

The Changing Meaning of Work, Herding and Social Relations in Rural Mongolia

Ariell Ahearn-Ligham

Green Templeton College

University of Oxford

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment for the Degree of Doctor of

Philosophy in Geography and the Environment

Hilary 2016

ABSTRACT

By using ethnographic methods based on extensive participant observation, this thesis explores the role of pastoralism and rural work as a medium of social reproduction for families in rural Mongolia. This work is reported in four articles, which examine herder household management, decision making, and the spatial aspects of household social and economic production. As standalone pieces and as a united work, the articles make a case for understanding social change through the lens of spatialized performative relations. Pastoralism as a form of work and social system is one aspect of these relations. I contend that people consciously engage with herding as a form of work, which is an important reference point in political subjectivities and administrative practices that idealize the state. The policies and practices of government institutions, including non-state agencies, play powerful roles in the particular forms through which relations are spatialized. By taking this approach and prioritizing herder critical reflections on their own lives, I argue against the dual claim that herders exist outside the state and are bound to local environments. I show, in contrast, how herder efforts to access resources beyond local environments, such as formal schooling for children, spatially transform the labour, finance, and mobility systems of households.

My work presents three key arguments with reference to these concepts. The first is that patron–client relations continue to play a strong role in family hierarchies and wider social alliances used to gain access to needed resources and services. Secondly, I argue that pastoralist work is an integral part of governance and the propagation of the moral authority of the state. Pastoralism as a form of work should be seen as a political enterprise as much as an economic or cultural one. Finally, attention to the spatial organisation of household economies, including household splitting and new types of mobility, reiterates the significance of place in human agency.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS	V
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	VII
INTRODUCTION	1
THE CHANGING MEANING OF WORK, HERDING, AND SOCIAL RELATIONS	28
THE MONGOLIA ECONOMIC AND POLICY CONTEXT	66
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS	90
ARTICLE 1	137
Herds or Family?: Contradictions in Schooling Children amongst Mongolian Pastoralists	
ARTICLE 2	162
The New Mongolian State Herder: Examining “the State” as a Political Resource in Patron-Client Relations	
ARTICLE 3	200
The role of kinship in negotiating territorial rights: exploring claims for winter pasture ownership in Mongolia	
ARTICLE 4	233
Placing absence: Gendered work and the spatialisation of Mongolian pastoralist households	
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION	254
REFERENCES CITED	277

ILLUSTRATIONS

TABLES

1 Population of Bayanhongor.....	106
2 Bayanhongor Livestock Loss, 1995–2013.....	107

FIGURES

1 KS's Family Tree.....	115
-------------------------	-----

MAPS

1 Map of Mongolia and Bayanhongor Province.....	104
2 Bayanbulag, Gurvanbulag, and Ölziit Counties in Bayanhongor Province.....	105
3 Detail of Ölziit County.....	108
4 Summer Campsites for Selection of Families in Ölziit County, 1 st <i>Bag</i>	110
5 Fall Campsites for Selection of Families in Ölziit County, 1 st <i>Bag</i>	110
6 Winter Campsites for Selection of Families in Ölziit County, 1 st <i>Bag</i>	111
7 Spring Campsites for Selection of Families in Ölziit County, 1 st <i>Bag</i>	111
8 Seasonal Sites for Dorj's Household in Ölziit.....	112
9 Seasonal Sites for Purev's Household in Ölziit.....	112
10 Seasonal Sites for Tsetee's Household in Ölziit.....	113
11 Detail of Gurvanbulag County.....	120

PHOTOGRAPHS

1 Saraa with KS's First Child in Ulaanbaatar, October 2012.....	119
2 Ochirbat and Saraa Milking in Ölziit, September 2012.....	119
3 Inspecting a New Well Pump in Ölziit, November 2013.....	119
4 Dairy Products Drying on Wooden Carts in Gurvanbulag, August 2013.....	121
5 Bat's Mother with their New Truck in Bayanbulag, August 2013.....	122
6 Ochirbat Caring for his Mother and Grandchildren in Bayanhongor, September 2013.....	123
7 Awarding Mongolian State Herder Diplomas.....	194
8 Explaining the Mongolian State Herder Stamps.....	194

9 Mongolian State Herder Diploma and Medal.....	195
10 Mongolian State Herder Stamps.....	196
11 Public Meeting in Gurvanbulag.....	197
12 Household Visit with Bag Governor and <i>Sum</i> Officials.....	197
13 <i>Bag</i> 1 Herder Meeting in <i>Ölziit</i>	229
14 <i>Bag</i> 1 <i>Ovoljoo</i>	229
15 Dorj Making Milk Libations at <i>Ovoo</i> Ceremony.....	230

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project would not have been possible without the contributions of many colleagues and friends in Mongolia. Most especially, my research was realised through the generosity, patience, hospitality, and critical guidance of the people of *Ölziit sum*, *Gurvanbulag sum*, and *Bayanbulag sum* in Bayanhongor, Mongolia. They have been an unceasing source of inspiration and energy; this project is dedicated to them.

I am deeply grateful to my DPhil supervisor in the Department of International Development, Professor Dawn Chatty, who has been a constant source of inspiration and courage and an advocate of long-term ethnographic research and language learning. I am honored to have had the opportunity to learn from such a teacher and to carry on the legacy of research on pastoralism and politics.

I am also incredibly grateful to my DPhil supervisors in the School for Geography and Environment. I would like to sincerely thank Professor Craig Jeffrey for taking me on as his student and for his work in training me to engage in broader scholarly debates. His insistence on clarity and form spurred intellectual growth and scholarly writing skills. More than can be said, I am grateful to my doctoral supervisor, Dr. Troy Sternberg, for making Oxford part of my world, for his gracious hospitality, mentorship, sound advice, reassurance, generosity, and sharp reviews. He kept it real and “awesome” every step of the way.

I would like to thank my adopted supervisor and co-author from the National University of Mongolia, Dr. Bumochir Dulam, for his great energy, sharp feedback, and incredible adaptability and communication skills. I am very grateful to have him as a friend and partner in research and writing. Also, I am very appreciative for the support that I received from the National University of Mongolia and especially Sarantsetseg Dugersuren.

I owe special thanks to Khishigsuren Tserenchunt for showing me the way to Bayanhongor, providing a safe and stable platform to work, and for over a decade of friendship and support. I am also indebted to the rest of my Bayanhongor family, Naraa and Tserendorj, Khishigjargal, Emee, Maydee, Khishigbaatar, Luya and Ulzii, and Mazi. Additionally, Luvsantseren Sangi is an essential colleague, *ah*, and friend who acted as my translator from “Mongolian to Mongolian,” who empowered me every step of the way and approached every situation with sensitivity, grace, and kindness.

I am greatly indebted to my *bagsh*, Tserenchunt Legden, at Indiana University, Bloomington, for deepening my love for the Mongolian language and constantly challenging me

to refine my understanding and communication skills. Also, I own a great intellectual debt to Professor Christopher Atwood at Indiana University, who at the early stages of this project helped me to understand the meaning of rigorous research.

I am eternally grateful to Jonathan Balls, Charlotte Von Mangoldt, Viresh Patel, and Yi'En Cheng for their review of early drafts of the papers, for their clarity of mind and good humour. Thank you for making the academic world a fun place to be.

I would also like to thank my transfer of status examiners, Dr. Anna Lora-Wainwright and Dr. Nick Middleton as well as my confirmation of status examiners, Dr. Fiona McConnell and Dr. Henri Reuff for their very constructive reviews of my writing and early drafts of the thesis.

Bindi Dondov's unceasing support, energy, and intelligence always lit the path ahead. She deserves special thanks for help with last-minute transcriptions and translations. Thanks to my friend and colleague Sougar Monkhtsoog for his feedback and help with translations, as well as Tsesu Purevsuren for her hard work in transcribing interviews. I am further indebted to Jargalan Bat-Orgil and Orkhon Gantogtokh for help with translations and stimulating conversations.

I benefited greatly from conversations and collaborations with: David Anthony, Atif Ansar, Batbuyan Batjav, Sue Bird, Lauren Bonilla, Dorcas Brown, Pierre Clavel, Julian Dierkes, Caroline Dyer, Jane Dyson, the GTC Lodge, Rebecca Empson, Marcia Favale, Byambabaatar Ichinkhorloo, Benjamin Meader, Phil McMichael, Uvsh Purev, Bradley Rappa, Ulziijargal "Mama Ulzii" Sanjaasuren, Jaspal Sandhu, Emilia Roza Sulek, Eric Thrift, the Transformations Cluster, Michael Woost, amongst many others.

Leah Holguin makes the most awesome maps in the world and I am so happy to have a few of them in this thesis.

Special, extra sparkling thanks to Dr. Allison Hahn for sharing the epic journey from the early days, for reading thousands of words and ironing out the kinks and for your love and care.

I am sincerely grateful for T.H.R., my thesis angel, who has been a constant source of strength and support. I am profoundly thankful for his friendship, insights, and absolutely perfect timing.

Special thanks to the Baigalmaa and Mark Tasse at the American Center for Mongolian Studies, Green Templeton College, and Indiana University, Bloomington for their financial support and intellectual support.

Finally, I am immensely thankful for the positive energy and grounding of my family, especially Susan Ahearn and William Just as well as my grandparents, William and Gloria Ahearn.

INTRODUCTION

Becoming a Herder

On the road to Kharkhorin in mid-September 2013, we made an unplanned stop at the famous *Elsen Tasarkhai* sand dunes, which stretch over 80 kilometres in a long line across the otherwise generally grassy steppe terrain of Ovorhangai province in central Mongolia. A friend was visiting from Australia and my Mongolian *ah* (elder brother) who was accompanying us on the trip insisted that we take a camel ride at a popular tourist spot. Despite my initial ambivalence, I was compelled to stop and inquire after Ochkoo, a herder friend who I recently learned had relocated and rented camel rides there. I initially met Ochkoo's family in 2004 and continued to visit his family and neighbours outside of Kharkhorin on and off until 2006. As we were saddling up between the woolly Bactrian camel humps, I asked my host if he knew Ochkoo and where I might find him. Happily, I ascertained that the man from whom I was renting a camel was Ochkoo's father-in-law and that the family had recently moved to their fall camp beyond the rocky mountains visible in the distance. Before departing, I scribbled my phone number on a scrap of paper and asked his young associate to relay my message to him.

In 2004, Ochkoo was in his early 20s. He was the eldest of five children, with one disabled brother and three sisters; his father died when he was fifteen and he was primarily responsible for grazing his family's herd. He was an excellent rider and skilled in all areas of horsemanship including tying halters from a leather rope, riding bareback, and gracefully catching sheep and horses with the Mongolian long willow lasso poles. His summers were spent herding, milking, training horses, playing occasional bouts of polo for a local club

created by wealthy foreigners, and taking infrequent trips to the county centers to go to the shops or visit friends, amongst many other daily chores, socialising events, and winter preparation tasks. At that time, Ochkoo's family was one of the few in the area who owned a motorcycle, though fuel was always in short supply and most people walked or rode horses to their destinations.

Given Ochkoo's obvious livestock husbandry skills, I was surprised to learn in 2007 that he, his friend Bor, and Bor's wife travelled to Oyunga, a large artisanal mining site in the province, to try their hand at panning for gold. Their fortunes changed during this trip. Bor fell down a deep hand-dug mine shaft and broke a leg; Ochkoo found enough gold to purchase property in Kharkhorin. This news was the last I had heard from him until 2013, when Ochkoo called from his pasture camp near the sand dune after receiving my message.

Over the course of the next few weeks, I managed to piece together his story, based on phone calls, text messages, and finally meeting in Ulaanbaatar when he spent nearly a week fruitlessly searching the markets for a part to fix his old truck. Ten years had taken its toll. He explained his situation so directly and with such emotion that I was taken aback, wondering how this youth so over-confident a decade earlier had come to look so tired. Over tea, he described how he lost over forty cows and all of his horses in the 2010–2011 winter disaster (*dzud*) of prolonged freezing temperatures; a loss he blames on himself for poor preparation and an inability to find a way to move the animals to a place of safety in time. He admitted to developing a drinking problem following this loss, with three particularly bad periods—once after he lost his animals, again when his relationship with his wife became strained, and again after he got into a motorcycle accident on icy roads and broke his collarbone. Ochkoo didn't lose all of his animals during the 2010 *dzud* and continued to maintain a herd mostly of sheep

and goats. His relationship to his livestock was flexible. He maintained a herd and combined it with those of close friends, sharing herding duties with them in the countryside, which allowed him to spend time away from the pasture camp. Additionally, he bought property and built a house in a settlement near the *Elsen Tasarkhai* area where his wife and two children, a three-year-old and ten-month-old, live. His wife pushes him to make money, which he explained as a contributing factor in his decision to start renting camel rides at the tourist stop.

While his wife and children stay in the house in the settlement, Ochkoo returns to the countryside to relieve his friend from herding duties. He describes living alone in the pastures during this time as *ontsgui* or unpleasant and boring. He also views his time in the settlement as dissatisfying and aimless as there are few work opportunities, especially after the tourist season ends. He thought of selling his camel in order to buy a vehicle to hire out as transport for other herders, but finding buyers was difficult in the fall season. In the meantime, he focused on trying to get his old truck up and running again. In the months after our reunion in the winter of 2013, Ochkoo updated me on his temporary move to Kharkhorin, where he did carpentry work and contemplated the option of temporarily moving to his sister's *ger* in the outskirts of Ulaanbaatar to try to find construction work in the city. His ability to travel to Ulaanbaatar was compromised when his wages, which he placed on a windowsill in the building where he was working after being paid, disappeared when he went outside to smoke a cigarette. Disappointed and without any cash, he needed to decide if he was going to find more work in Kharkhorin or borrow money from a friend to travel home to the settlement. This was the last we communicated until I called him from England to wish him a happy Lunar New Year for the annual *Tsagaan Sar* celebration in February 2015. When I asked what he did after the problems the previous year he told me “*bi malchin hun bolson*”—I became a

herder. In other words, Ochkoo had decided to return full-time to a herding livelihood. His situation may change again next year depending on the development of new opportunities or obstacles and family-related events.

I relate Ochkoo's experiences over the last ten years as a means to highlight the spatial transformations of herder households in rural Mongolia and the social effects of these transformations on relations between people and territory, which include state administration and relations to the land. Mobility, finance, labour, gender, moralities, and governance institutions are implicated in the nature of these transformations and herder perceptions of the agencies to which they give rise. Examining the lives of herders through participant observation and lived relationships with people, livestock, environment, and the cosmos has re-affirmed Massey's now classic argument, "the spatial is integral to the production of history, and thus to the possibility of politics, just as the temporal is to geography" (Featherstone and Painter 2013, p. 3). Space is social, and social relations transform space. This thesis aims to show that *malchin* (herders) practice pastoralism through varied spatialized, performative relations, which are continually renegotiated in the context of shifting interactions and relationships with historically produced material infrastructures, technologies of governance, discourses about the state, and resources in the broad sense. I demonstrate that *malchin* do not make up a single social category; rather, people who work as pastoralists include a diverse range of individuals with different histories and future aspirations. Doing rural work in Mongolia involves ongoing political negotiations, where gender and status hierarchies play an important role in who succeeds in accessing resources. The ethnographies presented to substantiate this view can be brought to bear on ongoing

debates in anthropology and geography on sovereignty, territoriality, and the relationship between changing landscapes, governance, and social relations.

By focusing attention on the organization of herder households and decision-making processes, I highlight the ways in which households use resources such as livestock, mobility, family and friend networks, education, new political categories and financial technologies to achieve agency. These strategies to achieve agency are both innovative and constrained, reflecting inequalities in social status, social and physical mobility, and access to resources that further inform political subjectivities. This household-level viewpoint contributes to literature in political geography and anthropology by problematizing the conceptual separation between “the state” and “society” in analyses of changes in social organization. Rather than a natural category, scholars have demonstrated that “the state” is an idea that is used as a political resource. Jeffrey (2015) has written, “states do not simply exist; rather, they are accomplishments reified and reformulated through prosaic and quotidian activities” (p. 66). From this perspective, I demonstrate that pastoralism as a form of work and strategy to access resources and reproduce households is part of the “prosaic and quotidian activities” through which ideas of state legitimacy take shape in ongoing relations of power.

The concept of governmentality has been used to deconstruct the analytical separation between state and society in understanding changing subjectivities and power relations in pastoralist societies (Agrawal 2005; Sneath 2007; Yeh 2013; Yeh and Coggins 2014). This perspective is useful, especially in highlighting the role of bureaucratic practices such as map-making, population statistics, and other knowledge production activities in the biopolitical management of everyday lives by governing institutions. Evidence from the critical reflections of herders and observations of their decision-making processes also reveals the prevalence and

long history of government bureaucratic practices around herding work. Livestock censuses are conducted on bi-annual basis, household mobility and seasonal camp sites are closely documented in maps created by local authorities, and herders are formally categorized as a small and medium enterprise, to name a few ways in which herding work is identified by government administrators in today's market economy. The conceptual application of governmentality in these contexts tends to focus on the administrative procedures of governance institutions as subjectivity forming processes (Agrawal 2005; Ferguson and Gupta 2002; Gupta 1995; Rose-Redwood 2006). Attention to the varied social roles that individual actors play on a daily basis complicates the rigid conceptual boundaries between governing authorities and subjects. In rural Mongolia, one individual may play multiple social roles such as a government employee, a household head, a herder, a host, a mother, and entrepreneur. Observing the varied roles and social identities of individuals requires closer analytical attention to the times, spaces, and relationships that allow for the possibility of these roles to achieve performative force, or legitimacy within formal government and non-government social situations.

A focus on relations points to the salience of the concept of performativity in analyzing relations of power and social status hierarchies, which take place in reference to and in spite of formal institutions. From this perspective, human subjectivity is always in a state of becoming. The state and society are not pre-existing entities but are ideas that gain legitimacy through re-iterative social expression. As Glass and Redwood (2014) explain, "The subject who performs a political action does not precede the performance but is rather constituted in and through it" (p. 8). This point can be seen in herder household strategies to access formal education for children in primary school. The lowered enrollment age for primary school in

combination with housing requirements for children has given rise to new forms of household spatial organization, which articulate with political negotiations over territorial rights, new types of investments, mobility and financial dependencies. These spatial transformations in herding livelihoods unfold creatively within social systems structured by expectations about gendered and age-based concepts of kinship. Practices of formal governance articulate with these expectations and relations of obligation as individuals negotiate for rights with the resources at their disposal in a given time and place.

I show that a focus on governance in terms of state-society relations by scholars, policy makers, and development experts distracts attention from the distributional inequalities that herders face in accessing services such as education, health care, and other infrastructures. Ironically, pastoralism provides a means for many to cope with these inequalities by securing stable forms of wealth and food supplies in the context of fluctuating economic conditions, even as rural areas continue to be marginalized from access to comforts and services based in urban areas. Continued funding from international donor organisations to establish decentralised governance frameworks, community participation in resource management, and support of entrepreneurship as a means to create “sustainable livelihoods” (see for example Usukh et al 2010; World Bank 2014) expands state bureaucracies but overlooks the centripetal nature of infrastructural resources and sources of social capital, which converge in provincial centers, and ultimately in Ulaanbaatar (Dalaibuyan 2012). Government bureaucratic practices focused on managing and administering pastoralist land use do not resolve social inequalities, which are exacerbated by distributional inequalities.

Additionally, scholarly and expert analyses of contemporary pastoralist livelihoods tend to characterize the role of local government administration as negligent, nonexistent, or

weak (Fernandez-Gimenez 2002; Fernandez-Gimenez et al 2012; Hannam 2007, 2012, 2014; Upton 2008, 2012) and have led to different and often contradictory conclusions. The end of socialism has been consistently linked with the idea that the rural herders have little contact with government administration. This view forwards the idea that herders exist outside the state, a position that has been used to advance land privatization and sedentarization schemes in pastoralist territories around the world. Evidence presented in this thesis illustrates the active presence of local government administration in rural economies. Transformations in the organization of herding households and livestock husbandry practices need to be understood as occurring in reference to a specific political history and in ongoing relations of power. I argue that the state should be seen in terms of social relations that adhere to a patron–client dynamic, of which elite international development organizations are a part. This view contributes to debates in anthropology and geography by problematizing the state and households as ideal types. Rather, I illustrate how the organisation of government systems and household systems are interwoven through spatialized relationships, which have acquired performative force through historical notions of morality and related hierarchical relations of dependence between people with unequal access to resources.

The Question of Viability

Pastoralism, above any other livelihood in Mongolia, has been targeted as a risky and uncertain endeavor with questionable viability in the context of climate change and extreme environmental conditions. Mongolia's market economy, which is balancing on a strikingly thin export base composed primarily of natural minerals, is widely exposed to fluctuations in world prices, which creates government deficits and contributes to inflation (Barnett, Bersch, and Ojima 2012). In this context, it would seem that other risky livelihoods which depend on

foreign investment (such as mining), or reliable and inexpensive supplies (such as the construction industry), would receive similarly skeptical reviews. The question of the viability of pastoralism is even more difficult to understand because it has been a form of employment and source of food and social security for at least a third of the population since the government instituted liberal market reforms in the early 1990s and throughout the periods of economic crisis since that time. Given the stability that pastoralism has offered many families in the context of this fluctuating economic environment, it seems ironic that the government identifies pastoralism as potentially unviable while the regime continues to support policies aimed at privatisation and decentralisation, further amplifying the effects of external economic shocks and reliance on external funding from multilateral organisations and foreign governments. As social and spatial inequalities change, this situation has opened space for new forms of distribution and social welfare around financial lending, government-backed mortgages, conditional cash transfers, and legislation that empowers elite investment in private schools, hospitals, and luxury apartment buildings (Byambadorj, Amati, and Ruming 2011). Pastoralism provides the means for some families to make significant investments in education, property, and other material aspirations and often provides a basis for noncash wealth in fluctuating economic conditions. Scholars focused on environmental management emphasize the relationship between land and herders without investigating how economic conditions and nonlocal relations are involved in pastoral histories and decision-making.

Ochkoo's story above highlights common themes in the changing meaning of work in rural Mongolia that are often overlooked in common framings of pastoralism as a primarily locally-bounded, climate, and environment-shaped economy. In the introduction of a scholarly book published in 2015 called *The Ecology of Pastoralism*, the editor states, "While

pastoralists exhibit significant flexibility in their adaptations, they do confront certain constraints. Central amongst these limitations are the conditions required by the animals they tend....As a result, that animal's needs figure greatly in decisions about where they move, and how they structure their economic system (which affects political and social organization" (Kardulias 2015, p.7-8). Ochkoo's experience complicates this common framing of herder livelihoods in analyses of rural economic change in Mongolia by illustrating that the environment, in combination with other important factors such as aspirations, emotions, past experiences, social relations, gender relations, morality, and obligation, and financial concerns were important aspects of mobility decisions. Additionally, Ochkoo's experience shows that herders move between multiple spaces and family members are often dispersed and in motion between rural pastures, provincial centers, and the districts of Ulaanbaatar.

The original idea for this research project emerged from my fieldwork in 2004–2006 with international development ex-pats who portrayed mobile pastoralists as being caught in the cross hairs of changing economic and governance systems. Mongolian politicians and development institutions have raised issues such as pasture degradation, loss of livelihoods due to severe winter disasters, and increases in the numbers of cashmere goats as both environmental concerns and evidence of an unsustainable pastoralism (World Bank 2003). The characterisation of pastoralist livelihoods as a way of life under threat recurred in the international media after a severe winter disaster killed approximately 20 per cent of the country's livestock over the course of 2010–2011 (Sternberg 2010). A *New York Times* article by Andrew Jacobs on 19 May 2010 titled "Winter leaves Mongolia a harvest of carcasses" reads:

The disaster poses a challenge to a government already struggling to address the needs of a third of the population that lives in poverty. But it also raises a host of thorny questions about climate change, environmental degradation and whether the pastoral way of life that sustains many of the country's 3 million people has a future.

...Although the mining and tourism sectors are a growing portion of the Mongolian economy, a third of the population still depends entirely on husbandry for its livelihood. "The key question we have to ask is whether this way of life is sustainable," said Mr. Usmani of the United Nations. "It's a very sensitive issue."

This *New York Times* article specifically questions the current and future viability of mobile pastoralism in Mongolia, despite acknowledging its long history of practice in the region. At the same time, other systems such as market capitalism or government emergency response policies were not questioned for their viability or potential contribution to the winter disaster. The focus on environmental degradation and tragedies such as the *dzud* is part of a larger conversation about rural governance and infrastructural support of rural livelihoods in Mongolia. These discourses depoliticize social and spatial inequalities, while at the same time categorizing herders as certain types of economic and political subjects that need greater governance. These discourses are not unique to Mongolia, but part of broader historical discourses around pastoralist livelihoods in dryland environments across the world. Development discourses focused on the sustainability of pastoralism, which project a disordered and unregulated rural scene, are common in projects in Africa, Central Asia, and South Asia (Bocco 2006; Chatty and Colchester 2002; Fratkin and Mearns 2003; Kervin et al 2012). As Bocco (2006) has lucidly argued in his work on sedentarization schemes in the

Middle East, expert reports on pastoralism have framed household economic activity as primarily environmentally driven. He writes, “The question of territorial appropriation, though considered crucial, is approached only from the angle of land-ownership laws and ecological constraints” (p. 309). This thesis stands with scholars like Bocco to contest this inaccurate and depoliticizing portrayal of pastoralism, which obscures the history and limits possibilities of future forms of pastoralist identities.

Defining Mobile Pastoralism

Mobile pastoralism is practiced in dryland environments around the world. Pastoralists live in Africa, South and Central Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and Latin America and rough figures indicate that 100–200 million pastoralists live in the world today (Dyer 2014, pg 22). There are a number of definitions of pastoralism, based on different emphasis on factors such as mobility, social, and economic forms. For this study, I follow Chatty’s (1972, p. 28) definition of pastoralism as “animal husbandry by natural graze with some access to crop cultivation.” Dyer (2014, p 3) sites Dyson-Hudson and Dyson-Hudson’s (1980, p. 18) definition as “mobile animal husbanders who raise livestock and move them to pastures.” Chatty goes on to identify the particular economic practices of pastoralists as relating to the social characteristics of the people and environments they inhabit, including important relations with urban and sedentary centers. As Barth (1961) has discussed in his work with the Basseri in Southern Iran, pastoralist households not only maintain active relationships with people in settled areas, but invest in land and settle themselves for temporary or long-term periods of time (p. 106). Temporary sedentarization may be used as a strategy to re-invest in livestock or empower friends and relatives to take over livestock holdings. In this way, the definition of pastoralism

should not be so rigid as to exclude the important relationships with settled centers that inform household work practices.

Recent work amongst mobile pastoralists also emphasizes the importance of human-animal relations (Fijn 2011; Ingold 2000; Krätli and Schareika 2010). In particular, the development of specialized livestock breeds and training methods to aid survival, milk and meat production, and the reproduction of livestock in challenging environmental conditions involve close socialisation between humans and animals. Krätli and Schareika (2010) have argued that successful pastoralists practice an “intelligent harvesting of unstable concentrations of nutrients on the range” (p. 606). They emphasize the situated knowledge gained from working closely with animals in uncertain environmental systems and the training involved in teaching animals how to graze on certain types of grasses in order to maximize nutritional gains. In this sense, pastoralism represents specialized knowledge of animal physiology, nutrition, behavior and training techniques.

In Krätli and Schareika’s (2010) work with Wodaabe pastoralists in the Sahel region of Africa, they demonstrate that pastoralists continue to be characterized by “narratives of deficit” (p. 606) amongst policy makers and development experts despite evidence that demonstrates pastoralism to be a specialized system for living in highly changeable and extreme environments. In addition to scholars, the World Initiative for Sustainable Pastoralism has identified a number of myths about pastoralism (Dyer 2014, p. 23). A common myth is the idea that pastoralists are a “throw-back to a past era” (Chatty 2006, p. 1) and engage in irrational economic practices. Other myths listed by Dyer (2014, p. 23) include the idea that “pastoralists need to settle to benefit from services,” and “most rangelands are degraded as a

result of pastoral over-grazing.” In each of these myths, pastoralism is portrayed to varying degrees as incompatible with modern economies and development.

Chatty shows in her early work that mobile pastoralists in Lebanon adapt their livelihood strategies to changing economic, political, and environmental conditions while still maintaining practices, such as hospitality and adherence to a certain kinship structure, which makes their social forms distinctly ‘Bedouin,’ though they may not be living in their traditional homelands of the *Badia* (Chatty 2013, p. 4). The use of new technology such as motorized vehicles, or mobile phones and GPS, has opened up new mobilities and techniques of practising pastoralism and combining pastoralism with other types of work.

Chatty also highlights the complex relationship between the state administration and the Bedouin community in Lebanon. Nearly four decades after her initial contact, this community was not able to secure citizenship from the Lebanese government due to their decision not to participate in a French colonial census to avoid enforced settlement (2013, p. 154). This decision left them undocumented, without citizenship, and thus no access to public health care. Chatty writes that across the border in Syria, on the other hand, the Bedouin community is much more integrated into the official political system where influential leaders identify as Bedouin (Chatty 2013). These examples point to the different placement of people who are members of pastoralist groups within formal practices of government, sometimes marginalized and sometimes central to them, but in all cases firmly placed in the landscapes of power and the politics of territoriality where ideas of homeland and place are rooted through social forms historically connected to pastoralist livelihoods.

Chatty’s body of work and focus on the resilience of pastoralists in the Middle East and their adaptation and change strategies in contemporary conditions continue to bear fruit in

debates around governance, development, and change amongst pastoralist peoples. Her argument that pastoralists are “constantly changing their way of life to best suit their needs” (Chatty 1996) is especially relevant to the examination of the changing meaning of work in rural Mongolia. In Mongolia, pastoralism has many meanings. It remains an important primary livelihood for nearly one third of the population, a source of food security for many urban residents who maintain links to rural homelands, a system of values and moralities, and a cultural identity that reifies Mongolian nationality. Chinggis Khan has become a unifying symbol of democratic Mongolia and even mining companies portray themselves as part of the future of Mongolia’s cultural heritage and feature children herding horses on urban billboards (Jackson 2014). The images of nomadic pastoralism are sanctified as cultural heritage, as a source of culture, while paradoxically many judge the lived lifestyle of herders as uneducated, uncultured, and second-class by many urban residents and even herders themselves (Marin 2008).

In Mongolia, the Environmental and Cultural Conservation in Inner Asia (ECCIA) Project from the early 1990s (Humphrey and Sneath 1996a, 1996b) is an important benchmark for the study of rural social change. Humphrey and Sneath discuss pastoralism as a worldview rather than only an economic practice. David Sneath identifies pastoralism as a sociotechnical system (Sneath 2003, p. 446) in order to highlight the cultural context of specialized work, including skills, knowledge and technologies as well as social forms that support mobile livelihoods in rural Mongolia. He identifies the rural economy of Mongolian households as being historically characterized by “yield-focused or specialist” and a “subsistence or domestic” forms of production (Sneath 2003, p. 446, 2004), which reflect systems of governance. Yield-focused production coordinated by wealthy institutions or governments

managed risk by overseeing long migrations, providing markets for agricultural goods, and emergency supplies or transport for households in the cases of natural disaster or other threats. Environmental risks were often absorbed by large institutions to which households belonged and engaged with through relations of obligation (Humphrey and Sneath 1999).

In this context, pastoralism is as much a cultural institution as an economic livelihood, evoking a deep sense of belonging and rules for social engagement beyond strictly economic and rural settings. It is used by politicians to imagine the Mongolian state and continues to play a prominent role in the material and metaphysical lives of rural and urban Mongolians alike (Bruun and Narangoa 2006). This point is essential in the study of the changing meaning of work and value, as pastoralism has been a long-standing feature of the Mongolian governance systems and has distinct social and cultural elements that are integrated in the economic aspects and value orientations of this practice.

