

Mongolian National Identity Versus Global Cultural Order: Negotiating Identity of
Contemporary Mongolian Youth

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the discursive strategies employed by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working with Mongolian youth. Specifically, it examines how these organizations construct Mongolian national identity among the young audience in the meeting with global cultural order by negotiating them. The thesis explores the ideologies promoted by these youth-oriented NGOs, often perceived as global cultural norms. Utilizing qualitative research methods, the study aims to uncover the dynamics of national identity formation and its implication for nation-building. The findings enhance our understanding of the influence of NGOs working with Mongolian youth and their promotion of ideologies prevalent in the West

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Justification

Freedom, liberty, and human rights are fundamental pillars in contemporary social and political life. They form the bedrock of democratic societies and are deeply embedded in political philosophy. While the idea of freedom is universally cherished, its definition varies depending on political philosophy and a particular nation's cultural context. We can, for example, witness many of the Western media reports on how human rights are violated in some countries under a tyrannical system, or criticize a particular country for its decision to prevent illegal immigrants, or demonize a parliament that legislated a law that embraces conservative values. While at the same time these media may neglect the nuances of the situation or fail to give equal attention to infringements in countries aligned with Western perspectives, democracy and human rights are no doubt essential normative and legal systems and mechanisms for both domestic and international practice. Yet, are they truly compatible with every nation's way of life? Do all people genuinely desire the values that (Western-based) international organizations work so hard to promote and invest in on a global scale?

In recent decades, there has been a significant increase in public attention towards values such as "multiculturalism," "gender," "feminism," "LGBTQ+," and "equality and inclusivity." These values are closely connected to issues surrounding identity and are accompanied by liberal and human rights discourses. While this phenomenon is not new, it has become increasingly difficult to ignore as it permeates the everyday lives of people and establishes itself as a new societal norm. These values can be called "liberal progressivism," representing the promotion of harmony, tolerance, and inclusivity in a society.

In this thesis, I will explore how such values have been received in Mongolian society and the complex interplay between “traditional Mongolian values” and these emerging global influences. Numerous non-governmental organizations have emerged in Mongolia, starting in the 1990s, focusing on values that can be categorized as global norms and values associated with the “Western” world. These discourses have spread among young Mongolians, leading to values, beliefs, and national identity being contested. But whom are they trying to become? And how do they perceive themselves as Mongolians? To further explore this, I will look at “representatives of the civil society,” non-governmental organizations that work with the Mongolian youth, and their agenda, specifically which direction they seek to shape and lead Mongolian youth, both as individuals and as Mongolians.

From the standpoint of sociological perspective, individuals must, in order to function properly, learn general social norms and values throughout their lives and acquire a sense of right or wrong, and good and bad. This socialization process is only possible under pre-existing social knowledge shared among social actors; hence, it forms collectivity between individuals within a society. One form of such collectivities is a shared identity, especially national and religious belonging. This shared social knowledge, or “discourse,” shapes individuals, their behavior, political attitude, and distinctiveness, which are of great significance to a democratic system and its principles. Hence, delving deeper into this topic becomes not only intriguing as a social phenomenon but also imperative due to its inherently political nature. I argue that liberal progressivism is a political ideology that has the effect of neutralizing the national feelings of individuals, which is distinct from their loyalty to the government, separating individuals from the intergenerational knowledge that often determines national identity.

The aim of this thesis is thus not to assess whether progressive values are inherently good or bad or explain and trace their origin. Instead, I explore contemporary phenomena related to identity and its politics that might be influencing these values. By studying the context of Mongolia, the thesis’s findings may offer insights and a general reflection on nationality, global discourse, or the “global cultural order.”

1.2 Research Question(s)

The primary aim of my research is to investigate the youth-oriented organizations, their agendas, and the discourses prevalent among Mongolian youth and their role in the construction of Mongolian national identity. This study seeks to explore how youth-oriented organizations and NGOs in contemporary Mongolian society contribute to shaping the Mongolian national identity by influencing the younger generation of Mongolians.

The overarching research question of this thesis is:

- What are the discursive strategies employed by youth-oriented organizations and NGOs to shape the identity of the young Mongolian audience?

In addition, I ask two sub-questions:

- What ideological terms and concepts are utilized in the textual materials produced by youth-oriented organizations and NGOs?
- What political objectives and ideologies are reflected in the discourse and communication strategies of youth-oriented organizations and NGOs?

By carefully examining the discursive strategies employed in this context and politicizing youth-oriented organizations and their agendas, we can gain valuable insights into the implicit social and national identity shift. Through this research, I aspire to enhance our understanding of the ideologies and discourses that are influencing Mongolian youth, as well as how NGOs are attempting to promote those ideologies with the purpose of shifting the identity of Mongolian youth.

1.3 Research Significance

In a democratic society, public opinion and individuals' attitudes play a crucial role in policymaking, elections and political decision-making. These factors are influenced by various elements of society, such as social norms, values, and culture, which shape the behavior of individuals within that society. Those social norms, values, and cultures consist of pre-existing, continuously transforming social knowledge that generates social reality and is shared among social actors.

Focusing on Mongolian youth offers several compelling reasons for investigation. Firstly, studying the youth can provide insights into how Mongolian society has changed compared to the previous system, shedding light on the trajectory of social changes. Secondly, understanding the political and social implications of the younger generation becomes crucial, as they will soon determine the future directions of politics and society.

Hence, it is essential to examine and comprehend the nature of the new global discourses that are shaping the perceptions and attitudes of Mongolian youth. Exploring the content and implications of these discourses can yield valuable insights into the cultural shifts and conflicts occurring within Mongolian society. While focusing on civil society and youth and exploring the phenomenon of identity, this thesis also has significance in the field of national security since it is related to social knowledge and ideology. By delving deeper into these issues, we can address critical questions such as the impact of these discourses on traditional norms and values, the challenges they pose, and the potential consequences for Mongolian national identity and security.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, I will start by exploring the relevant literature on nationhood, with a specific emphasis on Mongolian national identity and youth. This exploration aims to provide a foundational understanding of the key concepts and contextual background essential for this study. I will review critical academic writings and theories that offer insights into the formation and perception of national identity in Mongolia. Additionally, the chapter will briefly touch upon Mongolian youth identity. This initial exploration will ensure that readers have the necessary background to understand the more specific discussions that follow. Afterwards, I will discuss fundamental theories related to the sociology of knowledge by studying the works of five renowned authors. These theories form the basis for my thesis and help us understand the intricate dimensions of power and language within a society. Karl Marx, Emil Durkheim, Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, Peter Berger, and Thomas Luckmann provide valuable perspectives on ideology, social construction, power, and society. Based on the writings of these influential authors, I will construct a comprehensive theoretical framework that illuminates the underlying connection between discourses, and power, and society, which provides a strong foundation for the analysis.

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 Nation

The concept of nation is crucial to the emphasis of this thesis. There is no commonly agreed definition of what constitutes a nation; the concept has a different meaning depending on who perceives it. However, in contrast to common popular belief, the nation as a concept is modern, finding roots in the French Revolution in the late 18th century. Rather than giving significance to the prior existence of a national community, which is the popular understanding among people, the modern idea of the nation consists of the

concept of a sovereign citizen. In general, there are three main approaches to nation in the literature: (1) primordialist, (2) modernist/constructivist, and the (3) ethnosymbolist.¹

Within the primordialist approach, two influential figures who have made significant contributions to the field are Edward Shils and Clifford Geertz.² Primordialists see the nation as an inherent and ‘given’ entity. One of Shil’s arguments and suggestions attracted my interest, especially in his article *Nation, nationality, nationalism and civil society*, he first attempted to explain core concepts such as nation, nationality. and nationalism by providing the interrelated nature of those concepts.

A nation is constituted by its [nationality] collective self-consciousness, the referents of which are birth in a specifically bounded territory, residents in that bounded territory or descent from persons in that bounded territory.... A nation is by its nature a transgenerational entity. It would be a contradiction in terms to conceive of a nation as a phenomenon of a single generation.³

According to Shils, nationality is a phenomenon inherently associated with collective self-consciousness.⁴ It is a “necessity of human existence” in society. Then, he elaborates on were the origins of nation, nationality and nationalism. Throughout his article, he consistently argues that civil society simply could not exist without nation and nationality. Shils is especially critical of Jürgen Habermas’ idea of ‘Constitutional Patriotism,’ which denies all the claims of primordialism, such as the originality of nation and nationality.⁵

In contrast to the primordialists, the modernists argue that nations and ethnic identities are not static or fixed entities but rather socially constructed and subject to change. Prominent scholars within the modernist camp include Eric J. Hobsbawm,⁶ whose research examines the role of nationalism in modern history, and Ernest Gellner, who

¹ Umut Özkırımlı, *Theories of Nationalism: A Criterial Introduction*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

² Alex Bellamy, *The Formation of Croatian National Identity*, (Manchester University Press, 2013), 8.

³ Edward Shils, “Nation, Nationality and Civil Society.” *Nations and Nationalism* 1, no.1 (March 1995): 94, 100.

⁴ Shils, “Nation, Nationality and Civil Society.” 93.

⁵ Shils, “Nation, Nationality and Civil Society.” 117.

⁶ Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992)

emphasizes the role of industrialization and modernization in the emergence of nations. Gellner was an anthropologist, sociologist, and philosopher. According to his point of view, nationalism and nations are only possible in modernized industrial societies, which have standardized norms and cultures. For example, education infrastructure in modern societies provides literacy, basic habits, and social skills, which makes it possible to acquire “high culture,” as he put it. However, in order to protect a given culture, there must be a state that prevents mixing with other cultures. Conversely, before industrial societies, national culture was not that important for the rulers and had a lesser role within states. According to Gellner. “The imperative of exo-socialization is the main clue to why state and culture must now be linked, whereas in the past their connection was thin, fortuitous, varied, loose, and often minimal... This is what nationalism about.”⁷

Furthermore, to connect nation with nationalism, he offers the following statement in his work *Thought and Change*: “Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist.”⁸

Benedict Anderson, a scholar renowned for his significant contributions to the field of nation and nationalism through his seminal work “*Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*” Here, Anderson delves into how nations are imagined and created through shared narratives and collective imagination.⁹

He argues that all communities larger than small, face-to-face villages are “imagined,” and they should not be distinguished by their authenticity but by the style in which they imagined.¹⁰

Finally, there is an ethnosymbolism, which was developed as a critique of modernism’s view of a nation. In contrast to the modernists claim, ethnosymbolists see nations as profoundly rooted in historical, cultural, and symbolic components. Put simply, ethnosymbolism is an approach that stands between primordialism and modernism. The importance of ethnic symbols, customs, myths, and collective memories in shaping national identities is emphasized by ethnosymbolism.

⁷ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishing, 1983), 38.

⁸ Ernest Gellner, *Thought and Change* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 169.

⁹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (London: Verso, 2006)

¹⁰ Anderson *Imagined Communities*, 6.

Important contributors to this approach are Anthony D. Smith and John A. Armstrong.¹¹ They emphasize the role of ethno-cultural symbols and rituals in fostering a sense of belonging and attachment to the nation. Armstrong believes that ethnic consciousness has a long history and can be traced back to ancient civilizations such as Egypt and Mesopotamia. In this context, contemporary nationalism can be viewed as merely the concluding phase within a broader cycle of ethnic awareness that traces its roots back to the initial manifestations of collective organization. He argues that the important feature of this consciousness is its persistence. Armstrong adopts the social interaction model of Norwegian anthropologist Fredrik Barth and his argument that the groups' definition is often characterized by the comparison of "strangers." Therefore, there can be no such thing as "character" and "essence" for the group, but perceptions of the individuals of the group that establish the boundaries of identities. Hence, it would be more convenient to focus on boundary mechanisms that distinguish the group from other identities rather than objective characteristics of the group.¹²

Armstrong further clarifies that when he refers to the "persistence" of ethnic groups, he specifically addresses the enduring presence of elements such as myth, symbol, communication, and related factors. Additionally, what contributes to the lasting nature of symbols is their integration into verbal and nonverbal mythological frameworks. The legitimizing feature of these mythic structures is subsequently reinforced over time through their amalgamation with other myths, forming what Armstrong calls *mythomoteur*.¹³

Even though he argues that nations did exist before nationalism, he agrees with Anderson and Hobsbawm that national identity as such is an invention.

In this thesis, I will adopt a similar stance and rely on the standpoint of ethnosymbolism, not because I hold that "nation" is a completely artificial construct or invention, but because the ethnosymbolist approach provides vital methodological insights and tools that can be utilized in the analysis. Before we proceed further, however, we also need to look more specifically at the extant literature on the Mongolian nation.

