are some businessmen who imagine...

Saara: And they [women] are waiting there around the corner, they are some business gifts or something

(Interview 4, 50 years old, lower education)

In these statements, traits of "bad femininity" are associated with women's alcohol-oriented socialising as presented in the picture. For Meeri, this is the only possible interpretation of the image: *So I don't*

see any other meaning for the situation than that three well-dressed chicks come to the restaurant and those guys are sitting alone. The women can put a 500-euro price tag on their chest (interview 4, 50 years old, lower education). This interpretation continues the previous discussion in which the women waiting around the corner were seen as *business gifts*. In other words, they are rather seen as “easy-to-get” objects of men than subjects who are having fun because they want to. The femininity of the picture is therefore perceived as something to be ashamed of, loaded mainly with negative connotations in this age group. This interpretation has its origin in an atmosphere when it was not acceptable for a decent woman to be in a restaurant without male company (Sillanpää, 2002; Paakkanen, 1992).

In the group of 35–40-year-old women, the decency of the female representations presented in the picture is not questioned, nor is the picture interpreted through the men, as in the older age group. The representations of women having drinks together are naturally connected to alcohol without the presence of a man. They are seen to play with the men positioned in the role of objects – which is a completely reversed interpretation from the one in the group of older women. In the interpretation of women aged 35–40 years, the women become independent alcohol users who have the freedom to follow their own desires regardless of men (Törrönen & Juslin, 2009).

Tuija: They are flirting together, these girls I think

Kaija: Not these pearls for those swine

Kati: Exactly. Those pearls [women]

leave to have their own party and they [men] can stay moping about there

Tuija: No, but they [women] are allocating

Kati: Do you take that one...

Eeva: I take that one...

Kati: And who would take two, alright, I can

Taina: One for one [woman] and two for the others [laughing]

Taina: Fair division

Kati: They draw lots as to who has to leave with only one

(Interview 2, 35–40 years old, higher education)

In the quotation, the presented femininity is loaded with positive connotations unlike in the interpretation of the older age group. The women in these representations, using alcohol, are not seen as “business presents”, but as pearls, whose enjoyment is not dependent on men. The discussion highlights socialising among women as intended, valued and desired. The women in this group identify with the representation of women as independent actors having fun and drinking together. That the picture is interpreted with a sense of humour tells of a skill to read pictures in advertising language, which differs again from the realistic interpretation of the oldest group.

In the youngest group, with 25-year-old women, the picture is interpreted in the same way as among women aged 35–40 years. The picture is read symbolically, attached to partying, having fun and drinking among friends, which has become a central social institution in the leisure culture of young urban adults (Törrönen & Maunu, 2007).

Reetta: (...) women looking for a party together somewhere (...). The men have waited for a romantic dinner and the women go to gossip in the ladies' room

(Interview 13, 25 years old, lower education)

This extract highlights women's own partying as a desired drinking behaviour. It reflects female solidarity in which women's own, "us girls" celebration bypasses men's hopes and expectations. The female representations of drinking and partying together are interpreted not only as independent and separate subjects from men. They are seen to have a competence which the men are lacking.

Nea: The women seem to have a much nicer time together. The men are sitting there alone

Jonna: But isn't it precisely the idea that those women don't know each other, but anyway they have straight away got that kind of good feeling and they drink together and have fun and the men there are alone and no-one says anything to each other and they don't have anything in common

(Interview 13, 25 years old, lower education)

The woman is interpreted as socially capable and open, whereas the man is described as limited and solitary. This reinforces the interpretation of the representations of women as strong, self-aware and proactive alcohol users, whose partying does not require men's permission. But what kind of alcohol use is connected to women's partying?

Unlike the other groups, the young women associate the picture with intoxication-oriented drinking. The picture is interpreted as a double date, where the women are not satisfied with the men they have met. They will therefore follow their own needs: *Let's just drink to get drunk and then just leave* (Iina, interview 5, 25 years old, higher education). The objects of desire are now the women's own enjoyment, partying and pleasure. Attention to one's dinner company is secondary. A woman's desire for integrity – a feeling of individuality and the right to have one's own wishes separate from men – is stressed in this age group (cf. Sulkunen 2009). In Iina's statement, this desire refers to intoxication-oriented drinking with female friends, which the group strongly identifies with. This is why the young women claim that *when you go to drink, it is quite intoxication-oriented and beer is not drunk for the flavour of it* (Johanna, interview 13, 25 years old, lower education).