Governance and Pastoralism in Mongolia

Even in development projects that seek justice for pastoralist livelihoods, some scholars and development professionals working in Inner Asia have mainly focused on alternative forms of resource and environmental management systems for herders. Scholars and analysts focusing on environmental management have forwarded interventions to re-format the social basis of work practices through community-based rangeland management, the formulation of new land legislation and herder “pasture user groups,” livestock insurance, and a number of other governance-oriented frameworks (Kervin et al 2012; Upton 2008). Just over the southern border of Mongolia, the Chinese government has forcibly evicted and displaced pastoralists in areas of Inner Mongolia and Tibet under the auspices of grassland conservation and social development (Yeh 2005). In the proliferation of scholarship around “pasture user groups” and

“cooperative land use” in Mongolia by rangeland scholars, the social worlds of herders and their rights as Mongolian citizens are often portrayed as being based on bounded local environmental identities (see for example Upton 2012). These development perspectives essentialize pastoralist livelihoods by focusing on the revival of “traditional” institutions that are imagined as an idealized form of community management (Klein et al 2012; Upton 2009). My work illustrates how herders’ critical reflections and negotiations around space involve relations and considerations beyond pasture, which have political and governmental effects. These relations also inform local land use and how herders interact with authorities that promote these new forms of organisation.

Focusing on pastoralism as a system bounded to local environments overlooks the many interconnections and flows of ideas, people, and resources beyond pastures that are involved in this system and which inform its social reproduction. The characterisation of herders as resource users overlooks the importance of identities beyond pastures and is an insufficient explanation of pastoralist work practices and household decisions around accessing education, material aspirations, and political participation. Until 1990, herders were employees of the Mongolian socialist state and pastoralism was a highly regulated national enterprise with production targets and skill specialisation. Since the early 1990s, economic crisis, wealth inequality, and the impoverishment of at least a quarter of the population have contributed to the sense of uncertain livelihoods for people living in urban and rural regions alike (Sharma and Davaakhuu 2015). The viability of pastoralism continues to be questioned in the context of the development of the mining sector. This question, however, is primarily political. It also reflects ideas about the place of pastoralism in relation to modernity and development.

This project emerged from puzzlement over the contention that the environment posed such a great risk to pastoralists, to the point where this form of work may no longer be viable. Additionally, my previous experiences in Mongolia indicated that local governments were in active contact with herders. The dissonance between observations of pastoralist work and expert reports indicated a need for long-term engaged ethnographic fieldwork in this important area. Ethnography is best suited to this research because it involves an experiential engagement with the systems being investigated. This proximity affords an opportunity to observe social systems on a daily basis in order to understand how participants makes sense of, and critically reflect on, the circumstances of their own lives. Long-term observation and participation in herder livelihoods is important because it allows the researcher to see patterns and deviations in ongoing, lived events, which are not possible to capture in solely short-term “rapid assessments” or quantitative-based research, though other methods are valuable to combine with ethnographic research. Understanding these changing dynamics is important not only for the scholarly disciplines involved in studying people and their social forms, but also in the realms of policymaking and law. From this point of view, my study is constituted by ethnographies of rural work in Mongolia in order to critically review the production of knowledge and infrastructures that frames pastoralist livelihoods and subjectivities in certain ways. It prioritizes a focus on relations in order to understand broader systems. Beyond Mongolian studies, this study provides insights into the performative and spatial nature of politics and the constitution of state social spaces.

Epistemological Perspective

In James Ferguson’s (1985) conclusion of the “Bovine Mystique,” he reiterated the importance of an approach to knowledge that does not begin with pre-conceived categories,

but involves studying on-going relations in an effort to formulate an understanding of the focus of inquiry. He writes, “The task is not to name an empirical object and then go and find it and describe it; instead, we start with a problem or a set of questions, establish a cluster of relations, and only in the end arrive at a picture of the complex which is our ‘object’” (p. 669). Ferguson’s statement emphasizes the importance of allowing theory of social systems to emerge from and maintain the integrity of lived knowledge of social systems. Thus, this study is based on an interpretative paradigm that emerges largely from the qualitative approaches of critical research in anthropology and sociology. In a study of relations, the issues of agency, power, and the position of the researcher are important considerations in the production and dissemination of knowledge (see Denzin and Lincoln 2011). Additionally, this approach to knowledge gives attention to the possible ways in which power relations and social hierarchies are involved in the work of doing research and producing publications. Rather than view knowledge production as an objective process that occurs outside of politics, critical researchers consider these politics to be significant aspects of the research experience.

I take an ethnographic approach, which prioritizes people’s reflections on their own lives and understanding of the world around them (Ferguson and Gupta 1997; Jeffrey and Dyson 2008). In her article on traditional divination and syncretic prophecy in Central Africa, Benetta Jules-Rosette (1978) advocates for ethnography to be an exercise in discovery and suggests that the researcher-as-learner should conduct research through a process of ongoing inter-subjective exchange and learning. This work requires active self-evaluation. She critiques forms of scholarly writing and research approaches that are “veiled in objectivity” (p.549). The co-occurrence of different interpretations of a single phenomenon can be

evaluated in the context of the situation in which it occurred, rather than reduced to a single, often reductionist explanation. She writes,

Asserting that the social scientist, the diviner, and the prophet are examining ‘the same’ situation does not establish an equivalence in what they see...All seek to provide a reasonable explanation for events that extends beyond the moment of their occurrence. Both science and folk inquiry contain interpretative frameworks intended to dispel doubt and offer a rationale for familiar and extraordinary events. (1978, p. 567)

I attempted to practice methods in line with an “ethnography of discovery,” (p. 565) which necessitated an immersion in the daily activities of a location and finding ways to capture my presence and participation in the field site as I played multiple roles in the community. I openly discussed these methodological orientations with the communities and individuals with whom I interacted. The research project was an ongoing conversation and exchange, a co-creation with the community of people with whom I lived and worked. This approach to knowledge production prioritized lived relations rather than a focus on pre-conceived, essentialized roles and identities.

An important methodological concern in this study was to account for my position as a researcher, and perhaps more meaningfully in the Mongolian context, a guest member of households and communities. Accounting for my position as researcher and guest is a means to overcome the problematic inheritance of positivism of creating Others and Subjects in anthropology and ethnographic writing, a neo-colonial habit that is easily expressed in accepted scientific conventions and writing styles (Ferguson and Gupta 1997). Assuming an omniscient point of view can have the effect of reducing ethnographic field data to fit

preconceived theories, thereby oversimplifying or mystifying the varied, sometimes seemingly contradictory, interpretative frameworks used by people as they live their lives. This issue is especially pertinent in rural Mongolia, where a mix of local interpretative frameworks may be used simultaneously in problem solving or decision-making processes. For example, a physical illness may be addressed by going to a doctor, having Buddhist prayers read, performing a ritual such as lighting candles at the household altar, as well as recruiting support from friends or relatives by drawing on their resources. Taking a researcher-as-learner approach was both a means to make my research project a collaborative endeavor and a way to remain sensitive to the interpretative frameworks and critical reflections of the individuals with whom I lived.

Research Objectives

This project explores the changing meaning of work, herding, and social relations in rural Mongolia. Ethnographic methods were employed as a basis to examine the question: To what extent do the changing conditions of work in rural Mongolia affect the terms by which people and things are valued? The guiding questions of the project were:

1. How are rural work, herding, and social relations changing in contemporary rural Mongolia?
 - a) To what extent do the changing conditions of work in rural Mongolia affect the terms by which people and things are valued?
 - b) How do rural Mongolians negotiate their position as mobile pastoralists within changing governance systems?

The ethnographic materials examined for this purpose were based on field research in two sites in Mongolia and include narratives of work; audio-visual narratives; formal, semi-structured, and group interviews with participants; field notes from observation and immersion in work activities, as well as primary documents. I spent a year in the field over the course of 2012–2014 and conducted interviews without the use of a translator or research assistant. The ethnographies draw from a grounded theory approach by analysing data built through attention to broad questions around how herders make decisions related to their family and livestock. The themes in the research material have been framed by literature on education and development discourse, governance, pastoralism, and Mongolian studies. In particular, the research material speaks to the literature in geography and anthropology on the spatialisation of households and notions of the state and territory.

This research contributes to understandings of household reproduction in rural Mongolia and how notions of value transform and shape over time. Although there are a number of studies on pastoralism, the focus on how people reflect on and negotiate their position as pastoralists has not been explored in depth in the academic literature on social change in Mongolia. This research contributes to the knowledge in the field of Mongolian studies specifically as well as anthropology and geography more broadly as it critically engages with ideas about political subjectivity and governance. This research is also useful to rural communities in Mongolia. Mongolia is a particularly useful case for this study because the current generation of working adults experienced large-scale political and economic change during their formative adolescent and young adult years. By documenting experiences of work and examining notions of change in this context, this study aims to contribute to the

academic debates on studies of state and rural society relations, the spatial aspects of household divisions of labour, and contradictions that arise from participation in formal educational systems.

This research is important and timely because it addresses issues around land use, administration, kinship, gender, and development frameworks that directly relate to debates on new legislation in Mongolia. Specifically, this research is valuable for the evaluation of development projects funded by multilateral agencies, an unresolved pastureland law under debate in the Mongolian parliament, and other legislation related to environmental policy and land use around expanding mining sites. Currently, there is not enough data on rural administrative structures, mobility, financialisation, urban-rural networks, politics, gender, and territory use in Mongolia. Scholars have done valuable work on important themes in the political economy of pastoralism, but the work is often scattered and talks to different audiences. More research needs to address issues that are specific to Mongolia and also go beyond the Mongolia scene to illustrate how these processes are relevant to broader debates as well as experiences in other regions of the world. Recent work by Murphy (2014a, 2014b, 2015), for example, has highlighted the importance of examining power relations and inequality in pastoralist society and how it articulates with governance procedures focused on decentralised forms of decision making. These points can be developed further to help further debates on the state in political geography or the anthropology of the state. In this way, my research has identified important areas for further study. Beyond Mongolia, this research is important for international legal frameworks for mobile peoples, specifically in the context of education policies and territorial governance.

Conceptual Framework

In my work, I draw on the conceptual framework developed by political geographers around the notion of performativity and improvisation (Glass and Rose-Redwood 2014; Jeffrey 2013; Reeves 2011a, 2014) to analyse the social and spatial dynamics of pastoralist livelihoods in Mongolia today. Performativity has a long history and has been utilized in a variety of contexts, but was revitalized in Butler's (1993, 1997, 2010) work on gendered subjectivities. Butler develops a notion of human subjectivity through performative social relations where performativity refers to "the reiterative and citational practices by which discourse produces the effects that it names" (1993, p. 2; Rose-Redwood and Glass, p. 10). These practices are embodied and interactive. In other words, the identity of an actor is made possible through ongoing references to past recognizable forms. This approach has important consequences for understandings of the subject because in performativity theory, the subject does not have ontological status outside of ongoing, relational actions. Thus, the important units of analysis are relations and practices to understanding how certain identities are naturalized or destabilized, emerge and submerge. Rose-Redwood and Glass (2014) make clear that "performativity theorists argue...that identities arise through the repeated performance of subjects-in-information and that this process of reiteration opens up the performative space for new political possibilities to emerge" (p. 255). The two aspects of performativity that I focus upon throughout this thesis are around notions of subjectivity and agency and to some degree, ideas of legitimacy and authority.

Reeves work on the enactment of borders in a region where four Central Asian countries were once combined in the Soviet Union meet draws upon performativity theory to illustrate how borders are made visible through social action. In her ethnographies, multiple

borders appear and disappear in the context of local identity politics. She writes, “The work of bordering highlights the *improvisatory* work of everyday state formation, and affords an insight into a mode of governance in which power thrives less on rendering populations and places legible and more on working the gap between life and law” (2014, p. 21). Reeves’s examination of the material, ideological, and cultural practices involved in “border work” highlight a relational approach to understanding the production of space. She writes, “It [the relational approach] allows us to question the reflex tendency (and sometimes quite explicit political practice) to assume an originary natural ‘fit’ amongst people, culture, and territory, or to conceive of threat as emerging from the failure of these three to coincide” (2014, p. 57). Reeves work on borders is a useful application of the concept of performativity in understanding how place is an inseparable part of cultural and social production.

Alex Jeffrey (2013) has built from Bourdieu’s theories of habitus and concepts of performativity to develop the notion of improvisation in his analysis of the political creation of the state in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Improvisation refers to “a process that combines performance and resourcefulness” (p. 3). Drawing from Bourdieu’s notion of habitus and cultural, economic, and social capital, Jeffrey illustrates how the process of statebuilding in post-conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina has involved repeated claims of legitimacy by political actors, who drew upon their status positions and cultural resources to project state authority. The concept of improvisation is a useful approach to understanding power relations and changing social organization because it emphasizes how certain individuals are better able to secure claims to resources, rights, and authority based on their social position. He writes, “The concept of improvisation, then, is one that embraces the limits to power, which demonstrates

that agents cannot simply ‘act as they like’ since each act is dependent upon available resources, whether material or ideological” (p. 171).

Performativity theory and the concept of improvisation are anti-essentialist conceptual frameworks that emphasize the ongoing creative aspects of power relations, as they emerge in reference to historically produced but also contingent circumstances. The performative approach focuses on routine and extraordinary aspects of humans as they interact with, learn from, and reflect on their environments. These concepts provide an approach to understanding processes rather than defining objects. Thus, while scholars have largely used performativity and improvisation to problematize analytical categories such as the state or gender, they can also be applied in analysis of any social phenomenon.

Overview

This study is organised as four scholarly journal articles. Each article focuses on debates specific to the ethnographic data it addresses. Each article was submitted to an academic journal and these articles are currently at different stages of review, revision, and publication. The status of publication is indicated on the cover page of each article. The articles are framed by a literature review, which focuses on debates around the changing meaning of work amongst pastoralists from literature in anthropology, geography, and post-socialist studies. Following this section is a methodology section which includes specific information about the methodological approach, choice of field sites, the research design and data collected over the course of fieldwork. An overview of the Mongolian political and economic context follows in order to provide background information to supplement the four articles, which had limited space to discuss historical information due to word count limitations. The final section of the thesis includes a discussion and conclusion section, which takes an elevated view of the study

in order to show how the four papers are tied together and contribute to the debates outlined in the literature review section.

THE CHANGING MEANING OF WORK, HERDING, AND SOCIAL RELATIONS

Introduction

This dissertation addresses two questions, “How is work, herding, and social relations changing in rural Mongolia today?” and “How do rural Mongolians negotiate their position as mobile pastoralists within changing governance systems?” I approach these questions by examining the lived experiences and everyday practices of Mongolian herders using ethnographic research methods. Pastoralism continues to be part of the livelihoods and identities of families in rural (and urban) Mongolia, making it an important space of social reproduction. As such, people who identify as herders (*malchin hun*) or rural people (*hodoonii hun*) occupy a distinct vantage point from which to reflect on experiences of social transformation. From the household point of view, I discuss how people engage with herding, how they make decisions regarding the organisation of their households, and how these experiences relate with broad economic and political processes. This examination also highlights the inequalities amongst people who practice pastoralism and the variation in approaches to work and orientations towards the future.

The Argument in Brief

The collected articles argue that rural Mongolians negotiate their positions as mobile pastoralists based on a range of interconnected spatialized relations which involve obligations and dependencies between differently placed livestock, environments, and institutions, including family and governance institutions. The patron–client dynamic is an important feature of these relations and problematizes conventional ways of understanding the state as well as household types. The location of resources in settled centers and the perceived need to

access them is an important way in which herder households are becoming spatially reorganised and financialized. Relations of dependence between actors with different status positions reflect continuity between historical political institutions and pastoralist work in Mongolia. Examining patron–client relations within family and government organisations blurs the lines between them. It shows the interwoven nature of family and government organisations as they are co-formed through relations of dependence. These power hierarchies are formed in relation to larger perceptions about morality and historical systems of resource distribution. Seeing these relations through the lens of performativity further illustrates that discourses around the sustainability of pastoralism and the portrayal of herders as living outside of the state are primarily political questions.

This work is written as four academic articles, which examine herder household management, decision making, and the spatial aspects of household social and economic production. As both stand-alone pieces and a united work, the articles make a case for understanding social change through the lens of spatialized performative relations. From this perspective, people act creatively and draw upon resources at their disposal to achieve desired ends, but within constrained circumstances. Pastoralism as a form of work and social system is one aspect of these relations. I contend that in contemporary Mongolia, people consciously engage in herding as a form of work and identity based on their placement in and historical experience of a constellation of embodied social relations that are always open to reinterpretation. The policies and practices of government institutions, including partnerships with entities such as banks, private investors, corporations, and development agencies play a powerful role in the particular forms through which changing relations are spatialized. These agencies often provide the government with key funding through credit and aid, which

influence the locations and types of resources available for social reproduction. A close study of herders' everyday decision-making processes and work practices provide insight into governance institutions and how these systems are expressed and performed through historically produced and contested circumstances. This highlights the political nature of rural spatial transformations in Mongolia. Herders are often characterized as bound to local environments and nature-based identities. While the physical environment and climate do figure into herder relations in a significant way, I argue that relations to the environment are shaped with reference to social practices and belief systems. For instance, accessing formal education is one way in which spatial identities are shifting in the performance of herder social reproduction.

My work presents three key arguments in reference to these concepts. The first is that patron–client relations continue to play a strong role in family hierarchies and wider social alliances used to gain access to needed resources and services. Patron–client relations involve the leveraging of expectations around social obligations that are often expressed in the moral frame of active and fictive kinship relations. Concepts of kinship also include age and gender-based status positions. The gendered and spatialized expression of social hierarchies and relations of obligation can be seen in herder negotiations for winter pasture use rights as well as strategies used by herders to combine pastoralism with accessing formal education for children. In these cases, established individuals who command economic, cultural, and symbolic capital are able to secure territorial rights and social resources, which constitute positions of authority. I also argue that the Mongolian state as an idea is made visible and performed through these social hierarchies. The “state” is an ideological resource used by powerful patrons to build political power and legitimize new systems of distribution.

Government-issued diplomas and communication notebooks, for example, cultivate political subjectivities and valorise certain forms of communication as a prerequisite for acquiring a legitimate political voice.

Second, I argue that pastoralism as a form of work should be analysed using a political lens as much as an economic, environmental, or cultural one. The prioritisation of an ecological framework in writing on Mongolian rural society has contributed to the essentialization of pastoralist livelihoods. Although this thesis does not include a historical analysis, evidence from scholars of Mongolia such as Atwood (2012), Bawden (1982, 1984); Humphrey (1992a, 1995, 1996); Kaplonski (2004, 2006) Sneath (2007), Bulag (1998), and others indicate a link between ideas of morality, pastoralism, and technologies of power used by governance authorities. As I have discussed in my article, *The New Mongolian State Herder*, the distribution of material items such as state-issued diplomas, award medals, and communication notebooks reframe political subjectivities and shape moral discourses around rights, identity, and social reproduction.

Finally, attention to the spatial organisation of household economies, including household splitting and new types of mobility, reiterates the significance of place in performative relations, part of what Massey called “stories-so-far” (2005, p. 12). In particular, literature on the experiences of absence (Frers 2013; Maddrell 2013; Reeves 2011a, 2011b) has prompted deeper investigation into the political consequences of people and things that are missing from home spaces as a result of migration, seasonal work, education, or death. This work also illuminates how corporeal and material experiences of absence inform experiences of place, make up knowledge about the environment, and give rise to the development of new discursive and spatial practices.

The first article, “Herds or family?: Contradictions in schooling children amongst Mongolian pastoralists” supports these arguments by illustrating how mainstream schooling processes can have contradictory effects on household social reproduction in rural livelihood contexts. Herders critically reflect on housing and financial requirements that need to be met to provide children with formal education while maintaining rural livelihoods. In order to access mainstream schooling, herders adopt strategies such as household splitting, which often brings about labour shortages and the financialisation of households. These challenges have given rise to new forms of pastoralism characterized by seasonal migration out of pastures, temporary sedentarization and reliance on annual loans. Household splitting also involves the separation of family members during the school season; experiences of absence have become prevalent and have consequences for seasonal pasture migrations, gendered work, and land use.

My second article addresses ethnographies of herder livelihoods which also reveal that government institutions, including compulsory education requirements, have a strong local presence in rural Mongolia and governance as a set of social relations is enacted through historically relevant forms of social organisation that have maintained continuity over time, which draw on antecedent socialist frameworks. In the article, “The New Mongolian State Herder: Examining “the State” as a Political Resource in Patron-Client Relations,” I show how the recent distribution of diplomas, award metals, and stamps issued by the Ministry of Agriculture as well as government-issued communication notebooks builds relations between herders and administrative bodies. The government engages with pastoralism as a medium to rationalize state practices and often governance mechanisms do not solve the contradictions in pastoralist livelihoods that have emerged from strategies to access education and other urban-

based resources. This data substantiates the position that government administrators and herder households are in frequent, active contact. This article further explores moral ideas about expectations around responsibility for local leaders and government authorities.

In third article, I explore how kinship relations and concepts of kinship structure power relations and contribute to herders' ability to claim rights to use land resources. I show how negotiations for winter pasture-use rights occur around informal land tenure systems based on notions of hierarchical, occupancy-based rights. The establishment of use rights based on notions of custodial tenure are sanctioned by formal, government-based procedures. This article, titled "The role of kinship in negotiating territorial rights: Exploring claims for winter pasture ownership in Mongolia," also presents data to support a deconstruction of the analytical separation of the state and society by highlighting how government bureaucracies are part of hierarchical social relations informed by expectations around age, family roles, and gender. This paper also supports the argument that patron-client relations play a strong role in strategies to gain access to resources in the broad sense.

My last article pays further attention to household splitting and experiences of absence in herder households to illustrate the gendered nature of herder strategies to access resources that are located in physically distant locations. Studying perceptions of absence is particularly useful because it has the potential to make taken-for-granted expectations around spatialized social relations visible. This opens up opportunities for contestation around gendered expectations around work, conjugal relations, as well as land and property laws. The paper, "Placing absence: Gendered work and the spatialization of Mongolian pastoralist households" discusses herder experiences of female absence from the home as a result of household splitting and accessing education for children.

In the following literature review, I consider the multiple, at times competing explanations for social change in rural Mongolia and the implications these explanations have for rural political institutions and governance. The review is designed to foreground my own work within a complex and vast milieu of humanities, social science, and scientific research. I have separated this research into three sections. The first section discusses social change from a postsocialist perspective by examining how economic liberalisation reforms, such as privatisation, and the uncertainty surrounding economic crisis has made relations of patronage an important means of accessing former state-owned resources in rural areas. I juxtapose this literature with conventional critiques of neoliberalism to demonstrate that the ethnographies of post-socialist regions, including my own work in Mongolia, present a complex terrain of power relations and social aspirations, where household decision making and agency is not limited to market-based constraints. I then discuss government policies in relation to pastoralism in order to problematize the idea of the reified state and notions of modernity and development that have framed pastoralism as an uncertain livelihood. I show that uncertainty is not unique to pastoralist livelihoods in Mongolia; it is a characteristic of the macroeconomic situation in general and relates to transformations in other regions of the world. Following from this discussion, I discuss recent theory on the concept of performativity and the improvisation of the state. Finally, I discuss how concepts of kinship, gender, and age relate with political subjectivities and the spatial organisation of households.

The Postsocialist State and Patron–client Relations

Scholars of the former Soviet Union and the countries in its orbit have emphasized the radical social and economic changes in the region since the Soviet Union's economic crisis and breakup in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Above all, a sense of uncertainty emerged for many who were unprepared or did not have inside knowledge of how to navigate the end of the socialist system. The end of state provision of employment, housing, and services as well as government control over prices and consumption choices contributed to the temporal and material aspects of experiences of uncertainty. The liberalisation of markets and the activities of market actors outside of government regulation were associated with deception, foreign influence, and criminality (Humphrey 2002; Verdery 1996). Caroline Humphrey writes, "The collapse of Party rule, the ending of full employment, massive inflation after decades of stable prices, a labyrinth of new, widely disobeyed laws, and the chasm of unbelief opened after the rejection of the Soviet ideology all combined to cast people into a state of radical uncertainty" (2002, p. viii). These experiences of uncertainty were coupled with the idea forwarded by market reformers that it was actually the socialist state planning system that was a source of deception and inefficiency, and "transition" to a market economy would correct these so-called distortions produced by government controls (Asian Development Bank 1992; Sneath 2002). Economic reformers framed the end of socialism and the establishment of capitalism in rural Mongolia and elsewhere as a transition from a "centrally planned system to a market-oriented economy" (Asian Development Bank 1992, p. 89). The notion of transition emphasizes a "dismantling," a break with past forms, participation in the modern global economy, and the shrinking of the state. Economic reformers used words like "shock therapy" and "big bang" to describe programmes to establish the market system (Verdery 1996, p. 205),

imagining change in radical terms. The conceptualisation of transition set into motion new plans for social development and a reorganisation of systems of consumption and distribution. As Collier (2011) has pointed out, a similar transition was imagined by Russian city planners and socialist reformers in their efforts to build the socialist state and reorganise “feudal” systems that were seen as undermining people’s well-being and perpetuating relations of exploitation. Market reformers perceived the socialist system through a similar lens of repression.

The ethnographies of post-socialism offer rich data for understanding notions of the state and how these notions intersect with political subjectivities, changing social relations, and systems of economic production and distribution. In my articles, I illustrate how people use moral frameworks to make claims to political rights and resources. These moral frameworks combine ideas about work responsibility, obligation, and duty and draw upon socialist orientations and materials. A discussion of post-socialist governance also corroborates my argument that relations of patronage are an important means by which rural households achieve agency and access resources. Ideas of morality are also involved in expectations around the obligations between junior and seniors, men and women, guest (outsider) and host (insider), ruler and subject, spirits/gods and humans.

Like a quickly receding ocean tide, privatisation reforms exposed many underlying inequalities in the socialist system that were previously submerged in the context of public ownership of housing and land or silenced through government censorship. Despite public ownership, people developed particular cultural sensibilities and connections to elite, cosmopolitan groups in order to achieve entitlement to state-controlled resources. Verdery contends that in the final days of the Soviet Union, the socialist state system was spatially

reorganised through processes of privatisation, which she refers to as having “de-statizing and re-statizing” effects (1996, p. 215). Privatisation had de-statizing effects because private agencies and individuals bought goods and services formerly available for public use and access. Former systems for distribution were largely removed from outright government control. Additionally, in places like Mongolia, the privatization process involved the loss of jobs for around 50 per cent of the population from 1990–1995. Many newly unemployed people pursued informal work or trade (Anderson 1998, p. 17). On the other hand, privatisation had re-statizing effects because the public demanded central mechanisms for oversight and supervision to adjudicate disputes over access to property and employment. Verdery contends that during the period of privatisation, people in positions of authority were able to transfer their managerial power into ownership power in post-socialist spaces. Bureaucrats, who were already in advantageous positions within the socialist economy, were able to use their superior knowledge, cultural and symbolic capital, and networks to benefit materially and politically from the privatisation process. They were also in stronger positions to take advantage of and weather fluctuations in the economy, such as conditions of unemployment, shortages of basic commodities, shifting values of prices, and inflation. She writes, “Such analysts show that even as entrepratchiks drain the state’s assets, thus debilitating the state and changing both its capacities and its nature, they also support its continuing existence for the resources and subsidies it provides” (1996, p. 213). In this sense, powerful actors also had interest in certain aspects of re-statization.

Additionally, Verdery’s analysis highlights how relations of reciprocity and dependence during the socialist era were re-configured during economic crisis and liberalisation. She illustrates how an individual’s ability to mobilize monetary and non-

monetary resources influenced livelihood choices and the spatial reorganisation of households, as well as entire territories and national governments (see also Verdery 2003).

In her problematization of the idea of transition, Verdery also argues that many transformations in the post-socialist region appear to be a “transition from socialism to feudalism” (1996, p. 227). Drawing from Humphrey (1991), Verdery points out that the end of the central government’s role as a supplier of goods, services, and employment in places like Russia, Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary, coupled with uncertainty over prices and the value and supply of money, led to the development of appanage-like communities, or territories controlled by “bosses” or elites (1996, p. 205). Similarly, Nixon and Walters’s (2006) study of the privatisation process in Mongolia indicates that people with secure rights to resources based on occupancy and use within the socialist system, like apartments or livestock, not only gained more from privatisation, but fared the economic crisis better than those who were disadvantaged in this process. They show that the economic crisis led many resource poor people to sell their shares of public wealth, allowing more secure (and often urban-based) households to accumulate greater wealth and longer term security.

Verdery and Humphrey’s accounts from across post-socialist countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia highlight how privatisation re-shaped political subjectivities. Verdery discusses the development of networks of patronage and Mafia-like power in Romania as a way in which government organization was transformed. She contends that the mafia as a symbol blurred former socialist distinctions between legal and illegal types of exchange and reciprocity. Also, mafia and mafia-like leaders are able to exploit the unclear boundaries between state and non-state institutions. Burawoy and Verdery (1999) write, “The transformation of party states in the context of changes in the global regime of accumulation

has radically shifted the rules of the game, the parameters of action within which actors pursue their daily routines and practices. This presents an opportunity for local improvisations that may press either in novel directions or toward a ‘return’ to socialism...Both innovation and reversion are responses to unstable environments, at least as much as they are evidence of socialism’s legacies or its culture” (1999, p. 2). This analysis lends itself to recent theories of improvisation and performativity, which will be explored in later sections. Recurring themes in discussions of post-socialist ethnographies are descriptions of instability and uncertainty. In my reading, uncertainty and instability are broad terms that include a range of psychological, social and material factors. In the literature on Mongolia, scholars have described uncertainty in terms of experiences that range from soul loss, alcoholism, livelihood loss, failure and hope, and the evil eye (Buyandelgeriyn 2007; Højer 2007; Pedersen 2012; Pedersen and Højer 2008). Such experiences of uncertainty indicate struggles around identity, agency and often include ideas around gendered social roles.

The legacy of privatisation on politics and power relations can also be seen in recent work on the construction of post-socialist border making. Reeves (2014) and Reeves, Rasanayagam, and Beyer’s (2014) work on post-socialist regions show how local power relations articulate with broader performances of state legitimacy in contestations over territorial borders. Reeves’s study of the transformations of borders in the Ferghana Valley, where Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan meet and were once unified in the Soviet Union, provides a particularly fascinating case to think through links between the everyday performances of the state in the context of local relations, livelihoods, and the spatial reorganisation of resource distribution and the articulation of group membership by local inhabitants. In this region, Reeves shows how the border as a social construction thrives on

uncertainty. Local authorities profit from collecting rents from people who move through the area in search of work, health care, or markets. She shows how the border in this region is part of social and material shifts, “appearing and disappearing,” (p. 7) and has gained new meaning in the context of unequal access to resources since the end of socialism. Youth migration to Russia is a change in household organisation and finances that involves new forms of relating and “doing kinship” (p. 104), especially in the absence of young men who leave home to find work in Russia and other destinations for migrant labour. These changes in relations between family members, neighbours, and friends figure into the creation of borders through appeals to local identities and membership in ethnic groups. The idea of the border and its material creation through infrastructure projects such as roads has become a resource in local politics. Reeves writes, “the absence of durable and sustainable sources of livelihood, ever-greater emphasis on ‘security’ through increased military presence risks transforming the border into an ever more lucrative (and prospectively violent) space for the extraction of tribute, transforming issues of local resource allocation into matters of national politics” (p. 246). Reeves shows through her ethnographies how the border shifts over time and fades in and out of visibility, reflecting the changing ways in which individuals express rights to place. These rights are expressed using categories such as citizenship, identification with ethnic categories or religion, or by appealing to powerful patrons who control access to key resources and infrastructure.

Additionally, Kaiser’s (2014) research on the establishment of the Estonian state and the resulting statelessness of Russians living in Estonia emphasizes the border as an important metaphor in identity politics and processes of territorialisation. This work on borders is important because it illustrates the performance of political subjectivities around place-based

identities, even when full rights to place are denied, such as in experiences of statelessness. I would argue that running through these border-making practices are moral discourses that locate power and rights in certain identities that are categorically created by governance institutions. Harriss and Jeffrey (2013, p. 517) point out that the Indian government's development of social categories has become a basis for unequal citizenship, where some are extended certain rights based on their status in relation to the government while others are excluded. They write, "Only those who are 'marked' or labeled in a certain way—as 'BPL' [below poverty line] for instance—are entitled to certain benefits that that state supplies." They add depth to the former points about territorialisation and borders by illustrating how the history of power relations and political authority in different regions impact how people go about claiming their rights and enacting their political agency.