¹¹ Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986)

¹² Özkırımlı, *Theories of Nationalism*, 155

¹³ Özkırımlı, *Theories of Nationalism*, 157

2.1.2 Mongolian National Identity

As regards Mongolian national identity, Mongolian anthropologist L. Munkh-erdene significantly contributed to the field. He adopts what we can refer to as an ethnosymbolist approach, arguing that while the modern sense of nation did not exist in medieval Mongolia, the people already had an understanding of nation or ethnicity at that time.¹⁴ He carefully examines Mongolian identities from the medieval period to modern times and analyzes terms that determine Mongolian national identities. For instance, in the medieval period, *Monggol ulus* (state-people) identity formed, particularly under the Mongolian Empire. He highlights how Chinggis Khan's statecraft plays a key role in shaping this distinctive identity. The Mongols identified themselves based on their cultural and linguistic affinity as "people of Mongolian tongue."¹⁵

The prevailing, almost inseparable, attached identity of Mongolians is their "nomadic" distinction. Often, Mongolians are portrayed as representing a brutal, nomadic war machine by the outside world. However, Orhon Myadar questions the nomadic identity of Mongolians, which hardly represents 21st-century Mongolia. She investigates the deeply pervaded stereotypes connected with nomadic identity both in the Western world and the imaginary self-representations Mongolians create. Hence, Mongolians are not solely defined by their lifestyle, as is often imagined. Moreover, she argues, the concept of "pure nomadism" is a romantic construct frequently employed as a strategy to resist globalization and delineate cultural boundaries. To underscore this point, Orhon Myadar emphasizes that as the ongoing global assimilation intensifies, real nomadism will gradually disappear. In contrast, the symbolic significance of nomadic culture will increase, and Mongolians are thus likely to embrace their nomadic identity even more.¹⁶

Furthermore, Franck Billié's work, *Sinophopia: anxiety, violence, and the making of Mongolian identity* adds an interesting perspective on the topic of Mongolian identity. In this book, he carefully examines how anti-Chinese sentiments construct Mongolian

¹⁴ Munkh-Erdene Lhamsuren, "The Mongolian Nationality Lexicon: From the Chinggisid Lineage to Mongolian Nationality (from the Seventeenth to the Early Twentieth Century)," *Inner Asia* 8 (1): 51-98.

¹⁵ Lhamsuren, "The Mongolian Nationality Lexicon: From the Chinggisid Lineage to Mongolian Nationality (from the Seventeenth to the Early Twentieth Century)," 57.

¹⁶ Orhon Myadar, "Imaginary Nomads: Deconstructing the Representation of Mongolia as a Land of Nomads," *Asia* 13, no. 2 (2011): 335-62.

identity among the Mongolian population. He proposes that many Mongolians firmly believe that China is actively trying to regain control of the country through various means. Thus, Mongolian people perceive China as a significant threat to its national security and its very existence, and the Chinese as their “constitutive Other.”

Additionally, Billié points out that the Mongolian stereotype of the Chinese personage is reminiscent of Western and Russian racist representations of the Oriental. He explains it as:

Given the Soviet monopolistic control over publications and media images in Mongolia throughout most of the twentieth century, it is a reasonable assumption that Mongolian images of the Chinese find their roots, at least in parts, in Russian stereotypes.¹⁷

There are two main constructions of anti-Chinese discourse: the body and the land. The Mongolian body has been threatened by China through “ethnic corruption,” while the land is threatened by the Chinese hunger for natural resources. For Billié, these types of anti-Chinese discourses are hardly comprehensible for Chinese people, but they appear to exist among Mongolian individuals. Hence, Billié believes that the Chinese portrayed in anti-Chinese discourse among the Mongolian population is not real but rather conceptual or symbolic representations.¹⁸ Nonetheless, the Chinese “threat” plays an integrated role in the “bordering” of Mongolian identity.

As regards modern Mongolian identities, Morris Rossabi’s analysis offers invaluable insights into modern Mongolia and the profound transition towards democracy. By delving into Mongolia’s historical evolution, from its nomadic past under the Khans to its current capitalist society, Rossabi provides a comprehensive understanding of Mongolia’s historical trajectory. He examines the intricate interplay of economic, social, and cultural dynamics during Mongolia’s transformation, shedding light on the remarkable journey the nation has undertaken.¹⁹

¹⁷ Franck Billié, *Sinophobia* (University of Hawaii Press, 2014), 74.

¹⁸ Gabriel Bamana, “Mongolia Society Review Reviewed Work(S): Sinophobia. Anxiety, Violence, and the Making of Mongolian Identity,” *Mongolian Studies* 36 (2014): 80–82, <https://doi.org/10.2307/26865345>.

¹⁹ Morris Rosabbi, *Modern Mongolia: From Khans to Capitalists*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005),

Moreover, *Mongolian culture and Society in the Age of Globalization* edited by Henry G. Schwarz, complements Rossabi's work by going further into the impact of globalism on Mongolian identity. The book explores various aspects, such as youth identity, emerging cultures, and ideology, which further enrich the understanding of Mongolia's changing society.²⁰

Together, these works offer a nuanced and multifaceted view of Mongolia's modern history, highlighting both its resilience and adaptability of Mongolian identity in the face of profound changes. Rossabi's analysis and Schwarz's contributions provide essential insights into the challenges and opportunities that the Mongolian nation has encountered on its path towards democracy and capitalist development.

2.1.3 Mongolian Youth and Identity

Not much research has been conducted on Mongolian youth identities. Mostly, Mongolian youth identity has been defined by its music culture, particularly pop and hip-hop genres. As globalism expands and intensifies, it does not skip Mongolia as well. Western, especially American, music culture has played a central role in forging the identities of Mongolian youth. Peter K. Marsh outlines the dynamics of Mongolian popular culture, starting from the 1960s to until today.²¹ Despite being an isolated country, due to its communist system during the 20th century, young people in Mongolia; were able to reach European and American music by some means. The Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP) attempted to constrain popular music into ideological shape, but they failed, since youth creativity was unable to channeled and controlled by the authoritarian social system. After the democratic transition, popular music has grown significantly on the newly acquired freedom to express themselves. While Marsh investigates further, he highlights that hip-hop culture as a newly emerged genre begins to define Mongolian youth in the late 1990s. Of course, this generation was the first

²⁰ Henry G. Schwarz, *Mongolian Culture and Society in the Age of Globalization*, (Washington: Western Washington University, 2006),

²¹ Peter K. Marsh, "Our Generation Is Opening Its Eyes: Hip-Hop and Youth Identity in Contemporary Mongolia," *Central Asian Survey* 29, no. 3 (September 2010): 345–58, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02634937.2010.518013>.

generation who grew up in the new order, different from their predecessors who were born in communist society. Thus, hip-hop music culture in Mongolia has become their identity. Marsh describes this generation as:

They are especially attracted to the way it lends itself to expressing the ‘darker’ and ‘harder’ realities of being young in contemporary society. They also like how it allows them to be ‘straight and direct’ with their audiences, the Mongolian people, about aspects of life they say their generation does not like, including political corruption and the abuse of society’s most vulnerable members.²²

However, the situation described in work of Marsh has changed. A new generation of youth and new identities emerged over time. Sender Dovchin has conducted study of youth identity, using an applied linguistics approach. As with Marsh, her research covers popular culture and hip hop identity of youth. Specifically, she studies “Mongolian urban youth identity” and the role of language in popular and youth culture. Sender’s research discovers a situation involving temporary, mixed, and adaptable soundscapes and linguascapes. These elements are being reclaimed and reshaped by young urban Mongolians as they navigate the influences of both global and local dynamics and languages. These activities challenge notions of “Americanization” and cultural linguistic imperialism because young urban Mongolians are driven by the cross-cultural influences of popular music, rather than solely by the “soft power” of the American or Western cultural dominance.²³

2.2. Relevant Theories

2.2.1. False consciousness and Ideology

Karl Marx is one of the most popular and well-known scholars in the intellectual world. His critique of capitalist society and other contributions to the social science are

²² Peter K. Marsh, “Our Generation Is Opening Its Eyes: Hip-Hop and Youth Identity in Contemporary Mongolia,” 356.

²³ Sender Dovchin, “Performing Identity through Language: The Local Practices of Urban Youth Populations in Post-Socialist Mongolia,” *Inner Asia* 13, no. 2 (2011): 315–33, <https://doi.org/10.1163/000000011799297618>.

both influential and relevant to this day. In this research project, I will focus on his concept of “false consciousness” and “ideology” as a relevant theory.

Marx initially used term “ideology” to describe sets of dominant ideas that aim to conceal the fundamental conflicts inherent in the capitalist system. These ideologies use three main strategies: firstly, they establish subsystems of ideas such as religion, philosophy, literature, or legal systems, which give the impression that the contradictions within capitalism are coherent and logical. Secondly, they dismiss or explain away any experiences that reveal these contradictions, often attributing them to personal problems or individual peculiarities. Lastly, they portray the contradictions of capitalism as inherent to human nature, suggesting that they cannot be resolved through societal change.²⁴ From this perspective, the causes of unfreedom and inequality within capitalism recognized the need to change the capitalist system itself. To defend capitalism, capitalists use ideologies that are developed to distort the perception of inequality by presenting it as equality, and they depict unfreedom as freedom.²⁵ Consequently, proletariats believe it is natural to live in a poverty and inequality as they are seen as normal; this is what Marx pointed out as “false consciousness.” His concept of ideology provided valuable insights about social knowledge and inspired many other social scientists.

The selection of Karl Marx’s concepts of ideology and false consciousness as a focal point in this thesis. It serves to underscore the hypothesis that societies often exist within a ‘bubble’ of political force, largely unaware of its influence. Marx’s theory provides a critical framework for understanding how social knowledge can be manipulated to achieve specific outcomes, particularly in the context of liberal-progressivist ideologies in Mongolia. This manipulation of social knowledge leads to what Marx termed ‘false consciousness,’ where the oppressed classed accepts the status quo as natural and inevitable.

In the Mongolian context, this theory is particularly relevant when examining the shift in national identity and societal values amidst the rise of liberal-progressivist ideology. It raises critical questions about whether this shift reflects a genuine evolution of

²⁴ George Ritzer, and Jeffrey Spetnisky, *Sociological Theories 10th edition*, (London: SAGE, 2018), 109.

²⁵ Ritzer, and Spetnisky, *Sociological Theories*, 111.

social consciousness or if it is, in fact, a manifestation of ideological manipulation by powerful groups.

2.2.2. Discourses and Power

French thinker Michel Foucault's thoughts on "discourse" and power is an essential theory for this thesis. While Foucault contributed to social science with many of intriguing works such as *Discipline and Punish*, and, *The Order of Things* and *Archeology of Knowledge*, discourse and power are the key concepts to understand his work.

In general, the meaning of discourse is solely related to texts and languages, and it has little to do with social, political and historical conditions. There are two approaches to discourse other than Foucault's "discourse," which are formal and empirical. In contrast, the Foucauldian term "discourse" refers to distinct and defined categories of social knowledge rather than language or social interaction per se.²⁶ Foucault suggests that formal and empirical approaches predominantly concentrate on the production and recognition of utterances, referred to as enunciation. Enunciation encompasses the techniques, structures, and know-how employed by individuals in generating speech or writings. However, this limited focus disregards the deeper dimensions of concepts and meanings.²⁷ In case of this research, the "discourse" as a central phenomenon enables us to explore the underlying meanings, and power dynamics embedded in the prevailing discourses that generated by youth-directed organizations.

Moreover, in light of politics, the concept of power is another crucial side of discourse. How discourse empowers some social groups and changes social practice and norms, as well as what strategies it uses are important questions to pursue. It has an ability control, enable some behavior in the individuals and at the same time constrain it, altering the social reality that is shared between individuals. Therefore, power is the inseparable from discourse. The essence of power lies in discourse and its prohibition are intertwined with both verbal and physical actions. Restrictions on language should also serve limitations on reality and behavior. This concept lies at the core of the "logic of

²⁶ Alec McHoul and Wendy Grace, *A Foucault Primer: Discourse, Power and the Subject*, (London: Routledge, 1995), 31.

²⁷ Alec McHoul and Wendy Grace, 35.

ensorship.”²⁸ We can for example reflect on current topics around “political correctness” and sensitive speeches related to identity and sexuality in terms of the logic of censorship that Foucault explained. He further noted that the relationship between discourses and power are far more complex than controlling behavior:

Discourses are not once and for all subservient to power raised up against it... discourse can be both an instrument and effect of power, but also hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy...²⁹

This perspective is particularly relevant when considering dynamics of Mongolian national identity and the diverse discourses among NGOs that work with youth. Foucault’s concept of discourse and power not only illuminates how national identity is shaped and contested within society but also a framework for understanding the intersection of political correctness, identity, and sexuality. By applying Foucault’s theory, we can analyze the ways in which Mongolian youth engage with and challenge established norms and discourses of national identity. Michel Foucault’s concept of discourse and power provides comprehensive insight on socio-political situation in Mongolia today.

2.2.4. Globalization

Globalization is a broad concept; there are numerous approaches for how to analyze globalization and its effects on culture, politics, economics and institutions. However, in this research thesis, the perspective of cultural globalization is the most relevant, as it aims to analyze Mongolian national identity and competing discourses among the youth. According to Jan Nederveen Pieterse, there are three major paradigms within the study of cultural globalization.³⁰ The first paradigm is referred to as “cultural differentialism,” Drawing on Samuel Huntington’s “clash of civilizations,” this emphasizes how cultures

²⁸ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction*, trans. R. Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1990), 84.

²⁹ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 100-101.

³⁰ Jan Nederveen Pieterse, *Globalization and Culture: Global Mélange* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2020), 43.

and civilizations persist under the globalization in 21st century. The second one is “cultural convergence,” which highlights the global cultural homogeneity due to the globalization, and it is explained by the theory of “McDonalidization” by sociologist George Ritzer. In the third paradigm, “cultural hybridization” stresses globalization as a very positive process, often romantic that results cultural hybridity, and emergence of new and unique cultures. Nevertheless, all three paradigms of cultural globalization are crucial to answer the research question of this thesis.

In the rapidly globalizing world of the 21st century, exposures to other cultures and fashion has become almost inevitable due to various factors such as technological advancement, the interconnectedness of global internet, and international politics, and trade. This globalization process has intensified over time. However, Mongolia experienced this phenomenon relatively recently, following the fall of communism in the 1990s. Until then the closed and authoritarian nature of the state had limited the country’s exposure to external connections.

The transition to democracy and the opening up of Mongolia marked a significant turning point, as the country embraced a market economy, allowed free migration, and established connections with the Western world. Since then, Mongolia has undergone numerous changes across all aspects of society, including social, economic and political spheres.