Intoxication is appropriate, normal and desired, a natural part of being a woman (cf. Simonen, 2007; Simonen, 2011). The relation to intoxication is expressed openly unlike in the groups of older women, who can count the occasions of being intoxicated on the fingers of one hand, such as in Leila's case: *three distinct states of drunkenness I've had in my life* (interview 9, 60 years old, lower education). The relation to intoxication in the youth of the youngest generation is totally different from that of the oldest group, in whose youth alcohol, and intoxication in particular, belonged to the men's world: *drinking was a thing for boys and girls just watched* (Elina, interview 7, 60 years old, higher education). Alcohol often became a more

The woman as a controller of man's drinking



Picture 3. A woman is helping a man who has passed out.

visible part of the lives of these older interviewed women only during their studies, after they had come of age (at 21 at the time).

In the third analysed picture, a man has passed out. He is leaning on a table which is full of empty glasses while a woman is propping him up. The picture can be interpreted as a symbol of the traditional gender order of alcohol use in which the woman takes care of a man and assumes responsibility for the relationship (cf. Holmila 1992). Unlike the previous pictures, this situation is immediately recognised in all women's groups. The women in the group aged 50–60 years identify with the female representation of controlling the man's drinking.

Alli: This is exactly why I restrict my husband's drinking in certain situations, 'cause this is what happens to him around midnight: He becomes sleepy

Meeri: Yes, but that one has passed out

Alli: Yes, he has, but he [my husband] becomes sleepy and it is quite similar to this, when [his] eyes don't stay open anymore

(Interview 4, 50 years old, lower education)

The quotation shows that the woman's role as a controller of man's drinking is considered to be typical. Although the woman is positioned into this role by consensus, the identity of female representation is debated.

Aulikki: Can it be the wife when she doesn't look angrier than that?

Aulikki: Can't be the wife

Marjatta: That's not the wife. That's some female friend, a friend or something, but [anyway] some work colleague

Aulikki: She is like, "yes, I can take care of this"

Elina: From a working place Christmas party

(Interview 7, 60 years old, higher education)

The smiling female representation in the picture is not perceived as the man's wife. The women are unanimous: she cannot be the man's wife because she does not look angry enough. This indicates that in the associations of the group, the wife would disapprove of her husband's drunkenness and loss of control. The configuration reflects the traditional gender division of alcohol. Alcohol and intoxication-oriented drinking in particular are considered masculine issues, and alcohol use follows the logic "the husband drinks and the wife controls" (cf. Falk & Sulkunen, 1980; Alasuutari, 1986; Holmila, 1988). In these groups, the interpretation of the relation between woman and alcohol is determined through a man. Rather than being

an independent alcohol user, the woman is seen as the guardian of male drinking.

The formula “man drinks, wife controls” is also apparent in the group of women aged 35–40 years.

Kati: I don't know if she was the girlfriend or the wife, but that smile; she tries to make it a funny picture but she actually is like “goddamn”

Taina: Yes, like “we will certainly be discussing this at home”

Kati: Yes

(Interview 2, 35–40 years old, higher education)

The man's behaviour evokes disapproval in this group as well. The woman's gesture is interpreted as a fake smile, which reveals that the affair is not settled yet but will be discussed later. In the previous age group, the woman's role as a controller of man's drinking was experienced as being, if not desired, then at least natural, and as a task belonging to a woman. In the group of women aged 35–40 years however, this role is not perceived as desirable at all.

Taina: (...) many times when you are in some bar or a party and someone drinks themselves into that condition, then it starts that kind of disgusting “that one has to be taken care of” caring instinct

Kati: yeah, you can't leave him even though you'd feel like doing that

Taina: That you'd like to kick him in the head

(Interview 2, 35–40 years old, higher education)

The emergence of the “caring instinct” is experienced as natural even if not desir-

able. In this age group, the woman is not automatically positioned in the sole role of guardian of male drinking as in the older women's groups. The very different positioning is striking in the youngest age group.

Päivi: But at least that woman is not very piqued 'cause she smiles

Jonna: But she is also drunk that woman, she doesn't think about it in that way

Nea: Yeah, that's true

I: Who could this woman be?

Johanna: She could be his girlfriend (...)

I: Does someone disagree?

Nea: I think that's only some friend of his

Päivi: I think so too

(Interview 13, 25 years old, lower education)

Although the woman's identity is discussed in a similar way as in the other groups, the extract bears a significant difference compared to the older age groups. In the interpretation of the young women, the female representation is not only regarded as controlling the man's behaviour but she is also seen as an independent alcohol user: *she is also drunk*. This interpretation is confirmed in the next discussion, in which a woman can also be the one passing out. Whereas the women in the oldest age groups identify only with the female representation presented in the picture, the young women identify with the male representation as well.