In the early 1990s, the tandem occurrence of economic crisis with rapid economic restructuring, including the distribution of public assets through processes of privatisation, is important to highlight because these conditions involved profound changes to people's livelihoods, imagined futures, and ability to access public resources, such as health care. The characterisation of change as transition is problematic because it prioritizes the temporal frame over the spatial frame as it relates to concepts of growth, wealth distribution, inequality, and uncertainty. During the restructuring process, lending agencies such as the World Bank and leading reformers prioritized speed (Heybey and Murrell 1999) as a means to achieve market stability. This focus underplays the spatial aspects of redistribution amongst differently placed actors with varying abilities to claim rights over resources based on their social characteristics and relations. A focus on the temporal aspects of economic crisis emphasizes a break with the ideologies and institutions of the Soviet-socialist past and

downplays the consequences of continuity of form from socialist to market systems. Collier (2011) has shown that socialist and capitalist notions of social development, modernity, and progress share common origins though differ in approach. In classic critiques of neoliberal governance, the market and capital are agents of unequal distribution and inequality. Recent analysis of formerly socialist household economies in Europe by Stenning et al (2010) have focused on “neoliberalism” as a key structuring force of social relations in the region. They argue that neoliberalism has become “domesticated” by re-shaping household spheres around market-based institutions and ideologies. This interpretation plays into notions of a break between socialist and capitalist forms and concepts of a “great transformation.”

Verdery (1996) and Humphrey (2002) have critiqued the notion of transition and have emphasized experiences of continuity and even the reestablishment of the socialist-era political parties in political leadership positions after the end of socialism. Socialist systems of governance were also characterized by unequal access to goods and services, hierarchical power relations as well as work and place-related social status (see for example Alexander, Buchli, and Humphrey 2007; Humphrey 2002). These inequalities did not begin with the establishment of a market economy. Dalaibuyan’s (2012) work on social capital in Mongolia substantiates the importance of clientage relations across postsocialist geographies that were established through socialist institutions. He writes, “Education, the workplace, and other social institutions in the socialist past and post-socialist present created a space for dense social interaction perpetuating informal norms of obligation and reciprocity. Yet, the concentration of the population in Ulaanbaatar as the sole ‘central hub’ of the country contributes to the density of social networks among Mongolians” (p. 53). These former sites

of socialization and sites of cultural capital continue to be important ways in which elite status positions are imagined and enacted.

In accounts of change since the end of socialism in former Soviet Union countries and former members of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, critiques of neoliberalism have been tools for analysing rural social change (Ericksen 2014; Hann 2006; Stenning et al. 2010). Karl Polanyi's theory on the formalist and substantivist economy has appeared in debates about redistribution and economic value. Polanyi's (1944) analysis of market capitalism in the early 19th century led him to develop the idea that capitalism, applied through a "formal" system of distribution rules based on money and exchange based on market prices, "disembedded" the economy from society. He compares the formalist economy of market capitalism with the "substantive" economy of pre-industrial societies. According to Polanyi, in substantive economies redistribution was fundamentally embedded in social forms and played out through reciprocal relations based on kinship, social hierarchies, and expectations around obligations to redistribute wealth (Carrier 2005; Hann and Hart 2009). Although Polanyi's argument has a number of flaws, including his formulation of an evolutionary view of history and separation between categories such as "state" and "society", his ideas continue to inform debates on economic transformations, and in particular the explanations of change in the post-socialist space. The idea of a socially disembedded economy has proliferated in the literature on neoliberalism and critiques of global capitalism (Da Costa and McMichael 2007; Harvey 2005, 2006; McMichael 2010). In particular, Polanyi's arguments have come to the fore in analysis of post-socialist redistribution and property rights in light of privatisation (Burawoy and Verdery 1999; Hann 1998, 2002, 2003, 2006). The restructuring of the post-Soviet states has been termed "the second great transformation" (Burawoy and Verdery 1999, p. 1). In my

view, it is difficult to substantiate Polanyi's categorical separation of formalist and substantivist economies given ethnographic evidence that points to more complex and diverse economic forms.

Collier finds the polarisation of substantive and formalist economies unsatisfactory in his study of post-Soviet infrastructure reforms in Russian cities. He argues that it is wrong to characterize changes in governance since the end of socialism as "a battle of markets versus the existing organisation of social life" (2011, p. 137). As Collier (2011) has deftly pointed out in his critique of neoliberalism, the transformations forwarded by policies aimed at freeing markets in the post-socialist transition are based on certain ideas about modernity and the government's role in providing social welfare to its citizens. Collier argues that Soviet social modernity was also a project of "biopolitics" aimed at social welfare based on state planning and the "total reconstruction of daily life" (2011, p. 65). Collier's work intersects with my arguments in showing that the built socialist space, epitomized in the planned city, is experienced as a lived-in landscape, a material infrastructure and platform for political subjectivities in-the-making. As Verdery (1996) might argue, it is a space in which processes of re-statization and de-statization occur.

Bernd Steinmann also draws attention to the combination of "uncertainty," rapid privatisation, and appropriation of property by well-placed elites in Kyrgyzstan. He writes that the re-distribution of state-owned property, including "land, livestock, and infrastructure" (2011, p. xii) to private entities was localized and often disconnected from state legislative procedures. Relations of dependence and the growth of the informal economy in these regions has raised questions around institutionalized corruption, perceptions of morality, and concerns over legitimacy and deception. Sneath's research on corruption and obligation examines

expectations around social roles in the context of honourable gift-giving as distinguished from perceptions of manipulative giving or corruption. The transition to a market system and the monetisation of gifts (i.e. from goods such as tea, meat, or silver to cash) changed the expression of social relationships, especially in displays of generosity, obligation, and respect. Sneath's analytical focus on "material transmission" (2006c, p. 104) as opposed to material transactions or exchange allow for a deeper understanding of the practices of obligation and respect, and the fine moral lines that distinguish morally correct from illegitimate transactions. Notions of obligation are defined by social position such as urban vs. pastoral kin, elder and younger, men and women, rich and poor, etc. Material flows do not completely animate these relationships, but the relationships themselves do produce material flows. Thus, the transfers of goods and assistance as "materializations of various types of social relations," (p. 90) also indicates expectations around unequal social positions, which are defined by place of habitation, type of livelihood, as well as age, kinship, and gender-based identities. There is a sense of responsibility or duty in the materializations of social relations, which can be easily mistaken for corruption or illegal favours.

The rapid transition to privatisation of livestock and formerly commonly owned property has led to a "situation of permanent uncertainty" (Pedersen and Højer 2008, p. 73). These processes have changed a herder's relationship to society, state, and the primary resources available for reproducing life in rural areas (de la Sablonniere, Tougas, and Lortie-Lussier 2009; Sternberg 2008). From this perspective, these experiences of uncertainty relate to social issues in other regions of the world, which are characterized by wealth inequality, expectations around rights to modernity and development, and the lack of formal employment opportunities for youth. Work by Jeffrey (2010) and Ferguson (2015) have documented

similar experiences amongst unemployed men in India and Africa. Ferguson's (2015) work on cash transfers and social assistance programs in southern Africa provides a fascinating case to think about the connections between economic transformation, the end of secure formal wage labour employment opportunities, social relations and political subjectivities. He argues that the more or less permanent ending of industrial wage labor work for men in South Africa has resulted in a situation of surplus labour, where former social roles of men as "household heads" or providers have broken down. Additionally, status provided by work membership and the provision of related social benefits were no longer available. This situation has coincided with rising wealth inequalities and new forms of social welfare that provide cash to traditional "dependent" groups such as women, the elderly, or children. Ferguson makes the point that men, who have traditionally been valued according to their ability to labour, have been doubly excluded in the new South African economic system. He writes, "Rather suddenly, unclaimed men (formerly fought over and eagerly claimed— first as chiefly subjects, later as scarce wage laborers) have become at the same time without commodity value and truly independent— a terrifying predicament given the importance, as I have argued, of relationality for personhood" (p. 152). Ferguson goes on to illustrate the political consequences of these experiences of uncertainty and exclusion, where young men are beginning to demand their "rightful share" of the national wealth, which may take the form of basic income grants from the government. Ferguson makes the point that embodied aspects of political rights, which were very much defined by the use value of working, productive bodies which contributed to national economies, is in a process of transformation. He also illustrates that these politics reflect political histories that have included relations of dependence between governing elites and subjects. The right to a basic income grant from the state expresses these

expectations around rights to national wealth, envisioned through common membership in a social group. These expectations borrow from past forms of dependence between political authorities and group members and draw upon notions of modernity, social mobility, and development to legitimize claims to these rights.

Pastoralism, Politics, and Technologies of Power

The temporal notion of “transition” from one era to the next shares an important relationship with concepts of modernity. Modernity explicitly has to do with notions of progress and certain socio-cultural forms associated with the development of cities (Appadurai 1996). During the socialist period and since the time of transition, pastoralist livelihoods have been defined according to perceptions about their relationship to a distant, traditional past and a physical remoteness from modern (urban) lifeways. Two common perceptions of pastoralist societies continue to appear in expert analyses of mobile pastoralist livelihoods. The first perception is that pastoralists live outside of state regulatory institutions. The second is that pastoralist societies themselves lack state and formal governance institutions. These perceptions also contain assumptions, not only applied to pastoralist societies, about the nature of the state as an entity separate from the realm of social relations. These perceptions are particularly relevant to development policy discourses since the establishment of market capitalism in the Central and Inner Asia regions since the 1990s.

The idea that pastoralists live outside of state regulatory institutions is prevalent in the context of social development and environmental conservation projects. The UN, for example, has identified the physical remoteness of herders from sites of schooling as a cause of education deprivation amongst pastoralist groups. This is to equate education deprivation with features of pastoralist livelihoods themselves. Caroline Dyer’s recent work illustrates how the

characterisation of pastoralists as being “hard to reach” is an idea that bases the exclusion of pastoralists in education on factors related to mobility and distance from settlements, rather than a history of socio-economic relations that have contributed to marginalization of livelihoods from mainstream public services (Aikman and Dyer 2012; Dyer 2001, 2006, 2013, 2014). Dyer (2006) has shown that formal education for mobile pastoralists is often contradictory. While formal education may lead to jobs, educational processes often require the temporary or complete sedentarization of pastoralists. Also, school leaders and teachers often forward negative views of pastoralist livelihoods (Dyer 2006). The UN policy discourse around Education for All aims to help governments achieve universal inclusion in education. However, Dyer’s (2014) work with the Rabaris of Kachchh in India illustrates how the focus on education inclusion has contradictory effects amongst pastoralist groups. She shows that the terms of accessing public (state) schools requires herders to curtail mobility and opportunities for situated learning, creating a situation where formal schooling competes with already sustainable pastoralist livelihoods. Further, Dyer demonstrates that formal schooling includes “discourses of deficit” about pastoralist livelihoods that aim to educate children away from pastoralism (2014), further marginalizing pastoralist livelihoods and framing them as outside of modern, developed institutions and subjectivities.

The idea that pastoralist livelihoods are external to state structures has deep roots, based on colonial social theories of pastoralism as a backward livelihood. For instance, the Mongolian socialist government characterised pre-socialist pastoralist economic organisation as a hindrance to national economic development. A Soviet publication called *Economic-Geographical Sketch of the Mongolian People’s Republic*, translated from Russian by the Mongolian Society (Ovdiyenko 1965), illustrates the efforts of the socialist government to

reorganise rural Mongolian society around collective and settlement-based social and production groups:

Cattle breeding supplies 79.8 % of the agricultural production and about 50% of the general value of the production of the national economy. There are 24.4 head of cattle per capita in the MPR. However, as far as the tempo of development is concerned, cattle breeding is lagging behind industry. One of the main reasons for this lagging is the fact that in many respects cattle breeding depends on the whims of severe climate, since cattle breeding still basically follows nomadic characteristics. To overcome this burdensome heritage of the past, and to make nomads accept a settled way of life, is one of the most important tasks and characteristic peculiarities of the socialist construction which has been conducted in the country. (p. 56)

Anthropologists and political scientists interpreted Inner Asian pastoralist societies to be a primarily kinship-based and “tribal” form of organisation (Sneath 2007). This view was widely held in other regions of the world, such as the Middle East and Africa. On the one hand, pastoralism has been characterized as an inefficient and irrational economic system that requires technical modernisation (Dyson-Hudson 1985; Dyson-Hudson and Dyson-Hudson 1980; Salzman and Galaty 1990). On the other hand, powerful state and non-state groups have categorically defined pastoralism, with particular emphasis on its mobile strategies, as a worldview that is not compatible with modernity (Chatty 2007).

In both capitalist and socialist contexts, pastoralism is commonly viewed through a lens of deficit. Governing bodies have leveraged this discourse in the cause of modernisation,

land privatisation, sedentarisation, and environmental conservation schemes (Anderson and Broch-Due 1999; Bocco 2006; Krätli 2001; Krätli and Dyer 2009). Eriksen (2014) documented the prevalence of a discourse that characterizes herders as irresponsible and lazy, especially in the context of winter-related herd losses. Additionally, China's development projects in Inner Mongolia and Tibet frame pastoralists as backward, lazy, and economically irrational (Benwell 2013; Williams 2002; Yeh 2007, 2013). Such policies have led to forced evictions from pasturelands, seizures of herds, and forced settlement into public housing projects. As Yeh (2013) has pointed out in her work with Tibetan communities in China, the government portrays development as a "gift" and she argues that this framing is one way in which Tibetan group identity and membership in the Chinese state has been developed through ongoing relations and public political performances.

The discourse that pastoralists are responsible for environmental degradation is commonly coupled with the idea that pastoralist live outside of formal regulatory frameworks. In Mongolia, since the early 1990s, a proliferation of development projects funded by the German Technical Cooperation, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, the World Bank, and other aid agencies have pushed for a reorganization of rural social and economic life under the concepts of "collective" and "community" action. These projects aim to foster environmental conservation, the reversal of grassland degradation, and economic participation in markets for herder households by creating "self-help groups" and "pasture user groups" (see for example Fernandez-Gimenez et al 2012; Schmidt 2006; Schmidt et al 2002; Usukh et al 2010). These projects essentialize pastoralist work by focusing on the revival of "traditional" institutions that are imagined as a primary way to make pastoralism sustainable and viable into the future. For example, Klein et al (2012) write, "Many of the

traditional strategies pastoralists have employed in the past are in flux and may not be readily available to them in the future. This will probably have profound effects on pastoralists' ability to adapt to their changing climatic, ecological and socio-economic situation and may impair their resilience in dealing with these ongoing-pressures" (p. 8). This fatalistic account not only depoliticizes pastoralist livelihoods and overlooks long political histories but also presents a very narrow interpretation of the diverse forms, identities and practices of pastoralism in Mongolia. In his work on the history of sedentarization schemes of the Bedouin in the Middle East, Bocco (2006) identifies a similar essentialization of pastoralists, who are framed in terms of almost absolute difference and separation from settled communities. He makes the point that development discourses focused on managing pastoralist territories through participatory approaches "reinterpret or even mystify certain aspects of the recent past as well as use ideological re-adaptions to legitimize one or another of these policies" (p. 303). These accounts also overlook the many ways that people who practice pastoralism also pursue other forms of work and maintain networks of relationships with people in distant regions.

Many international scholars and governing bodies are reliant on Garret Hardin's 1968 publication, "The Tragedy of the Commons," to advocate for private land ownership and the enclosure of rangelands. Using this metaphor, which is deduced from European sheep grazing by settled communities, these scholars and organisations justify land privatisation legislation that presumes that pastoralists use land in unregulated ways resulting in pasture degradation and destruction of national environments. This metaphor is even found in Mongolian legislation, such as the still-under-construction Pastureland law. Hannam, an international consultant and expert on rangeland legislation has written, "Mongolian rangeland is degraded because herders are unable to apply sustainable grazing practices. Mongolian grassland is not

valued so its regulation and management have been avoided in the past. Herders continue to graze their livestock on public land unrestrained, where there is high competition for good pasture” (2012, p. 418). The draft law clearly reflects the dual ideas that herders exist outside of regulatory systems and are responsible for land degradation.

While Mongolia remains proud of its pastoral history, power hierarchies continually sway towards the ideological biases of settled parliamentarians and development organisations. While modernity is no longer discussed in terms of social evolution, the notion of progress from one development status to the next is still central to international governance frameworks and UN development rankings. The argumentative space allotted to rural peoples as actors and co-creators of modernity and change has developed into a discourse of correctness and critique of former of narratives of backwardness. Ferguson (2006) makes the case that while anthropologists are correct in celebrating cultural difference as contemporary and not part of a gradient from “backward” to “modern,” they overlook the way in which modernity has become an index in a “global status hierarchy.” He writes, “if the first access (once unhinged) shows us a modernity that is newly understood as plural, the second shows us a different understanding of modernity in which, no longer promised as a telos, it has come to be simply a status—a standard of living to which some have rights by birth and from which others are simply, but unequivocally, excluded” (2006, p. 189). Ferguson’s (1999) ethnography of rapid economic growth followed by economic crisis in Zambia illuminates the significance of the “modernization myth” (p. 13) in the lived experiences of individuals and their evaluations of change, as well as state projects around development. His discussion is relevant to ideas about social development and modern worldviews that are associated with formal education in Mongolia.

As Ferguson notes, “being modern” is no longer seen as a stage of evolution, but as a stage of individual and social development, which is marked by certain valued criteria such as formal education. The contradiction that Ferguson addresses is that while modernity is framed in inclusive terms, where all people have the potential to live a modern lifestyle based on their abilities, in reality access to such lifestyles is spatialized and political. Work on education as a contradictory discourse contest the notion of development-as-freedom (Sen 1999) and provide examples of the ways in which formal schooling may increase household vulnerabilities and contribute to individual senses of marginality or insecurity (Levinson, Foley, and Holland 1996; Jeffrey, Jeffrey, and Jeffrey 2008; Jeffrey 2010).

I examine these contradictions in my article, “Herds or family? Contradictions in schooling children amongst Mongolian pastoralists.” In this article I focus on the dilemma faced by many herder households who need to choose between “herds or family” as they work to combine herding with formal education for children. This article highlights the ways in which state policies around education provision, which draw on World Bank-funded projects, contribute to the marginalisation of pastoralist livelihoods. Accessing schools in county and provincial centers often involves the migration of children and mothers away from pastures for the majority of the fall and winter season. The lack of alternative public schooling options and the location of important resources in settlements re-inscribe the sense of pastoralist lifestyles as being isolated, remote, underdeveloped, and politically excluded. In Mongolia, herders have high rates of participation in education, but that participation comes at a cost to household stability.

The links between experiences of uncertainty, expectations around modernity and notions of social development, in combination with discourses of development that frame

pastoralism in terms of deficit reveal the complex history of power relations and forms of governance in rural Mongolia. Experiences of economic crisis, privatization and wealth inequality connect the political struggles of Mongolian pastoralists with other pastoralist and nonpastoralist groups throughout the world where relations of dependence are key ways in which resources are accessed. In this context, moral ideas surrounding relations of obligation between authorities and subjects become important aspects of political subjectivity and the idea of the state.

Performativity, Morality and Authority

The previous sections have discussed themes in analyses of social transformation in post-socialist spaces and Mongolia. In various ways, these themes point to the importance of understanding changing rural livelihoods in the context of power relations and in view of political histories. The notion of “transition,” conventional critiques of neoliberalism, and ecological frameworks downplay the continuities between socialist and post-socialist hierarchies of power as well as the political circumstances in which social inequalities have emerged from socialist institutions. Performativity theory and the notion of improvisation provide an alternative theoretical tool for understanding these processes of continuity and change.

Performativity studies in geography share some important links to other conceptual frameworks for understanding governance in a broad sense. Butler’s (1990, 1993) development of performativity in relation to gender norms builds from Foucault’s work on power and knowledge. Governmentality, Foucault’s (1997) notion of the “conduct of conduct” has been usefully applied in analyses of power relations by focusing on the technologies of power that influence human self-governance vis-à-vis broader institutions (Burchell 1996).

Foucault's analysis of knowledge-generating practices around the governance of populations, such as statistics, identifies how power is actualized through certain types of discourses, behaviours, and actions (Murdoch 1997; Rose-Redwood 2006). Foucault's approach locates power within systems rather than extraneous to them, as disciplinary mechanisms which can include an individual's self-regulation.

As Collier has pointed out, Foucault's later lectures indicate that governmentality—and biopolitics specifically—is in itself not a form of power, but a “governmentality” that co-exists and competes with other rationalities of governance. Collier writes, “In a strict sense, governmentality designates the genus—diagrams of political rationality, ‘governmentalities’—of which specific political rationalities, such as advanced liberalism, are species” (2009, p. 99). In his work in post-Soviet Russia, Collier shows how governmental strategies are developed through the recombination and re-working of past methods and rationalities, sometimes with contradictory results and often in response to an identified “problem-space,” such as urban central heating provision.

In her discussion of the lived experiences of place and the construction of Central Asian borderlands, Reeves highlights the “sedimentation of histories” that are differently remembered and politically enacted, questioned, and contested in the context of everyday lived relations (Reeves 2011, p. 307). Recent literature in political geography has employed the concept of performativity to understand the unresolved, contested, and constantly re-iterated aspects of everyday relations that make up the social relations of the state and the development of political subjectivities (Glass and Rose-Redwood 2014). From this perspective, the performance of everyday relations in reference to situated knowledge about the world and one's perceived position in it is essential to understanding the dynamics of

social and political actions and discourses. Glass and Rose-Redwood write, "...space is not merely a pre-existing container within which, or a stage upon which, embodied performances and affective subjectivities are enacted; rather, the spaces of social and political life are *constituted* through the reiteration of performative acts" (2014, p. xiv, emphasis in original). Their analysis is based on a re-engagement with Butler's notion of performativity (Butler 1993, p. 2; Rose-Redwood and Glass 2014, p. 10), defined as "the reiterative and citational practices by which discourse produces the effects that it names." In her work on gender, Butler makes the point that discourse is always performed through embodied acts.

Political geographers have pushed forward analysis of material and affective geographies of performance, developing the concept of improvisation (Jeffrey 2013). This concept highlights the contingent aspects of power relations as they unfold in different spaces and times. The focus on process also draws attention to struggles over power and legitimacy between different actors. Thus, Alex Jeffrey (2013) defines improvisation as a "combination of performance and resourcefulness" (p. 171). Jeffrey draws on Bourdieu's theories on agency, where differing elements of socially recognized economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capital inform the course of action that people take to achieve their interests (Calhoun 1993). Interestingly, Bourdieu's theories of social organization based on the concepts of habitus, fields of power, and differing types of capital shares many of the basic elements of Butler's work on performativity. Calhoun (1993) quotes the following passage to illustrate the importance of history, and perceptions of history, in Bourdieu's analysis of social transformation, "it is necessary to write a structural history which finds in each state of the structure both the product of previous struggles to transform or conserve the structure, and, through the contradictions, tensions and power relations that constitute that structure, the

source of its subsequent transformations” (Calhoun 1993, p. 82). This being said, Bourdieu is less interested in defining a reified structure than in illustrating the multiple, mediated ways in which humans action occurs (hence the development of a theory of practice). Jeffrey’s notion of improvisation encapsulates the idea that an individual’s ability to act is both inventive and also mediated in multiple dimensions. The strength of improvisation as a conceptual framework is that it provides space to reflect on the role of the individual personality in the formation of group membership and ideas of belonging to a corporate community.

An important debate in studies of power relations, the problematization of the state, and social hierarchies in the context of performativity theory is the issue of how authority or “performative force” (Rose-Redwood and Glass 2014, p. 6) is achieved in the context of ongoing relations. In other words, why are some forms of power accepted as legitimate while others are not? Jeffrey, McConnell, and Wilson (2015) suggest that tracing the connections between morality and power might be one approach to understanding how legitimacy of rule is achieved. Issues of morality are involved in the everyday performance of social relations between differently placed actors and can be used as a starting place to tease out some possible ways that the relationship between rulers and subjects might be imagined.

Ingold (2000), Strathern (1988) and others (Anderson, Wishart, and Vate 2013; Empson 2011; Fijn 2011) take a “relational approach” to studying social transformation and change. Ingold draws on examples of human-animal relations in hunter-gatherer and pastoralist societies in the circumpolar north to deconstruct the human-nature dichotomy. He sees the human as a “singular locus of creative growth within a continually unfolding field of relationships” (2000, p. 5). According to Ingold, social change exists in interaction with an environment that includes human, nonhuman, and inanimate entities. An important part of

Ingold's argument, and a key formulation in his deconstruction of the division of nature and culture in theories of human behaviour, is the premise that "ways of acting in the environment are also always ways of perceiving it" (2000, p. 19). Ingold's commitment to the link between behavior, agency and perception is borrowed from Gibson (1979), a psychologist who studied how humans understood the environment. Ingold's emphasis on the mind-as-perception that involves immersion in an environment leads him to the idea that "cultural variation is actually variation in skills" (2000, p. 5). Interaction with material things, animals, and landscape constitutes perception and "lifeworlds." Ingold contests the idea of culture as a construction of the mind, and sees it as embedded in ongoing and changing interactive forms. Ingold contrasts an "ontology of dwelling" that is based on engagement with the world from a Western ontology, which separates nature and society and views the individual as constantly constructing the world, from a detached point of view, rather than living and changing with it (2000, 2013). Ingold's thesis also contests the anthropological construction of hunter-gatherer and pastoralist society as being "naturalized" (2000, p. 42) and insists that the nature-society dichotomy is a distortion of human ecology and development.

Social transformation from the position of the "perspectivists" emphasizes the subject as being constituted by a variety of relations with human, nonhuman, inanimate, and cosmological entities of which it is a part. Strathern's (1988) notable work in this category led to the notion of the "dividual," which has been extrapolated upon by many since (de Castro 2004, 2007). Strathern extrapolated on two ways of understanding change in a keynote speech at the International Union of Anthropology and Ethnographic Sciences annual conference in 2014. She used the terms "transplantation" and "metamorphosis" to describe types of relations where "variation in form and substance does not alter identity" and examples of crop

transplants where “divisions keep their forms” (Strathern 2014). In her lecture, Strathern used the concept of transplantation to explain a process whereby a root material is moved to new locations, such as the daughter-in-law of a Papua New Guinea family, who is referred to as a transplant from a maternal root into a new family. Another type of change, metamorphosis, Strathern relates, points to a variation in form, which nonetheless maintains a recognizable identity, such as the metamorphosis of insects from larvae to adult forms. Metamorphosis captures the temporality of change, the life cycle and stages of development of forms over time. Strathern’s focus on examining change by focusing on relations makes room for multiplicity and variation in forms that may nonetheless adhere to a common identity, much like Chatty’s (2013) reflections on the changes she has witnessed in the Bedouin community. Both examinations of change give particular attention to the spatial and temporal dimensions of these systems of relations.

Scholars have applied the concept of perspectivism to explain experiences of change amongst Mongolian herders. Perspectivism is notable because it prioritizes lived experiences of change and the moral frameworks that inform how people, bound up in systems of relations, respond to ever-changing circumstances. A Mongolian metaphor for kinship might prove useful to illustrate this idea, and one that shares in Ingold’s “ecological approach to perception” (2000, p. 3). Anthropologists have often identified a “Mongolian way of seeing” wherein an individual person is seen as being composed of “blood/flesh,” “bone,” as well as at least two kinds of fortune, which is both inherent to a person as well as influenced by, and in some ways dependent on, non-human agents in the landscape (Empson 2011; Højer 2007; Humphrey and Ujeed 2012). The metaphors of “blood/flesh” and “bone” that are used to express notions of relatedness and kinship amongst Mongols is relevant in apprehending the

nature of social change: It points to the solidity of inherited materials as well as the fluidity of relations through time (see Park 2003, p. 147, for further discussion). Seeing transformation as an ongoing process within systems of relations, where “genetic” materials (including memories and histories) and infrastructures (physical structures and technologies) of human groups are passed to new generations.

Empson uses this kinship metaphor in a similar way in her work on personhood amongst the pastoralist Buriyat ethnic group in Northeast Mongolia. She writes that the fluidity and movement associated with one’s material “blood” can be further identified with the fluidity and changeability of the social role of the shaman, while the “bone” metaphor is associated with social role of elderly men. The “absolute centers” of elderly men (Pedersen 2006) are visible in the landscape as standing rock cairns on mountains. These forms unite the individual self/body with social archetypes, which are also written into the landscape. These metaphors link past history and place with imaginations of future selves and generations. In this sense, a person’s potential agency is part of a living landscape (Humphrey 1995). The agency of the Mongolian state, with the president at its head, is also part of a living, politicized landscape. Sneath’s recent work on the “cosmopolitical state” in which the president participates in rituals on the most sacred and restricted mountaintops to ensure the continued prosperity of the nation provides an apt example (Sneath 2014). Empson extends this understanding of personhood to include acts of “separation and containment” (2011, p. 325). She writes, “By focusing on the transformations afforded when parts are extracted from people, animals, and things and then contained, or housed, to allow for growth and generation, we have seen that distinctions such as agnatic and consanguineal, vertical and horizontal, or separation and containment are always internal” (2011, p. 325). Empson’s work highlights the

importance of “agentive artifacts,” including things and places that imbue actions with effectiveness (2011, p. 19).

One noticeable issue in Ingold’s focus on relations is that he presents an unclear framework for understanding the formation and operationalisation of hierarchical relations or power in social change. The patron–client relationship, for example, is one way in which Mongolian herders relate not only with each other, but with human and nonhuman agents in the environment. Dyson’s (2015) recent critique of Ingold’s argument shows how girls’ relationship to the environment, and their “capacity to wander freely” (p. 52) in it, changed over time based on their changing identities and roles in the course of life stage development. As girls grew older, their relationship to the environment changed based on expectations around their gendered social roles (Dyson 2015). In this way, we can better understand agency as expressed through improvisation, a creative process that is structured by relations as well as the place, time, and space in which actions occur.

An alternative approach to understanding the values laden in pastoralism is through an exploration of commonly-held cultural beliefs related to shamanism and attitudes toward nature (Humphrey, Mongush, and Telengid 1993; Pedersen 2011). The attitudes assume common rules for behaviour toward environmental resources based on the idea that humans are part of a cohesive idea of nature, *baigal*, “to be” (Humphrey et al. 1993). As the presence of intervening ritual-performing, regulating institutions that solidify these attitudes in everyday practice change, these values that define so much of human behaviour, such as notions of respect, will be affected in some capacity.

Rebecca Empson’s (2011, 2012) work with pastoralist Buryat communities in northeast Mongolia offers a useful perspective on personhood, agency, and place. This

ethnography is a possible approach to understanding the manifestation of values in experiences of work and the way personhood is communicated through particular objects. In her study of Buryat ethnic identity, she uses the indigenous idea of fortune to investigate Mongolian social relations, as fortune is an idea that structures community relations by establishing rules for behaviour in order to accumulate various forms of wealth. In this context, she discusses the prevalence of arson in northeast Mongolia as increases in wealth differentials between households provoked “malicious gossip” (Empson 2011, p. 7), which can lead to the devastating loss of fortune and the destructive or jealous acts by other members of society or forces of nature. Regarding the indigenous idea of fortune, Empson writes “...many seemingly everyday practices are inherently politicized because they compete with other ways of appropriating places or memories, or accumulating wealth. Seen in this way it is obvious that there is a contentious historicity to these practices, where different agendas are cultivated for different means” (Empson 2011, p. 21–22). Mongolian ideas about wealth and prosperity are part of moral orientations around conceptions of agency and social order. Given the uncertain features of a market economy, indigenous knowledge on wealth, fortune, or luck may be an alternative way that people assign values and attempt to achieve agency in their pursuits and order the social relationships of which they are a part (High 2008; Højer 2007).