Now, I will delve deeper into the concept of society, utilizing these theories to uncover their commonalties. By utilizing the selected theories to explain the concept of society, I aim to reflect on the political aspect of these theories. I am confident that this approach will provide readers with clearer understanding of my main subject liberal-progressivism, and its societal and political functions. These will be more coherently explained within the framework of these theories.

Society and Social Knowledge

The concept of society is vast and complex, making it challenging to comprehensively discuss in this thesis. Therefore, I will outline key theories and offer insights to briefly define and understand “society”. There are many theories that provide

explanation on what is a society (from classical to modern) and variety of scopes to study (micro to macro) it. In a society, there are social facts that limit and guide the behavior of individuals. These social facts encompasses external elements such as social structures, cultural norms, and values, which exerts coercive influence on individuals.³¹ For instance, a worker in an office should adhere to the internal rules and regulations of the organization. Simultaneously, the worker's behavior is constrained by norms and values of Mongolian society. Individuals' behavior is constrained by social facts, and this applies to all aspects of social life.

The concept of social facts was first developed by French Sociologist Emil Durkheim. His work contributed to variety of fields, and some of his ideas remain relevant to this day. Durkheim explains social fact as:

A social fact is every way of acting, fixed or not, capable of exercising on the individual an external constraint; or again every way of acting, which is general throughout a given society, while at the same time existing in its own right independent of its individual manifestations.³²

Another example of social facts is a language, which is also coercive and external from an individual. While individuals use language, it is not formulated or originated by the individual. The adjustment of language to personal usage implies that language inherently exists external to the individual, necessitating adaptation for individual utilization. Moreover, changes in language can only be explained by other social facts, rather than the deliberate intent of singular individual.³³ Therefore, it is possible to be explained in a context of social group or society.

Furthermore, he categorizes social facts into two labels, material social facts (1) and nonmaterial social facts (2). Material social facts including legal codes, forms of technology, educational institutions and more. However, the bulk of Durkheim's works are focused more on nonmaterial social facts. Nonmaterial social facts are collective

³¹ George Ritzer, *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology* (Malden, Ma: Blackwell Pub, 2007). 4414-4416.

³² Émile Durkheim, Steven Lukes, and Wilfred Douglas Halls, *The Rules of Sociological Method* (New York: Free Press, 1982), 13.

³³ Ritzer, and Spetnisky, 131.

conscience, morality and social representatives. While he provided detailed explanation on these concepts, it would be too wide to cover everything in this thesis, thus, I will not cover all his works. It is worth to note that Durkheim was interested in morality of society, which is a social fact, coercive of, and external to the individual. He was deeply concerned about social “health” of modern society but this does not simply mean society had become immoral or was in danger of becoming, immoral. For him, society could not be inherently be immoral, but it could certainly diminish its moral force if the collective interest of society reduced to merely the accumulation of individual self-interests. Therefore, he argued for the necessity of a robust morality within society. The term ‘collective conscience’ denotes the overall framework of commonly held understandings, norms and beliefs. It’s noteworthy that in French, the word “conscience” encompasses both consciousness and “moral conscience.”³⁴

Similarly, other classical sociologists such as Karl Marx and Max Weber, and others expressed this idea in their own terms. Karl Marx used the term “ideology,” which is much-contested concept and has various interpretations since Marx. He developed the concept of ideology in relation of capitalism and its ruling class, which often gives negative connotation in the term “Ideology.” Nevertheless, he uses the term ideology to describe systems of dominant ideas that seek to conceal the underlying contradictions at the core of the capitalist system. Then the ruling class utilizes one of these three methods in most cases: (1) This results in the formation of idea subsystems like religion, philosophy, literature, and legal systems, which render the contradictions seemingly cohesive; (2) they rationalize instances revealing these contradictions, often attributing them to personal issues or individual peculiarities; or (3) they portray the capitalist contradiction as fundamentally rooted in human nature, thus framing it as an issue beyond resolution through social change.³⁵

To connect this idea in relation to Durkheim’s concept of “collective conscience,” Marx’s interpretation relatively has political tone than Durkheim. Marx interpreted ideology as something that manipulates collective conscience by concealing of the truth or

³⁴ Ritzer, and Spetnisky, 132-134.

³⁵ George Ritzer, Jeffrey Spetnisky, 109

a reality of society. Perhaps, we could apply it in the context of Mongolian constitution. Up until 1990s, Mongolia had been a communist and authoritative state, and after the failure of the Soviet type of communism, Mongolia installed new democratic constitution similar with the West, like any other post-communist countries in 1992. In that new constitution, it starts as:

We, the people of Mongolia: Strengthening the independence and sovereignty of the nation, Cherishing human rights and freedoms, justice, and national unity, Inheriting the traditions of national statehood, history and culture, Respecting the accomplishments of human civilization, And aspiring toward the supreme objective of building humane, civil and democratic society in the country hereby proclaim the constitution of Mongolia.³⁶

Undoubtedly, it was a new start for the Mongolian people and their chance to seize freedom, and exist their own way. From the preliminary examination, the overall tone of the Mongolian constitution is mainly global-oriented, taking account of lexicons such as human rights and democracy. Simultaneously, it attempted to include nationality, tradition, history, and culture. However, it would be illogical to mix them together, because they are two opposites, which makes them contradicting and incompatible to each other.

While Marx and Durkheim, and other sociological thinkers emphasize shared beliefs, norms and values in a society, commonly referred to as ‘social knowledge’ or ‘social reality,’ the exploration of these concepts extends further through the lens of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann’s theory. Their unique perspective sheds additional light on dynamics of society, complementing the diverse terms used by various social thinkers to navigate shared knowledge and offer their own unique interpretations, while capturing the accurate essence of a given society.

American sociologists, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann’s sophisticated work *Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* provides not only insights about discourse but also about a comprehensive imagination of society, identity and social reality. First, they use a variety of notions to describe ordinary life as a dynamic and complicated process created by interactive engagement, based on phenomenological philosophy. Second, they create a comprehensive theory that explains how societal

³⁶ The Constitution of Mongolia, The Constitutional Court of Mongolia, Feb 12 1992, https://www.conscourt.gov.mn/?page_id=842&lang=en

processes give rise to and maintain social institutions.³⁷ They divide everyday life into objective and subjective reality, explaining how social knowledge forms, and transmits to the next generation. From their standpoint, society is a symbolic construct consisting of ideas, meanings and language, rather than a system, mechanism, or organism. It is continually changing as a result of human actions, which both impact and shape it. Individuals are subject to both opportunities and restrictions from society.³⁸

To illustrate their exploration of how experience and social knowledge are transmitted and legitimized through language, shaping society in the process, Berger and Luckmann draw on the example of hunter-gatherer societies:

Only some members of a hunting society have the experience of losing their weapons and being forced to fight a wild animal with their bare hands. This frightening experience, with whatever lessons in bravery, cunning skill it yields, is firmly sedimented in the consciousness of the individuals who went through it... As this experience is designated and transmitted linguistically, however, it becomes accessible and perhaps strongly relevant to individuals who have never gone through it.³⁹

These societies served as a lens through which the authors examine the mechanisms by which cultural norms, values and practices are passed down from one generation to another. Language allows the shared experiences to be passed down among a linguistic community, making them available to other member of this community and serving as both the foundation and tool the collective knowledge. Additionally, language provides a means for objectifying new experiences, incorporating them into existing knowledge, and transmitting this knowledge through tradition in the community.⁴⁰ While Berger and Luckmann elaborated on more broad and overarching images of society and social knowledge, the relationship between language and thought is what is most in our case. Their theory is specifically significant in this thesis, since it provides comprehensive explanation on society, including macro and micro aspect.

³⁷ Nigel Parton, "Reviewed Work(s): The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann," *The British Journal of Social Work*, Vol.38, No.4 (2008): 823.

³⁸ Parton, "Reviewed Work(s)," 823.

³⁹ Peter L. Berger, and Thomas Luckmann, *Social Construction of Reality : A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*(England: Penguin Books, 1991), 86.

⁴⁰ Berger, and, Luckmann, *Social Construction of Reality*, 85-86.

Hence, a singular focus in this thesis is, once again, the phenomenon of the shared knowledge among social actors—collective conscience and morality, or what Durkheim terms as moral force, and Marx conceptualizes as ideology—transmitted across generations. However, it's essential to note that while Durkheim and Marx are pivotal figures in social science, the discussion represented in this thesis is merely the tip of the iceberg within this expansive field. Thus, the exploration extends beyond the confines set by these thinkers, capturing the richness and diversity inherent in the broader landscape of social science.

Why is it Political?

Previously, I attempted to briefly describe and explain what society is, which makes it one-step closer to the goal of reaching the political aspect of liberal progressivism as we discussed above. For ordinary individuals with limited knowledge of social science, distinguishing and identifying specific political and social ideas can be challenging. Even among social scientists and activists, many often struggle to consciously recognize the ideologies around them. Thus, it is challenging to identify those ideologies because they had already become normalized and naturalized, and perceived as common sense in a society.

There are many scholars and social scientists emphasized the connection between social knowledge and politics, including Michael Foucault, and Pierre Bourdieu. While the concept of social knowledge and power extends beyond these scholars, I am confident that those theories put forth by these scholars are sufficient to grasp the idea of knowledge and power.

The concept of power that Foucault had taken is relatively complex, which offers broad scope of human society. He had undertaken variety of power relations that are interrelated such as disciplinary power, bio-power, and the power and knowledge relations.

Before delve into the concept of power and knowledge, it is important to note Foucault's interest in studying knowledge. His approach on knowledge centers on particular form of unspoken awareness embedded in a historical context. This implicit

knowledge, recognized as the prevailing “common sense” of a specific time and place, actively shapes the codified explicit knowledge within the various academic fields, spanning both the natural and social sciences.⁴¹ Foucault underscored a type of knowledge that lacks, traceable origin, arising organically within the unfolding dynamics of history. This is not the sort of knowledge dictated by an authoritative entity “from above”; rather, it can be more accurately characterized in passive terms as knowledge that is “acknowledged as true,” understood to be factual.⁴² This knowledge is distributed among the individuals that works as a force of power. Another crucial concept Foucault coined was he concept of “panopticism.” In his work of *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1978) he took its idea from prison architecture “Panopticon” founded by the English philosopher and social theorist Jeremy Bentham in the mid-1700s. As Foucault described Panopticon:

at the periphery, annular building; at the centre, a tower; this tower is pierced with wide windows that open onto the inner side of the ring; the peripheric building is divided into cells, each of which extends the whole width of the building; they have two windows, one on the inside, corresponding to the windows of the tower; the other, on the outside, allows the light to cross the cell one end to the other. All that is needed, then, is to place supervisor in central tower and to shut up in each cell a madman, a patient, a condemned man, a worker, or a schoolboy.⁴³

This prison model, panopticon, therefore, have one major effect on the prisoners. The prison has high transparency, inmates of the prison are unable to know whether he/she is being watched or not; thus, prisoners behave as their being watched all the time, self-disciplining themselves even without the presence of the prison guard.⁴⁴ Moreover, he argued that modern institutions such as school, hospital, military, workplace etc. fundamentally function similar patterns with the prison system, defining it “anatomy of power” a “technology” to control and discipline the social actors.

Panopticism is, therefore, a technology to enforce and correct individuals with what is considered “normal” in a society. The common sense among the social group or in a society works as panopticon, because fellow social actors enforce the “normal” and

⁴¹ Dianna Taylor, *Michel Foucault: Key Concepts* (London; New York: Routledge, 2014), 61.

⁴² Dianna Taylor, 62.

⁴³ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish : The Birth of the Prison* (London: Allen Lane, 1977). 200.

⁴⁴ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 201.

simultaneously discipline themselves and their behavior. In conclusion, Panopticon serves as a lens through which to understand how societal norms, enforced by the collective awareness of individuals, function as a panoptic force, influencing and disciplining behavior. Foucault's insights continue to prompt critical reflections on the intricate relationship between power, knowledge and social order in contemporary societies.

While Foucault refrained from attributing power and knowledge to a central and controlled authoritative entity, French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu took a contrasting position. His theory of symbolic power and symbolic violence provides valuable insights into a more centralized perspective. Bourdieu's theoretical framework consists of the concepts such as cultural capital, habitus, and symbolic systems, suggesting a structured approach where dominant groups to legitimize their position and impose their worldview on others wield power. This stands in contrast to Foucault's more decentralized focus on power and knowledge relations.

In advance to exploring Bourdieu's theory of symbolic violence the concept of habitus needs to be explained, which is at the core of his theories. Habitus, according to Bourdieu, is a property of social actors that consists of a "structured and structuring structure."⁴⁵ It is structured, because individual's socialization between family upbringing and educational background, often determined by past and present experiences. Habitus serves as a structuring force, contributing to the organization of individual's actions. It can be described as a systematic arrangement rather than a random or chaotic one. This organized structure consists of an inherent quality of individuals mind and character that generate perceptions and worldviews.⁴⁶ This means individuals in a society has certain pattern of behavior, set of beliefs, and structure of thinking, depending on the habitus they have.

One of Bourdieu's main argument that related to his theory of symbolic violence was focused on education. In modern industrialized societies, education systems function to sustain and legitimize class inequalities. Achievement and success are only possible for

⁴⁵ Pierre Bourdieu, *In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology*, trans. M. Adamson (Cambridge: Polity, 1994), as cited in Michael Grenfell, *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts* (New York: Routledge, 2014). 51.

⁴⁶ Michael Grenfell, 51.

the students who are upper-middle class and above, because they possess appropriate cultural capital and higher class habitus to complete the education system. In contrast, lower class pupils lack the cultural capital to succeed and their habitus differs from those higher-class students, thus, failure is often inevitable for them.⁴⁷ This results reproduction of class inequalities, occurring without the conscious awareness of lower class pupils, often seen as individual failures to succeed, thereby embodying Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence.