Iina: That's a situation that happens to all of us sometimes

Eija: Yes

Katja: Yes it is

Eija: Certainly

Iina: Yes, I don't even try to lie

Eija: That's true, one experiences it sometimes

Laura: But maybe more seldom nowadays

Katja: From that point one will be led to sleep in the bed and in the morning one gets laughed at "ha haa"

Laura: And the next day a friend will call: "Ha haa, do you feel sick...?"

Iina: And then she remembers for three months not to drink booze

Katja: One month

Eija: She remembers for one week

(Interview 5, 25 years old, higher education)

The discussion shows that intoxication and passing out are connected to the group members' own experiences. Drunkenness and excess drinking are actively expressed, unlike in the older groups, where they are disapproved of and where there is no identification with the male representation at all. The differences in the interpretations refer to the limits of control that are related to drinking.

Getting drunk and losing bodily control are clearly connected to the image of female alcohol use in the youngest age group. At the same time, the difference in the interpretation of drinking control reveals that while drinking-related norms are divided according to gender, intoxication-oriented drinking – which is usually perceived as a masculine feature – is also accepted and desired by women in the youngest age group.

Summary: images of female alcohol use and drinking-related gender orders in groups of Finnish women at different ages

In the above analysis, I have examined images of female alcohol use arising in discussions among groups of Finnish women of different ages. Alcohol and drinking have functioned as a window through which I have sought to capture the images of female alcohol use and drinking-related gender orders which women at different ages identify with. The chosen approach was rewarding, as the micro-level discussions elaborated on how different drinking situations are connected to wider social structures of gender ideals, gender relations and practices related to age and education. The reception analysis of female representations related to drinking situations showed that accepted, desired and embarrassing images of female alcohol use vary rather systematically in groups of Finnish women of different ages. The different age groups also had diverging views on the gender order of alcohol, the drinking-related hetero norm (referring to gender-specific attitudes and expectations and relation between genders in drinking) and on the context where relations between genders are structured.

According to the analysis, images of female alcohol use are framed by strict morals among the oldest group of women, those between 50–60 years of age (see also Abrahamson, 2012). These women emphasise moderation, decency, respectability and strong self-control in drinking as well as traditional feminine values of responsibility and taking care of home and family. This generation has lived with the traditional gender division of alcohol use of the man as subject in drinking and the woman

as controller. Only in recent decades have women taken steps to become independent alcohol users. The analysis suggests that the oldest age group talks about alcohol use and appropriate femininity as if from *inside of one gender*. The hetero norm of alcohol use includes traits from the traditional gender order. The woman is meaningful in relation to a counterpart, a man, and is cast in the role of “the other” in alcohol use. Drinking, as life in general, is discussed by using moral terms of good and right versus wrong and evil (cf. Ronkainen, 1999).

In contrast, the group of women aged 35–40 years is not tied to the traditional gender order of drinking. The image of female alcohol use underlines a responsible, active and independent femininity where women are also subjects in alcohol use. Therefore, unlike in the previous age group, a woman who is independent from a man and consumes alcohol for her own pleasure is considered culturally accepted and desired. This younger age group has entered *the world of two genders in alcohol use*. The drinking-related hetero norm is determined by an apparent gender neutrality in drinking and also in social life in general. This generation has not grown up in the traditional gender order, but has experienced equal education and work opportunities already from an early age. They have grown into a world of equality of independent actors. In regard to values, however, this generation finds itself at the intersection of traditional and modern female roles (cf. Ronkainen, 1999). Drinking is described as something private that is carried out in public where one’s own desires and traditional female responsibility interlock.

In the youngest age group, among the 25-year-old women, the image of female alcohol use is strongly characterised by the feeling of subjectivity in drinking as well as by female separateness and individuality. These women emphasise having fun in alcohol use in order to strengthen their social relations. Their drinking behaviour includes uninhibited and transgressive features. Intoxication-oriented drinking is desired, too. The youngest women belong to the group in which gender equality has been expressed already for several generations. The hetero norm repeated in the group presents a woman’s relation to alcohol as independent and private, and by no means as marked by a man. Since the former kind of hierarchy no longer exists, “the otherness” in drinking is not recognised. Gender, which has been a strong factor in the orientation of attitudes towards drinking behaviour, has thus lost its former significance among this age group, even though research has also shown that women and men are still subjected to different moral regulations on alcohol use (Abrahamson, 2004; Bogren, 2011). According to my analysis, young women are firmly established as individuals *in the big world* where genders are experienced and expressed as open and flexible. The discussion on relations and equality between genders or women’s rights is not relevant for them (Ronkainen, 1999). Since gender is no longer a threshold question, gender equality for these young women seems to be self-evident. This age group is surrounded by a discourse in which everything is possible for a woman (see Julkunen, 2010; Lazar, 2009). Equality between men and women as alcohol consumers is therefore natural: of course one