Morton Axel Pedersen’s (2011) work on shamanism in northern Mongolia portrays the relationships between herders and nature as “out of control” since the introduction of a market economy. He likens the state of economic, social, and spiritual affairs to having the common characteristics of being potentially violent, dangerous, and unpredictable, and takes shape in human behaviour as states of *asgan*. Pedersen describes this state as “The term *asgan*—which is also used to describe fiery-tempered horses that are particularly difficult to break in—refers

to a disturbing condition of drunken rage that was said to afflict a growing number of people in northern Mongolia...The person struck by *asgan* quickly loses control over himself (it is primarily a male phenomenon) and screams, cries, and aims punches in all directions” (Pedersen 2011, p. 1). Pedersen’s work illustrates how acceptable behaviour in northern Mongolia has taken on new expressions as manifestations of uncertainty unfold in the social landscape. Themes of uncertainty have run through this discussion of analysis of change in regions featuring fluctuating economies and forms of resource distribution.

Conclusion

In this literature review, I have examined the transformations of relations through the lens of work at the scale of the rural herder household, with a particular focus on how state administration and policies figure into these relations and their temporal and spatial aspects. As Chatty (1996, 2013) elucidates, pastoralist individuals and communities articulate their identities within a variety of governance organisations. In some nation-state regimes, they may be stateless while in others they may form elite identities. Pastoralist identities are mobilized to warrant claims about modernity, development, and territory. The mainstream nature of “nomadic” culture and mobile pastoralist livelihoods is reflected in the history of Mongolia’s political formations, from the 13th century military systems to the 20th century socialist economy. Today, herder households and mobile pastoralism livelihoods are being regenerated and reproduced in the context of new systems. These new systems, however, are borne from past forms and exist in reference to them. The examination of household decision making and strategies around social reproduction reveal how these forms take shape.

These accounts highlight experiences of uncertainty and disorientation. The anthropologist, Manduhai Buyandelgeriyn, describes the collapse of the Soviet Union as an “epistemic, as well as social and economic” crisis (2008, p. 236). Similarly, Verdery’s significant work on socialist ideas of property and the redistribution of collectively-owned resources in Transylvania (Verdery 2003; Verdery and Humphrey 2004) also highlights the transformation of value that occurred in an environment of existential and economic crisis, “With the fragmentation of the state and the reorganisation of the political field, the configuration of interests that might influence policy shifted, affecting who would get values and who would get junk. In socialism, a central value lay in relations of reciprocity and obligation; privatisation now threatened to individualize these relations, which would change the context for establishing values” (Verdery 2003, p. 22).

Although there are cultural and historical differences between the Bedouin of the Middle East and the Mongolian pastoralists of Inner Asia, important similarities open up ways to reflect on the politics of transformation, where politics refers to power and status. The first similarity is the importance of mobility in the political economy of pastoralism. The second is the role of the state administration in pastoralist livelihoods, and the spatialisation of the state—the blurring of boundaries between households and state authorities, including powerful actors such as multilateral development agencies. The third important similarity is the issue of economic forms and territory, especially in regions of arid environment with large and powerful mineral sectors. From this point of view, examining the changing meaning of work in rural Mongolia, from within the home of a herder, reveals what elements are anchor points that distinguish Mongolian pastoralism from other forms of work and continue to make it an important means of social reproduction and politically relevant. Additionally, a close

study of pastoralist work lays bare information about the organisation of the state and how it solicits membership from its citizens that can help us clarify or move beyond popular but vague terms such as “neoliberalization,” “responsibilization,” and “social fragmentation,” that attempt to explain change processes. Focusing on relations through ethnographies of rural work yields alternative explanations that write actors back into narratives of change.

THE MONGOLIA ECONOMIC AND POLICY CONTEXT

Mongolia is a land-locked, former socialist country situated between Russia and China. It has one of the lowest population densities in the world with two people per square kilometre, with the exception of Ulaanbaatar which has more than 200 people per square kilometre (National Statistical Office of Mongolia 2013, p. 80). In 2012, the population of Mongolia was 2,867,744 and there were 768,263 Mongolian households residing in the country, of which 67 per cent were registered as urban residents and 32 per cent as rural residents. Twenty-seven per cent of Mongolian households were herders in 2012 (National Statistical Office of Mongolia 2013, p. 59). About 39 per cent of the population lived in the capital city of Ulaanbaatar in 2007 (Kamata et al. 2010, p. 1), further exaggerating the contrast between the largest urban center in the country and the rural areas. According to the National Statistical Yearbook for 2012, approximately 46 per cent of the population were inhabitants of Ulaanbaatar in 2012 (p. 80).

Pastureland constitutes approximately 80 per cent of Mongolia's territory and around 1 per cent is arable (Sternberg 2008, p. 1296). Horses, cows and yaks, sheep, cashmere goats, and Bactrian camels are the primary domesticated animals and main sources of wool for the fibre industry which serves as a major national export and a significant source of cash income for herders (Fox 2015). Income from cashmere sales alone accounts for up to half of the annual cash income for some families (World Bank 2003). Milk and meat are mainstays of the Mongolian diet, with hundreds of varieties of dairy products produced by herder households throughout the country (Batsukh, Altantsetseg, and Enkhtsetseg 2013). Mongolia has a harsh climate and arid environment, with temperatures dropping to -40°C during the coldest period of winter from January to February, and rising to $+40^{\circ}\text{C}$ in some places during the height of

summer. Herders have developed specific practices to cope with these fluctuations in weather and the severely cold winter season.

Mongolian-speaking peoples have practiced mobile pastoralism on the Inner Asian steppe for centuries. It is a defining element of the region's socio-political history. At the same time, romantic notions of "nomadism" also have long been part of imaginative accounts of Mongolia's history and society by outsiders. Mongolia is often represented in the international media and popular accounts as an "untamed land" (see for example Becker 2008; Branigan 2014), contributing to the idea of rural pastoralist "nomads" as belonging to a final frontier cut off from modern technology and bureaucratic systems. Within Mongolia, the historical leader Chinggis Khan has re-emerged as a popular figure since the end of socialism. He reigns from a great seated statue in front of the parliamentary building in the central square of Ulaanbaatar, eclipsing the space's former hero, Sukhbaatar, who salutes north to the Russians from atop his rearing horse. The gilded Chinggis faces south to China, guarded on either side by imposing statues of armed mounted guards. His view of the Bogd Khan Uul mountain range has been blocked in recent years by glass-towered hotels and luxury shopping malls, with flickering projections of Bloomberg TV showing advertisements for popular cashmere companies, figures of market data racing across the bottom, and silent interviews of specialists displayed on its side. Across the city, one encounters evidence of sinophobia in the form of graffiti and the exchange of urban myths (see Billé 2015; Delaplace 2010). Yet the influence of both China and Russia is palpable in material form, with imports from both countries accounting for over 60 per cent of trade. Over 80 per cent of Mongolia's exports went to China in the first half of 2015 (Bank of Mongolia 2015). In this geopolitical squeeze, the Mongolian national identity is expressed in part through attention to cultural heritage based on rural ways of life

and notions of purity of cultural form (Bulag 1998; Byambajav 2015; Marsh 2009; Maydar and Rae 2015; Sneath 2010a).

In the portrayal of a timeless nomadism by outsiders, and the popularisation of nomadic cultural heritage within Mongolia, it is easy to lose sight of pastoralism as a livelihood and form of work. The idea that herding is a livelihood, which anyone can pursue or depart from, is often not emphasized in accounts that frame herders as timeless, homogeneous, and fixed in the steppe landscape. Humphrey and Sneath (1999) advocated for the end of the use of the term “nomadism” to refer to Mongolian pastoralists in order to disrupt these powerful associations and to show how government policies have shaped environments and herding livelihoods differently over time. Humphrey and Sneath argue that mobile pastoralist systems in the region of Inner Asia are a specialized form of production that can exist within a variety of political and economic administrative systems, as the history of the region and the differing systems of China, Russia, and Mongolia have demonstrated. They write, “far from being a practice associated with the most backward herders, highly mobile livestock herding is often the basis for the most efficient, wide-ranging, well-co-ordinated, and specialized production, and that it is compatible with technologically advanced and profit-oriented economic activity” (1999, p. 1). At the same time, they show that mobile pastoralist systems are threatened when mobility is curtailed and related knowledge, relations, and administrative structures that enable mobile systems are disrupted (Humphrey and Sneath 1996a, 1996b, 1999, p. 3), often through state policies that subscribe to myths about pastoralism as backward and incompatible with modern systems. For example, China has pursued a resettlement policy for herders in Inner Mongolia and Tibet based on a combination of ideas about national development and environmental degradation. Government policies

restrict mobility by requiring livestock to graze within enclosures or banning the herding of certain livestock altogether (Cao et al 2013; Williams 1996; Yeh 2003). In addition to direct government policies such as forced settlement, restrictions on grazing territories, burdensome taxes, the location of social resources and infrastructures in urban areas in combination with ideologies about social development also affect the extent to which pastoralists can practice mobile livelihoods.

This section offers contextual details on the history of the Mongolian economic and political system as it relates to the administration of mobile pastoralism, with an emphasis on Mongolia's economic and political structures since independence and the establishment of the socialist People's Republic of Mongolia in 1924. I aim to highlight economic and policy developments to provide a context for the empirical material from Bayanhongor. While this thesis does not include a historical analysis, attention to the history of the region unsettles common discourses that portray herder livelihoods as fixed in time and place and shows how herding has been part of Mongolian governance systems over the course of its long history. The following sections employ broad brushstrokes to add texture to the journal articles, which had limited space to discuss the history of the region.

Early Political Systems and Group Membership

Written records from as early as the 13th century such as *The Secret History of Mongolia*, the 17th century *Altan Tobchi*, as well as records on the jurisdiction of land disputes, bureaucratic reports, and reports from foreign travellers since that time illustrate a long record of administration of pastoralist territories around socio-political units (Atwood 2004, 2012; Bawden 1982, 1984; Humphrey 1995; Sneath 2007). In the 13th century, socio-political groups were organised according to a military-based command system that divided

households into *tumens*. Further subdivisions were the “thousand” household unit constituted by smaller groups of a hundred or several hundred. Each household belonged to a unit, which had a specific territorial basis and these units were under the leadership of the Imperial court (Atwood 2012, p. 28; Sneath 2001, 2007). Sneath writes, “in the Chinggisid era the term *ulus* (‘people,’ ‘nation’) meant something very much like patrimony, domain, or appanage...” (2007, p. 168). These territorial units were the basis for systems of taxation and defined pasture use boundaries.

Atwood (2012) has argued that Mongolian society has retained a form of territory-based group membership in larger state systems over the course of its history, reflected also in the later 16th century socio-territorial units and the administrative structures of the Qing Dynasty until the early 20th century. He supports the view that Mongolian history has been characterised by continuity in social organisation rather than social upheaval and revolutionary changes. Further, Atwood develops the “appanage community” approach to understanding socio-political organisation. He defines an appanage community as a territory with some prescribed boundaries, which was under the jurisdiction of an authority, such as a nobleman. The inhabitants of these territories had certain rights to use the territory’s resources as members of the community based on social position and relation to the authority figure; these relations were not necessarily based on kinship. Concepts of kinship, such as the obligations between parents and children or seniors and juniors were expressed in hierarchical political statuses. Atwood describes this system as having a “distinctive patrimonial and kin-like coloration” (2012, p. 4), even outside of descent-based lineages. Mobility was practiced within local *nutag* (homelands), and involved the seasonal return to pastures.

Similarly, Sneath (2007) has argued that power structures in Inner Asia resemble a “headless state.” Sneath shows how translations of early Mongolian texts reflect the biases of colonialist and orientalist social theories, which framed nomadic societies as tribal or clan-based. For instance, records from the 13th century, which referred to aristocratic positions, such as a “duke” were translated instead as “chief” (2007, p. 64). These scholars purposefully shaped a reading of history based on an evolutionary model of history and the state, perpetuating an interpretation of Mongolian political history as fundamentally clan-based until the socialist period. Sneath demonstrates that the aristocratic and military basis of steppe politics illustrates a long history of statecraft between political leaders across the region. He also shows how the idea of “clan” has been used by politicians in the modern state-building project. He writes, “The success of aristocratic houses or lineages over very long periods of time, in both centralised states and other political formations, reveals descent and kinship as enduring techniques of power and aspects of stratification rather than their antithesis” (2007, p. 195). He argues that pastoralism has always involved central oversight, especially as it pertains to the coordination of migration (Humphrey and Sneath 1999; Sneath 2001). Institutions such as aristocratic families or Buddhist institutions had jurisdiction over territory use rights as well as ownership of large herds of livestock. Pastoralism was a central element of these economies, trade, and political legitimacy.

From the 17th to the 20th century, Mongolia was part of the Manchu Qing (Ch’ing) Empire. The central government of the Qing was located in Beijing and the Outer Mongolian territories were administered according to a “banner” system, where Tibetan Buddhist institutions acted as the local administrative authorities alongside noble lords (Sneath 2000). In Southern Bayanhongor province, for example, a large monastery organised the long

seasonal migrations between the Gobi to the south and the mountainous regions to the north (Fernandez-Gimenez 1999). Humphrey (1992b) estimates that up to one quarter of the Mongolian male population was affiliated with these monasteries as either monks or labourers. Additionally, monasteries and nobles were further tied to the Qing administration through trade and debt (Atwood 2003; Sneath 2003).

Bawden states, “Under the Ch’ing, Mongolia was subjected to centralised control of a strict and minute nature” (1984, p. 547). Bawden describes the proliferation of maps created by the Qing to administer the territory, where banners were divided into smaller territorial units called “*sum*.” Police monitored pasture use on behalf of the banner authorities. Bawden also writes about cases of land disputes in areas where borders were not clearly defined or enforced. A fascinating case from the early 1800s, which Bawden discusses at length, is a complaint lodged to banner authorities about such a dispute. A section of the complaint from a banner prince named Azar to the Qing authorities presented by Bawden is:

The people of the two banners of the Tushee gung Sonomwanchig and the zasag Maidarjav, though there is no drought or cattle starvation in their own pastures, have for some time been coming arbitrarily into my banner pastures, and what with their transport and riding animals they eat up the grass on which my poor people live, and are always pasturing commingled with them. In my stupid opinion, it is quite untrue that they are coming under the stress of being constrained by drought or starvation. It is just that they are wilfully after extra gain, and so eating up the foodstuffs and grass belonging to our poor people. Moreover, suppose that these people always dwelling commingled there, mutual or internal cases of murder or robbery should arise, under

whose direction shall they be deal with—that of the zasag, the lord of the pastures, or the zasag in charge of the offenders? (1984, p. 552)

I quote this passage at length to drawn attention to the role of local governors, such as Azar, in addressing the economic and social concerns of the people living within his jurisdiction. These newcomers threaten his authority and economic base and he appeals to higher authorities to establish a protocol for mitigating such events. High and Schlesinger (2010) have discussed similar boundary transgressions by foreign gold miners during the Qing period. These miners and their collaborators received harsh punishment for violating Mongolian land use customs and violating the social and cosmological order. Also, they were seen as threats to the integrity of the banner administrative system, which enforced separation between ethnic groups.

The contemporary political divisions of Mongolia bear a resemblance to the Qing system, with households belonging as registered members to a *bag* subdivision, headed by a *zasag darga*. The term *zasag* and its connotations are valuable to underscore. Both Humphrey (1992b) and Kaplonski (2006) have discussed the prevalence of morally correct behaviour being associated with an exemplar figure. This has important implications for modes of governance, which is reflected in the word *zasag*. As Kaplonski has discussed, *zasag* refers to “government,” but is based on the word which means “to correct” (2006, p. 84). This idea of government links rulers (exemplars) with subjects based on moral expectations about the regulation of correct behaviour (see also Humphrey 2008). The exemplar and the appanage community unit are two general concepts that have maintained continuity over time and which are important heuristic devices to think through modes of governance today.

The People's Republic of Mongolia (MPR)

After defeat at the hands of the Japanese in the late 19th century, the Qing Dynasty was in a weak position to manage its far-reaching territory, which was under threat from the Russians and Europeans as well. The Qing began to encourage Chinese expansion into Tibetan and Mongolian territories, prompting the leadership in Mongolia to appeal to the Russians to back armed resistance along the border. By 1911, Mongolians established independence from China by appointing Jibzudamba Khutugtu as Bodg Khan, a theocratic title meaning “Holy Emperor,” to the throne (Atwood 2004, p. 269). The years following independence involved conflict amongst political factions in Mongolia, the Chinese, and White and Bolshevik Russians. In an effort to maintain independence from the Chinese, Mongolians appealed to the Russians for assistance. The Russians successfully defeated the Chinese, though conflict ensued between a Russian warlord associated with the White Army and Bolsheviks (Atwood 2004). The Bolsheviks won this conflict, ushering in Mongolia's alliance with the Soviet Union. The Mongolian People's Republic was established in 1924 and gave way to a democratic system in 1991. During its nearly 70-year history, the organisation of the Mongolian state and economic system was closely modelled after the Soviet Union. Moscow played a strong role in foreign and domestic policy (Morozova 2002). The Soviet presence in Mongolia was expressed ideologically, economically, and militaristically. Geopolitically, Mongolia was positioned at an important frontier of Japanese expansion during World War II. Starting in the 1960s, the Soviet army intensified its military presence partly due to antagonistic relations with China and by the 1980s about 82,000 Soviet troops and their family members were stationed in Mongolia (Radchenko 2012). Some sources estimate up to 500,000 Soviet troops stationed in the country (Nixson et al. 2000, p. xiv). Herders in Ölziit

County, where I conducted the majority of my research, often recalled their attempts to obtain cigarettes and candy from the Soviet servicemen stationed in the county center.

This strong Soviet influence contributed to the establishment of a new administrative infrastructure and governmental norms, which affected both pragmatic and imaginative iterations of mobile pastoralism. The Soviet influence in Mongolia was aggressive, especially during the Stalinist period. Mongolians believed to be connected to the pan-Mongolia movement or thought to be Japanese spies were targeted by the Soviets amongst the Buriyat ethnic group in Siberia. Investigations spread to Mongolia. Between 1937 and 1939, at least 20,000 Mongolians were killed as Soviet advisors attempted to gain control over rural and religious threats to the emergent socialist state (Atwood 2004). The Buriyats of eastern Mongolia, as well as monks, and others political leaders viewed as a threat to the Soviet order disappeared, were subject to arson and attacks, or executed (Baabar 1999 [2010]; Empson 2011). Kaplonski (2002) estimates that during the purges up to 100,000 people may have been killed and he describes political show trials as a way in which the purges were legitimated and used to shift power to the newly established political institutions (Kaplonski 2008). Although they became less frequent, purges continued through the 1950s as the MPR sought to concentrate power in Ulaanbaatar, away from systems of family and religious hierarchy.

The purges put an end to previous forms of education based in monasteries. A rigorous compulsory state schooling system became an important form of socialisation and further alignment with the Soviet Union and socialist ideology. The Mongolian script was replaced with Cyrillic in the early 1940s and compulsory schooling was introduced in 1955 (Steiner-Khamsci and Stolpe 2006). Children of herders boarded in student dormitories starting at the enrolment age of eight. The literacy rate for adults reached 97 per cent by the late 1980s

(Steiner-Khamsci and Stolpe 2006, p. 167). According to the Marxist typology of social progress, pastoralist production should yield to industrialisation, and the urban space would become privileged as a center of culture and progress (Bruun and Narangoa 2006). Compulsory schooling for the children of herders and the dormitory system were part of a larger organisation of public and private life in the framework of cooperatives or collectives. Rural cultural centers were another manifestation of the deliberate production of socialist subjectivities. Marsh (2006) discusses the establishment of cultural centers after the establishment of the MPR, which were deliberately designed to develop Soviet “cosmopolitan” sensibilities through educational activities, movies, theatrical performances, and music. Marsh demonstrates how the government leaders at the time saw the cultural centers as a means to reform the worldviews of rural people away from traditional values and styles of artistic expression (see also Marsh 2009).

Modernisation and industrialisation were primary goals of the MPR. The constitution imitated the USSR’s 1918 constitution and set out an agenda to rapidly transform Mongolia into an industrial-agricultural state (Bruun and Narangoa 2006; Dupuy et al 1970). Urbanisation was promoted through city building projects, which focused on producing industrial sites and factories. The population of Ulaanbaatar expanded rapidly, housing nearly 25 per cent of the national population by the mid-1970s (Sneath 2009). Other industrial cities were built including Darhan and Erdenet. By 1962, the MPR joined the Council for Mutual Economic Cooperation (COMECON or CMEA), closely linking Mongolia to the Soviet Bloc through trade and coordinated production plans (World Bank 1992). Mongolia’s placement in CMEA and close relations with the Soviet Union eventually aided its admission to the United Nations in 1961. Agricultural products were a major export from Mongolia to the CMEA

countries and pastoralism was re-defined by the changing macroeconomic organisation of Mongolia in this context.

Agriculture, primarily in the form of livestock husbandry, was an important part of the economy, with major exports being raw materials such as wool, livestock, hides, meat, cashmere, and furs (Ovdiyenko 1965). The state reorganised pastoralism as a national economy, introducing mechanised transport, new fodder systems, and breeds. Incentives were also designed to reward men and women for productive work and contributions to society, such as the Honour of Motherhood given to mothers with more than four children (Hodges et al 2007, p. 14) or “Herdsman with a good herd” (Badamkhatan 1981 [2010], p. 1016).

Socialist writing in the 1950s characterized practices of mobile pastoralism as “extremely backward” (Ovdiyenko 1965, p. 3). To reconcile this supposed backwardness, in the mid-1950s, the Soviet Union increased its aid to Mongolia, which included financial aid as well as the provision of factories, machinery, equipment, and other industrial supplies (Dupuy et al 1970). The state administration made a focused effort in transforming pastoralism into a national enterprise around the establishment of collectivized production. Broadly defined, collectivisation organised agricultural production into state farms and agricultural associations or co-operatives referred to as *negdel* (Atwood 2004). In the 1930’s herders contested the collectivisation project and protested by slaughtering their own livestock (Humphrey 1978). According to one source, herders killed seven million livestock in an act of resistance to the first five-year collectivisation plan starting in 1931 (Dupuy et al 1970, p. 298). Steimann (2011) reports that around the same time period Kyrgyz pastoralists similarly opposed Soviet collectivisation measures and people slaughtered animals out of protest.

Collectivisation was a long process, which involved the gradual incorporation of livestock into *negdel* organisations, which were administered by the *sum* (Atwood 2004; Szykiewicz 1968). A Russian language text from this time period describes the social and economic transformations in Mongolia as a leading example for other socialist countries:

The Mongolian people are creating a new geography of production forces. During the years of the first five-year plan (1948–1952), the second five-year plan (1953–1957) and the three-year plan (1958–1960) for the development of the national economy and culture, the Mongolian People’s Republic, as a result of the development of national industry and the mechanization of transportation, changed from a land of backward, nomadic livestock herding to an agrarian-industrial state, into one of the leading countries of the Asian continent. The MPR is the first and only (at least in such a classical form) country which has accomplished the transition from feudalism to socialism. It is unique in this respect.

Mongolia’s way of development is a shining affirmation and realization of the teaching of the genius, V. I. Lenin, about the possibility of direct transition by backward countries from feudalism to socialism, bypassing the capitalist way of development (Ovdiyenko 1965, p. 2–3).

Administratively, this “new geography of productive forces” involved the reorganisation of *aimag* (province) and *sum* (county) boundaries from 1957–1959 to facilitate the formation of cooperatives (Dupuy et al 1970; Ovdiyenki 1965). The government organized mobile pastoralism into a system of national production and aimed to modernise pastoralism through

new technology. Production quotas for products such as wool, meat, milk, etc. became mandatory in 1941 (Sneath 2000).

Lenin's decree that Mongolia should bypass capitalism involved substantial financial and technical support from the Soviet Union. A series of five-year and three-year plans were created to develop Mongolia's agricultural sector to match the Soviet system of mechanized production (Bawden 1960; Bradsher 1972). Prior to the third five-year plan of 1961–1965, the Soviet Union delivered an aid package including huge amounts of technical assistance: machinery such as tractors, combine harvesters, trucks, and livestock. They sponsored the electrification programme, provided free training and education for Mongolian students to study in the Soviet Union, and also extended a 615 million-rouble loan. At this time, the Chinese also provided the Mongolian government with a loan of 200 million roubles (Dupuy et al 1970, p. 303). Bulag wrote of this time period, "In a bizarre competition between the Soviet Union and China to control Mongolia, both sides extended huge aid to Mongolia, which led to the rapid development of infrastructure in Mongolia" (Bulag 1998, p. 15). Throughout this time period, Mongolia's economy was dependent on foreign aid and trade relations with the Soviet bloc.

Collectivisation of Livestock

By the late 1960s, the government succeeded in institutionalising the collectivisation of livestock herding despite continued opposition by herders. By 1967, about 75 per cent of livestock was state property, with families retaining small private herds, usually around 25–75 animals depending on the region (Sneath 2003, Ressel 2005, p. 203). Each *sum* or county-like district made up a *negdel*, or collective farm. Each *sum* had a center, or settlement, and herder households lived on surrounding pastureland and were organised into production brigades

(Sneath 2000). To this end, individuals would specialise in taking care of a specific breed, sometimes further refined to a group of livestock with the breed, such as lactating goats, ewes, etc. These specialized units were called *suur*, usually consisting of up to ten families (Szynkiewicz 1968). The collectives received production orders from the state and were paid fixed prices for quotas of raw materials (Sneath 2000). Herders received a salary from the state for their work (Sneath 2003). The administration of the *sum* dictated production plans and work schedules. The *sum* was also the location of local schools and dormitories for school children, health facilities, social centers, and public administration buildings. The *sum* administrators were elected officials who held office for two years (Szynkiewicz 1968).

By the late 1960s, around 90 per cent of Mongolia's exports were livestock products (Dupuy et al 1970, p. 308). The government also focused on developing a grain industry and means to grow fodder. In 1959 the Revolutionary Party passed the Virgin Lands Campaign, which aimed to cultivate crops and grains on pastureland characterized as "virgin" (Konagaya 2013). The collectivisation of rural work was a common practice throughout Soviet-controlled territory in Central Asia. Kraudzun (2012) makes the argument that collectivisation was not only important to the economic system of the Soviet Union, but was a means for Moscow to retain control over border areas through the oversight and administration of rural work. He demonstrates how rural administration in the Pamir mountain range of Tajikistan along the border with China and Afghanistan was a geopolitically strategic position for the Soviets. Establishing strong infrastructural links between these areas and Moscow was a process of territorialisation. Reeves's (2014) research on borders in the Ferghana Valley demonstrates how these infrastructures continue to be reworked in state building projects.

Although the national government was heavy-handed in the regulation of everyday life, Mongolian customs and belief systems remained in practice. For example, Sneath (2009) discusses how practices of divination, such as scapulimancy, the reading of burnt sheep shoulder bones, continued to be practiced during the socialist period. Ressel (2005) also makes the case that the government allowance of private animals to families allowed informal networks to continue to be important.

Economic Crisis and Restructuring

In the late 1980s, peaceful demonstrations in Mongolia called for economic and political change. Public intellectuals played a formative role in these demonstrations (see for example Baabar 1990 [2010]). The Mongolian People's Republic came to an end with the resignation of the country's leaders and a general election in 1990. At the same time, the Soviet Union was undergoing rapid political and economic change, leading to its collapse in 1991 and the end of CMEA. The termination of aid, expertise, supplies, and imports from the Soviet Union, which amounted to approximately 30 per cent of Mongolia's GDP, created intense economic shocks throughout the country (Griffin 1995, p. 3). In 1991, imports of consumer and investment goods, including fuel, declined by approximately 60 per cent. Likewise, Mongolia's terms of trade disintegrated as the country left the rouble zone and began to trade in world prices (World Bank 1992). The supply shock had particularly strong effects on the Mongolian construction industry, as important inputs such as fuel and other materials became scarce. An ongoing issue in the Mongolian economy is its reliance on favourable terms of trade for a narrow export base largely composed of minerals and agricultural products. The government budget is sensitive to fluctuations in world prices of oil and copper, as the government deficit is mainly funded by mining tax revenues. For example, in 1996, falls in

the prices of copper decreased Mongolia's GDP by 10 per cent (Chimeddagva, Jargalsaikhan and Walters 2000, p. 47).

The twin shocks of the collapse of the USSR and the end of CMEA posed serious problems not only for Mongolian citizens, but for the functioning of the government. A severe government budget deficit emerged with the cessation of Soviet funds. Inflation increased dramatically throughout the period of liberalisation. In 1992 alone inflation was 325 per cent (Nixson et al 2000, p. 65). The government responses to control the immediate problems of inflation and the emerging economic crisis occurred at the same time as it began to restructure the economy by following an IMF-prescribed strict liberalisation model of reforms called "shock therapy" (Collins and Nixson 1993). The establishment of a market economy and the response to economic crisis seemed to converge around reforms aimed at restructuring the government budget and the role of the government in the country's economic production. In 1992, the World Bank wrote, "A big part of the solution to Mongolia's crisis lies within the public sector, both in reducing the extremely high fiscal deficits and in restructuring the public finance system to one suited to a market economy" (1992, p. 12-13).

At the same time, administrative restructuring incurred a heavy cost for Mongolia (Nixson et al 2000). As Nixson et al (2000) have argued, there was little consideration of the fit between the reform plans adopted by Mongolia and the situation of the country at the time. Shock therapy reforms were applied in an idealistic manner without considering the "actual process or goals of transition" (p. xv). They write, "...the pursuit of narrowly economic objectives has meant that many of the real achievements of the socialist period, particularly in education, health, and gender equity, are being sacrificed for little gains in terms of economic benefits for the majority of the population" (p. xvi). The government focused on rapid

privatisation as a primary method of establishing a market economy. The fall-out of this process has been significant problems with distribution and an increase in poverty and wealth inequality (Janes and Chuluundorj 2004; Janes et al. 2006; Nixon and Walters 2006; Rak and Janes 2004).

On 14 February 1991, Mongolia became a member of the World Bank Group (World Bank 1992). The Bank and IMF provided an essential line of credit during the economic crisis, but their aid came with conditions for restructuring the economy. The structural adjustment reforms began with privatisation and trade and price liberalisation. These reforms allowed Mongolia to join the World Trade Organization by 1997 (Sharma and Davaakhuu 2015). Starting in 1992, members of livestock cooperatives and other state workers were entitled to purchase livestock through a voucher system. The implementation of this system lacked consistent management and varied by region as the *sums* organised their own means of distribution (Nixon and Walters 2006; Russel, Adya and Tseven 2000). The co-operative's collectively-owned goods were divided amongst its members, including winter shelters, vehicles, and livestock (Sneath 2003). More successful and experienced families, or people with better information on how the voucher system worked, were able to benefit more from privatisation than others (Nixon and Walters 2006). Pastureland, however, was omitted from private purchase by constitutional provisions that protect common grazing land rights.

The push for land privatisation as part of Mongolia's economic reform process continues in 2014 and 2015 debates on land laws. In the early years of economic transition, economists from the Asian Development Bank and other investors called for the privatisation of land as a fundamental aspect of capitalist market systems. Additionally, economists argued that free-range livestock husbandry posed an environmental risk, citing Hardin's (1968)

tragedy of the commons idea. Despite pressures to privatise land, a new constitution was drafted by the Mongolian parliament, which passed in 1992 (Sanders 1992). The constitution protects pastureland as a state-owned resource and identified the national livestock herd as an important source of national wealth. In 1994, the Land Law was passed and established three main categories of rights to land, which included land ownership, land possession, and land use (Fernandez-Gimenez and Batbuyan 2004). Two primary designations of property rights in this law are land ownership rights, which allow for land to be bought and sold in settled areas, and land possession rights, which refer to the right to use certain areas of land for a period of time based on a contract with the state. This portion of the Land Law is applicable to herder's winter shelter use and possession rights, *ovoljoonii gerchilgee*, which are the focus of my work in the article titled, "The role of kinship in negotiating territorial rights."