The theories of Foucault and Bourdieu illustrates that knowledge is deeply connected with power and politics, while they utilized their own terms, it is possible to see through the overlapping concepts such as the habitus and the power/knowledge. Social knowledge, therefore inherently political, and determines power dynamics of social groups and individuals, thus shapes the society. Their theories suggest that it is possible to control and direct groups and individuals, guiding them to behave and act in certain patterns implicitly, without explicit acknowledgment. Indeed, achieving such a purpose would likely require an extensive period, perhaps, decades.

Language plays crucial role in the works of thinkers mentioned above, including Durkheim, Marx, and Peter Berger, Thomas Luckmann. They highlight its functions, particularly in relation to social knowledge. Through language, an individual's mind and expression, enabling thought and action, and thereby shaping particular reality. Numerous theories explore the connection between language and knowledge. However, given the expansive nature of language, akin to the broad concept of society, this thesis will not delve further into language and linguistics. Instead, it focuses on other aspects central to the study, while acknowledging language's underlying significance in the formation and conveyance of social knowledge.

⁴⁷ Alice Sullivan, "Bourdieu and Education: How useful is Bourdieu's theory for researchers?" *The Netherlands' Journal of Social Sciences* 38 (2002): 144.

2.3. Conceptualization

In this part of the thesis, I will focus on three main concepts that will be utilized throughout the thesis, and I will attempt to define and conceptualize them. In order to examine particular social and political phenomenon, a researcher must use clear and concrete concepts.

National Identity- It is a collection of shared knowledge that has accumulated over historical periods within a society. This shared knowledge forms the backbone of social values and norms and is a unifying force among social actors. It is shaped by a nation's history, traditions, collective experiences, and prevailing beliefs. National identity is dynamic, continually evolving as it absorbs and reacts to new experiences and influences. In context of Mongolia, national identity reflects the unique experiences of the nation, incorporating its cultural heritage, historical experiences, and the collective aspirations of its people.

Global Cultural Order- The concept of a Global Cultural Order in this thesis is closely tied to the rise of liberal-progressivism, which advocates for values such as gender equality, feminism, LGBTQ+ rights, and environmentalism. This order represents a shift in global societal norms, where these progressive values are increasingly becoming benchmarks for assessing the cultural and social development of nations. It can be seen as a set of values and practices that transcend national boundaries, influencing and sometimes challenging traditional societal norms and practices.

Ideology- It is, as conceptualized by Karl Marx, is a set of dominant ideas and beliefs that serve the interests of the ruling class by masking or distorting social realities. In Marx's view, ideology is a tool used by the ruling class to maintain their power and control over the working class. It creates a 'false consciousness' where the proletariat is led to believe in the fairness and naturalness of the existing social order, thus maintaining the social reality. This concept is utilized to examine how current ideologies within Mongolia society, particularly those influenced by global cultural shifts towards liberal-progressivism, might be shaping or reshaping national identity and social knowledge.

2.4. Methodology and methods

In this thesis, I aim to employ Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the primary methodology to examine the discourses on Mongolian national identity among contemporary Mongolian youth organizations. Recognizing the influence of language and discourse in shaping social identities and ideologies, I will seek to uncover the underlying power dynamics, conflicting ideologies, and social constructions embedded within the discourses of Mongolian youth organizations.

By adopting a CDA approach, this thesis aims to critically analyze the discursive strategies used in constructing and contesting Mongolian national identity in this specific context. Norman Fairclough, the founder of critical discourse analysis (CDA), in his theory of discourse as an analytical tool, sheds light on how language usage subtly reflects one's attitudes and beliefs.⁴⁸ When individuals communicate, whether through writing or speaking, they invariably leave behind traces of their ideological leanings. An intriguing example lies in the dichotomy between the Western world's endorsement of democracy and human rights, juxtaposed with its opposition to authoritarianism. Through discourse analysis, I aim to gain deeper understanding of the subject matter and uncover underlying political meanings and interpretations.

2.4.1. Data analysis

Concerning data analysis, I am following the guidelines outlined in an article written by Hilary Janks titled "*Critical Discourse Analysis as a Research Tool*." Here, she further unpacks Fairclough's theory of CDA and illustrates how to apply Fairclough's theory, exemplifying it on a brochure of The Standard Bank of South Africa, which was implicitly written with a racist discourse of paternity.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Ruth Wodak, and Michael Meyer, *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, (London: Sage, 2001), 121-136.

⁴⁹ Hilary Janks, "Critical Discourse Analysis as a Research Tool," *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 18, no. 3 (1997): 329–42, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0159630970180302>.

Fairclough's model of CDA comprises of three interconnected process of analysis. These processes are linked to three interrelated dimensions of discourse.

1. The object of analysis (including verbal, visual or verbal and visual texts);
2. The processes by which the object is produced and received (writing/speaking/designing and reading/listening and viewing) by human subjects;
3. The socio-historical conditions that govern these processes.

Each of these dimensions necessitates a distinct analytical approach.

1. Text analysis (description);
2. Processing analysis (interpretation);
3. Social analysis (explanation);⁵⁰

Janks suggested that a researcher, when conducting textual analysis, should systematically examine the text for:

1. Lexicalization,
2. Patterns of transitivity,
3. Use of active and passive voice
4. Use of nominalization
5. Choices of mood
6. Choices of modality and polarity
7. Thematic structure of the text
8. Information focus
9. Cohesion devices.⁵¹

It is important to note that she specifically emphasized the analysis of transitivity because it provides researchers with a fruitful source of data for the text they are conducting research on. The analysis of transitivity consists of six distinct transitivity, such as material process, verbal process, relational process, behavioral process, and existential process.

⁵⁰ Janks, "Critical Discourse Analysis as a Research Tool," 329.

⁵¹ Janks, "Critical Discourse Analysis as a Research Tool," 335.

In this thesis, I will adhere to her approach to textual analysis, as demonstrated in her article, focusing on lexicalization and patterns of transitivity, which will help me to discover power dynamics and discourses.

2.4.2. Criteria of selecting NGOs

According to the Mongolian National Statistics Office, there are 6838 actively operating NGOs on a national scale.⁵² Among those organizations, I identified 36 youth oriented focus. These NGOs operate on a range on bases, encompassing a variety of activities, projects and programs aimed at addressing and enhancing various aspects of youth development such as education, health, and social policy.

The selection criteria of NGOs incorporates five “progressive” concepts:

1. Feminism and Women’s rights
2. Gender equality
3. LGBTQ+
4. Education
5. Climate change

Furthermore, I narrowed down the number of cases by deciding their agendas should address a minimum of two of the identified concepts related to youth development. Finally, the NGOs must have a demonstrated track record of actively engaging their respective initiatives for a minimum of five years. This gave a list of seven NGOs (see Appendix B).

The data collection involves a systematic collection of texts. I will rely on public websites, and I collected texts, such as official statements, and publicly distributed materials produced by Mongolian youth-oriented NGOs to provide comprehensive understanding of the discourses promoted by these youth organizations.

Additionally, I interviewed with seven individuals who possesses significant experience in non-governmental organizations focused on Mongolian youth. These

⁵² National Statistics Office of Mongolia, “Number of Enterprises,” accessed November 23, 2023. https://www2.1212.mn/tables.aspx?tbl_id=DT_NSO_2600_011V3&13999001_select_all=0&13999001SingleSelect=_T8&Aimags_soums_select_all=0&Aimags_soumsSingleSelect=_0&YearQ_select_all=0&YearQSingleSelect=_202303_202201&viewtype=linechart

individuals provide insights and nuances in relation to the youth related initiatives and their perspectives on Mongolian national identity. I employed a semi-structured interview approach. This method allows for flexibility, enabling interviewees to express their thoughts openly without the constraints of strict questions. The list of interviewees are included in the Appendix B.

2.5. Ethical considerations

In this thesis, my focus will revolve around topics and methodologies that enable the utilization and analysis of publicly accessible data in the form of textual material. By relying on sources such as websites, official statements from NGOs, and information brochures, the thesis ensures a safeguard against any potential risks associated with revealing identities of research participants or breaching confidentiality.

Emphasizing the use of openly available information not only upholds the ethical integrity of this study but also fosters transparency and enhances the reliability of the thesis findings. By drawing upon publicly accessible data, the research becomes more accessible, allowing others to verify and build upon the conclusions drawn from this work.

However, this research also involves human participants working in NGOs focusing on Mongolian youth. Ensuring the ethical treatment of these participants is paramount to the integrity of the study.

The interviewees aware fully informed about the nature, purpose, and potential risks associated with their involvement. Informed consent was obtained through a carefully prepared consent form, outlining the details of the research. Participants were given the opportunity to ask questions before providing their consent.

To protect the confidentiality and privacy of the participants, measures have been implemented. Participants were given the option to choose whether they wanted to remain anonymous or be identified in the research. All collected data is stored securely and will only be accessible to the researcher. Any information that could potentially identify participants will be treated with the utmost sensitivity.

This research pose minimal risk to the participants. The questions asked during the semi-structured interviews are designed to explore their experiences and perspectives

without causing harm. Participants were assured that they could withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. The benefits of this research include contributing valuable insights to the understanding of the role of NGOs when it comes to Mongolian youth and their cultural and identity-related development.

CHAPTER 3: MONGOLIAN (TRADITIONAL) IDENTITY VS GLOBAL CULTURAL ORDER

Every individual in this world has subjective beliefs, values, and moral standards. However, no matter what their beliefs are, there is an also “real” or objective world representing pre-conditions that are “given” to us. For example, individuals cannot choose their parents or the country of their birth. These are universally given preconditions, representing static and unalterable conditions. An individual’s race or the sex he or she is born with also applies in this matter as well.

In the past, identities, such as national belonging; or sexual orientation, were often perceived as immutable and unchangeable realities. However, in the contemporary era, many societies have embraced the idea that individuals can openly choose and modify their identities according to their self-perception. Indeed, throughout history, norms, values change, and ideas evolve or become outdated by the time. However, one cannot conclude from this given norm or idea was “right” or “wrong,” rather we should ask ourselves about the politics and power dynamics behind a particular change of norms and values as well as of an identity. Especially one that relates to national peculiarity, uniqueness and distinctiveness.

In the following parts of this chapter, I will attempt to break down into segments and provide detailed reasons why liberal progressivism is intrinsically political issue and it is necessary to take account of potential consequences in Mongolian society.

3.1. Liberal-Progressivism as a Global Cultural Order

By global cultural order, I mean global cultural change, especially, the liberal progressive movement, which aims for a change in social and economic pillars by creating inclusive and diverse society that is prevailing internationally. Liberal progressivists often appear to use specific lexicons and narratives such as “gender equality, inclusivity/diversity, feminism, human rights and climate change.” According to Gordon Hak, liberal-progressives define themselves against their rivals, including racists, anti-

feminists, sexists, religious fundamentalists, and those who oppose or express hostility towards LGBTQ+ rights.⁵³ Indeed, these progressive campaigns may sound good to their audience, even seen beneficial for a society. There is nothing wrong in the idea of empowering women, protecting gender equality and providing rights to marginalized groups. Yet, society is complex and continuing historical, intergenerational, and cultural process, hence, there must be a good reason to interrupt and regulate this process. For this reason, we must question and take account of political aspect of this matter.

There are two types of liberalism, according to John Mearsheimer: classical liberalism (*modus vivendi*) and liberal-progressivism.⁵⁴ In short, while these two forms of liberalism share some commonalities, such as individualism, human nature and inalienable rights, there is also significant areas of disagreement between them. They think differently about the role of state and extent of their intervention in the context of individual rights and freedom. Classical liberalism advocates the idea of minimal state intervention; conversely, liberal-progressivism favors involvement of state and social engineering to ensure those rights.⁵⁵ Liberal-progressivists demand equal rights and equal opportunities, and believe that its government's responsibility to secure them. Furthermore, they assert that such "rights" ought to be universally applied, transcending the boundaries of state and nation.

Due to the inherently universalistic nature of liberal-progressive principles, they often lead to liberal hegemonic ambitions. This is particularly evident in the West, especially in the United States of America, where these ideologies have historically driven foreign policy objectives. The pursuit of spreading democratic values, human rights, and free-market principles across the globe has been cornerstone of U.S international strategy. This approach reflects a belief in applicability and desirability of these liberal-progressive values in diverse cultural and political context worldwide. However, this strategy raises questions about the compatibility between these universalistic values and national sovereignty and cultural differences. Since the focus of this thesis encompasses cultural

⁵³ Gordon Hak, *Liberal Progressivism* (Routledge, 2021), 1.

⁵⁴ John J Mearsheimer, *Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities* (New Haven, Ct Yale University Press, 2018), 51.

⁵⁵ Mearsheimer, 51.

aspects of liberal-progressivism, such as gender and sexuality, race and multiculturalism, the economic aspects of liberal-progressivism are not covered in the thesis.

Considering the widespread popularity and the extensive global audience of the U.S film industry, Hollywood has recently seen a notable integration of liberal-progressive values and identity politics. This trend is evident in numerous contemporary films. For instance, in the 2023 adaptation of “Little Mermaid.” Where the main protagonist, traditionally portrayed as white, is reimagined. Additionally, “Buzz Lightyear” (2022) includes portrayals of homosexuality. These examples reflect a broader shift in Hollywood towards embracing and representing diverse identities and implicit ideologies. While, media and film industries are highly relevant to the thesis topic, it extends beyond the scope of the thesis, thus will not be discussed further.