can enjoy drinking if one wants to. What is essential to this age group is to find the drinking habits that are suitable for oneself and those one is celebrating with (cf. Ronkainen, 1999).

The analysis shows that the images of female alcohol use adopted by the different age groups differ in two respects in particular: first, 1) in the way responsibility is allocated in drinking, and second, 2) in the way alcohol use is experienced. In the alcohol use of the oldest generation, responsibility for a man (usually a spouse) is carried by these women. Women of this generation represent the traditional rationality that follows the logic of responsibility. This feature is considered to be characteristic of femininity. Taking care of the other has been a matter of honour and a measure of self-worth (see Jokinen, 2004). Among young women, this responsibility is turned more strongly to(wards) the individual and the people who one is celebrating with, as well as towards the needs and desires emerging in joint drinking situations. While comparing these different generations, it becomes apparent that the rationality which follows the logic of responsibility seems to have changed in a qualitative way. Released from a duty of care, the woman has entered the world of alcohol as an alcohol consumer and has gradually grown to be a more and more independent alcohol user.

This transition has also changed the way in which alcohol consumption is experienced. When more responsibility is taken for one's own drinking and one is released from responsibilities towards others, there is more space for one's own independent experience. In the groups of young women, drinking is experienced through an in-

terpretative framework which emphasises freedom and pleasure. The strengthening of independent experiences also leaves more space for individual experiences of intoxication. Specifically in this aspect the differences in attitudes are obvious between young and old women. The groups of old women construct femininity by focusing on control and by distancing themselves from intoxication, while the young women's groups express femininity through identification with intoxication.

In the comparison of different age groups, the clearest difference can be found between the oldest and the two younger age groups. While the differences between the two younger groups are also apparent, they are less defined. This raises the question to what extent these differences – such as attitudes towards intoxication – are a generational factor and to what extent a matter of age. The divergence of attitudes among the two youngest generations can be at least partly explained by the different phases of life. Women aged 35–40 years may have contributed more to an intoxication-oriented discussion 15 years previously, but they may have a different relation to intoxication now that they have started a family and are perhaps more settled in life. This is not to say that the relation to intoxication is homogeneous in these groups. A previous analysis of these same generations in their twenties (women aged 20 born in the 1960s and 1980s) has shown that the attitudes towards getting drunk and the ways in which intoxication is used as a part of self-presentation differ between these two generations (Simonen, 2011). My analysis above, however, implies that the difference between the two younger and the oldest age group with re-

gard to drinking and drunkenness is more of a generational than an age factor. This also applies to their target of responsibility and changing gender roles, which reflects the liberalisation of women's alcohol behaviour and the norms guiding it. It also indicates the broadening of activities and repertoires related to women's drinking. In the younger age group, the agency in drinking seems to have intensified and become independent in such a way that the drinking-related hetero norm can be regarded as having been eroded. Among the young women, men are no longer the norm in drinking, and alcohol use and intoxication are considered to be gender-neutral, whereas they are still clearly gender-related in the eyes of the older women. The difference of opinion between the oldest and the youngest women is so pronounced that one can probably talk about an old and new femininity in drinking (cf. Bergmark, 2004).

When comparing the age groups and the results obtained, it is also essential to consider the restrictions of the methodology used and the reception of the pictures. It is necessary to ask whether the connection with the visual material is similar between the different age groups. Are the pictures read in a similar way?

It seems that the ways can indeed be read in different ways. For example, all groups seem to perceive picture 3 (a man has passed out, a woman is helping) as a realistic representation of reality. Pictures 1 (reversed gender roles) and 2 (partying women, waiting men) on the other hand, are approached by using different ways of reading. The older groups interpret them in an overly realistic manner: they search for meanings which are consistent with re-

ality. The younger groups, in turn, read the pictures in a more metaphorical and playful fashion. They interpret the pictures as images, not as reflections of the surrounding reality.