In the first ten years after the establishment of the market economy, the number of herders significantly increased. From 1990–1998, livestock increased by more than 20 per cent (Sneath 2010b, p. 1074); a majority of the increase was in goats (Maekawa 2013). The increase in livestock numbers and herders in the early years of transition reflects the lack of formal employment after the state system ended (Anderson 1998). Families with newly acquired livestock, both former state herders as well as new herders, were largely subsistence producers (Sneath 2006b). The turbulent Mongolian economy and uncertainty since the end of socialism has added pressure to pastoralist household economies and provided a form of food security for many. Herders also combined livestock husbandry with short-term work and trading. "Suitcase traders" plied newly-opened routes between Russia and China along the trans-Siberian railroad (Lacaze 2010). Additionally, absentee and contract herding has gained traction (Fernandez-Gimenez 1999; Murphy 2015)

The unemployment due to the termination of state-sponsored jobs increased the number of people reliant on herding for income and food security, including many with limited skills in livestock husbandry (Diener 2011; Janzen 2005). At this time, household mobility was compromised due to the lack of reliable motorized transport or draft animals, need for proximity to markets, and in some cases, the poor herding knowledge or skills of new herders (Spoor 1996). Sneath (2003, 2004) argues that Mongolian pastoralism has always involved a mutual dependence between larger institutions and households. Larger institutions, such as rich households, monasteries, or collectives, dictated aspects of migration and territorial use and absorbed risks to some degree. The breakdown of the socialist system eliminated many of the risk-mitigating procedures and services provided to herders. The increase of the population herding with limited experience further disadvantaged herders in the face of a turbulent economy and winter disasters in 1999–2001 and 2009–2010.

Since the transition to a market economy, herders have faced two major winter disasters, called *dzud*. The first was from 1999–2001 and the second from 2009–2010. In the first disaster, about three million livestock were killed (Sternberg 2010). Since the disaster in 2010, donor agencies have pushed for stronger governance interventions focused on decentralisation (Mearns 2004b). The World Bank's Sustainable Livelihoods Project was renewed after the *dzuds* and established pilot projects for index-based livestock insurance. Initial research into the feasibility of index-based insurance followed the *dzud* in 2000 (Skees et al 2002). In 2014, the Sustainable Livelihoods Project was reinstated for a third iteration. Additionally, the UNDP and World Bank have played a role in developing and drafting a new Pastureland Law. The draft of this new, still developing-law states:

The main purpose is to provide a legal method for the transition from an unplanned and unregulated grassland user system to provide a system characterized by: secure possession of pastureland for herders and legal entities; pastureland planning and management system; improve the development and management of pastureland information; distinguish the functions, duties and responsibilities between different levels of administration; and to improve the system to identify and manage problems associated with land degradation and effects of global climate change. (Hannam 2007, p. 4).

The government and international consultants are drafting this law in a context where legislation on mineral rights and environmental protection is also a contentious political topic. Mongolia is currently considered to be one of the most open economies in Asia and international investment is important to the fiscal stability of the government (Davaakhuu, Sharma, and Bandara 2014; Sharma and Davaakhuu 2015). Over the course of the last five years, the size of the mineral sector in the national economy has grown significantly, surpassing the agricultural sector since 2010 (Thampapillai, Hansen, and Bolat 2014). This ties economic stability and future aspirations of prosperity more closely to the mining industry and its international investors. High and Schlesinger (2010, p. 289) estimate that approximately 30 per cent of Mongolia territory was leased to mining companies in 2010. One of the largest coal deposits in the world is located in the Gobi Desert. The development of the Oyu Tolgoi copper and gold mine in the South Gobi desert has contributed to high growth rates in the last five years (Sharma and Davaakhuu 2015). In addition to mega-mining projects, artisanal mining and smaller scale operations proliferate (High 2008). In 2015 the economy returned to the economic doldrums as world commodity prices have gone down, international

investment has waned and the government struggles to find money to cover the resulting national deficit.

Despite the rising star status that Mongolia has achieved in recent years, at least a quarter of the population has been impoverished since the mid-1990s. The poverty rate decreased from 38.7 per cent in 2010 to 27.4 per cent in 2012 (Sharma and Davaakhuu 2015). The prevalence of poverty reflects the legacy of the reform process in the 1990s and contributes to the sense of uncertain futures for some. In order to address this problem, the government has implemented cash transfer social welfare schemes, including a programme targeted at the children of poor families starting in 2005, which expanded into the universal Child Money Program in 2006. Newly married couples receive a benefit from this programme, as well as all children under the age of 18. School-aged children are required to be living with their parents and going to school to receive the money. Such income sources, as well as pensions, are important to the functioning of many rural households (Hodges et al. 2007). A continuing development is the financialisation of the public sector, which appears in pastoralist households through annual bank loans, livestock insurance, and cash transfers (see for example Meyanathan 2013; Sneath 2012). Despite these measures, poverty and wealth inequality are persistent issues. These inequalities are also expressed through social perceptions of rural and urban subjectivities. While the rural is idealised as a source of pure Mongolian culture, away from the polluted and corrupt city, in practice rural people and lifeways are often discriminated against as inferior to urban subjectivities. Ideas about modernity inform these discourses, as they did during the socialist era when the state initiated whole scale social transformation based on Leninist ideals and violently repressed past centers of power, such as the Buddhist temples.

This section has offered a cursory overview of some aspects of the organisation of the pastoralist economy in the last century in order to provide a greater context for the journal articles to follow, which had limited space to discuss historical developments. By highlighting these aspects of the history of pastoralism in Mongolia, I aim to show that herders have always been part of economies of governing elites in the region. The organisation of rural work changed considerably during privatization, economic liberalization, and economic crisis. The rural population experienced sudden change in the economic structure of work when formal employment and salaries of state-run collectives or state farms ended in the 1990s (Sneath 2003, p. 443). The establishment of democracy and capitalism in tandem with the collapse of the Soviet trading block, the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, redefined the economic worth of property, agricultural products, and labour. These changes have generated a number of forms of insecurity, ranging from spiritual to food insecurities, which are rooted in the fluctuating qualities of Mongolia's liberal economy and regional geopolitics (Højer 2007; Humphrey 1985; Narmandakh and Khan 2012; Pedersen 2011; Pedersen and Højer 2008; Sneath 2003; Spoor 1996; Templer, Swift, and Payne 1993). Despite these changes, many aspects of government administration are familiar to past systems. Land, although subject to new ownership laws, continues to be owned by the state and is protected as a common resource in the 1992 national constitution (Sanders 1992). Administrative districts and local government organisations also retain the same basic structure as during the socialist period, although there is a push for decentralisation of local decision making in rural areas. Additionally, cultural identities associated with pastoralism have been sources of power for elites and the control of territorial resources, faintly resembling appanage relations of the past.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

She said that when she was travelling in Russia near Lake Baikal she went to a monastery of some sort that only opens once a year or once every two years. She happened to be in the area at that time and inside the monastery was a 150-year-old meditating man who was sitting in a glass chamber or box. She said that you are only allowed to go in the room for a short period of time, that the man is really alive and has flesh like us—she made a gesture toward our flesh—real flesh. She went in the room to meet him and she said that she was very nervous, her heart was pounding, and she first wished for the world to live in peace, for the waters to be cleaned, for the earth and nature to be healed. Then she wished for her mother's good health and longevity, then she thought of herself in the very end and added her wishes about wanting to travel, etc. She said that he looked at her and he has brown eyes like her and I. She looked at me with her big brown eyes, the candlelight reflecting, to emphasize the point. She was describing these wishes to me and told me that Mongolians have a saying, that one should fit into the blanket that one has. In other words, live within your means, don't try to expand into areas that you don't have.

The saying is: “Хөнжлийнхөө хирээр хөлөө хий.” She said that she doesn't agree with this proverb at all. It is an example of how her and her mother differ in their opinions. She said that one should not just settle for the blanket that one has, but should actively expand the blanket. She gave the example: her mother will buy clothing according to the money she had, but she will buy the clothing that she wants and make the money to make it happen. She doesn't want to just settle for the size she has now. I thought that this was really fascinating, this issue of differing opinions. She said that her mom was really surprised because her mom realized that her baby is growing up and has opinions of her own.

—Except from field notes, 3 June 2013

RESEARCH AS LEARNING: PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION AND ETHNOGRAPHY

My research methodology is based on long-term participant observations of people who identify as *malchin* (herder) or *hodoonii hun* (countryside person), including their friends and

family who live elsewhere and may not identify or only loosely identify in this way. I employed participant observations, interviews, photographic, video, and audio recordings, and ongoing processes of writing and reflecting in order to understand contemporary pastoralist livelihoods. I also read newspapers, documents, and observed other media in my attention to the guiding questions of the research. These methods constituted a learning process—what Ingold (2014) refers to as a “practice of correspondence” (p. 389), which I communicate in the form of ethnography. Ingold feels that the term ethnography has been misused to refer broadly to qualitative research methods in the social sciences. Ingold argues that the shift of the meaning of ethnography from a style of writing and communication to a methodology is problematic because it mis-identifies practices of participant observation as a form of data-gathering rather than a process of learning and becoming. Ingold writes, “For to observe is not to objectify; it is to attend to persons and things, to learn from them, and to follow in precept and practice” (2014, p. 387). Ingold’s argument is important because it highlights ethnography as part of a larger experiential approach to research, which is not based on a positivist perspective that insists on the separation between knowing something and doing something. Rather participant observation is based on the belief that “knowledge grows from the crucible of lives lived with others” (p. 387). In this way, research methods such as participant observation are essential to ethnography, which means “writing about the people” (Ingold 2014). This, as Haraway (1988) has argued, is a practice of science based on “situated knowledges” (p. 590).

Crang and Cook describe the aim of ethnography as “to understand parts of the world more or less as they are experienced and understood in the everyday lives of people who ‘live them out’” (2007, p. 1). Research practices involving hands-on activities, conversations,

observations, and reflections are ways of learning about dynamic social systems. In the disciplines of anthropology and geography, ethnography relies on methods such as participant observation and a variety of interviewing techniques. It also involves particular ways of presenting evidence of social phenomenon through life histories and vignettes. As Mills and Morton have pointed out, “No matter how intense these lived experiences, they can only be communicated through writing. This is the paradox that sustains the ethnographic project” (2013, p. 3). Other types of presentation include photography, film, audio recordings, and story-telling techniques (Crang and Cook 2007). Recent work by Yi’En (2014) illuminates the transformative and embodied experience of doing fieldwork in an urban setting where walking is a means to learn about, explore, and engage with place. He writes, “Walking...attunes our bodies to the host of affects and mundane vignettes of the city, as well as sensitizing us to the networks of rhythms weaving urban life into form” (2014, p. 221). A growing literature on walking as a research methodology has been utilised by human and cultural geographers to re-focus attention on everyday practices, materialities, and the corporeal aspects of human relations (Bondi 2005; DeCerteau 1984; Hitchings 2011; Ingold 2007), including experiences of absence and haunting (Frers 2013, Maddrell 2013). This approach is informed by the work of Latour (2005) as well as the phenomenology of Derrida (2006) and Husserl (2012 [1931]) in order to emphasise the non-discursive aspects of the research experience. The work also highlights the importance of positionality and place in the context of research encounters, where gender, age, education, and other characteristics inform choices about how, where, and under what circumstances fieldwork develops and related insights emerge.

Jane Dyson’s (2014) ethnography of youth and agency in the Indian Himalayas critiques Ingold’s idea of “wayfaring” and adds depth to discussions of walking as a form of

participant observation. In her research on girls' work and herding, she shows that work expectations and routines change over the life course. Rather than be free to roam through the environment as Ingold suggests in his concept of wayfaring, the girls from Bemni adjusted the places they herded, the type of work they engaged in, the company they kept, and their affective demeanor as they grew up and were expected to behave according to the rules of their house and the village. Conducting research in rural Mongolia also involved careful consideration of appropriate ways and places to do research, as well as being sensitive to age and gender-related expectations about behaviour, work, and communication. Indeed, while the increased attention to methodologies such as walking add value to ethnography by stressing the material conditions and emotional registers that inform how the researcher engages with people, things, and the immaterial in environments, it also begs the question of how walking as a methodology is different from and adds to participant observation in general. In rural Mongolia, it was not one activity in particular that drew attention to the environment, but all activities as they occurred on a daily basis in changing seasons and weather, as financial and health issues came and went, while sleeping, cooking, taking care of children, milking livestock, and a host of other events.

For example, an important lesson that I experienced on a daily basis was though milk. It was milk that taught me how "place" can be understood as an event. It consisted of an interface with temporal and spatial coordinates, which means that it occurred in a location and time, but was transformational. Milking goats was an activity that my host family did one to two times per day, or not at all, depending on the season. Milking, as an event that brought together people around a common task in the context of a specific physical environment, constituted "place." Place had meaning through the event; doing the work of milking (both

alone and with others) taught me about pastoralism, politics, and rural economies, gender, and the environment. I realised that conceiving of place as a series of ongoing (routine) and extraordinary events is a necessary part of carefully attending to the relations that make these events possible. Milk was essential to household nutrition, hospitality practices, and herding work. Also, milking involved situated knowledge, experience with animal husbandry as well as bonding, training, and communicating with livestock. Milking and milk were embodied differently for men and women.

These ethnographic methods are particularly useful for studying social transformation due to an emphasis on long-term engagement with the topic of study. Quantitative and short-term qualitative research does provide valuable insights and help to identify themes and questions that can be explored and tested in greater depth through long-term participant observation and ethnographic tools. Moreover, long-term engagement allows a researcher to gain a greater understanding of the history, interconnections, and changing circumstances in which people live and to observe how people make decisions in these contexts. This ethnographic research practice is a process of discovery, learning, as well as vigorous documentation to reflect on themes, develop grounded theory, and triangulate and substantiate the information that emerges from this process.

Anthropologists have long critiqued conventional methods and practices of ethnography in order to re-evaluate their positionality and to be accountable to how knowledge is produced and presented (see for example Mosse 2006). I practiced a way of doing research that focuses on the experiential aspect of “place” as event or an interface with temporal and spatial coordinates (rather than “boundaries”) as a means to move beyond practices that construct “the field” as a natural object of study and analysis. While geography

as a discipline makes the theoretical claim that “place matters,” the particular inheritance of the disciplinary (and disciplining) approach in anthropology and human geography around the formation of “field sites” can distract from “place” as an inter-subjective experience (see for example Jackson 2013) or “practice of correspondence” (Ingold 2014). As Appadurai (1986, 1988), Coleman and Collins (2006), Ferguson and Gupta (1997), Sidaway (2012) and others have argued, research fields, in terms of conventional area studies as well as the way in which places are conceived, are partly formed through the “institutional apparatus” of the disciplines (Coleman and Collins 2006, p. 5). As Coleman and Collins have advocated, understanding the “field as event” (2006, p. 12) captures the experiential qualities of doing ethnographic research and captures the dynamic environments that both shape and are shaped by these events.

The social sciences have made great strides in developing theoretical critiques of knowledge production based on the construction of objectively observable and bounded field sites. Critique has also been directed toward the relations of power in conducting research and has given rise to critical methods and decolonial approaches in the social sciences. Ferguson and Gupta (1997) argue that the problem with the construction of field sites, institutionally (based on funding, peer-review, and disciplining of early career academics) and in practice (methods based on imposing objectivity), is “the uncritical mapping of ‘difference’ onto exotic sites...as well as the implicit presumption that ‘Otherness’ means difference from an unmarked, white, Western ‘self’” (1997, p. 15). They write: “...even ideas about ‘the field’ that are explicitly disavowed by contemporary anthropologists in intellectual terms continue to be deeply embedded in our professional practices” (1997, p. 12). Despite the dethroning of the archetypal fieldworker, research in human geography and anthropology continues to hold onto

the value of rigorous immersion in a single field site, a research methodology based on participant observation, and the notion that field work is a “rite of passage” that enables authority, where “fieldwork-based knowledge as necessarily truer or less-mediated than other types” (Ferguson and Gupta 1997, p. 34). While there is much value in doing ethnographic research, learning language, and having a co-creative immersive experience in a place, the emphasis on the exclusivity of a researcher fixing an “ethnographic gaze” on so-called “informants” or “subjects” is an artificial positioning that detracts from the value of exploring issues using this form of qualitative research.

To avoid these hazards, I used ethnographic methods informed by a grounded theory approach, which included participant observation, semi-structured/open-ended interviews, group interviews, and immersion in rural life and work through home stays and visits. Writing daily field notes and frequently revising interview questions based on emerging themes from conversations with herders was a significant exercise in the research process. I did not go to the field to test a pre-conceived hypothesis, but to find ways to understand my initial research questions based on the reflections of the herder community and other groups, such as extended family or administrators, who were relevant to the social reproduction of pastoralist households. I routinely revised interview questions based on the new information I received from informants as well as my own developing linguistic comprehension. I consulted with herders and administrators to confirm that the themes I identified reflected an accurate understanding of local interpretations, as well as putting myself in similar experiences to that of my informants in order to experience it directly to understand the components of the issue. I used triangulation techniques to check facts and identify inconsistencies. Through this process, my research questions became increasingly oriented toward issues around the social

reproduction of the pastoralist households and governance, as households acted to mobilize resources mediated by public administration structures.

In doing this research, I attempted to work according to local systems rather than force others to conform to a research plan. For this reason, my research involved mobility, as I travelled with people and groups between the multiple social and physical spaces that they inhabited. Also, it involved flexible planning and strategizing that reflected local values and interpretative frameworks, such as consultation with local diviners and Buddhist oracles. I was firmly placed as a “member” of my host family and played the role of student/apprentice/researcher in my field site. I continue to maintain contact with my field site community via Skype and cellular text messages and I am committed to maintaining relationships with both my host family and the site community.

I returned from fieldwork with ethnographic data in a variety of forms, including video, photographs, interview recordings, recordings from county meetings and public events, informal communications, songs, and other materials such as letters, print materials, newspapers, local reports, and other items. I conducted a survey of 91 people in Ulaanbaatar and Bayanhongor using an open-ended question hard-copy survey. I also collected GIS data on the seasonal campsites of the herders from my primary field site and video footage of pastoralist work practices. The video and audio recordings enabled me to review and re-live moments from fieldwork after I returned to the UK. I analysed these materials and developed vignettes that represent common experiences and themes, which appear as ethnographies in the journal articles.

I followed Oxford University’s Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC) guidelines throughout the study and prioritised a critical methods approach that

involved feedback and suggestions from the field site community. In this way, my research reflects the community's interests and issues that were salient to their experiences through the lens of my research questions. In this thesis and the following journal articles, all names have been changed to aliases.

Site Selection, Language, and Communication

In September 2012, I travelled to Mongolia to do a preliminary assessment and lay the groundwork for a longer research trip. Prior to this trip, I had worked and studied in the country in various capacities. I first visited in 2004, when I attended an SIT undergraduate Study Abroad semester course. At that time, I established my first network of contacts which has enabled me to do continued research as a Fulbright Scholar, master's student, and now doctoral student. The field sites I considered prior to arrival in Mongolia in September 2012 were based on an evaluation of my existing networks as well as considerations of the characteristics of the specific regions. Having reliable contacts in the field site region was an important consideration in the selection process because my ability to conduct research in remote areas was entirely dependent on the strength of my networks and personal reputation. The purpose of the preliminary assessment was to evaluate these networks and the possibility of living with a local family for an extended period of time. In Mongolia, there is an expectation that connections to people and places will occur to some degree through networks. Personal introductions based on established relationships offer an element of trust, reliability, and protection.

Being part of a family network was in many ways more important than randomly choosing a place based on environmental features. As stated above, the focus on bounded field sites through a positivist approach fails to take account of the highly mobile, connected, and

fluid nature of human relations that span geographic regions and contribute to how these places are experienced. In rural Mongolia, herders are mobile and family members might live in many different locations over the course of a year. Further, one can argue that choosing a family placement is one of the most important decisions in establishing a relationship to place. To obscure the process of choosing a field site by framing it as a decision based solely on the physical geography of a region and demographic statistics is to mystify the research process and to reiterate a separation or unreal distance between the field and the researcher. Thus, in choosing the rural location where I planned to study contemporary pastoralism, both the social placement and physical and historical characteristics of the location were important considerations.

From September to November 2012, I reviewed potential field sites, met the community of herders in the field sites, piloted interview questions, surveyed the logistical situation and possible fields of action, and established a relationship with the National University of Mongolia. In addition to planning, I started preliminary research. Upon arrival in Mongolia in September, I stayed with KS, a close friend originally from Bayanhongor who I met in 2004. At the time, she was residing with her fiancée about 20 km from Ulaanbaatar in Khujur-Bulgan and shared a fenced-in plot of land with her younger brother's family. After arrival in Mongolia, KS and I travelled to visit her parents and grandmother (father's mother) in Bayanhongor.

While we were staying with KS's parents and her younger sister in their late summer pasture camp, KS suggested that I use her parents' house as a base for my research. Her parents both grew up in different regions in Bayanhongor province in herding families and had recently returned to the countryside to become herders again after living in the outskirts of

Ulaanbaatar for nearly a decade. They lived outside of Ulaanbaatar to work and support their children's high school and college education. Their decision to return to the countryside was complex and involved a mix of considerations over the welfare of their youngest daughter as well as their livestock herd, which were in the care of an immediate relative. The family dynamics will be addressed below, as they are an important part of the research experience. After consulting with professors at the National University, assessing the characteristics of *Ölziit sum*, and going to a diviner at the insistence of KS, I decided on Bayanhongor's *Ölziit sum* as my main rural research location. I chose to do research in Gurvanbulag and Bayanbulag *sums* in addition to *Ölziit* because they are located in more remote regions of Northern Bayanhongor, where the mountainous *khangai* environment and colder temperatures contrast with the Gobi-steppe environment of *Ölziit*. Also, Gurvanbulag is the birthplace of KS's mother. *Ölziit* was an appealing research site for additional reasons. Bayanhongor is the location of other research projects on mobile pastoralism and rangeland management. Although these sites are about a day's drive or more away from *Ölziit*, it is possible to compare and contrast the findings from this research with my own work. Additionally, Bayanhongor is environmentally diverse and it is in the top five provinces with the greatest number of registered herders in the country. This region was badly affected by the *dzud* in 1999–2001 and 2009–2010. These characteristics made Bayanhongor a valuable location to study herder livelihoods and household organisation. I discuss more details about these regions in the sections below.

I decided to follow KS's advice and use her parents' home as a base for my rural field site. I was comfortable in their home and easily adapted to their household dynamics. I quickly became part of the household and took part in all family activities, referred to my host

mother as *eej* (mom) and host father as *aav* (dad). Prior to September 2012, I had only spent time with them in their home on the outskirts of Ulaanbaatar and was not familiar with the Bayanhongor region or other families living there. Placement with KS's family was ideal for a number of reasons. First, her family had a history in the region but was re-establishing a lifestyle as herders after many years away. This decision was linked to a desire to facilitate their daughter's marriage and establish an independent household. These transitions and the related family dynamics around caring for livestock as well as infant and elderly family members provided a rich setting to study how herding related with broader social relations and concerns. Additionally, KS's family owned a low to average number of livestock for the region for their family size, milking around 49 goats out of a total of approximately 240 sheep and goats. Their location allowed me to easily liaise with local administrators and other herders in order to spend time with other households and observe local government activities.

Taking an ethnographic approach to research entails a long-term engagement with a community and the places they inhabit. As participant observation was a primary research method, some degree of language fluency was essential to establish a rapport with local herders, organise logistics, conduct interviews, and be a participant in the community. To this end, I took formal Mongolian language classes for approximately five months in advance of setting out on fieldwork so that I had the ability to conduct interviews without a translator and to do fieldwork independently. I received FLAS funding from the US Department of State to participate in Indiana University, Bloomington's Summer Language Workshop in Intensive Mongolian from June–August 2012. Studying Mongolian with Tserenchunt Legden, a professional language instructor based in the United States at a Department of Mongolian studies was the best option for quickly improving language capacity. It also allowed me to

consult many rare Mongolian texts and participate in Mongolian history classes offered by the department. The Mongolian language programmes for non-native speakers in Mongolia lacked rigorous curriculum and well-developed teaching methodologies. I did extensive research on the language programmes available in Mongolia prior to going to Indiana and was not able to find a course that offered the type of training that I needed. I later continued language study in Mongolia with tutors.

At the end of the preliminary assessment, I felt that my language ability was at an intermediate level and I needed to improve my comprehension in order to do effective research. Communication was also complicated by regional colloquialisms and accents of the residents of my field sites. In order to mitigate communication issues during semi-structured interviews, I prepared open-ended questions in Mongolian, which I read to the interviewee and recorded for transcription later. As my Mongolian language ability improved, I was able to ask more advanced follow-up questions. My language skills improved in tandem with gaining the trust of the residents of the community, so the follow-up questions provided further space for the original responses to be filled in with more details, corrections, or opinions. My system of interviewing was, from the beginning, open to critique by the community, as they corrected my badly written sentences or pored over my papers to understand the question I was asking. Many acted as a teacher and took the time to explain opinions, activities, or ideas in detail to help me understand how and why things were done in certain ways. The majority of my understanding emerged from conversations, discussions, and observations that occurred alongside routine activities. Semi-structured interviews were opportunities to ask questions and follow-up on experiences, observations, and conversations that occurred throughout the day while doing other tasks.

While my language skills did improve during the three months of initial research in fall 2012, I felt that it was important to advance my language skills in a structured manner. I decided to return to IU Bloomington to live with my language teacher and attend her courses from February to April 2013. She was raised in a herder family in Dundgobi province and provided valuable feedback as I planned my primary fieldwork phase, which commenced in May 2013. This additional study provided a much stronger framework for me to advance my language ability in the field and I felt much more comfortable communicating upon my return to Bayanhongor in May 2013.

Mobility and Fields

Ferguson and Gupta suggest that the way “the field” is conceptualized is “a form of political engagement, in terms of both the knowledge it has produced and the kind of disciplinary subject it has created” (1997, p. 38). It is political in the sense of figuring into relations of power and status. They argue that social scientists should reorient research practice toward being “attentive to location” (p.5). They frame this task in practical terms by engaging actively in the events of the research location and blurring of boundaries between a distant “other” place and “home.” They write: “We see the political task not as ‘sharing’ knowledge with those who lack it, but as forging links between different knowledges that are possible from different locations and tracing lines of possible alliance and common purpose between them” (1997, p. 39).

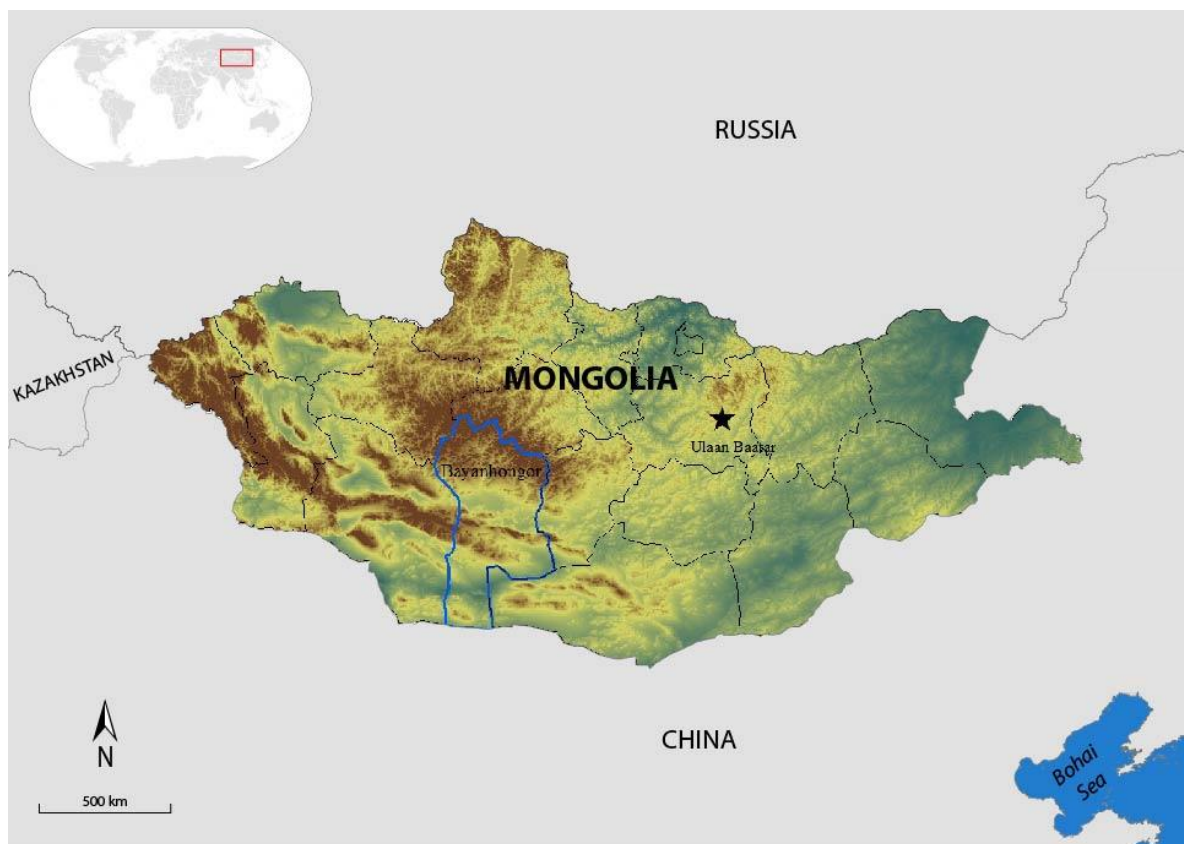
In my research, I wanted to learn about and participate in rural work, which was complicated by environmental and logistical factors. It quickly became apparent that 1) households were mobile within their region and 2) household members who engaged in herding moved between a variety of urban, semi-urban, rural, and even international spaces at

different times. These two features meant that pastoralism as a form of work both corresponded to a permanent geographic location (and highly depended on those environmental resources) and also occurred and was supported by people located elsewhere. Maintaining integrity to this place made the concept of a fixed field site almost impossible, as the inhabitants were constantly on the move.

With this in mind, I researched in three regions in Bayanhongor province in central-west Mongolia, which were connected through strong links to *sum* centers, provincial *centers* and Ulaanbaatar. The majority of my time was spent in *Ölziit sum, bag 1* where I resided with KS's parents and younger sister. The fieldwork was broken into two phases: a preliminary field assessment, described above, and a primary fieldwork phase from the beginning of May 2013 to the end of January 2014. The following sections describe these areas in greater detail as well as the other places where research took place, as herders moved between a variety of locations to access different resources and provide care for their family members.