Although individuals tend to regard liberal-progressive values as legitimate and safeguarding their rights, which encompass equality and justice, it is also necessary to approach these values as imported cultural and political influences. This makes it possible to analyze critically and enable us to see through the ideological function of liberal-progressivism. It would be overly simplistic to take it as merely good or bad; instead, attention should be directed towards understanding the potential outcomes within a society and nation. There are few reasons behind my argument:

Firstly, liberal progressivism, with its origin and foundations deeply rooted in specific cultural context of the West, represents a particular worldview. It is constructed around the core principles of “human rights” and individualism, which are often assumed to be universally applicable. This is not to deny the fundamental importance of human rights; however, it is crucial to recognize that different cultures have their own unique interpretations of justice and freedom, shaped by their distinct cultural and historical experiences. This assumption of universal applicability of liberal-progressivist values tend to disregard the pluralistic nature of global societies. Each culture has developed its own mechanisms and institutions that embody its understanding of rights, freedoms, and social organizations. Therefore, it would be challenging to embrace these liberal-progressive values for non-Western countries, including Mongolia, without any social engineering.

Secondly, with its emphasis on reforming social norms, often seeks to question and alter the established social knowledge that societies have developed over generations. This knowledge, which incorporates values, traditions, customs, and shared beliefs, forms the bedrock of national identity and cohesion. When liberal-progressivism introduces new concepts practices, especially those that sharply contrast with long-held beliefs, it can create a cultural shift that has both positive and transformative, as well as disruptive, consequences.

One of the key method in which liberal-progressivism impacts social knowledge is through its advocacy for reevaluating and often changing societal norms around issues such as gender roles, family structures, and sexual orientation. While these changes can be empowering and liberating for many, promoting greater equality and acceptance, they can also lead to a sense of dislocation or conflict within societies.

Furthermore, the global spread of liberal-progressivist ideology, facilitated by modern communication technologies and media, can lead to a form of cultural homogenization, where unique local practices and knowledge systems risk being undermined or replaced by a uniform set of values and practices.

Lastly, it holds political and societal functions in a nation. An individual's behavior and thinking patterns can be predicted, due to its socialization in the early life. Depending on what values and norms an individual embrace, the outcome will rarely fall beyond the constraints of values. Bourdieu's concept of habitus is highly relevant in this matter, which holds political aspect of liberal progressivism. Habitus, as defined by Bourdieu, is a characteristic of social agents, embodying a "structured and structuring structure." It is considered structured because it is shaped by factors like family upbringing and educational experiences, which are influenced by both historical and current experiences. As a structuring mechanism, habitus plays a pivotal role in shaping how individuals act. It represents an orderly system, instead of being random. This organized system is a reflection of the internal aspects of individual's mind and character, which form the perceptions and

worldviews.⁵⁶ Therefore, if individual's habitus is influenced by particular ideology, their internal system set of beliefs as well as behaviors can be changed.

3.2. Mongols as the Nomads

Mongolia boasts vast landscapes with low a population density, averaging only two people per square kilometer. Situated between two formidable neighbors, Russia and China, it occupies a unique geographical position, being landlocked. Mongolia had been a communist state for seven decades and successfully transitioned into democracy in 1991. However, the Socialist Mongolian State and its state-building process, created by adhering to the USSR model, are necessary to examine in order to understand contemporary Mongolian national identity. According to Uradyn Bulag, in order to establish socialism, Mongolia adopted the multinational structure of the USSR, altering fundamental features of Mongolian social organizations and leading to other unexpected byproducts.⁵⁷ He further argued that the expression of ethnicity and the development of ethnic consciousness are, in fact, inherent aspects of the socialist nation-building process. Bulag suggests that the attempt at direct translation from Russian terms into Mongolian language, such as *rod*, *narodnost*, which do not represent Mongolian reality, created more confusion due to the imitation of the social engineering project in Soviet ethnology.⁵⁸ As a result, socialist Mongolia was structured with the dominant group at the center, surrounded by other groups that consist of both non-Mongol and Mongol origin of people; akin to the USSR, where the Russians constituted the main nation and were surrounded by others. Ultimately, the consent reached in 1990 was that Mongolia recognized only two nationalities within Mongolia: the Mongols and the Kazakhs.⁵⁹

After the democratic transition in the 1990s in Mongolia, the question of national identity was forced to be discussed among Mongolians, making it a challenging quest for

⁵⁶ Michael Grenfell, 51.

⁵⁷ Uradyn Erden Bulag, *Nationalism and Hybridity in Mongolia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York, 1998), 29.

⁵⁸ Bulag, 32.

⁵⁹ Bulag, 31.

them. They faced the dilemma of whether to choose between pastoral nomadic identity and modernity. On the one hand, after the peaceful transition to democracy, Mongolian people acquired the ability to redefine their national identity and restore their personal tribal and family identities. This event allowed Mongolians to reconnect with their glorious historical past, the Great Mongol Empire and the Chinggis Khaan, representing the “Nomadic” identity of Mongols.

On the other hand, the nomadic identity clashed with modernity and the further progress of Mongolia; some people simply denied it. According to Tsedendambyn Batbayar, Mongolian national identity must be determined by its geographical position, incorporating elements such as Chinggis Khaan and Mongolian foreign policy. He is concerned with how Mongolian national identity, tied to national security issues, navigates the choice of being labeled between Central Asia and Northeast Asia.⁶⁰ Many policymakers in Mongolia, including Batbayar, reject the idea of the nomadic identity of Mongolia, which only creates obstacles for Mongolia’s further modernization.⁶¹ Nevertheless, the predominant national image of Mongolia is that of the nomad, and being Mongolian is commonly understood in such terms.

While Mongolia is mostly seen as a nomadic nation, it does not represent contemporary 21st-century Mongolia. There is no space for “pure nomadism” in the contemporary globalized world, and the nomadism in Mongolia is merely an imagination. Especially an imaginary construct generated both in the West and inside from the Mongolia. According to Orkhon Myadar, the myth around the Mongolian nomad is influenced by orientalist views and romanticization, akin to Edward Said’s analysis of Western portrayals of ‘Arab’ cultures, applying similarly to outside perceptions of Mongolian herders.⁶² The term “nomad” carries an additional connotation, erroneously suggesting a group of people who are uncivilized, barbaric, and lacking in moral principles. However, it’s essential not to use “nomad” indiscriminately to define Mongolian culture;

⁶⁰ Tsedendamba Batbayar, “Mongolia’s New Identity and Security Dilemmas,” *Mongolian Journal of International Affairs*, no. 8-9 (April 11, 2014): 5, <https://doi.org/10.5564/mjia.v0i8-9.124>.

⁶¹ Henry G. Schwarz, 79.

⁶² Myadar, “Imaginary Nomads: Deconstructing the Representation of Mongolia as a Land of Nomads,” 343.

instead, it should be contextualized and explained within the specificities of Mongolian cultural practices. Another term that is often used to describe aspects of Mongolian culture is *nuudelchin*, which carries distinct connotations and meanings separate from the general concept of nomad.

Furthermore, the aspirations of Mongolian youth are increasingly divergent from those of older generations. Rather than pursuing traditional nomadic lifestyles, they are drawn more towards modernity and technological advancements. This preference does not imply a complete rejection of their cultural heritage. Instead, it reflects a desire for a progressive future where respect and justice are universally upheld. While valuing their rich traditions, the younger generation in Mongolia is eager to forge a path distinct from their predecessors, one that blends respect for their heritage with a commitment to innovation and societal advancement. During the 2016 local elections, only three out of every ten young voters who were eligible actually participated in the voting process.⁶³ This indicates that the persistent corruption and frequent scandals involving Mongolian politicians, coupled with a lack of commitment to development, have eroded the trust of the youth in the government and its institutions. Moreover, the older generation generally tends to underestimate the power and involvement of youth. In everyday social life in Mongolia, young people are discriminated against and prejudged based on their age, often being excluded due to their cultural “new image” by the older generations. Consequently, a divide has developed between the older and younger generations, with their interests often failing to converge at a common point. In the Mongolian Generational Study, conducted by the Statistical Institute for Consulting and Analysis (SICA), they inquired questions regarding global norms, including the legalization of same sex marriage and marijuana use. The study highlighted responses according to generational differences. It found that 55.3 percent of individuals born after 1995 supported same-sex marriage, whereas the majority of those born before 1995 held opposing views.⁶⁴ While there are

⁶³ Baasansuren Enkhtungalag, “Including Youth Voices Strengthens Democracy in Mongolia,” International Republic institute, September 18, 2023, <https://www.iri.org/news/including-youth-voices-strengthens-democracy-in-mongolia/>

⁶⁴ Datamon, *Mongolian Generation Study* (Ulaanbaatar, 2020), 17, accessed December 28, 2023, <https://www.datamon.mn/content/detail/30/>.

many factors that cause the divide between Mongolian older and younger generations, a further discussion of these falls outside the limits of this thesis.

This divide between Mongolian older and younger generations creates a gap, disconnecting the transmission of social knowledge that is intergenerational in nature. On one hand, the Mongolian youth are forward-looking, aspiring toward progress and innovation, while on the other hand, the older generation, with its deep-rooted nomadic identity, struggles to align with these evolving desires. Mongolian youth, driven by a desire for progress, are increasingly embracing liberal-progressivism. This alignment not only reflects their aspirations but also marks a significant shift in their cultural identity, distinct from previous generations. However, it is important to note that the liberal-progressivism in Mongolia is a direct result of imports from the West; this sponsorship by various Western-based organizations and funds enabled its emergence in Mongolian society. In the absence of research reports and empirical data specifically measuring the extent of liberal-progressivism in Mongolian society, it can be tentatively assumed that Mongolia is gradually adopting a trajectory similar to the Western liberal-progressivism. For example, LGBTQ+ rights, a cornerstone of liberal-progressive values, are increasingly becoming normalized in Mongolian society. Public demonstrations supporting these rights are conducted without restrictions. Each year, hundreds of young people take to the streets of Ulaanbaatar, peacefully marching and holding rainbow flags to symbolize their support and solidarity.



Figure 1. *Equal Rights and Pride Days-2019*

3.3. The Role of Social Knowledge and Discursive Strategy

It is necessary to define what constitutes a ‘nation.’ As mentioned in the literature review section of this thesis, there are three distinct approaches to the concept of nation: (1) primordialist, (2) modernist/constructivist, and the (3)ethnosymbolist. Primordialists view the nation as an inherent and ‘given’ entity; modernists perceive the nation as a purely social construct. The ethnosymbolist approach stands between these two, emphasizing ethnic symbols, customs, myths, and collective memories.

Collective memory is crucial to the existence of a particular nation, serving as “intergenerational knowledge” within a society. It provides members of the society with a sense of belonging, enabling them to function and operate within the society. In simple terms, it is the glue that binds members of a society, providing a specific social reality for its constituents. This is likely what Durkheim attempted to emphasize by stating the “moral force” within society. He was concerned about social interest, which goes beyond the mere accumulation of the set of self-interest of social actors.⁶⁵ Without some form of collectivity, nations could not exist, as they require common or shared elements among their members. This, for me, is embodied in their traditional culture.

Elaborating on “tradition,” it can be seen as intergenerational knowledge, produced throughout history and inherited by subsequent generations. Berger and Luckman’s theory suggests that language functions as a tool for inheriting shared experience within a linguistic community, serving as both the foundation and instrument of collective knowledge or memory. Furthermore, language enables the objectification of new experiences, incorporating them into existing knowledge, and transmitting this knowledge through tradition in the community.⁶⁶ Therefore, language is a crucial entity in society, serving to both produce new knowledge and pass down the accumulated knowledge. Hence, national identity is a collective memory that is shared among social actors.

⁶⁵ George Ritzer, and Jeffrey Spetnisky, 132-134.

⁶⁶ Berger, and, Luckmann, *Social Construction of Reality*, 85-86.

In Mongolia, many new terms and concepts derived from other cultures have been adopted due to the globalization, a trend I believe applies to other parts of the world as well. This leads to a particular question: if one systematically influences a language by adopting new concepts and terms, would that change collective knowledge?

Among the younger generation of Mongolia, learning a second language is common, driven by the social need to increase their value in the labor market and other reasons. As a result, many new terms and concepts have been adopted in the communication of the Mongolian people in general. This extends to the academic and legal fields, where global practices such as human rights and democracy are adopted, along with liberal-progressivist concepts such as gender, gender diversity, gender stereotypes, and terms related to sexual orientation and identity, and more. Theoretically, intervening in the existing social knowledge or collective knowledge shared among individuals in Mongolian society. Furthermore, as suggested by Bourdieu's theory of habitus, this adoption develops certain structures, leading individuals to new ways of thinking, and behavioral patterns, and sets of beliefs, resulting in an individual being structured in particular patterns, a predictable and potentially controllable state.

The generational divide in Mongolia is a vivid illustration of the tension between "Mongolian national identity" and the "global cultural order." The older generation, largely custodians of the collective knowledge passed down through the ages, showed a certain reluctance to adopt global values. In contrast, the younger generation, more attuned to technology and global influences, is socializing within the norms of global culture without any obstacles because of the social environment and trends. This divergence is shaped by various factors, among which the role of youth-oriented NGOs is particularly notable. In the next chapter of the thesis, I will investigate further the materials produced by youth-oriented NGOs and the liberal-progressive values or ideologies they are promoting in Mongolian society.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As part of the research for my thesis, I conducted interviews with seven individuals, all of whom were representatives and directors of non-governmental organizations working with youth. Within the framework of the thesis, I inquired about their personal experiences of working in NGOs and, notably, their perspectives on Mongolian youth, society, and identity. Additionally, beyond the interview data,

I gained intriguing information and new insight from their experiences and personal opinions. All interviews were conducted with participants' consent and posed no harm to them. Here, I cited relevant interviews, which could help me answer the research questions in the framework of my thesis.