The differences between the ways pictures are read are evident not only in the interpretations but also in the content itself, in drinking. While, among older women, the relation to alcohol is determined by control, responsibilities and disciplined realism, the young women's relationship to alcohol is marked by uninhibited behaviour and the desire to experiment. For young women, unlike for the older generation, alcohol is something to joke about. The differences between the realistic and metaphorical way of reading the same picture thus also reflect the way in which alcohol is a suitable, possible and conventional subject to talk about in different age groups. It is therefore clear that the way of reading pictures can influence how the relation between drinking and womanhood is understood and expressed. The aim of our method was, however, to encourage the interviewees to express their targets, their premises and the scope of their cultural imagination. From this perspective, different ways of reading pictures cause no problems for the analysis. In contrast, different receptions are more likely to explain why women's relation to drinking becomes so different.

Differences of representations of female alcohol use between older and younger women inevitably bring up the question of what roles women have at different ages in Finnish culture. Even though the differences indicate disparities between the cohorts, it is not certain what will happen to these differences as the

youngest cohort becomes older. Will they maintain their positive attitude towards alcohol or will they start to absorb and express more conservative views and opinions that question the role of women as independent alcohol consumers and their appreciation of drinking?

In addition to studying the changes which come with ageing, special attention should also be paid to the differences inside one generation. For example, does education or class position function as a factor that differentiates gender-specific norms related to drinking inside an age group? A focus on the comparison between different age groups may hide differences within the groups.

Discussion: diversification in images of female alcohol use and changes in drinking-related gender order

In terms of the differences among the age groups on drinking-related norms and images of female alcohol use, one important fact needs to be considered. What has happened to gender and the gender order since the youth of the oldest women in the 1960s and 1970s, when gender ideology began to emphasise men's and women's equality as citizens, earners and parents, and as a result also in politics, work and at home? There has clearly been a shift from patriarchy and the power of fathers and husbands towards an individualisation of women, which implies that women, like men, have established their own personalities (Julkunen, 2010). In other words, there has been an increase in women's integrity, a sense of separateness (Sulkunen, 2009). This evolution should not, however, be interpreted as a transition to some

kind of post-gender space where gender has completely lost its power in organising culture, society, the social order, or drinking (Julkunen, 2010).

Raija Julkunen (2010) suggests, rather, that the gender order specific to our time should be understood as post-patriarchal, where the adaptation and expression of gender have more freedom. This perspective is also suitable to my analysis, because the relation between femininity and drinking seems to have diversified and acquired new normative layers. Structures and practices which produce gender hierarchy, segregation and hetero norm have not become completely irrelevant in drinking (cf. Julkunen, 2010), but one could argue that they are in transition; they break down in one place and renew themselves in another. In such transition, limits between genders in drinking are broken, while gender-specific norms are also mixing, creating more space to the expression of gender (Julkunen, 2010).

Similarly, according to the analysis, the images of female alcohol use expressed in different age groups are not static, neither mutually exclusive nor totally or hierarchically evolving. The construction of femininity attached to drinking also has continuity, as femininity, too, is produced by using the same attributes in the different age groups. The youngest generations will repeat some moral codes from the previous generation, but the variety of the attributes is growing while new codes appear that are unfamiliar to the older generation. Time will bring new layers to the expressing of drinking-related femininity, though this does not necessarily eliminate the former (cf. Julkunen, 2010). As a consequence, the representations of feminin-

ity accumulate and drinking-related femininity becomes more diverse.

The analyses refer to a change in the alcohol-related attributes of femininity as well as in drinking-related norms and attitudes in Finland in recent history. According to the analysis, the construction of a female gender identity related to drinking has expanded from traditional to multifaceted values. Women of the youngest generation are particularly critical towards traditional femininity. In addition, the analysis shows that drinking has become an area of women's own and independent experiences. Especially in the case of the youngest generation, one explanation for the growth in the popularity of drinking may relate to the will to gain independent experiences and the increased appreciation of these experiences. One may rightfully ask why "modern Finnish women" see drinking as an especially favoured and

important field to gain experiences in.

This development reflects more generally the changes and increasing diversity in experiences and action repertoires related to alcohol use among Finnish women (see also Simonen, 2012a; Simonen et al., forthcoming 2013). The expansion of women's roles in alcohol use implies that several drinking-related action positions have become approved and desired for Finnish women in recent decades (Törrönen and Juslin, 2009). Women who consume alcohol therefore have access to a wider range of feminine imagery, norms and ways of being a woman.

Declaration of Interest None.

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