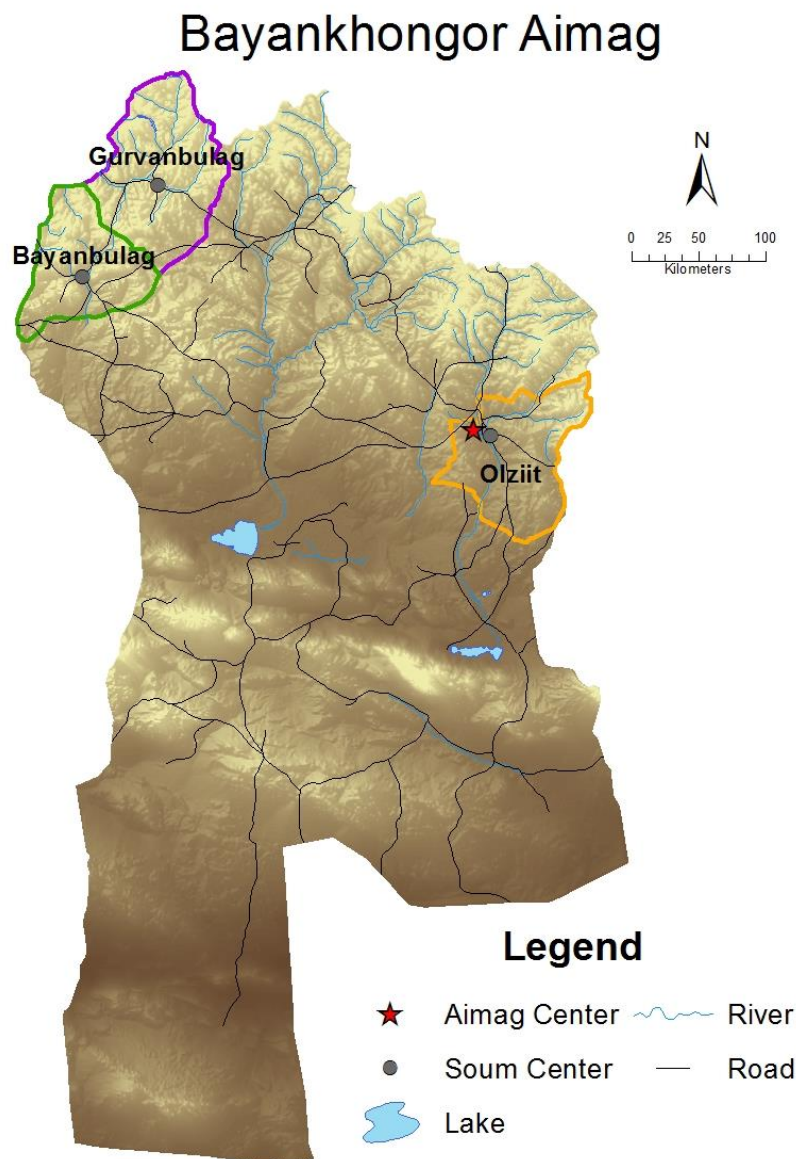
Bayanhongor Province

Bayanhongor includes the southern region of the Khangai mountain range, the eastern ridges of the Altai range, and stretches into the Gobi Desert to the south (Atwood, 2004, p. 39). It is mostly a Gobi-type ecological region, consisting mainly of desert-steppe and steppe with a stretch of the Khangai mountain areas in the northern regions extending below its borders with Zavkhan province. Mongolia has a continental climate, cold and semi-arid, where temperatures can range from -40°C in winter to $+40^{\circ}\text{C}$ in summer. The desert and desert-steppe regions receive less than 100 mm of rainfall a year, while the forested steppe and mountain areas receive up to 400 mm per year (Laituri and Thompson 2012, p. 39).



Map 1: Map of Mongolia and Bayanhongor Province, *created by Leah Holguin 2015*

The arid climate and environment makes mobile pastoralism a main livelihood, where diverse species of grasses make up common grazing lands. Types of soil, grass, and water quantity vary as one travels north from Ölziit to the Khangai mountainous areas. In Ölziit, Gurvanbulag, and Bayanbulag counties, local water sources were drawn from rivers and springs as well as local wells. Herders in Ölziit reported variable water quality and some households had separate sources for drinking water versus water for livestock.



Map 2: Bayanbulag, Gurvanbulag, and Ölziit Counties in Bayankhongor Province, *created by Leah Holquin 2015*

Bayanhongor province is one of Mongolia's twenty-one provinces and located in the central west region of the country. The province was established in 1942 and shares its southern border with China and northern border with Zavkhan province. The provincial borders were partly a legacy of Qian Dynasty administration. Campi (2006, p. 45) reports that the current site of the Bayanhongor provincial center was a Manchu relay station located on the road to the city of Uliastai. Bayanhongor was home to a number of large Buddhist temples, which were largely destroyed during the socialist purges (Atwood, 2004). The Erdene Bandidaa Monastery controlled a territory of about 20,000 square kilometres, including the present day county of Ölziit (Fernandez-Gimenez 1999, p. 326). Buddhism remains the main religious practice. The capital of the province is also called Bayanhongor and is located about 630 kilometres west of the capital city of Ulaanbaatar. It is geographically the second largest province in Mongolia and was home to approximately 77,800 people in 2013 (National Statistical Yearbook 2013, p. 82). The population of Bayanhongor has increased since 2011 after experiencing a steady decline since the late 1990s.

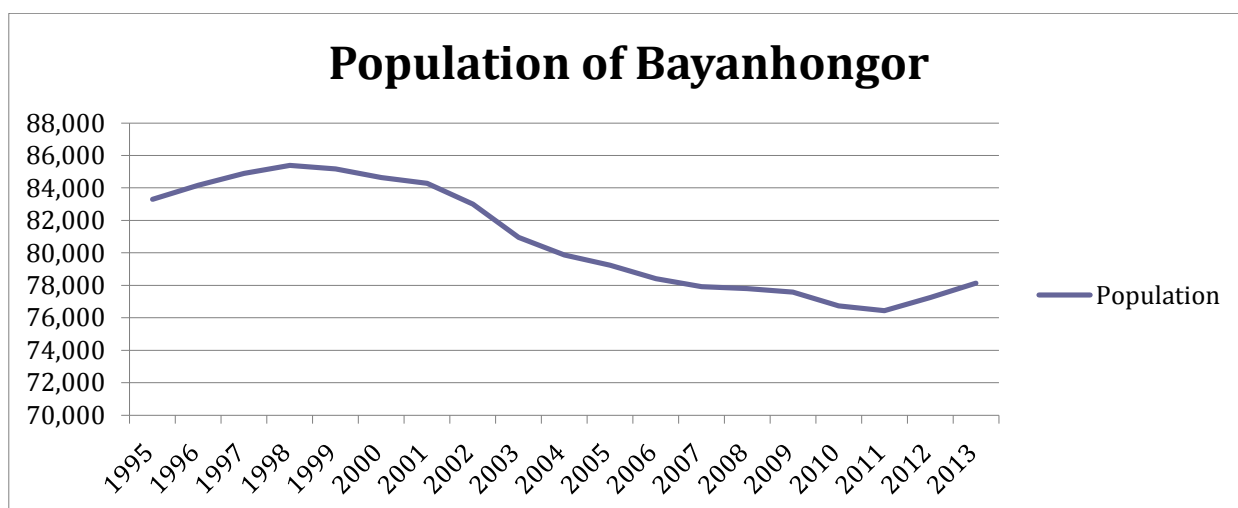


Table 1: Population of Bayanhongor, data from Mongolian Statistical Information Service

Bayanhongor has twenty counties, or *sum* in Mongolia. Each county has an administrative center which includes a residential settlement, elementary and middle school, and sometimes a high school, as well as the local government buildings, basic medical facilities, banks, shops, repair shops, one or more gas stations, and other facilities.

In 2012, there were 23,747 households in Bayanhongor province, of which 10,453 (p. 220) were registered as herder households according to the Mongolian Statistical Information Service, which defines a herder household as “herders(s) and their nuclear family which conduct livestock husbandry around the year for the main purpose of livelihood and source of income” (National Statistical Office of Mongolia 2013, p. 208). In Bayanhongor, the total herd count for 2012 was 2,640,831 head of livestock, which is an aggregate of the “five snouts of livestock” represented by horses, yaks/cattle, camel, goats, and sheep (National Statistical Yearbook 2013, p. 212). This number increased to 2,987,064 in 2013. Bayanhongor is in the top five provinces with the greatest number of livestock and herders. Two major *dzud* or winter hazard events characterized by extreme cold, heavy snow, and drought affected the livestock population in the 1999–2001 seasons as well as the 2009–2010 season, where around 700,000 head of livestock died in Bayanhongor and around 8.5 million livestock in the entire country (Fernandez-Gimenez, Batbuyan, and Batkhishig 2011).

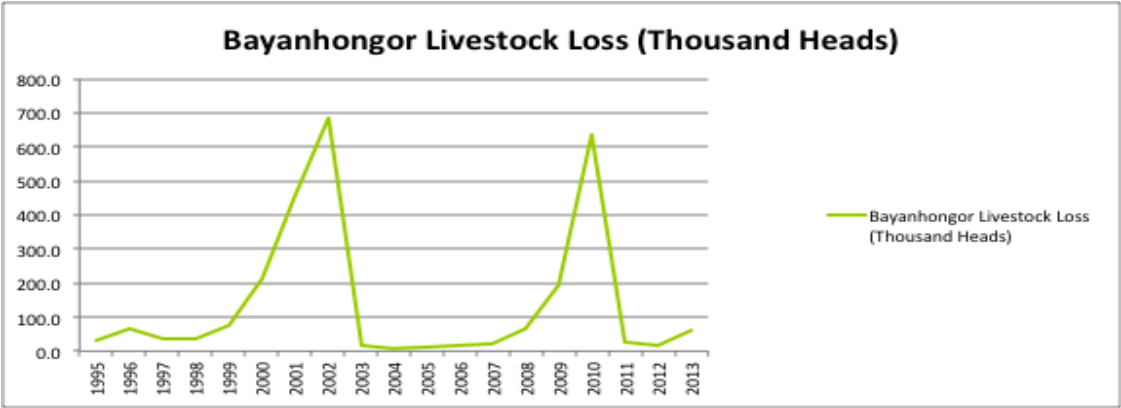
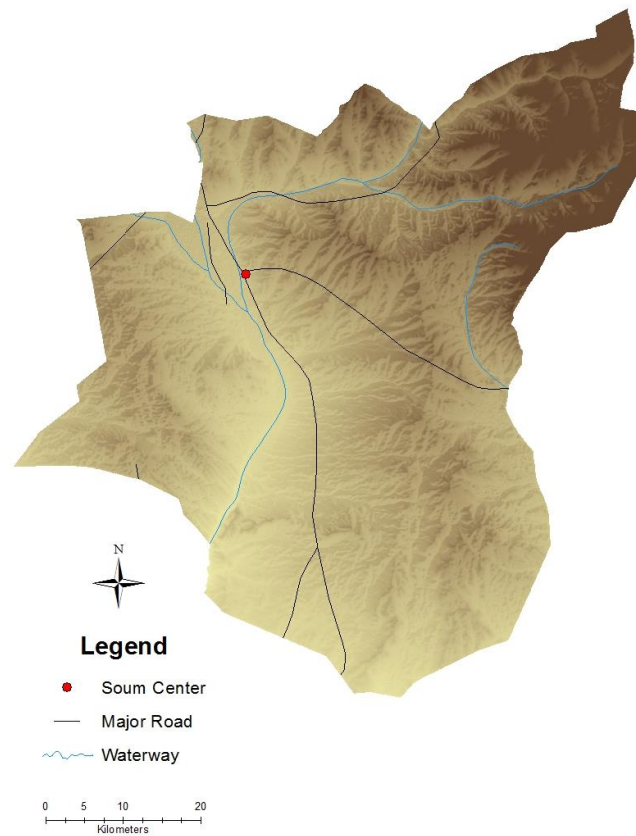


Table 2: Bayanhongor Livestock Loss, 1995–2013, data from Mongolian Statistical Information Service

Ölziit Sum



Map 3: Detail of Ölziit County, *created by Leah Holquin 2015*

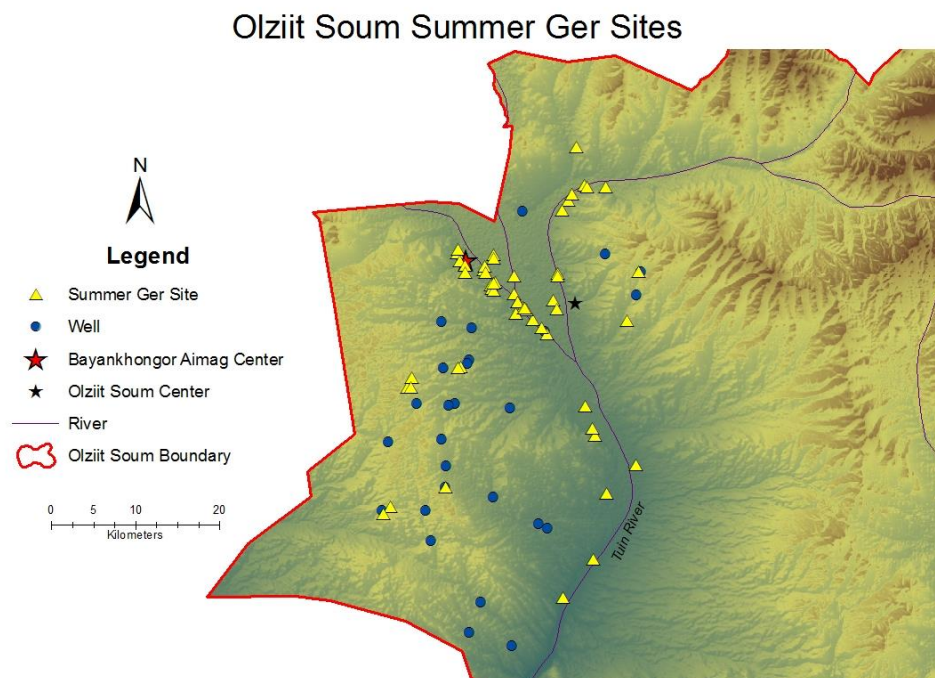
I based my research primarily in Ölziit *sum* in Bayanhongor, which is located approximately 20 kilometres from the provincial center of Bayanhongor. Ölziit is divided into six administrative sub-districts called *bag*. My base was in *bag 1*. Maps 4 to 7 show the seasonal campsites of a selection of families living in *bag 1* as well as wells and other water sources. I mapped these sites with the bag governor and a colleague in October 2014. Many families in *bag 1* have the same winter and spring camp and there are a few families who do not move at all. Maps 8, 9, and 10 provide details of the seasonal camps of three families in order to provide a general idea of variations in seasonal mobility throughout the *sum*. Mobility patterns

are not fixed but change as environmental and social circumstances change. These maps provide a general idea of where families were located and aim to show the different mobility routines between families. Age, presence of young children, labour availability, water availability, and types of livestock and milking routines are a few factors that influence migration decisions.

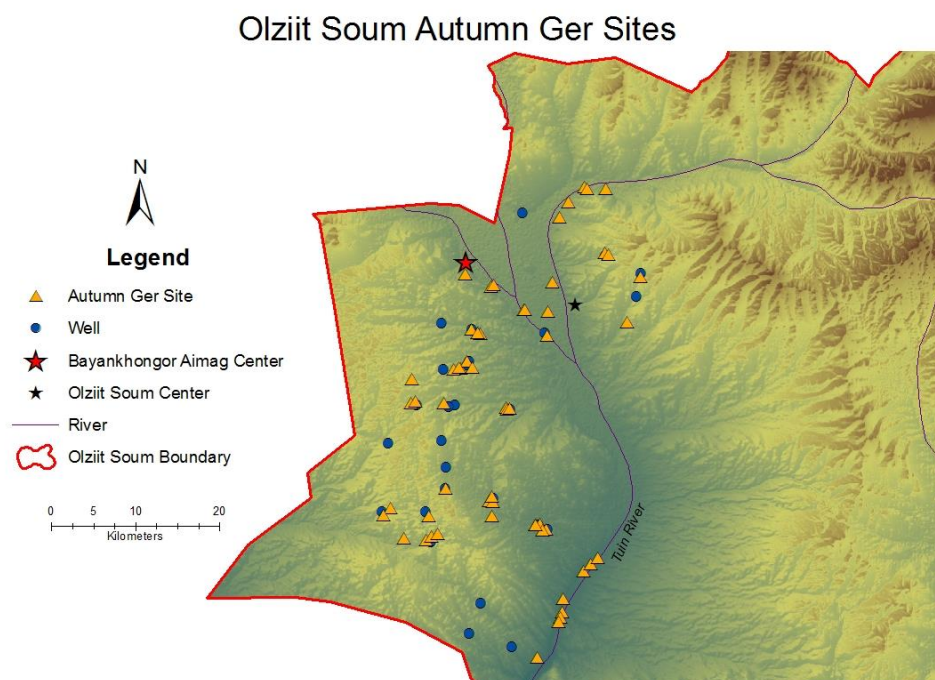
In 2012, there were 875 households registered as full-time herders. In 2013, the herd numbers were 207,692. Livestock were herded by motorcycle, by foot, and by horse, and rarely by camel. Goats were the primary source of milk in *bag 1*. On the outskirts of the Ölziit settlement, there is a brick factory owned by the Chinese and the Mongolians. There is a newly established chicken farm to produce eggs and a cow farm. There is also a new initiative around sea buckthorn production, though it is still being established. Additionally, some herders have taken to exploring for gold and there is illegal poaching in the area of wildlife such as marmots and wild sheep and goats.

Ölziit Families and Seasonal Camps

In September 2013, I invited a colleague to help me map a selection of families living in Ölziit, *bag 1* in an effort to gain a better understanding of the relationship between season, camp site locations, and water sources. We travelled with Erdene, the *bag* governor, and the county doctor on their rounds and used a GPS and open source GIS software to log the seasonal sites for 67 families. Ölziit families generally moved 3-4 times per year, with small moves and migrations within seasonal sites depending on herd and environmental conditions. The following maps illustrate the general spatial distribution of the households in Ölziit *bag 1*.

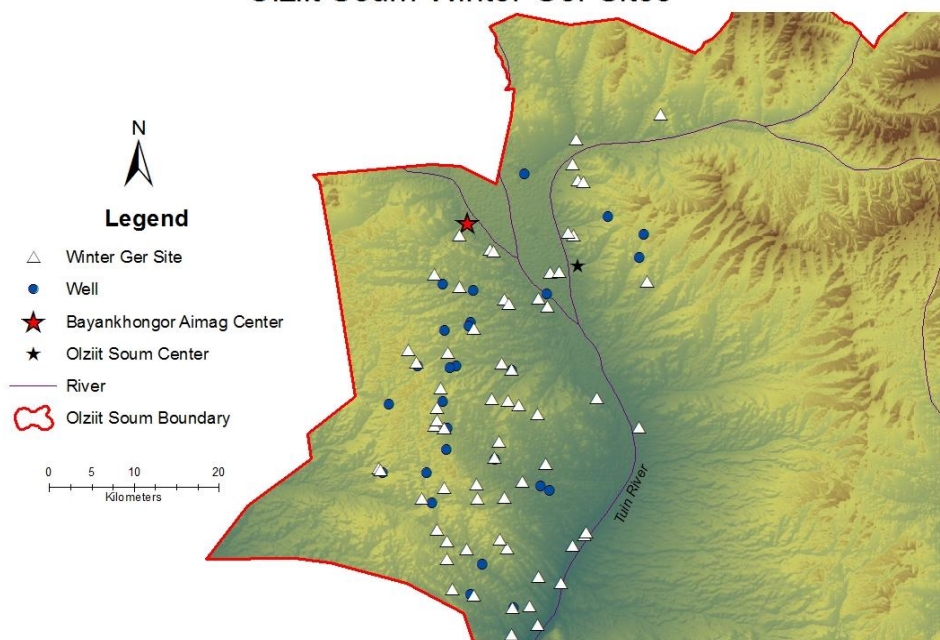


Map 4: Summer Campsites for Selection of Families in Ölziit County, 1st Bag



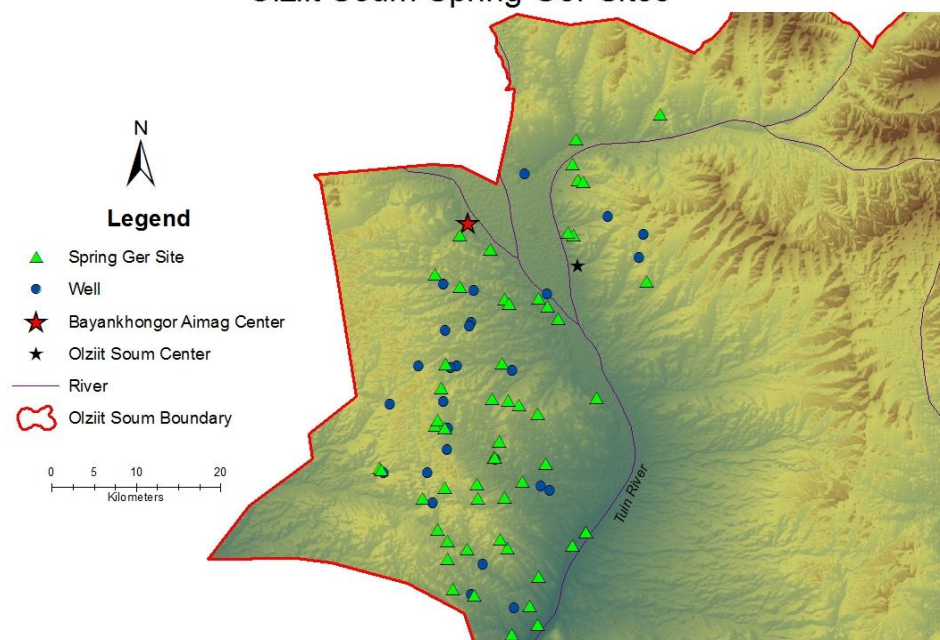
Map 5: Fall Campsites for Selection of Families in Ölziit County, 1st Bag*

Olziit Soum Winter Ger Sites



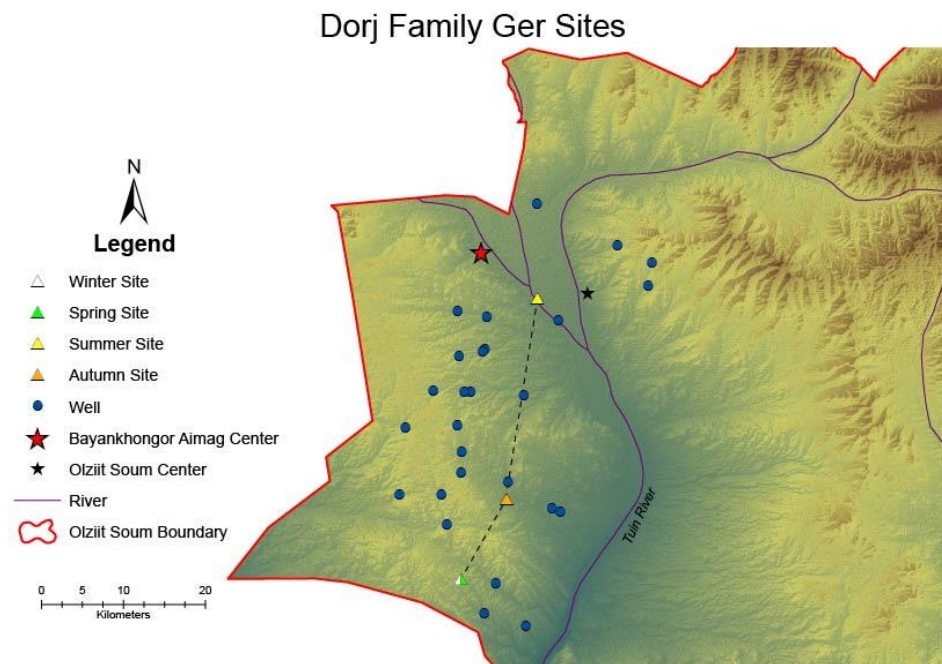
Map 6: Winter Campsites for Selection of Families in Ölziit County, 1st Bag

Olziit Soum Spring Ger Sites

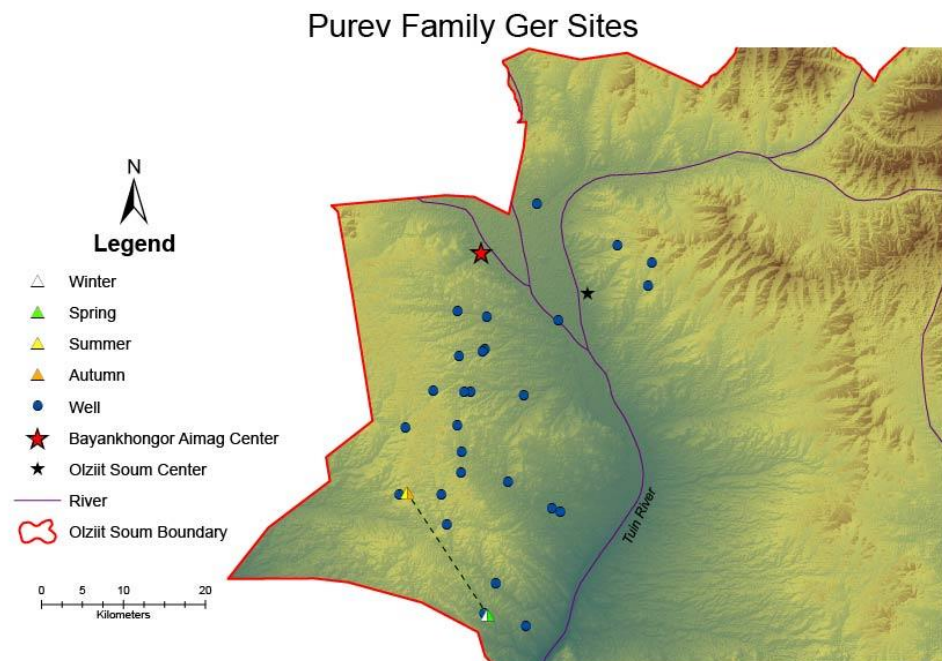


Map 7: Spring Campsites for Selection of Families in Ölziit County, 1st Bag

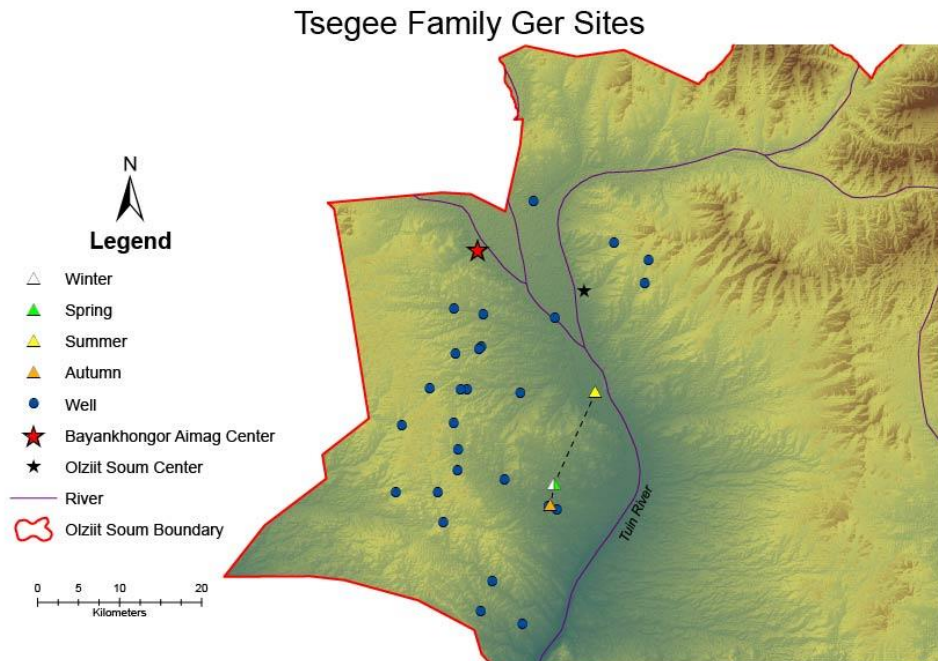
Variations in Migration



Map 8: Seasonal Sites for Dorj's Household in Ölziit



Map 9: Seasonal Sites for Purev's Household in Ölziit



Map 10: Seasonal Sites for Tsetee's Household in Ölziit

**All maps were created by Leah Holguin using the data we collected.*

Logistics: Access and Limitations

The logistics involved in conducting fieldwork in Bayanhongor were complex. Households were dispersed across the landscape and mobile. Walking between camp sites was not possible due to the threat of guard dogs. There was also the possibility of making the time-consuming walk of many kilometres between camps to find homes locked or empty as people were away collecting fuel, herding, or other chores. Besides foot, the other forms of transportation in the countryside were horse, motorcycle, or motorized vehicle. Going by horse involved some proficiency in horsemanship, knowledge of the landscape, and preparedness to fend off the guard dogs. I did not want to take the risk of injury from a riding accident because reliable hospital facilities were a day's journey away in Ulaanbaatar.

At first, I recruited my host father to transport me around the county on his motorcycle and he introduced me to his associates and facilitated my interviews. While this technique was productive to a certain degree, it did not work in the long run because my host father was occupied with herding and household work and could not spend the entire day travelling with me. He was not familiar with many families or their seasonal camp locations in the county because his family had just re-settled in the area.

The transportation constraints proved to be problematic because it was very difficult for me to make contact with other families outside of my home. My social sphere generally involved only my host family and the local herders as well as the occasional person who came to visit our household while they were out taking care of the livestock. This situation proved to be a very informative experience, as I came to understand the extent of isolation herders (especially women) face as they are constrained to work around the immediate vicinity of the home. From the beginning of the project I decided to solve my transportation problems the way that my host family would, mostly from catching rides from people going in the same direction that I was going. It involved improvising and flexibility, as rides were unpredictable and required an opportunistic approach.

I addressed the problems of isolation and transportation constraints in two ways. The first was to arrange home-stays with the households within eyesight of our home based on the approval of my host parents. As a result, I stayed with four other families in Ölziit to get a feel for how their household dynamics worked. Second, at the suggestion of my elder host sister, I contacted Erdene, *bagiin darga* or *bag* governor for help. My host sister explained my project and my need to visit herder homes in the region. He invited me to join him on his work rounds, which proved to be an excellent way of meeting and spending time with all of the

herders in the *bag*. He was an important contact and facilitated introductions with the 189 households in his district. As I did with all of the people I engaged with during my fieldwork, I participated in his work, such as collecting livestock products from households, distributing items, and helping to make calculations and notes. He was an essential contact and provided me with access and information that would have been difficult to obtain on my own. Additionally, he knew the history and environment of the area well because he was a former herder and grew up in the area. He had been an administrator for about eleven years, and knew every family in the region and their seasonal campsites. He transported me in his vehicles and helped me establish a rapport with families. Often I travelled with him during his work rounds, when other individuals such as the local vet, doctor, or environmental officer accompanied him. In most cases, when I travelled with Erdene, he left me alone with a family while he went to do other tasks or activities. He would drop me off at a household and go to another family to collect wool or complete paperwork, and then pick me up on his way to another household. This arrangement allowed for me to speak with families independently. Observing his work and interactions with herders was an important part of my research, so I often accompanied him to simply observe and record these administrative events. Then, during interviews or other conversations with herders and other *sum* administrators, I was able to clarify different issues or ask for more details on the events I had witnessed.

In terms of logistics, the Mongolian environment had a significant influence on my mobility decisions. As the winter set in, starting in November, it was increasingly dangerous to travel for long distances between sites due to the cold as well as the state of the roads. A large mountain pass between Ulaanbaatar and Bayanhongor was dangerous to navigate and a major cause of concern. Deep rivers, which froze irregularly, were difficult to cross between

my field site locations as trucks could get easily marooned. For this reason, I wrapped up much of my fieldwork in the countryside by mid-January.

Residential Arrangements and Family Life

I lived with my friend KS's parents and her younger sister, KB, in *bag* 1. My host parents were Ochirbat and Saraa, both in their late 50s. Ochirbat grew up in Ölziit and went to school at the local *sum* center. His father was worked at a small shop and as a travelling salesman in *bag* center located in the pastures about five kilometres from the county center. Ochirbat grew up herding in the region with his older brother and older sister. The older brother now is a well-known doctor in Ulaanbaatar and his sister is a full-time herder in Ölziit. Ochirbat and Saraa have five children—KJ (33), KS (31), KB (29), Luya (27), and Moogi (24). Ochirbat's 85-year-old mother lives in a Mongolian *ger* on the property of her nephew (Ochirbat's sister's son). The eldest daughter of Ochirbat, KJ, lives with the grandmother with her eight-year-old son and infant daughter. At the time, KJ's second husband and the father of her infant daughter, lived in the southern county of Bogd, located about a day's drive away. He was a physical education teacher at the elementary school there. He visited KJ every two to three weeks. The grandmother was in ill health and was not able to walk. She required almost full-time care from family members, primarily KJ and Ochirbat. KJ teaches elementary level English at the primary school in the Bayanhongor provincial center. Ochirbat's other son, Luya, lives in the provincial center in a recently acquired apartment in the provincial center. He is an accountant for a local kindergarten. His wife works as an administrator at a local school. They have a two-year-old son. For the duration of the summer, Ochirbat's mother moves her home to the countryside to live next to Ochirbat's *ger*.