While I had a fruitful conversation with these individuals, covering a variety of aspects of Mongolian society and the personal challenges and experiences they were facing, I only brought the parts that could be significantly relevant to answering research questions. I had the opportunity to inquire a question about Mongolian national identity and youth in relation to their beliefs and the new values established in Mongolia.

Furthermore, given the central role of CDA in this thesis, I have undertaken a detailed textual analysis, focusing on three publicly available materials. These materials were selected for their relevance and potential to shed light on the interplay between national identity, global cultural order, and prevailing ideologies within the context of Mongolian society.

After analyzing the text, I will further elaborate on the identified discourses and provide contextualization for the results. This will enable a reflection on the broad picture and reveal the interplay between national and liberal-progressivist values in Mongolian society.

4.1. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

4.1.1. Discourse Strategy 1: Linking liberal-progressivism with middle ages.

СОЁЛ, ХЭВЛЭЛ МЭДЭЭЛЭЛ

Далан жилийн түүхтэй социалист дэглэмээс өмнө 17 дугаар зууны эцэс хүртэл бөө мөргөл нь Монголчуудын соёл, уламжлалд давамгайлах байр суурь эзэлж байв (Nyamdorj, 2006). Бөө мөргөл бүхий нийгэмд иргэд трансгендер болон жендерийн олон янз байдлыг нийтээр ойлгож хүлээн зөвшөөрдөг байсан бөгөөд зарим бөө үрвүү жендерийн үүрэгтэй байсан нь үүгүүл америкчуудын бөөгийн уламжлалтай төстэй байв (Devereux, 1937). 17 дугаар зууны сүүл үеэс эхлэн улс төрийн зорилготойгоор Монгол оронд Бурханы шашин түгэн дэлгэрснээр жендерийн олон янз байдлыг хүлээн зөвшөөрөх уламжлалт хандлага Бурханы шашны үйлийн үр (карма)-ийн номлолоор тайлбарлагдах болсон юм. (Нямдорж, 2006). Харамсалтай нь 1921-1990 оны хооронд социалист дэглэм тогтсоноор трансгендер болон жендерийн олон янз байдлын талаарх өмнөх ойлголт замхарч, ижил хүйсийн бэлгийн харилцааг социалист Монгол улс яллан шийтгэж байсан (Тэрбиш, 2013) тул ЛГБТИК+ иргэдийн дунд айдас түгшүүр ноёлж, тэдэнд тулгамддаг асуудлууд нам гүм болсноор энэ нь 1990 оны эхэнд ардчилалд шилжих үе хүртэл үргэлжилжээ (Нямдорж, 2006). Ийнхүү орчин цагийн түүхэн дэх ЛГБТИК+ иргэдийн эрхийн хөдөлгөөний үнэмлэхүй ололт дэвшлээс ангид хоцорсон Монгол оронд өнөөг хүртэл транс болон жендерийн олон янз байдлыг олон нийт буруу ойлгож, сөрөг хандлагаар хүлээн авсаар ирэв (Ганбаатар ба бусад, 2021).

Транс болон хүйсийн хэвшмэл байдалд үл багтах хүмүүс Монголын соёл, хэвлэл мэдээллийн талбарт үзэгдэж байгаагүй бөгөөд 17 дугаар зууны сүүл үе хүртэл бөөгийн уламжлалаас улбаатай хүлээн зөвшөөрөх хандлага нийгэмд оршиж байсан. Гэвч жендерийн олон янз байдалтай холбоотой бичгээр үлдээсэн түүх туйлын ховрын дээр өнөөг хүртэл транс болон жендерийн олон янз байдал бүхий хүмүүсийг нэрлэх тогтсон үг ч байсангүй. Ардчилалд шилжсэнээс хойш нийтийг хамарсан мэдээллийн хэрэгслүүдийн хэвлэн нийтлэх, үзэл бодлоо илэрхийлэх эрх чөлөө баталгаажсанаар Ган-Од¹, Нараа² зэрэг тухайн үедээ гей залуус гэгдэж байсан хүмүүстэй хийсэн ярилцлага, сурвалжилгуудаар дамжуулан Монгол дахь ЛГБТИК+ хүмүүсийн тухай олон нийт олж мэдэх болжээ.

Гэсэн хэдий ч нийтийг хамарсан хэвлэл мэдээллийн хэрэгслүүд энэ асуудалд

Figure 2. (See Appendix for original material)

The selected text consists of three paragraphs and presents a historical and cultural examination of transgender and gender diversity and their public perceptions in Mongolia. It begins by noting the relative acceptance of these identities within early shamanist cultures. The narrator then shifts to the 17th century, marking Mongolia's conversion to Buddhism, which brought significant cultural transformation. The text further delves into the period starting in the 1920s, with the establishment of the communist state of Mongolia.

During this era, the acceptance of transgender and gender diversity greatly diminished, largely due to stringent criminal laws against gender diversity. This harsh legislative environment led to the near erasure of the concept of gender diversity in Mongolian society. Subsequently, the narrative emphasizes that gender diversity and transgender identities are largely misunderstood by the general public, a situation exacerbated by the lack of awareness and recognition of the successes of global LGBTQ+ movements. This disconnect has contributed to ongoing misconceptions and a limited understanding of transgender issues in a broader social context.

Lexicalization 1.

The text provides a detailed discussion on the concepts and experiences of individuals who identify as transgender, encompassing a range of gender diverse identities. In my analysis, I focused specifically on the terms “transgender” and “gender diversity” to understand their contextual usage and significance. Additionally, I took into account the emotional tone of terms, as well as the repetition and uniqueness of lexicons, in order to select key terms.

In the first paragraph, I focused on historical terms such as “shamanism” (*бөө мөргөл*), “Buddhism” (*Бурхны шашин*), and “Socialism” (*социализм*) in relation to transgender and gender diversity. The narrator initiates the discussion by elucidating the historical presence of these concepts within the context of Mongolian history. Afterwards, in relation to shamanism *бөө мөргөл*, and “widely acknowledged by citizens” (*иргэд хүлээн зөвшөөрдөг байсан*), this phrase suggests that Mongolian people traditionally or initially had accepting attitude towards transgender people and gender diversity, because of the shamanic culture. This idea repeatedly conveyed in the second paragraph. “The old concept diminished” (*өмнөх ойлголт замхарч*), “Mongolian state condemned” (*Монгол улс яллан шийтгэж*), and “giving rise to extreme fear and silence” (*айдас түгшүүр ноёлж*) are the terms utilized to describe socialism, concerning transgender and gender diversity. Lastly, “misunderstood by the public” (*олон нийт буруу ойлгож*), “negative attitude” (*сөрөг хандлагаар*) are used to describe current situation and challenges of transgender and gender diversity in Mongolia.

In the third paragraph, lexicons such as “non-Mongolian” (*Монгол бус*), “immoral” (*ёс зүйгүй*) employed to describe the perceptions of the public attitude that is affected by Mongolian media. The term used in the text “non-Mongolian” is again suggesting to the audience that transgender identity and gender diversity were initially rooted in Mongolian traditional culture, which are supposedly compatible with the Mongolian national identity. The narrator uses terms such as “joke” (*шог наргаа*), “biased” (*туйлиурсан*) and “misunderstood” (*буруу ойлгогдсон*) to describe societal attitudes towards gender diversity and transgender identities in Mongolia. These terms also reflecting the writer’s emotional tone. Subsequently, the narrator goes on to describe certain progressivists, referring to them as “so-called human rights attorneys” (*хүний эрхийн хуульчид гэж өөрийгөө тодорхойлсон хүмүүс*). This phrase underscores the perceived insufficiency of support and the exclusion of transgender individuals by these advocates. It also conveys judgmental emotional tone, reflecting skepticism about their commitment to truly inclusive human rights.

It is important to note that the terms such as “stereotype,” (*хэвцэмэл хандлага*) “gender stereotype,” and (*хүйсийн хэвцэмэл хандлага*) “gender” (*жендер*) “Trans,” (*транс*) “transgender” (*трансжендер*) and “LGBTQ” (*ЛГБТИК*) are newly derived concepts and these lexicons gradually adapted into Mongolian language use.

Patterns of transitivity 1.

While analyzing the text, three primary subjects emerged as potential main actors. However, my focus was on three specific types of transitivity: material (pertaining to physical aspects and events), mental (including perceptions, thoughts and feelings), and relational processes (concerning identities and relationships). I believe that these transitivity types offer a valuable framework for understanding discursive strategies in the context of Mongolian identity and youth.

Mongolian State/ Government:

- Material process: “a socialist regime took control of the state between 1921 and 1990” (*1921-1990 оны хооронд социалист дэглэм тогтсоноор*), sexual acts

“between two men condemned by the state” (*ижил хүйсийн бэлгийн харидцааг социалист Монгол улс яллан шийтгэж байсан*)

- Mental process: Not explicitly present
- Relational process: “acceptance of transgender and gender diversity waned” (*трансжендер болон жендерийн олон янз байдлын талаарх өмнөх ойлголт замхарч*)

Mongolian Society:

- Material process: “shamanism was the traditional and predominant culture in Mongolian society” (*бөө мөргөл нь Монголчуудын соёл, уламжлалд давамгайлах байр суурь эзэлж байв*), “Mongolian society to the existence of LGBTQ+ people” (*Монгол дахь ЛГБТК+ хүмүүсийн тухай олон нийт олж мэдэх болжээ*)
- Mental process: “the concept of transgender and gender diversity was widely acknowledged” (*нийгэмд иргэд трансжендер болон жендерийн олон янз байдлыг нийтээр ойлгож хүлээн зөвшөөрдөг байсан*), “persistent ignorance of mass media was reflective of the general population’s ignorance regarding transgender people” (*...хэвлэл мэдээллийн хэрэгслүүд энэ асуудалд хэт хайхрамжгүй хандаж олон нийтийн харалган тоомжиргүй байдлын тусгал болсноор трансжендер илэрхийллийг*)
- Relational process: “traditional acceptance of gender diversity was reinforced through the Buddhist doctrine” (*...улс төрийн зорилготойгоор... Буддын шашин түгэн дэлгэрснээр жендерийн олон янз байдлыг хүлээн зөвшөөрөх уламжлалт хандлага Бурхны шашны үйлийн үрийн номлолоор тайлбарлагдах болсон*), “Mongolian gender equality and feminist movements are somewhat trans-exclusionary” (*...феминист хөдөлгөөнүүдийн хувьд транс иргэндийн эрхийг багтаадаггүй хэмгээн дүгээж болох бөгөөд...*)

Transgender and Gender diversity:

- Material process: “trans and gender diverse people have historically lacked a visible presence “(*транс болон хүйсийн хэвимэл байдалд үл багтах хүмүүс Монголын соёл, хэвлэл мэдээллийн талбарт үзэгдэж байгаагүй...*), “transgender women visible in society” (*...цөөнгүй трансжендер эмэгтэй олонд ил болосон...*)
- Mental process: Not explicitly present
- Relational process: “portrayed as a joke in ways that perpetuate stereotypes” (*...хэвимэл хандлагыг улам өөгшүүлэхүйц байдлаар шог наргиа болгон дүрсэлсээр байна*), “misunderstood, and negative attitude among the public are still persistent”(*...олон нийт буруу ойлгож, сөрөг хандлагаар хүлээн авсаар ирэв*)

Expanding on the discussion. 1

Here, we can reveal discursive strategy by observing lexicalization and patterns of transitivity. This is the key discourse because the text incorporates very detailed and comprehensive information, including numerous uses of words and phrases that have emotional characteristics and an intricate chain of events, to identify liberal-progressivist values.

It is intriguing to acknowledge that the narrator attempted to merge LGBTQ+ rights, which is part of liberal-progressivism, with the shamanist culture of Mongolia. This point of view suggests to the audience that the liberal progressivist values are not only compatible with Mongolian national identity but also have been part of Mongolian traditional culture. This point is reflected in the interviewees, who are also representatives of the LGBTQ+ community in Mongolia.

Now, Tsevenravdan from the Youth Lead and his interview provide intricate explanations, regarding this discursive strategy, which I named “Linking liberal-progressivism with middle age.” In the text, shamanism played a key role in legitimizing the liberal progressive values, specifically transgender and gender diversity, in Mongolian

society. It is accurate that shamanism was one of the prevailing beliefs among Mongolians, and it directly led to the era of the “Great Mongol Empire” and “Chinggis Khan.” This part of history is overly cherished by the Mongolian people and constitutes an essential understanding of the Mongolian national identity.

Tseveenravdan shared his thoughts about the compatibility of liberal-progressive values with Mongolian national identity, and his opinion contributes to further understanding of the context. He suggested that the LGBTQ+ community is not new and existed, even before the fall of the socialist regime in 1991.

“Mongolian society views the LGBTQ+ community as entirely new, as they never have been existed in Mongolian history. As they suddenly emerged after the fall of socialist regime.”

He further supports his point by highlighting the Mongolian language and the existence of concepts within the Mongolian language and terminology.

“Exploring these values in the context of Mongolian culture is intriguing, particularly through the lens of the Mongolian language. For instance, the Mongolian term ‘Manin’ carries synonymous meaning with intersex, while ‘khootskhon describes the male-male sexual activity. Therefore, the existence of such specific terms in the Mongolian language, suggests that individuals with diverse sexual orientations have likely existed before.... It is important to emphasize that we, as LGBTQ+ Mongolians, are just like any other Mongolian people... Just differ only in our sexual orientation.”

(Tseveenravdan, from The Youth Lead Mongolia)

When I first interviewed him, I found this aspect quite astonishing. While I cannot further elaborate on whether it is accurate or trace the origin of the words, the focus is on the existing counterargument among Mongolians. From the perspective of common belief among Mongolians, LGBTQ+ is entirely foreign-derived, as Mongolians first established democracy and liberal values in 1991. Hence, from the perspective of common beliefs among Mongolians, LGBTQ+ is a recent phenomenon. For this reason, the Mongolian LGBTQ+ community is often perceived as non-Mongolian or simply ignored. Oulen, from

the LGBTQ+ Centre Mongolia, provided insights that echoed similar themes, sharing personal thoughts on this matter.

“There are events and concepts that originated from our organization, and one of these concepts is ‘Understanding human rights through Art.’ Rather than expressing it academically, which would limit the audience, we decided to convey it through art. In this year’s art exhibition, the theme was ‘Mongolian,’ encompassing Lesbian Mongolian, Gay Mongolian, and Trans Mongolian. This signifies that we are Mongolians, despite our difference... as some homophobic people perceive us as ‘nothing,’ not even human beings.”

“It is not like we want to differ ourselves as LGBTQ+ community, but because we appear different from the majority, since we perceived as minority, pushing us into this situation. Personally, I don’t want to stigmatize myself, explaining and lecturing my identity to everybody I encounter.”

Reflecting on the response given, I believe it is true that people who belong to the LGBTQ+ community used to be discriminated against harshly. They often become the victims of assault and bait for intense criticism in Mongolian society. However, I believe the situation has changed compared to the last few decades, and Mongolian people are becoming more open and receptive regarding LGBTQ+ rights. Moreover, I inquired about the ideal society of the LGBTQ+ community in Mongolia and the reflection of the current situation in Mongolia

“There are instances that we go overseas to participate international conferences, and we observed varying situations regarding human rights. In some countries, the conditions are extremely challenging, while in others, human rights are so well established that discussing them seems unnecessary. For example, our director once visited Switzerland and searched for gay bars. Surprisingly, there were none, not even once. The reason was Swiss society had progressed so well; they didn’t need to distinguish each other. We aspire for society where everyone is free and open, much like Switzerland. It has been almost 30 years since Mongolia democratized. Now, social media and technology has developed, the distance between government and the people has been shrank... I understand that there are

many unresolved problems other than this in Mongolia, but there exist many educated, good people; and I don't understand why the situation in Mongolia is not improving. It feels like those in position of authority lack effort and humanity within themselves."

(Oulen, from the LGBTQ+ Centre Mongolia)

Furthermore, Anudari from Women for Change expressed a similar opinion about the compatibility of liberal-progressivism with Mongolian national identity. She believes that due to the geographical situation of Mongolia, it has become the crossline of many cultures.

"Personally, I would say its 'not bad,' and it's very important question. Mongolia situated in unique cultural and geographical crossline. Western or global sentiments are strong in Mongolia; compared to East Asians like Koreans and Japanese, we have relatively open mindset in terms of democratic and liberal values. I believe Mongolian traditional culture is much closer to those values. In contemporary Mongolia, We have incorporated three cultural features: first, Nomadic, second, Post-communist, and lastly, Asian, more like East Asian. Of course, there are pros and cons of these features. However, I think the privileges outweigh the disadvantages, especially in terms of ideals of freedom and individual liberty, which often aligns with Mongolian traditional culture."

(Anudari form the Women for Change)

It is intriguing to discover that Mongolian traditional culture, which predominantly connects with nomadism, aligns with Western or global culture. Probably, it is the result of a nation-building project that started in the 1991s, which could be seen as Mongolia's attempt to get closer to Western nations. Nevertheless, her thoughts provide further insights regarding the linking of liberal-progressivism with middle ages strategy.

4.1.2. Discursive strategy 2: Undermining established knowledge

The figure 3. Illustrates portion of the Mongolian comic book titled “*Гайхмаа гайхахгаа больсон нь*,” which translates into English as “Gaikhmaa No Longer Surprises.” The comic book appears to illustrate the Mongolian election and challenges facing with female candidates in relation to gender-based stereotypes in Mongolian society. It utilizes fictional characters Gaikhmaa and Shiidelmaa, who are friends. “Gaikhmaa” (*Гайхмаа*) in the Mongolian language means “to surprise” and “маа” indicates femininity in the word. “Shiidelmaa” (*Шийдэлмаа*) means “solution,” and again includes “маа,” which signifies femininity. In Mongolian, many women’s names often end with “маа.”

In the story begins with Gaikhmaa and Shiidelmaa, two friends, are in the Mongolian Historical Museum, looking at the portraits of Mongolian historical leaders, who are predominantly male. Gaikhmaa asks her friend, “Where is the picture of Mandukhai Khatun? She led her nation and even fought in wars.” Shiidelmaa replies, “That’s true! In our history, many queens ruled our nation. But, you see, there are rarely written records in history.” Gaikhmaa then asks, “Hasn’t the time changed now?” Shiidelmaa responds, “Well... We will see about that!”



Figure 3. (See Appendix for original material)

Afterward, Gaikhmaa questions the absence of women in higher authority roles such as president and prime minister, noting that it is already 2020 and they are in the 21st century. Her friend Shiidelmaa responds, highlighting the issue of gender-based stereotypes in the Mongolian society.

Lexicalization 2.

On the first page, a fictional character Gaikhmaa asks why the portrait of one of the Mongolian queen “Mandukhai Khatun” (*Мандухай сэцэн хатан*) is missing. Despite her significant contributions to the Mongolian nation, her portrait is absent. The terms such as “led” (*удирдаж*), and “fought” (*байлдаж*), highlights the Mongolian female leader’s contributions, implicitly raising questions about equality. She had “ruled” and “fought” similarly to male leaders, yet her portrait is not displayed in the museum. Her friend Shiidelmaa further mentions the names of significant Mongolian female figures such as “Durgune” (*Дөргөнө*), “Sorkhugtani” (*Сорхугтани*), “Anu” (*Ану*). This point further

supported by the phrase “rarely written” (*бичиж үлдээсэн нь цөөхөн*) emphasizing the Mongolian female leaders and their understated significance in the history.

The question posed by Gaikhmaa, as “hasn’t the time changed now” (*цаг өөр болсон биз дээ?*), is a central point in this material. It implicitly conveys the message to the audience that the situation should have improved by now. Additionally, it suggests that past practices are outdated and inadequate, implying that improvements are expected in the current era. This message further explicitly supported by references to the “21st century” (*21-р зуун*) and “the year 2020” (*2020 он*) on the second page. The fictional character Gaikhmaa expresses her disbelief with the phrase, “I am utterly surprised.” (*би бүүр гайхчихлаа*) as she astonished by the absence of a “female president” (*эмэгтэй ерөнхийлөгч*) and “prime minister” (*ерөнхий сайд*) in this narrative.

Furthermore, “good house wife” (*сайн гэрийн эзэгтэй*), “mother” (*ээж*), “beautiful, like a men’s object” (*сайхан хүүхэн, эр хүний чимэг*) and “long-haired and short-sighted” (*урт үстэй ухаан богиной*) are used critically to highlight traditional women roles attitudes towards women in Mongolian society. These phrases underscore the stereotypical and objectifying ways in which women are often viewed, emphasizing their roles in the domestic sphere and physical appearance rather than their individual capabilities or intellect.

In contrast, the narrator describes men in Mongolian society as “leaders” (*үдирдагч*), a term that conveys authority and capability. The use of “persistent” (*байсаар байна*) underscores the ongoing nature of these challenges faced by women. It implies that despite progress and modernization, traditional views and stereotypes continue to shape and limit the roles and perceptions of women in society, indicating a need for further change and equality.

Patterns of Transitivity 2.

Speaker 1 (Gaikhmaa):

- Material process: “led her nation and even fought in wars” (*Улсаа удирдаж, дайнд хүртэл байлдаж байсан биз дээ?*)
- Mental process: “This made me really think and I was utterly surprised” (*Ингээд бодсон бүүр гайхчихлаа*)
- Relational process: “Why don’t we have a female President, Prime Minister, or provincial governors? (Яагаад бид эмэгтэй Ерөнхийлөгч, Ерөнхий сайд, аймгийн засаг даргагагүй байгаа юм бэ?)

Speaker 2 (Shiidelmaa):

- Material process: Not explicitly present
- Mental process: “That’s true” (*Яаг үнэн*)
- Relational process: “Women are seen as good housewives, mothers, and beautiful, like men’s objects...short-sighted, while men are seen as leaders” (*Эмэгтэй хүнийг... ухаан богиной улс, харин эрчүүдийг удирдагч гэж хардаг*)

Expanding on the discussion. 2

This comic book incorporates both visual and textual information, and is utilized distinct discursive strategy. While this material includes minimal textual information, it efficiently conveyed its main message, enabling me to focus on key terms and phrases. Compared to previous material, it used relatively different framing when it comes to conveying its content.

In the text, the phrase “hasn’t the time changed now” becomes the key expression, challenging the legitimacy of Mongolian traditional norms, and this expression again repeated in the text as “it is already 21st century and 2020” suggesting the idea that the established norms should have changed by now, and again challenging the legitimacy of existing beliefs.

In this regard, Zach, from the Caritas Czech Republic in Mongolia and his insightful thoughts about interplay between Mongolian society and liberal-progressivism, further extends on the matter. He provides intriguing perspective from the standpoint of a foreigner, who has been living in Mongolia for a while. Our conversation touched on the topic of women in Mongolia, while we were discussing about liberal-progressive values.

“While talking and interviewing all these youth CSOs, is that the CSO sector, it is almost exclusively women or it’s a high, high percentage of women. And they don’t feel like they have the same opportunities as men. They don’t feel like they have the same level of safety in the community as men, and they’re also not as connected with ongoing traditions in some respects because of this. For example, specifically, if I talk to coworkers about Lunar New Year, maybe one out of 10 women I’ve talked to, is actually excited about it because they know they’re the one doing all the dishes and cooking while men sit around drinking all day... They are not OK with that. If Mongolia in general wants to keep that happening, like something’s got to change just a little bit and we’re not changing the whole tradition.”

(Zach, from the Caritas Czech Republic in Mongolia)

Furthermore, Anudari provided her opinion by further extending on the women’s rights situation in Mongolia. While there might be numerous issues related to women are still persistent in Mongolian society, I would argue that to some extent, the situation of Mongolian women relatively improved compared to other parts of the world.

“As a post-communist country, we also share many sentiments with other post-communist countries. As generation that experienced socialist system, our hearts

are closer to democracy. For example, When I attend international conferences to discuss challenges in democracy and women’s rights, and observe other countries

like Japan and Korea, our circumstances don't align that much--even the challenges are different. I believe we have fewer problems than they do. We enjoy more freedom. On the contrary, there are things that unites us, specifically in terms of civil society...Moreover, when we engage with Central Asian countries; we also don't fit with their traits. Their situation is incomparable with Mongolia. Their values of democracy are different, and of course they have much more religious influence. "

In her interview, she offered an insight that might be imperative regarding the Mongolian national identity, emphasizing the necessity of forging new identity that incorporates both traditional culture and global elements.

"Overall, Mongolian culture is unique, and we often don't share trait with other countries. So, I think we need unique approach and methodologies, maybe even forging new identity."

(Anudari form the Women for Change)

Moreover, Sukhbat from Amnesty international Mongolia shared his thoughts about Mongolian society and youth in relation to national distinctiveness. The interview below, focuses on perspectives regarding Mongolian youth, illustrating on how younger generations are navigating the intersection of their national identity with emerging global cultural order. Sukhbat's reflections offer the aspirations, challenges, and attitudes prevalent among Mongolian youth, particularly in relation to the adoption and adaptation of liberal progressive values.

"In many instances, social revolutions and changes are instigated by young people who often take the forefront in driving transformation. In my opinion, Mongolia's peaceful democratization 30 years ago was largely made possible by the young people of that period. Mongolian people, while preserving their traditional culture and heritage, demonstrated an understanding of global trends, propelling the country in that direction. Now, we are witnessing a growing tolerance for diversity,

an embracement of human rights and commitment to globalization. I believe this reflects the identity of the Mongolian people—harmonious blend of global and local culture. Observing various youth organizations and movements, it's evident that they are on par with, if not surpassing, global counterparts, often outpacing both the Mongolian government and society. Therefore, what's holding them back lies in the government institutions and systems, which may seem incompatible with the forward-thinking stance of these youth. What I mean is that they are standing one-step ahead....”

(Sukhbat from the Amnesty International Mongolia)

4.3. Discursive strategy 3.



Figure 4. (See Appendix for original material)

This piece of text in Figure 3 illustrates the cultural and societal inadequacies to preventing and handling gender-based and domestic violence in Mongolia. However, it is important to note that none of the NGOs involved in this thesis produced or became part of this material. I selected this text because it enables me to identify common or popular discursive strategy of liberal progressive values. Moreover, it provides fruitful data to discovering discursive strategies to persuade the audience to embrace progressive values. Even though the context is a sensitive and important social problem to solve, my analysis focuses on the framing of the text. This involves examining how lexicalization and patterns of transitivity are utilized and delivered to the public. I selected terms, concerning their relation to liberal-progressive values.

Lexicalization 3.

The phrases such as “imbalance of power between women and men” and “human rights violations” reflect liberal-progressive stance. They stress on the need for gender equality and the protection of individual rights, which are central concepts of liberal-progressivism. These phrases also highlight power dynamics as a core aspect of Gender-based violence (GBV) and Domestic violence (DV), aligning feminist perspectives that focus on systemic gender-based inequalities.

Additionally, the phrase “Most significant social problems” indicates the framing of GBV and DV as not just merely individual incidents but as major societal issues. This framing suggests a systemic perspective, viewing such violence as deeply rooted in societal structures. The use of “widespread” underscores the extensive, far-reaching nature of GBV and DV. It moves beyond individual cases to emphasize a broader societal and even global problem.