KS and her younger brother Moogi live in Ulaanbaatar. When I met the family in 2004, they lived with their parents in a small one-room house in the settlement of Gachurt, about 20–30 km east of Ulaanbaatar’s city center. At that time KS worked as a waitress at a local Mongolian café (*guandz*) and her brother attended high school in the city. Due to Saraa’s ill health and her goal of sending her children to the university in Ulaanbaatar, half of the family lived and grew up in Ulaanbaatar while the other half stayed in Bayanhongor. While in Ulaanbaatar, they made ends meet by working odd jobs. Ochirbat drove a taxi at various times, Saraa worked for an insurance company and also sold items that she sewed such as pillowcases, curtains, and bed linens. Saraa also did suitcase trading between Russia and China after the end of socialism.

While Ochirbat and Saraa worked and sent two of their children to school in Ulaanbaatar, their other three children remained in Bayanhongor in the care of Ochirbat’s mother. They gave their livestock herd to Ochirbat’s sister to care for, but had lost many larger livestock in the 2000 *dzud*. They spent the summers and seasonal holidays in Ölziit with Ochirbat’s mother to help with the herd and household work. KB was the only child to remain in the countryside as a herder and lived in her aunt’s household for about ten years. She graduated from the local high school and returned to the pastures to care for livestock full time. In early 2013, Ochirbat and Saraa decided to move back to Ölziit to be full time herders. This decision was based on an interest in protecting KB, helping her to establish her own household, and to insure that their livestock were being properly cared for. They moved into their son, Luya’s, former *ger* with KB and initially camped with Ochirbat’s sister and alternated herding duties with them. This arrangement was strained by a family conflict and they moved to an independent location later in the year.

I stayed full-time in Ochirbat and Saraa's household in the Ölziit pastures. They owned around 250 goats and sheep and were milking 49 goats during the summer of 2013. KB was the only person in the household formally registered as a herder in Ölziit. She and Ochirbat shared the responsibility of daily herding and livestock care. They herded by foot and motorcycle and the main sources of income were from the livestock: sale of wool (sheep and cashmere), skins, and meat. Homemade dairy products, meat, and the staples of flour for noodles and rice were the dietary mainstay. In times of financial need, other family members would contribute items or cash. Over the course of 2012-2013, the members of the family went through a number of transitions and life course events. KS, KB, and Moogi had official marriage ceremonies. KJ gave birth to her second child, KS had her first two children in 20 months, and KB gave birth to her first child. Additionally, over the course of this time period the grandmother's mobility deteriorated significantly.

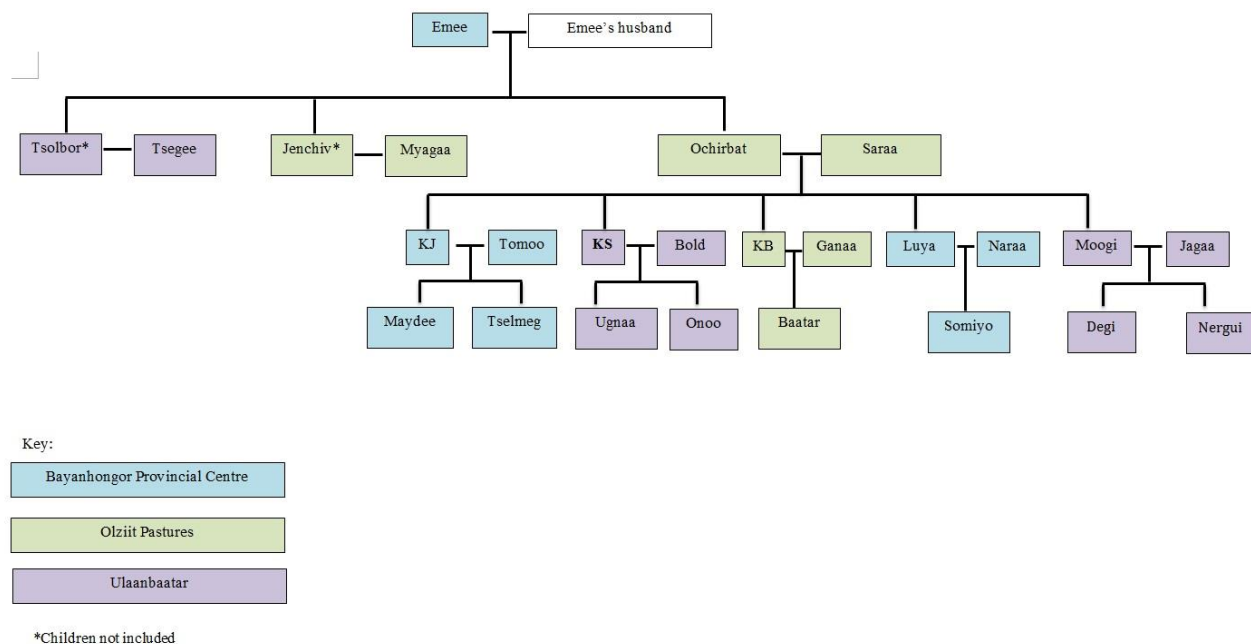


Figure 1: KS's Family Tree



Photograph 1: Saraa with KS's first child in Ulaanbaatar, October 2012

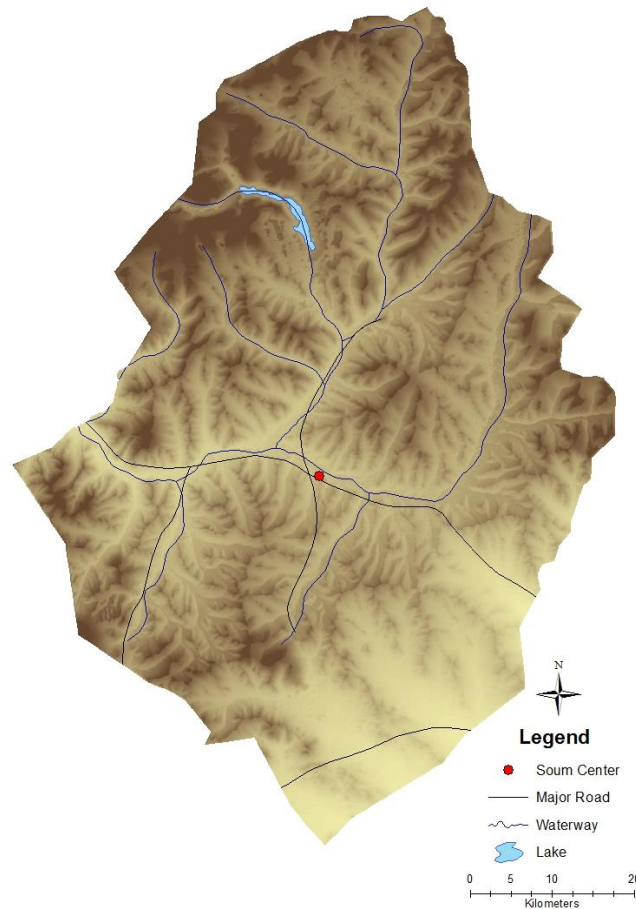


Photograph 2: Ochirbat and Saraa milking in Ölziit, September 2012.



Photograph 3: Inspecting a new well pump in Ölziit, November 2013

Gurvanbulag Sum



Map 11: Detail of Gurvanbulag County *created by Leah Holguin 2015*

A second field site was established in Gurvanbulag County in July 2013. This region is the location of my host mother’s birthplace and is on the northern border of Bayanhongor, close to Zavkhan province. I stayed with my host mother’s relatives in Gurvanbulag. It is locally known as the “coldest place in Bayanhongor” and is part of the Khangai mountain range. Due to environmental differences, families had a very different livestock composition in the Gurvanbulag region. Local migration practices were significantly different as well. For example, the households in Gurvanbulag herded their animals primarily by horse and continued to use wooden wagons to move camp, which was cited as a rare practice even by the people using them. The total livestock numbers were 82,966 in 2012 and it was home to

437 herder households (personal communication, *Sum administration*). Gurvanbulag residents generally produced an abundance of hardened dairy product called *aaruul*, which they sold to traders travelling from the province of Gobi-Altai.

Gurvanbulag was generally more isolated and the local *sum* center did not have access to as many material items as Ölziiit, which was located just 20 km from the Bayanhongor provincial market center. Herd sizes were larger, with greater proportions of sheep and yaks than Ölziiit. For example, all of the households that were interviewed in Gurvanbulag had six or more yaks and large numbers of sheep—upwards of 500 and even 1400 in one case. Nearly all of the families we spoke with did not milk their goats, which was significantly different than the herders in Ölziiit, where nearly the entire milk supply was based on goat milk production.



Photograph 4: Dairy products drying on wooden carts in Gurvanbulag, August 2013

Bayanbulag Sum

A third field site was established in August 2013 during the period of field work in which Dr. Bumochir as well as Professor Bradley Rappa from Ithaca College, NY joined me to do intensive interviewing and filming. Bayanbulag is the home of Dr. Bumochir's father and is the county adjacent to Gurvanbulag. There is frequent contact between families in Gurvanbulag and Bayanbulag as families crossed administrative borders to pasture livestock. We travelled to Bayanbulag in the course of doing fieldwork in Gurvanbulag. The total livestock numbers were 74,643 and there were 325 herder households.

During my time in Bayanbulag, I became close with a family with a large herd of over 1000 head of livestock and met with members of the family in the Bayanhongor provincial center and Ulaanbaatar. As with many of the herders with which I lived, I kept in touch with this family via text messages and phone calls, as they were often located in remote regions that were difficult to visit.



Photograph 5: Bat's mother with their new truck in Bayanbulag, August 2013.

Other important places:

Bayanhongor Provincial Center

Bayanhongor provincial center was a frequent destination for Ochirbat and Saraa's family, as they helped to provide care for Ochirbat's mother and their children's children. I frequently spent time caring for the elderly grandmother and children in the home in the provincial center, as the active family members were fully subscribed with their work and not available to provide care. Ochirbat frequently spent time caring for his mother and KJ's baby. The Bayanhongor provincial center was also a location where I met with herders from Ölziit and Bayanbulag, some of whom owned property in the provincial center and sent their children to school there. Additionally, some families sold milk at the Bayanhongor market and it was the central location for purchasing household items, bulk food supplies, showering, banking and other market sales.



Photograph 6: Ochirbat caretaking for his mother and grandchildren in Bayanhongor, September 2013.

Ulaanbaatar

In Ulaanbaatar, I established affiliation with the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology at the National University of Mongolia, which at that time was headed by Dr. Bumochir Dulam. I signed a memorandum of understanding with the University that outlined my intended relationship to the department and research plans. The National University of Mongolia arranged my student visa and I participated in the department's work by editing for the staff and giving lectures. Dr. Bumochir and I developed a strong working relationship and conducted research together in August 2013. Developing a collaborative relationship with the National University and Mongolian scholars has been an important part of my research philosophy.

I maintained an apartment at the student residence in Ulaanbaatar and spent time during December 2013 and January 2014, during the cold months when travelling was difficult, to focus on studying Mongolian and data management. The student residence was located close to the center of the city and housed the University of the Humanities undergraduates. Many, if not most, of the students were from rural Mongolia and I was able to speak informally with many of them in the hallway near the front door. This was a popular meeting place as the building was closed to non-residents and many couples or friends lingered in conversation before separating for the evening. I spent time chatting with the women who manned the door and discussed their life experiences and histories. They had roots in the countryside as well and many spent summer holidays with their relatives in rural areas. I spent a lot of time talking to these students about their studies and their transition to Ulaanbaatar from the countryside. A few of the students hailed from the Bayanhongor

provincial center. Living in this environment enabled me to interface with youth who grew up in herding families or had relatives herding in the countryside close to my field sites.

Additionally, Ulaanbaatar was a significant site because the children of my countryside host family lived there as well as other relatives and children of families in my field site. I was in contact with five children of herders who were attending university in Ulaanbaatar, studying subjects ranging from fashion design to law. My countryside host family travelled to Ulaanbaatar for a variety of reasons and I spent time with them here. KB travelled from Bayanhongor to give birth in an Ulaanbaatar hospital. Also, my host mother often travelled to Ulaanbaatar for medical treatment.

METHODS

Participant Observation and Field Notes

My core methodology involved participant observation of mobile pastoralist households. My research also involved being in contact with the extended family of these households, who often were not full-time pastoralists and lived, worked, or attended school in settled centers or cities. On a daily basis, I participated in all of the activities of the household and engaged with others by helping them work, asking and answering questions, conversing about a broad range of topics, and contributing to household life to the best of my ability. As a participant observer, I documented everyday life through audio recording of interviews, songs, conversations, and public events and meetings. I filmed people and livestock, as well as events such as public festivities and county meetings. Additionally, I wrote field notes by hand on an almost daily basis to record and reflect on the activities of the day. I organised these materials using the software Atlas Ti in order to aid my analysis. Much analysis happened in situ, where themes emerged in writing while in the field.

While doing research, I adopted the role of a student and helper, an “outsider who participates in some aspects of life around them and records what they can” (Bernard 2011). By the end of this stay in Mongolia, I was well integrated into domestic family life. I woke up at sunrise to start the dung fire, make tea, and help dress the grandmother. I cooked for the family, cleaned the house, washed the grandmother, put babies to sleep, and made sure my host nephew had a full cup of milk tea before I pushed him out the door to school. In the countryside, I collected dung for fuel, collected water, milked goats and pasteurized the milk, cleaned the house, cooked and acted as hostess to visitors. I helped to transport meat and dairy product supplies from family in the countryside to family in Ulaanbaatar, and my cell phone became a line used to reach anyone in the house. I also spent time travelling with Erdene, the *bag* governor, on his work rounds throughout the *bag*.

While participating in these household activities, I asked questions, listened to conversations, responded to text messages from herders, and learned rules about how to do things that otherwise would be impossible to learn without doing them. I gained knowledge about everything from fuel and water systems, to practices related to ideas of purity and good behaviour, as well as communication and hospitality practices from experiencing them, getting a feel for how things worked, and doing them with others. I learned the countless ways that households improvised with limited resources, which has informed a deeper understanding of the importance of livestock as food security in the context of volatile markets, inflation and little access to cash. These variations can make or break a household’s monthly budget.

Having a background in Mongolian studies helped me to integrate smoothly with local residents. I already understood basic cultural rules of social engagement and was able to

expand and deepen my knowledge through long-term contact with the community in my field sites. As Bernard (2011) writes, participant observation is a means to understand the internal logic of an organisation, a cultural system, or other social dynamic. Spending time in the countryside for all four seasons allowed me to get a sense of how households make decisions around social reproduction. At times, I was implicated in this process as I provided additional labour during times of shortage, such as when young infants needed care or during busy milking times. It is through participant observation that the logistics of decision making could be witnessed and understood. Also, my research was validated over time through continued observation, as I was able to see how an event or decision unfolded.

Interviews

I analyzed 101 recordings of unstructured and semi-structured interviews with herder households and 25 semi-structured interviews with government administrators, professors, bank officials, religious figures such as Buddhist monks and diviners, and others. I was able to do more than one unstructured interview with herder households and some of the material consists of audio recordings of their conversations with the *bag* governor as they discussed local herding arrangements and concerns. The number of informal interviews were countless and I attempted to capture as much as possible in field notes or by jotting down parts of conversations at various points throughout the day.

Informal interviews consisted of unstructured conversations that naturally occurred through the course of the day. Conversations were abundant and rich in detail, and often involving multiple people. In the Mongolian *ger*, all members of the household occupy one room and guests often visit during the daytime. As such, one is almost always privy to the conversations and activities occurring around the room. Also, many conversations occurred

before the family went to sleep at night. Some of the richest conversations occurred while doing work such as milking goats, as it was a time-consuming task that provided privacy away from the interior of the home.

The cell phone was another medium for informal “interviews” and a way to stay in contact with people over long distances. Many herders conversed with me by text message, even to give brief updates on work or other concerns. One young herder would text me when he was in the range of cell phone service on the mountaintop while he was herding to update me on their migrations, the weather, and the activities of his parents and siblings. Being in touch by phone was a significant means of having conversations and following up with questions, as well as simply checking in. The cell phone was a valuable aspect of herder networks and means of communication to overcome physical isolation in pasture camps. The use of cell phones as a data source was extremely useful given the logistical difficulties of doing research in Mongolia and allowed me to be in touch with people despite bad weather or other obstacles that prevented an in-person visit. Also, the cell phone further breaks down the idea of a bounded field site and illustrates how livelihoods include forms of communication and relationships that go beyond local settings.

In addition to informal interviews, I arranged formal interviews with the herders in my field sites as well as others in Ulaanbaatar and the Bayanhongor provincial center, such as government officials, local administrators, professors, students, and others professionals. Due to the mobility of the local population and flexible nature of planning and coordinating with the district supervisor to visit herder homes, I often did not know when I would have an opportunity to see a family again. Although I met and visited every home in the sub-district, there was a group of approximately 60 families that I visited multiple times and with whom I

had familiar relations. I was able to interview these families more than once using an unstructured approach while other activities and events were happening. I followed a loose structure based on categories that I wanted to cover, such as local politics, educating children, income and expenditures, herding practices, residential arrangements, extended family, belief systems, etc. The interviews that I conducted with the governor of Bayanhongor and bank officials took on a more semi-structured nature than the interviews with herders, which were generally more fluid and spontaneous based on the nature of work and free time in the countryside versus the office space. I tried to ask every family the same general set of questions in order to build up material around certain subjects that were relevant to my research questions. I also aimed to address the concerns and interests of the herders in order to make the research a co-creative experience.

Interviews occurred in household settings, where the interviewee often was cooking, cleaning, making tea, taking care of a child, or interacting with others. It was very rare to interview a person without others in the same space listening or contributing. Socio-cultural rules of respect often dictated who spoke and when during unstructured interviews. Higher status individuals were given the space to answer questions and others contributed in hierarchical order. For example, an elder man would always speak before his young son or daughter. The head of household, usually the husband, would generally act as the primary representative of the household in an interview, even if it meant turning it over to his wife to answer the questions. These hierarchies of communication were more apparent during an initial meeting with a family and generally loosened over time or in subsequent meetings. As a female, I was able to directly engage with women at appropriate moments and I often used

opportunities to help make food, process dairy products, take care of children, or milk animals as a way to talk more privately to women of different households in more informal spaces.

Although I had proposed to do a number of focus groups over the course of fieldwork, I conducted only one while in Bayanbulag. It was a spontaneous decision to do a focus group, as a number of families came together to meet me and my collaborators at the time—Dr. Bumochir Dulam and filmmaker Bradley Rappa. We decided to interview the group, which consisted of about 10–12 adults who were related to each other. Generally in large settings the eldest male member of the group would speak first. During a multi-family group interview in Gurvanbulag, the son of an elderly man waited to speak until his father left the *ger*. In some cases, young women did not speak if there was a large crowd composed mostly of men or semi-strangers. I used a variety of approaches to communication to engage with people outside of the structure of an interview and to connect with people who did not speak or participate in these settings. Also, observing differences in communication styles in different settings was a valuable form of participant observation in itself. Thus, while the verbal content of interviews is very important, the surrounding environments and forms of interaction are also crucial to observe.

Questionnaire

During the preliminary assessment, I distributed a questionnaire of twenty open-ended questions and additional demographic information to begin to identify general themes relating to the research topic. I recruited Mongolian university students in Ulaanbaatar to distribute the questionnaire to their peers. I asked my host sister in Bayanhongor to distribute the questionnaires to her colleagues who worked at the public elementary and high school in Bayanhongor. Ninety-one questionnaires were completed by a range of people residing in

Ulaanbaatar and Bayanhongor and involved open-ended questions (see appendix). I used the responses in the questionnaires to help me develop interview questions and general topics of inquiry. For example, one question asked, *Өнөөгийн нийгэмд залуу үед боломж бий юу?* (*Do youth have opportunities in society today?*). Answers included:

“хэлтэй бол хөлтэй, гадаад хэл сурах ёстой”:

To have language is to have legs [common proverb], foreign language study is a must

“байгаа учир боловсролдоо анхаарах хэрэгтэй”:

There are, giving attention to education is necessary

“соёл нийгмийн хувьд өсөх хөгжих боломж их боловч, эдийн засаг талаар боломжгүй”:

There are growing opportunities on the culture and society side, but there are no opportunities on the economy side.

These responses indicated that the respondents perceived education to be a valuable means to access opportunities. The herders that I worked with in Bayanhongor communicated similar sentiments. The questionnaire offered further evidence of common perceptions around education, or other topics, which informed my investigation of herder strategies to access formal schooling for children.

Positionality and Reciprocity

As discussed earlier, conducting research in rural Mongolia involved careful considerations of my position as a (relatively) young, female American student as I interacted with people on a daily basis and made decisions about where and how I would conduct research. The success of the project depended on my reputation and my ability to gain the trust and confidence of the people of Bayanhongor. In this way, I always made sure to arrange overnight homestays with elderly people rather than staying with younger couples, which might create discomfort for them. The exception to this rule was with members of my own host family, who were approximately my age. Gender and age-related expectations informed my way of communication and behaviour as well as my choices of where, how, and with whom I travelled.

In order to give back to *Ölziit sum*, in September 2013, I worked with the *bag* governor of *bag 1* in *Ölziit* and a GIS specialist from Middlebury College to log the seasonal camp sites and water sources of herders registered in the area. We used open source mapping software on an iPad along with a GPS device to log the information. We produced a large map for the *Ölziit* county government administration and bought the sub-district supervisor an iPad so that he is able to continue the mapping project or use the open-source software for his own projects. He was particularly interested in the maps to help set up a system for emergency fodder delivery during difficult winters.

Additionally, it was important for me to develop collaborative links with the National University of Mongolia and other educational institutions. I volunteered to help students at the University of the Humanities to translate their research into English and offered a research methods workshop to the professors at the National University of Arts and Culture. My co-

authored paper with Bumochir Dulam also reflects my commitment to collaboration and ongoing communication with Mongolian scholars.

Analysis and the Writing Process

I used the software AtlasTi to organise the transcriptions of interviews, recordings, photographs, and field notes. This software has the capacity to organise, code, and do variable analysis on large amounts of data, including audio, film, photos, and text. The quantity and variation of the material I worked with is better organised using the medium of computer-assisted analysis software and can serve as an effective “audit trail” (see Bringer, Johnston, and Brackenridge 2006, p. 247). AtlasTi is a powerful organisational tool for complex data. I decided to use Atlas Ti over other programmes like MaxQDA because it allows me to import and work with a large variety of file types and I am able to work with the original Mongolian versions.

Conclusion

In this section, I have presented my approach to knowledge and research methodology over the course of my fieldwork in Mongolia from 2012–2013. I took an experiential, researcher-as-learner approach to exploring my research questions in collaboration with the herders and others with whom I lived and worked. In this way, my research is based on the material of lived relationships with people and place. The analysis of these experiences prioritises the reflections of people on the events, activities, and experiences of their own lives, of which I was a part. My background in Mongolian studies and experience conducting prior research in the country enabled me to quickly begin research, effectively communicate with people, and develop long-term relationships. My understandings of mobile pastoralism in Bayanhongor are shaped through the development of situated knowledge and hands-on experience. Although the written word can only partially express knowledge gained in situ, I attempt to convey the prominent themes and findings from this investigation through vignettes that

typify common experiences amongst families as well as highlighting decision-making events. I include verbal exchanges about land use, mobility, or local concerns between differently positioned people in order to show the historically informed and contingent circumstances in which events take shape.

ARTICLE 1

Herds or Family?: Contradictions in Schooling Children amongst Mongolian Pastoralists*

Abstract

Mongolian pastoralist households with children face an annual decision at the start of the school year—How to take care of both herds and children separated by long distances and resource needs? This article draws on twelve months of ethnographic fieldwork of rural work practices amongst mobile pastoralists in Mongolia to illustrate how children's access to primary education spatially transforms the organisation of herder livelihoods. By prioritising herder reflections and theoretical insight on their own lives and experiences, we show that educating children in the conditions of Mongolia's emerging market macroeconomic system is entangled in struggles over housing, finance, and labour, and highlight the spatial nature of these contradictions in everyday rural social production. This evidence forwards the understanding that the terms of inclusion in Mongolia's current schooling system poses challenges for pastoralist livelihoods and provides a space to reflect on the need for imagining innovations in education provision.

Keywords: capitalism, education, pastoralism, post-socialism, Mongolia

*Co-authored with Bumochir Dulam as second author. The co-authorship indicates a research collaboration. See appendix for letter of confirmation.

Accepted for publication in *Human Organization*, 2016, v. 25, issue 1.

Introduction

In the past children went to school at the age of seven or eight. Now two-year-old children are entering school and the mother takes them to the town center [to live there]. Then in the Mongolian *ger* [mobile dwelling] the man is alone. Waking up alone. Goes out with the herd and returns to a cold *ger*. If it were me...in my opinion, I want to change this school system a bit. Then all of these young people, they all move to the town center! They increase their livestock, not to improve the stock, but to slaughter half of them in order to buy an apartment in the center. Then this person with the apartment will begin to reject the countryside *ger* before the age of 40, meanwhile other children enter school and it begins again...

—Jargal, 77-year-old herder in Ölziit, Bayanhongor, June 2013

Over the course of living and working with mobile pastoralists (henceforth “herders”) in Bayanhongor Province, Mongolia from 2012 to 2014, households consistently described accessing school as a reason behind changing household organisation, labour, and finance. We observed that taking care of livestock in remote seasonal sites while providing housing, supplies, and care to children attending school in administrative centers involved complex arrangements that have given rise to a new type of pastoralism. This article examines how the terms of inclusion in education contributes to transformations in the political economy of mobile pastoralism at the household scale. It is our argument that the terms of inclusion in Mongolia’s current school system poses challenges to pastoralist livelihoods and need to be critically examined by scholars and policymakers in order to ensure both education and livelihood justice for pastoralists in Mongolia today.

Recent research on education and development has argued that the formal schooling options available for people who live as mobile pastoralists have unfavourable terms of inclusion based on the fixed location of schools, the conflation of education with schooling, and an orientation toward seeing pastoralist livelihoods as inferior to “modern,” educated lifestyles (Dyer 2012, 2013, 2014; Krätli 2001; Krätli and Dyer 2009). Examining education using the “terms of inclusion” conceptual framework elucidates the specific issues that pastoralists face in accessing education for their children and provides a means to account for the multiple ways that education as a process of cultural production broadly influences social organisation and household economies. This article does not seek to explain the long history of education in Mongolia or to analyse the many reasons why herders might value education. Likewise, it is beyond the scope of this paper to trace educational outcomes for the children of herders or assess the relationship between education and future livelihoods. Rather, the purpose of this article is to examine herders’ critical reflections regarding changes to herding, movement, and finance to facilitate childhood access to education.

Mongolia has a long history of state-sponsored education, stretching back to the 13th century. Formal education reached the majority of the population through socialist state policies, which made schooling compulsory in the 1950s (Steiner-Khamsci and Stolpe 2006, p. 165). Since the end of socialism, enrollment remains high amongst the rural population. For the 2012-2013 school year, the gross enrollment ratio for primary education in Bayanhongor province was 101.5 per cent, higher than the national figure of 97.9 per cent (National Statistical Office of Mongolia 2013, p. 332). One indication of the strong demand for education amongst Mongolian herders is the significant financial investment in educating children. In 2010, 67 per cent of the personal loans taken out by herders were spent on

education (Engle and Prizzon 2014, p. 18). This already high number is even more impressive because it excludes related investments in property and time that contribute to caring for children in school.

Behind Mongolia's positive educational indicators are critical questions regarding how strategies to access primary and secondary school play a role in changing land use practices and the ability of herders to practice pastoralism in secure and sustainable ways. Pastoral livelihoods directly support nearly a third of the Mongolian population; 27 per cent of Mongolian households were registered as full-time herders in 2013 (National Statistical Office of Mongolia 2013). Pastoralism accounts for 19 per cent of GDP, informs cultural identities, and pastoralists are in a position to act as stewards of the globally important grassland ecosystem (Middleton et al. 2015). Since the restructuring of its economic system in the early 1990s, the Mongolian population faces significant income inequality and new insecurities (Nixson and Walters 2006). Pastoralism is particularly important because it is a stable form of non-cash investment and food security in the context of unstable commodity markets, inflation, and fluctuating prices of basic foodstuffs (Barnett et al. 2012; World Bank 2011) and many urban residents are supported by rural food supplies.

Despite the importance of pastoralism in the Mongolian economy and society, the current school system poses significant challenges to pastoralist livelihoods. To ensure their children's education, herder households must meet a set of conditions including on-site housing, after school care, uniforms, food, and school supplies (Atwood, 2004, p. 372; Demberel and Penn 2006, p. 208; Marin 2008, p. 88). Government policies, including the newly lowered age of enrollment (Tandon 2011), the concentration of schools and services in semi-urban and urban centers, and under-regulation of dormitories, have added additional

barriers to accessing formal education (see also Steiner-Khamsci and Stolpe 2006, p. 168). For many herding families, accessing education requires that some or all members of the family settle near the school. This settlement frequently occurs through “household splitting.” Often households split residences between pasture locations and school locations. This practice gives rise to new types of property investment and finance through annual loans. Herders report concerns that splitting prevents children from learning advanced seasonal herding skills. Additionally stressful, when women and children move to centers, men are left alone in distant winter camps to tend livestock in extreme winter conditions with a shortage of labour, which risks their own well-being and the well-being of livestock.

Herders of different socio-economic backgrounds describe difficulty and concern for their ability to care for their herds, maintain rights over rural resources, and provide education for children at the same time. These challenges indicate that the terms of inclusion for herder households to access education has contradictory effects on livelihoods. Our research provides evidence to support Dyer’s argument that education justice for pastoralists can only be achieved if education provision is “complementary to rather than in competition with” already viable pastoralist livelihoods (Dyer 2014, p. 180). Accessing school for children and discourses around education are often overlooked in scholarly debates on the transformation of pastoralist livelihoods in Mongolia yet play a powerful role in household decision making, rural identities, and subsequent livelihood strategies.

Education as a Contested Resource

Well-established sociological critiques have demonstrated the inherently political nature of formal education as it relates to state projects and everyday social relations (see for example Bourdieu 1984). Scholars indicate that educational policies and institutions play a significant

part in the production and reproduction of power relations and ideologies. This position, which highlights the often-exclusionary aspects of schooling practices, sits in contrast to international development frameworks that forward education as an intrinsically valuable social good and neutral social intervention (Dreze and Sen 1995; Sen 1999).

Formal education can be contradictory because it can facilitate individual growth while also fostering new community divisions between educated and uneducated members by valuing certain cultural forms, knowledge, skills, styles, work, and ideologies over others (Bourdieu 1984; Demerath 2000; Kipnis 2011; Levinson, Foley, and Holland 1996; Morarji 2014; Unterhalter and Walker 2007; Willis 1977). Levinson, Foley, and Holland's (1996) approach to examining the "cultural production of the educated person" focuses on how individuals creatively navigate educational institutions. They highlight the culturally produced values promoted through schooling and individual choices in utilising, rejecting, or ambivalently performing "educated person" identities. Competing moral frameworks outside of schools, such as gender roles, rural livelihoods, other subjectivity-forming practices may be in conflict with educated identities and involve negotiations over place, the value of labour, social roles, status, and cultural capital (see for example Morarji 2014; Dyson 2010, 2014).

Scholars have advanced debates around education as a contested resource by analysing childhood and youth schooling and post-education experiences. In Jeffrey, Jeffrey and Jeffrey's (2008) research, young educated men in India struggled to reap the expected gains from educational qualifications without additional social networks and the ability to mobilise resources by leveraging local contacts and using inside knowledge, or other means of coercion. These cases showed the limitations of youths' agency as educated persons in situations where other ways of securing resources dominated, demonstrating that education's

value is not intrinsic but socially produced. While these studies focus on the experiences of individuals navigating post-educational spaces in India, it points to the ways that schooling has contradictory outcomes. In this paper, we focus on how accessing school creates contradictions in already viable livelihoods through unfavourable terms of inclusion, which is corroborated by the literature on education amongst mobile pastoralists.