Moreover, the lexical choice of “Prevailing social and cultural norms” points to the societal and cultural dimensions of GBV and DV, suggesting that Mongolian traditional norms play a role in perpetuating violence. The phrase used in the text “children who grow

up in families where there is violence” highlighting the persistence and intergenerational nature of the problem, also suggesting further GBV and DV in the future.

Patterns of Transitivity 3.

Victims of gender-based violence:

- Material process: “women who had been physically or sexually abused”
- Mental process: “significant short-and long-term damage to the physical and mental health of woman exposed to violence”
- Relational process: “woman’s inability to work”

Perpetrators of GBV:

- Material process: not explicitly present
- Mental process: not explicitly present
- Relational process: not explicitly present

Mongolian society:

- Material process: “protection and prevention systems have so far failed”
- Mental process: ”Limited knowledge and awareness of GBV”
- Relational process: not explicitly present

To add further contextualization in the thesis, I present some relevant part of Zach's interview. This interview provides intriguing insights to the thesis. As a foreigner living in Mongolian society, his perspective and observation contribute a unique interpretation regarding the interplay between Mongolian culture and liberal-progressivism.

"...You know, there are some really interesting things that I notice about Mongolian national identity how it mixes with new values. For example, like consumerism and fashion. Like often I see like young people walking around in traditional clothes, which are really cool traditional clothes and then they've got like Nike sneakers on, like this mix of street style with traditional culture is fascinating to me. I have never thought monks walking around in like nice street sneakers before with their orange clothes, it was really cool."

He shares fascinating observations about the mixture of Mongolian national identity with new values such as consumerism and fashion. He is especially amazed how young Mongolians are combining traditional culture with modern elements, such as Nike sneakers and traditional clothes, creating a unique street style that merges tradition with modern trends. Another interesting aspect he offered was the adaptation of hip-hop culture in Mongolia that has become a vital outlet for Mongolians especially for the youth, to express and address their problems related to Mongolian society. It is true that hip-hop culture is popular in Mongolia and it is used as an expression of frustration and social problems youth face in daily life. Traditional Mongolian songs are mostly about the land and country or overly related to nomadic culture, which do not usually attract Mongolian youth. As Zach mentioned, they do not provide the same freedom to openly discuss their issues.

"And there's this really interesting adaptation of expression where specifically if you look at hip hop culture in Mongolia going back maybe 20-30 or 25 years, I think it's when it started. Like it's a way of expressing things. It gives them an outlet to talk about these problems that they have in their daily life that I haven't seen in any other way. Mongolian song, like traditional song, doesn't give you an outlet to talk about those things so openly. This is just based on conversation I have had with Mongolians..."

He also touches on the cultural norms around discussing personal problems with others. In Mongolian society, people tend to avoid burdening others with their personal troubles. From his observations, art is emerging as a crucial medium for Mongolian people to express their genuine feelings, bypassing traditional constraints to discussing sensitive or taboo topics. For him, this trend in artistic expression is just beginning and it offers a fascinating insight into changing Mongolian mentality and society.

“It’s not OK to really talk openly about your problems with people that you care about. There’s this sense that, if I share this weight, this burden that I am carrying, it also weighs you down, is what people have told me. So I get this impression that art specifically is becoming this really important medium for people to express how they really feel without the traditional barriers to expressing things that are not usually talked about. So I think that’s a really interesting and fascinating space... This transition seems like it’s only just beginning.”

Zach’s insights provide a valuable lens through which to view the changing Mongolian identity amidst the influences of global culture. His observations about the youth mixing traditional Mongolian elements with modern fashion and the unique adaptation of hip-hop as a form of expression emphasize a social and cultural transition. This is not just superficial changes in style but reflects deeper shifts in how young Mongolians perceive themselves and their culture in the context of a globalized world. As this new image continues, it will be interesting to observe how these elements further influence the broader cultural and social expression of Mongolia.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

1. What are the discursive strategies employed by youth-oriented organizations and NGOs to shape the identity of the young Mongolian audience?

Based on the CDA conducted on selected materials, I have identified several intriguing discursive strategies. A common strategy found in these materials is the alignment of liberal-progressivist values with Mongolian nomadic culture. This framing is evident in the textual materials and in the responses of interviewees. Notably, almost all interviewees expressed a genuine belief that liberal-progressivism is compatible with Mongolian national identity, or “nomadic” identity, both in an implicit and explicit way. For instance, the textual material illustrating discourse 1 intriguingly suggests that LGBTQ+ rights and gender diversity were commonly accepted norms in Mongolian society before the 17th century. While the accuracy of these claims is debatable, it is clear that this belief is not widely held among modern Mongolians. This is likely due to the post-1991 Mongolian identity project that heavily emphasizes Chinggis Khan and nomadism. Consequently, there is a protective and resistant attitude toward liberal-progressive values, with the latter often being perceived as alien by Mongolians, and thus hindering their adoption. Hence, this discursive strategy can be seen as an effort to localize the liberal-progressivist values, in anticipation that Mongolians then will more readily accept such values as their own.

Another discursive strategy I identified is “undermining established knowledge,” achieved by asking questions, and conducting reality checks. This approach may give the audience a sense that they somehow left behind in the past, generating slight shame and confusion. This is because due to the dilemma Mongolians are facing, whether to embrace and cherish their tradition, which often relates to ‘nomadism,’ that represents the past, or strive for development and modernity that represents contemporary Western culture. Liberal-progressivism and its values often perceived as forward direction of development. Consequently, adhering to tradition is frequently seen as synonymous with lagging behind the world, not benefiting from technological innovation and progress. This notion generates

anxiety that falling behind the development and modernization. This strategy would work more efficiently to persuade audience to embrace liberal-progressivist values.

This strategy is effective because it tackles the collective fear of being left behind in an increasingly globalized and interconnected world. Presenting traditional values as outdated and incompatible with progress, pushing the audience towards embracing the new values, without a critical perspective of the implications of such a change. This approach subtly shifts the people's attitude to race towards global standards or Western standards.

2. What ideological terms and concepts are utilized in the textual materials produced by youth-oriented organizations and NGOs?

In the texts analyzed through CDA, I identified numerous ideological terms and concepts. These terms are easily recognizable in Mongolian language, as they are often directly adopted from foreign language without being translated. For example, terms like “gender” and “gender diversity” and “trans,” are imported into the Mongolian language. While it is more challenging to reveal ideological concepts and terms in translated form, it is still possible to identify them. Moreover, liberal-progressivism is frequently associated with the narratives of human rights, democracy and individualism. It is important to note that terms such as “stereotype”, “equality” and “discrimination” are often emphasized in the analyzed texts, implicitly challenging the accumulated collective knowledge and the existing social order within society. By making this observation, I am not suggesting endorsing discrimination or ignoring the universality of human rights. Instead, I am suggesting that these terms are often used as a tool to challenge existing social knowledge, and every one of these terms and concepts incorporate concrete system and practices behind them.

3. What political objectives and ideologies are reflected in the discourses and communication strategies of youth-oriented organizations and NGOs?

It is challenging to directly address this question, as the texts do not explicitly express political objectives and ideologies. However, it is evident that the texts emphasize normalizing feminism and LGBTQ+ rights in Mongolian society. My response to this

question, therefore, is more of an assumption based on my reading of the texts and the interviews. The agenda of liberal-progressivism, I argue, is to reform existing, well-established social norms and values often linked to Mongolian distinctiveness. This is possible only by intervening in the shared beliefs and social knowledge among social actors, producing new discourses that foster excessive individualism in society, where self-interest might outweigh national interests. Old taboos and social constraints appear to be diminishing.

Another pattern I identified in the texts is a subtle opposition to masculinity, often implicitly criticized. When liberal-progressivist discussions touch on “gender”, the focus is predominantly on women and sexual minorities. This suggests that they view masculinity as an antagonist because the existing social order is developed in favor of men. I believe that Mongolian society will increasingly embrace liberal-progressivist values in the future, evolving towards a societal structure and belief system more akin to those prevalent in contemporary Western cultures. This evolution, while copying Western societal models, will also need to navigate unique cultural, historical, and social context of Mongolia, potentially leading to distinctive hybrid of traditional Mongolian values and global values.

Since, critical discourse analysis is about revealing hidden messages and power relations through discourses, it is important to note that while I was exploring discourses produced by youth-oriented NGOs and interviewing individuals, I observed a common practice among them. Many of the projects and activities were funded by foreign institutions, embassies, or NGOs with headquarters overseas, particularly in Western countries. This observation raised concerns about Mongolian national security, specifically societal security, which is incorporating identity and culture. Moreover, these values and the direction of liberal-progressivism raise skepticism about whether they truly reflect the aspirations of Mongolian youth or Mongolians in general. Within the framework of this thesis, I decided to focus on NGOs as a part of the civil society sector of Mongolia, leading me to question their influence.

In democratic system, the civil society sector and NGOs significantly contribute to influencing state policy and laws, and they effectively influence public opinion. Due to the limitations of the Master’s thesis framework, I avoided focusing on the funds and financial

sources of the NGOs, as it would have been too complex. Instead, I chose to focus on publicly available materials that anyone can access, explaining their potential consequences, using sociological and political theories.

However, it would be too harsh to criticize Mongolian youth-oriented NGOs, or other NGOs in Mongolia, because they receive little or no support from the Mongolian government or its people. I believe lack of support is a main weakness and vulnerability of Mongolian society regarding the political activity or behavior of Mongolians, but I am convinced that their lack of activity and participation contributes significantly to the problems faced in contemporary Mongolian society. There is nothing wrong with protecting women's rights and empowering sexual minorities, as they are humans too. My concern is that being influenced by foreign countries through financial aid and support can give other countries considerable power and influence over Mongolian society, directly impacting security matters. I strongly believe that any country or nation has the right to determine its own identity without foreign intervention.

Nevertheless, when it comes to solving these problems, countries like Mongolia have limited capacity and cultural bases for developing solutions and addressing social issues. Practices implemented in Western countries often do not apply or fit cohesively when adapted, leading to more destruction than positive outcomes. In modern society, old norms and traditions often do not fit in the modern context, even though new social phenomena and problems have emerged in life. Thus, tradition is often seen as outdated and irrelevant. Modernization, which first emerged in the West, has allowed scientific knowledge to develop over time, providing upper hand in addressing modern problems. However, countries like Mongolia, where these knowledge did not develop but was copied from USSR, and where a since it had been "nomadic" lifestyle prevailed, it is challenging to address the problems Mongolians face today. Thus, for countries that shares similar traits with Mongolia, it becomes imperative to forge a unique path that acknowledges their distinct historical and cultural context. This approach should incorporate traditional wisdom with modern scientific knowledge, creating careful solutions that respect their heritage while efficiently addressing contemporary challenges.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM



Consent Form

The purpose of the study conducted is to learn more about the priorities of organizations that work with Mongolian youth. The material will be published in the form of a Master Thesis at the OSCE Academy in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

Participation consists of one interview, lasting approximately one-hour. Participation is voluntary and the interviewee has the right to stop the interview at any time. The interview will be audio taped, unless otherwise requested by the interviewee. If the interviewee allows, there may be additional follow up/clarification questions through email.

Privacy will be ensured through anonymization. If the interviewee has no objections, however, his/her full name will be rendered in the study.

If the interviewee later decides to withdraw from the study, he/she can contact the researcher, Bilguun Terbish, at b.terbish@osce-academy.net and request that the information is deleted.

I hereby confirm that I have read and agree to the conditions

Signature of Interviewee

Signature of Interviewer

Date: _____

Зөвшөөрлийн хуудас

Энэхүү судалгааны зорилго нь Монгол дахь залуучуудтай хамтран ажилладаг байгууллагуудын тэргүүлэх чиглэлийн талаар илүү ихийг мэдэх явдал бөгөөд уг судалгааны үр дүнг Киргизийн Бишкек хот дахь ЕАБХАБ-ын Академид магистрын диссертаци хэлбэрээр хэвлүүлнэ.

Судалгаа нь нэг цаг үргэлжлэх бөгөөд зөвхөн ярилцлагын хэлбэртэй байна. Судалгаанд оролцогч нь сайн дурын үндсэн дээр судалгаанд оролцох ба судалгааны аль ч үед ярилцлагыг зогсоох эрхтэй. Судалгаанд оролцогч өөр хүсэлт гаргаагүй бол ярилцлагыг дуу бичлэгээр явуулна.

Хэрэв судалгаанд оролцогч зөвшөөрвөл цахим шуудангаар нэмэлт/тодруулах асуултуудыг асууж болно. Судалгааны нууцлалыг оролцогчийн хувийн мэдээлэл нууцлах байдлаар хангана. Гэвч судалгаанд оролцогч өөрөө хүсвэл бүтэн овог нэрийг оруулж болно.

Хэрэв судалгаанд оролцогч нь уг судалгаанаас буцахаар шийдсэн бол судлаач Тэрбиш Билгүүн b.terbish@osce-academy.net хаягаар холбогдон мэдээллийг устах хүсэлт гаргаж болно.

Би дээрх нөхцөлийг зөвшөөрч байна

Судалгаанд оролцогчийн гарын үсэг

Судлаачын гарын үсэг

Он, сар, өдөр: _____

APPENDIX B: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES AND NGOs

№	Name	NGOs
1	Tseveenravdan	Youth Lead Mongolia
2	Oulen	LGBTQ+ Centre Mongolia
3	Anudari	Women for Change
4	Zach	Caritas Czech Republic in Mongolia
5	Sukhbat	Amnesty International Mongolia
6	Munkhchimeg	All for Education
7	Enkhbayar	Mongolian Youth Council

APPENDIX C: MATERIALS USED IN THE ANALYSIS