Throughout the world, people practising pastoralist livelihoods experience education as a contested resource in distinct ways. Scholars working with pastoralists in South Asia, the Middle East, and Africa have illustrated how schooling environments produce ideological and political antagonisms between settled and mobile communities and reflect wider state policies toward mobile pastoralist livelihoods. Historically, governing authorities have viewed pastoralists, whose livelihoods depend on socio-technical systems to enable livestock mobility in response to dynamic dryland environments, as antithetical to, or outside of, modern society. This ideology, based on a “discourse of deficit” (Dyer 2014, p. 23) continues to inform many state policies toward pastoralist communities, which characterise mobile livestock husbandry as economically irrational or the cause of environmental damage, or both (see for discussion Chatty 2013; Williams 2002).

Government officials and herding communities themselves frequently devalue pastoral livelihoods and knowledge. Mongolian Prime Minister Enkhbayar expressed this view in 2001 when he called for the end of pastoralism and the movement of 90 per cent of the population to urban areas within 30 years (Endicott 2012, p. 90). Enkhbayar supported his policy by questioning the viability of pastoralism after severe drought and winter weather killed the livestock of 12,000 families from 1999–2001 (Sternberg 2010). His criticisms did not acknowledge the government’s role in exacerbating this disaster (Sneath 2003; Sternberg

2010). Also, in Mongolia, some pastoralists evaluate their work as “unskilled” and their own subjectivities as “uncultured,” despite the widespread celebration of nomadic identities in nationalist discourse (Marzluf 2015). We observed that herders and non-herders alike generally see formal education (*bolovsrol*) as a quality that differentiates pastoralist work from non-pastoralist work. Herders evaluate formal education as contributing to cultured (*soyoltoi*) and skilled (*meregjiltei*) worldviews, an assessment informed by the history of education in Mongolian society as well as current frameworks that forward formal education as crucial to human and social development (*hogjil*). There is a social discourse in which herders are generally perceived of as uneducated and unskilled both by themselves in self-reference and by non-herders. Formal education is perceived as a transformative process by which one becomes professional and skilled, and differentiated from those practising rural livelihoods. These discourses of deficit contribute to the contradictory nature of education amongst mobile pastoralists, as herding livelihoods are not deprived positions but enable far-reaching investments in education amongst other things.

Scholars have shown that pastoralist livelihoods are rational, involve highly skilled labour and specialized knowledge, continually adopt new technology and information, diversify livelihoods and invest in diverse enterprises (Chatty 1996, 2006, 2013; Dyer 2014; Dyson-Hudson and Dyson-Hudson 1980; Humphrey and Sneath 1999). As such, scholars such as Dyer have challenged the assumptions underlying the implementation of state educational programmes for pastoralists under UNESCO’s World Declaration on Education for All initiative in India. In this system, “inclusion” is practiced in narrow terms, despite the initiatives’ pledge to support universal access. Dyer assessed the effects of removing pastoralist children from community places of situated learning and socialisation as having

contradictory effects for pastoralist livelihoods. On one hand, children gained literacy skills as a key tool in advocating for pastoral rights, resources, and territories; on the other hand, schooling prevented children from learning the skills necessary for pastoralist livelihoods and curricula contained an underlying discourse of deficit in regards to pastoralist livelihoods. Additionally, Dyer indicates that in India, schooling plays a part in delegitimizing pastoralist identities, promoting the view that educated persons do not practice pastoralism (2013, p. 181). Dyer's problematisation of the terms of inclusion for pastoralists reveals the deeply contradictory nature of participation in formal education for pastoralists in India.

The work exploring formal education amongst mobile pastoralists illustrates the political nature of schooling processes and the extent to which terms of inclusion, opportunity costs, and expected outcomes influence household choices to enroll children in school. Chatty's (2006) research on the establishment of a government school for the Harasiis in Oman demonstrates the complex negotiations required to establish remote schools. Complications emerged as Harasiis community leaders advanced competing agendas and household mobility patterns clashed with the school schedules. Households were concerned that the enrollment at the age of seven would prevent children from gaining cultural knowledge, values, and the skills needed for desert livelihoods (Chatty 2006, p. 221). Families enrolled some children in school in order to facilitate future work in government or the extraction industry while keeping others with livestock, thereby acting in the interest of their herds and children by pursuing strategies to diversify income, disperse risk, and create strong networks in order to access resources.

In our study, the contradictions of education have many spatial qualities that affect households even before children attain educational qualifications. The splitting of herder

households between rural pastures and settlements, labour constraints, and the emotional stress of separation constitute liabilities that make life in seasonal encampments unattractive and contested, especially for men left to care for herds during the school year. It is not our argument that education lacks merits. Rather, we are arguing that the pursuit of education within specific governance and institutional frameworks can create new difficulties for households practising pastoralist livelihoods.

Changing Governance and Educational Infrastructures

Mongolian pastoralists have a long literary history and participation in formal and informal education, which can only briefly be summarised here. Education has broad culture meanings in Mongolian society, which are beyond the scope of this article (see Humphrey 1996 for further reading). Formal education was established in the court of Chinggis Khan in 1204 after the adoption of the Uighur-Mongolian script. Later, Qubilai Khan created an empire-wide system of schools (Atwood 2004, p. 159). By the mid-16th century, schooling took place in Buddhist monasteries with instruction in the Tibetan and Mongolian languages. During the Qing dynasty from 1636–1912, schools existed to train clerks for local administration in rural territories (Atwood 2004). Marzluf (2015) argues that pre-socialist home schooling practices were based on learning through games, poetry, songs, texts translated from Tibetan to Mongolian, genealogy charts, and ceremonial texts (Empson 2011; Marzluf 2015) and fostered informal home schooling and pastoral literacy.

Educational practices changed significantly after the establishment of the Mongolian People's Republic in the early 1920s. Compulsory education began in the 1950s (Steiner-Khamsci and Stolpe 2006, p. 44) and the state invested considerably in education infrastructure by building schools and dormitories in administrative centers alongside worker

associations and collectives (Atwood 2004, p. 116; Demberel and Penn 2006, p. 197; Portisch 2012, p. 389). The children of herders lived in student dormitories, which were integrated in the socialist rural economic system based on collective livestock husbandry (Steiner-Khamsci and Stolpe 2006).

Socialist education emphasised Leninism and nationalism, building upon Mongolia's connections with Moscow, economic integration with CMEA, and focus on a modernisation agenda. Compulsory education was one of the primary means by which a sense of national identity and citizenship was developed (Atwood 2004; Kaplonski 1988; Sneath 2003, 2010). Education was central to Mongolia's modernisation and so successful that Mongolia became a model for other newly established socialist states (Kaplonski 1988; Steiner-Khamsci and Stolpe 2006, p. 42; Sneath 2009). Even today student dormitories have been evaluated as a "best practice" (Krätli 2001) in education for nomadic peoples. Although the socialist system was extremely efficient in improving national literacy rates, it is unclear the extent to which the school dormitory system can be assessed as a form of educational justice or best practice for Mongolian pastoralists. This system was deliberately designed as part of a national collectivised livestock production system oriented toward agricultural intensification and modernisation, where households did not own significant numbers of private animals and individuals were employed by the state.

Education financing from the state deteriorated with the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s (Sneath 2002, p. 193; Steiner-Khamsci and Stolpe 2004), leaving many rural schools bankrupt and teachers unpaid, or only paid in-kind with flour or meat (Engle and Prizzon, 2014, p. 7). Herder households absorbed many costs of education, such as payments for teachers and the cost of student housing. These new economic burdens were difficult as

the country simultaneously experienced widespread unemployment. Many newly jobless Mongolians returned to the countryside to take up herding, resulting in food stability but additional cash shortages (Sneath 2003). The net enrollment ratio dropped from 97.3 per cent in 1999 to 88.9 per cent in 2002, but recovered to 95.2 per cent by 2012 (Government of Mongolia 2013, p. 61). The school dormitory system has fallen into disrepair and poor management; herders are reluctant to have children stay in dormitories because they are associated with poor quality care and performance in school (see for further discussion Steiner-Khamsci and Stolpe 2006, p. 167). With no other housing option available to herders, they need to arrange their own housing close to schools, which leads to household splitting, labour shortages, and reliance on annual loan financing.

School Locations in Bayanhongor Province

Between 2012 and 2014, we conducted ethnographic research focused on pastoralist work practices in Gurvanbulag, Bayanbulag, and Ölzii counties in Northern Bayanhongor province in central west Mongolia. Bayanhongor province has 20 counties, or *sum* in Mongolian and is in the top five provinces with the greatest number of livestock and herders (National Statistical Office of Mongolia 2013, p. 220). Each county has an administrative center, which includes fenced-in residential plots, an elementary and middle school, and sometimes a high school, as well as the local government buildings, basic medical facilities, banks, shops, repair shops, and at least one gas station. The Bayanhongor provincial (*aimag*) center is the main market and transportation hub and the site of a number of high schools, as well as vocational colleges and a university. Many students complete their secondary education at the county-level schools, which typically end in 8th or 9th grade. This means that some herders sent their

children over 200 kilometres (about a day's drive) to attend the final two years (10th and 11th grade) of secondary school in the provincial center.

This paper draws upon 75 semi-structured interviews with full-time herders as well as interviews with local residents that occurred during the process of living and working side-by-side with families. The material analysed also includes observations of county meetings, district-level maps of seasonal encampments, and multiple visits to households inhabiting the regions and homes of extended family members in the Bayanhongor provincial center and Ulaanbaatar. The characterisation of education as a contradictory resource emerged from the critical reflections of herders on their work and decision making, as well as participant observation of living and working with herders as they occupied multiple residencies and spaces in the context of rural work. Herding households in the region are demographically diverse, ranging in age from 20 to 85, and of varying degrees of wealth. Despite these differences, accessing education for children was consistently raised as a reason for changing household organisation and finances. Few ethnographic studies address pastoralist participation in education at the household level in Mongolia. While other studies consisting of short-term fieldwork during summer months when children are out of school, historical studies, and quantitative analyses are valuable, they do not include data on the lived experiences of rural herders as they combine pastoralist livelihoods with accessing education. This study was specifically designed with a focus on livelihoods and the empirical data can serve to address these gaps in the literature.

Herds or Family? Accessing Education through Household Splitting

As has been discussed in the previous section, herders value education and actively enroll their children in formal schools. Given the long distances and poor road infrastructure,

accessing education requires children to be physically located in proximity to schools. Herders meet this requirement by splitting their household in different patterns depending on their household size, number of children in school, financial resources, social resources, type of livestock, and other factors. *Bag* governors in the counties where we worked indicated that 50–60 per cent of households split during the school year. Herders report that during the winter season, pastures are predominately occupied by older men. During an interview in 2013, a herder in Ölziit explained, “Here in the countryside only elders around 60 to 70 years old are left to tend their livestock. When you look at it, the young people come to the countryside over the summer to collect milk, and in autumn because of school and other commitments they leave their livestock with elders and go to the centers.”

We have found that there are four basic patterns to household splitting in Bayanhongor, which all show a clear link between the changes in the spatial organisation of households and accessing school for children. In Bayanhongor, school-aged children of herders typically spend the summer months, June to September, with their family in pasture encampments. During the school year, from September to June, children move from rural encampments into the *sum* or *aimag* center where their school is located. If extended family members do not already live near the school, herders establish a second home to house the children. In this case, the children are customarily accompanied by one or both parents. The resulting household splitting either leaves a male member of the household alone at the winter camp to care for livestock for the duration of the school year or leaves the livestock in the care of a friend, relative, or hired help while the entire family moves into the administrative center, or a combination. This change to rural households in every case corresponds to the entry of children in primary school.

Four Types of Household Splitting

Households typically follow four patterns in separating homes when children attend *sum* center schools. In the first, the wife and children move into the administrative center for the duration of the school year, either occupying a second home—a *ger* (traditional mobile dwelling) or wooden cabin—on personal property or on a relation's property. In this case, a male member of the household continues to reside in the countryside *ger* and tend the livestock for the duration of the winter. The second type of splitting involves the entire family re-locating to the center and leaving the herds in the care of friends or relatives. Similarly, the entire family may re-locate to the center and contract herders to take care of herds. We have included this as a separate type of splitting because contracting labour involves explicit payment for services, though the placement may still be with friends or relatives. Lastly, households place their children in student dormitories for the duration of the school year and the parents remain in the pastures.

A typical example of the first case is Ölziit herders, Purev and Bataa, who are 30 and 29 years old, respectively, with two young daughters. They planned to live separately during the 2014–2015 school year when their eldest daughter entered kindergarten. Both grew up in a county to the south and moved to Ölziit approximately eight years ago. Purev is the son of a successful camel herder in the Gobi region of Bayanhongor, a day's journey south, and his father continues to maintain a herd in the hundreds. Bataa explained, “soon one of us will be in the *aimag* [provincial center], my daughter will enter school and my husband will be alone in the countryside watching the livestock while I go to the *aimag* center and watch my daughter. I would like to stay but need to go because our child is entering school.” Bataa plans to be away from September to June and plans to visit her countryside home and help with their

herd of 400 goats and 70 sheep during school vacations, such as the Lunar New Year. She describes the period of separation from her husband and the livestock as “heavy,” a colloquial expression to describe a difficult or burdensome situation. Although this family resides in Ölziit county, they chose to enter their daughter in school in the *aimag* center rather than the school in Ölziit’s center, despite the shorter distance to Ölziit.

Bataa explained that while residing together, they do not have enough labour to meet all of their work needs. When supplies are needed from the provincial center, they make arrangements for friends to travel about 20 kilometres from the *aimag* center to take care of the herds so that Purev can take the trip. Bataa explained that these labour problems would be exacerbated when she departs for the school year, as they camp alone during the winter season, which is typical for families in this desert-steppe region. Purev explained that herding alone for the winter is extremely challenging. Amongst his difficult tasks are collecting water from a distant well and preventing it from freezing while he is away from home, staying warm in the absence of someone to stoke the fire, and protecting his animals from unpredictable weather and predators without recourse to immediate assistance while still provisioning his family in the provincial center. Distance, poor cell phone service, transport and fuel requirements, livestock needs, and difficult weather conditions prevent frequent movement between seasonal pasture camps and settlements. These logistical difficulties are exacerbated during the livestock birthing period in spring, when extra care is needed to safeguard young animals, milk livestock, and protect weakened animals during harsh weather events.

In another example, Bat, the 21-year-old eldest son of two successful herders in their early 50s, spent the summer of 2013 helping his family with their livestock and building a new house on their property in the Bayanbulag county center located about 25 kilometres away.

His family owns more than 1000 head of mixed breed livestock including horses, yaks, goats, and sheep. During the summer of 2013, Bat, his father, mother, 20-year-old brother, and 13-year-old sister lived at home and actively participated in household work. Another sibling lived in Ulaanbaatar and was being trained in Buddhist Tanka painting. In early September, his younger sister moved into Bayanbulag to attend school. She lived alone for one month while her parents set up their winter camp about 40 kilometres away. Bat's 20-year-old brother travelled to Ulaanbaatar to do seasonal work for a bakery. Bat's mother was not able to join her daughter at the start of school because she had too much work with milking and worried that her daughter "didn't even have someone to comb her hair." She explained that their labour constraints were acute and she often cried from joint pain while milking their large herd of yaks and doing other household tasks. By late-November, Bat's parents moved into their house in the center and Bat remained alone looking after the livestock at their winter camp. "The only thing 'alive' when I get home in the evening is the hot tea in the thermos, everything else is frozen" was his description of life at the winter camp in mid-January. He expressed the hardship and isolation of living alone while tending to the different pasturing requirements of their livestock and the need to be brave (*zorigtoi*) in the face of unpredictable dangers.

The second and third type of splitting involves the husband and wife both moving to the *sum* center. Relatives or friends tend to the family's herds during the winter. The parents' primary winter occupations are taking care of their children. Men rarely take on other jobs, while women may sew garments and produce things to sell. Alternatively, the family moves into the *sum* center and hires another herding family to take care of the herd. This relationship is based solely on cash remuneration offered on a per month basis calculated according to the

herd composition and size. The details of this arrangement are discussed in the following section.

In our interviews, men expressed negative emotions about leaving livestock in the countryside and spending the winter in the provincial center. For example, Ganbold indicated “moving into the center is generally not a good idea.” He described an annual decision between abandoning his herd and abandoning his children, to leave either one in a state of *Ezengüi*, literally meaning “unoccupied, vacant, with the owner absent” (Bawden, 1997, p. 560). Ganbold spent the last three years wintering in the center with his family, where he did not do other work, leaving his herd in the care of a younger relative. This year, Ganbold decided to winter in the countryside to care for his valued horse herd. He explained that this work requires a certain skill set that is acquired from long-term working knowledge of the herd, indicating the importance of situated learning in Mongolian pastoralist livelihoods. He explained that he was once responsible for taking care of a herd of 500 horses in the winter and 430 of the horses died over the course of the season due to winter conditions. For this reason, he has decided not to risk hiring a herder, even if it means spending the 4–5 months of extreme cold alone in his small *ger* in rural isolation while his larger *ger* accommodates his family in the distant county center.

Herders indicate that sending children to school involves a pragmatic dilemma, as they maintain pastoralist livelihoods while also working to access public goods that are important to their children’s futures. The examples provided in this analysis indicate the multiple ways in which herding families are attempting to reconcile to dual, often contradictory, desires for maintaining rural livelihoods while providing education for their children. These interviews corroborate Dyer’s argument that mainstream schooling requires herders to alter their

livelihood practices in order to participate in formal education. Household splitting creates labour strains in winter encampments and creates concerns over territorial rights when household heads are absent from pastures, where occupancy plays an important role in establishing territorial rights.

Financialisation of Herder Households

Accessing schools involves the financialisation of households and herding work primarily through annual loans and hiring herders to care for livestock over the winter. In order to mobilise the cash necessary to send children to school, households use their primary form of economic capital—livestock—as collateral to take out annual bank loans. Herders qualify for bank loans based on the number and type of livestock they own (see also Marin 2008, p. 91; Sneath 2012). In Bayanhongor, the bank loan application process requires the local district supervisor to list a household's total number and type of livestock. Herders invest loan money in a variety of things, including buying property for housing school-attending children and to pay for education-related expenses. Ganaa, a herder in Ölziit explained, “We have to get a loan. In spring we can make a living with the income from wool and other goods. But in autumn, kids go to school and to pay their fees, we can only pay with loans.” Educating children financializes the herder household for the long-term because loans are taken out annually. Reported loans range upwards of 10,000,000 tugrik or around \$8,000 (2013 prices) for livestock-rich households. According to the local administrators in Bayanhongor, the local Khan Bank is reluctant to approve loans if a family does not own a lease for winter camps (*ovoljoo*), a form of private possession over pasture resources. Taking out loans thus has knock-on effects in land use practices (for further discussion see Murphy 2014a, 2014b, 2015).

Obtaining possession rights for winter campsites makes herders more eligible for annual bank loans that are used to pay for education, educational expenses, and maintaining multiple residences. Loans are also used for other expenses, such as buying livestock and vehicles. Sending children to school is part of this process. A 33-year-old herder with two children who entered primary school in the last two years explained:

Now, for example, these children enter school and we don't have ready cash in order to go to the center and obtain property and take care of other various expenses there. We can sell some animals but we don't have enough for it, and in order to build a house in the center we take out loans. Then we pay back the loans by selling cashmere and other products from the herd.

At the time, the family had a herd of 208 mixed breed livestock, which was close to the minimum number to sustain the household. In order to obtain necessary cash, herders would rather borrow against their herd than reduce the number of animals through outright sale and compromise future stock. Herders have to weigh the risk of loans versus reduction of their stock. This example typifies the way in which herders use capital generated from livestock and invest it in property in settled centers, which further solidifies the problems of separated residential arrangements.

A significantly wealthier 37-year-old herder from Gurvanbulag described similar patterns in finance, labour, and household splitting. His family herds over 2000 mixed breed livestock and he has three children aged fifteen, thirteen, and six. They move camp ten to eleven times per year. The children attend primary school and secondary school and he

purchased property in the *aimag* center approximately 240 kilometres south to send his eldest to complete high school there. He raises cash by selling livestock products as well as taking out loans for investments in property, transportation, and more livestock. He encounters labour shortages when his children and extended family leave for the school year and he hires herders for about \$100 per month to help with the work. In this way, educating children contributes to the financialisation of household production. A herder named Otgoo explained an alternative arrangement. He explained that his wife moved to the *sum* center for the first time last winter when their child started first grade. He stayed alone in the countryside and took care of the livestock of his and other families. He charges 500 tugrik per large livestock (i.e., horse or cattle) per month, making 25,000 tugrik from herding 50 large livestock, or about \$18 per month.

These narratives illustrate how schooling children is entangled in changing valuations of livestock and pasture. Loans, hiring herders, and new types of land use emerge directly from herders' effort to access primary and secondary school for children. Herders link children's entry into school with choices to invest in private property in *sum* centers. Additionally, herders site their absence from winter and spring pastures as a contributing factor in the purchase of land possession rights. This evidence suggests that the frequency of dual residence during the school year may challenge custodial tenure practices over common pastures and may make way for alternative ways of being "owners" (*ezen*) and establishing rights in the absence of pasture occupancy. More research is necessary to investigate these complex dynamics. These cases are illustrative of herder decision making and the considerations needed to make arrangements to educate children at local schools. The empirical data from Bayanhongor clearly demonstrates the link between the financialisation of

the household and accessing school for children. An older herder from Ölziit discussed contemporary work in the following terms:

Mongolia is like today's wind. Nothing is stable. Today the price of a goatskin is not stable. It has been 2000 or 3000 [tugrik] but it rises up to 10,000 when goats have more cashmere. Just like that...our country is in the hands of few traders. There is nothing to make us wealthy. We have maybe cars with the money we make from the wool and cashmere of our animals. A person with cash in his wallet to buy cigarettes is rare. In the countryside, everyone has a loan. We herd the bank's animals, if I tell the truth. Then children attending school say they need some money. Apartments cost 80 million or 60 million at least. We have no capability to buy that...then if we decide to buy a fence and house in the *ger* district then it is 20 million. We go to Khan Bank to afford it. We have to have insurance if we want a loan. The loan interest is 2%. They used to give 10 million but now the highest amount is 5 million. Our life is in a difficult situation. People might say you are not in a difficult situation. It is hard. We need to spend at least 30 or 40 million for our child to make their own household.

Bathoyer's statement "we herd the bank's animals" in reference to the need for cash to access school and to ultimately establish a household for children explicitly implicates schooling in struggles over finance and uncertain livelihoods. In this way, the terms of inclusion in the current Mongolian school system have far-reaching effects on land use practices and the social reproduction of households amongst herders in rural Bayanhongor.

Conclusion

Herder household strategies to access school for their children significantly affects the way that mobile pastoralism is practiced in Mongolia today. Accessing education in the current Mongolian school system involves transformations in the spatial organisation of herder households through household splitting between remote seasonal winter pastures and school locations. The critical reflections of Mongolian herders in their pursuit of formal schooling for children provide material to substantiate the notion that the terms of inclusion have contradictory effects on pastoralist livelihoods.

Herders report stress on the labour supply available to care for livestock and maintain winter homes and curtailed opportunities for children to learn winter survival and herding skills. They evaluate household separation as emotionally negative and contributing to uncertainties. Additionally, an important issue not discussed extensively in the literature on education amongst pastoralists is the financialisation of households in the schooling process. Herder households are financialized through annual bank loans to access cash in order to pay for the costs associated with schooling, including the purchase of second homes. Additionally, pastoralist work is financialized when herders contract labour to care for livestock during their times of absence during the school year. The conditions needed to access education significantly alter the organisation of household residence and finances. The strategies used by herders to combine pastoralism with schooling affect practices of pastoralism and contribute to livelihood vulnerability especially in the extreme weather in winter and spring seasons. This material substantiates Dyer's argument that the terms of inclusion in schooling for pastoralists has contradictory effects and does not meet the goal of universal inclusion of international development frameworks, but requires herders to effectively temporarily

sedentarize key members of the household to access schools. The costs of access go beyond finances; they cut into the fabric of pastoralism as a sustainable livelihood. This situation is ironic because pastoralism has provided a safety net of employment in the absence of macroeconomic stability since the early 1990s. There is significant room for the development of innovative schooling methods in rural areas and these options should be pursued, especially given the importance of pastoralism for the Mongolian economy, society, and environment.

Schooling children also has consequences for gendered family roles and sociocultural values connected to seasonal divisions of labour. Living in pastures and caring for livestock during the winter requires a completely different skill set than wintering in a settled center with ready access to amenities and proximity to other people. Decision making around how to solve the quandary of “taking care of herds or taking care of family” as one herder explained, has led to four variations in school-year housing arrangements. Herder struggles and experiences of social reproduction occur in the context of education, which corroborates Jeffrey, Jeffrey and Jeffrey’s (2008) proposal that education is not a straightforward transformative resource, but constitutes “terrains of social and political struggle” (p. 8) and involves negotiations over value in contexts of economic uncertainty and other means to achieve agency. The investment of time, labour, and financial resources may create liabilities that erode rather than create future possibilities, adding more uncertainty and potentially limiting the resilience of household operations, as Dyer (2012, 2013) has given clear examples in her analysis of the Education for All programme. Evidence from Mongolia confirms these arguments and contributes to them by showing how the contradictions of education go beyond the experiences of educated individuals and affect the organisation of households as they work to access educational resources for children. This material illustrates how schooling children

can contribute to uncertainty and instability in rural livelihoods. The role of schooling in the transformation of pastoralist livelihoods is an understudied subject and should receive more attention in debates on land use and environmental governance.

Herders are keenly aware of these contradictions as they live with the daily effects of split households, labour shortages, and financial difficulties. Long-term stability and success of pastoralist families is entwined with herds that play critical roles in sociocultural beliefs, values, food, and finances. Further research is needed to understand in what terms pastoralists value education and how this articulates with citizenship and ideas of responsibility.

ARTICLE 2

The New Mongolian State Herder: Examining “the State” as a Political Resource in Patron-Client Relations*

Abstract

This article aims to advance understandings of the state as an idea, contingent on historical processes rather than a taken-for-granted natural category. By investigating the interactions between an active government administration system and pastoralist households in rural Mongolia, I show that “the state” is performed in part through a variety of patron–client relations. Based on ethnographic research from 2012–2013, this article focuses on the activities around the implementation of two government initiatives tailored for herder households and a county meeting. This article draws on performativity theory and the concept of improvisation in order to highlight the ways in which social hierarchies of power and political history structure people’s engagement with governing authorities. The second aim of the paper is to suggest that concepts of responsibility, obligation, and duty form part of the moral framework of political patronage relations and the terms by which the state as an idea is performed in everyday relations.

Keywords: the state, performativity, improvisation, pastoralism, Mongolia]

*This article was sent to *American Ethnologist* in December 2014, with reviewers’ comments received in June 2015.

Six hundred and forty kilometres west of Ulaanbaatar, Erdene's cell phone is constantly ringing, which he juggles between cigarettes and the stick shift of his indefatigable Hyundai Excel. He is the local supervisor of a rural administrative subdivision called a *bag* in Ölzii County in the Central West province of Bayanhongor, Mongolia. The district is home to 189 households who practice mobile pastoralism as their primary livelihood. Erdene is a middle-aged native of the district, a former herder with the energy to match his peppy Bollywood ringtone. In his youth, Erdene envisioned his future work to be as a horse herder for the local socialist collective. In 2013, over twenty years since democratic reforms, he now works as a public servant for one of the most open economies in Asia. This irony was not lost to him as he sped along the sometimes barely visible track with a confidence that only one with deep knowledge of the landscape could do. It was knowledge built up from a childhood of herding in that area and reinforced by frequent visits to the seasonal homes of local families that his job required.

In Ölzii, the everyday work of county administration is interwoven with shared family relations, friendships, weddings and holidays, herding and rural work, and other everyday activities such as eating meals, drinking beer, playing cards and dominos, fixing broken vehicles, exchanging news and sometimes spending the night with herders while in transit to even-more distant herder homes. Government administrative work largely addresses household economic activities, such as buying and selling livestock products, the management of common pastureland, usufruct rights, livestock and social insurance, pension advances, well repairs, transportation, and other services. Erdene explained with amusement that the Mongolian government is so concerned with livestock that it counts each household's herd twice a year and its human population only once a decade. These counts are recorded on

multi-paged spreadsheets featuring each household's livestock profile—neat columns listing numbers of goats, sheep, cows or yaks, horses, and camels. Household livestock even act as collateral for bank loans, one reason why Erdene's signature on official counts is in high demand. Each of these administrative tasks is something of a social event, too, and involves everyday interaction in the space of herder homes, on the phone, or in the cabs of vehicles.

The frequency of contact between government administrators like Erdene and herding households is striking, especially given a number of studies that portray the state as absent, neglectful, or ineffective in rural areas since structural adjustment reforms in the 1990s (Fernandez-Gimenez 2002; Fernandez-Gimenez and Batbuyan 2004; Fernandez-Gimenez et al 2012; Hannam 2012, 2014; Upton 2008, 2012). Research conducted in a county just south of Ölziit in Bayanhongor reports, “the absence of formal or customary regulation of pasture use” since the end of socialism (Fernandez-Gimenez 2002, p. 59). Xiaoyi and Fernandez-Gimenez contend, “In Mongolia, which has much weaker institutions of control compared with China, the government has played a very limited role in grassland management and has interfered little with herders' daily lives” (2012, p. 214). Many rangeland scholars and ecologists have focused on the role of international agencies in pastureland management with little analysis of current government administrative activities and local politics. While these scholars offer valuable insights into economic and social trends in rural Mongolia, the focus on analyzing the degree to which an imagined state is present or not present in rural areas distracts attention from understanding how differently positioned actors, whether they are government employees or not, act to maintain authority over and rights in social, economic and cultural resources. As Erdene's experience above illustrates, the concept of the reified

state fails to capture the ways in which ongoing relations of power are performed and improvised in reference to specific temporal, spatial and social conditions.

Further, claims of state absence erroneously imply that herders in Mongolia exist outside the state, a common distortion of the mobile pastoralist way of life that has contributed to the notion that pastoralist livelihoods are a throwback to earlier times or are a threat to social and economic development (Chatty 1996; Dyer 2014; Humphrey and Sneath 1999). This characterization has justified sedentarisation schemes and other policies regulating access to public services that have been shown to reproduce pastoralist political marginalisation in Africa, India, and China (Dyer 2013; Hahn 2013; Yeh 2013). The Soviet-backed Mongolian government similarly discredited mobile pastoralism in these terms in its push to rapidly modernise the country (Ovdiyenko 1965). While many herders report the vanishing of food on shop shelves during the economic crises of the 1990s, there is no strong evidence of the institutional collapse of the political system in rural Bayanhongor. The analytical focus on “the state” by scholars further obscures the politics of post-socialist redistribution, privatisation, and economic liberalisation by avoiding a discussion of the historically produced and spatialized relations from which current and emergent inequalities and relations of dependence thrive (see Harriss and Jeffrey 2013 for further discussion).

Drawing upon fieldwork in rural Bayanhongor, Mongolia from 2012-2014, I aim to advance understandings of the state as an idea, contingent on historical processes rather than a taken-for-granted natural category. By investigating the relations between government administration and pastoralist households, I show that “the state” is performed through a variety of patron–client relations. I critically engage with Gupta and Ferguson’s concept of the “spatialization of the state” in their examination of the everyday practices of administration in

India and Africa (Gupta 1995; Ferguson and Gupta 2002). Their work has moved debates on the state forward by showing how sub-district bureaucracies and “quotidian practices” (Gupta 1995: 376, 2012) are ways in which the notion of the state becomes naturalized in governance practices. Ferguson and Gupta could do more to show how the ontological status of the state is always partially accomplished through ongoing political processes and relations of power. Attending to the highly social, varied, and improvisational work of people like Erdene reveals the importance of historical power relations, moralities and political identities, through which the idea of the state is deployed and invoked in ongoing negotiations for rights and claims to resources.

Further, attention to the critical reflections of local administrators and herders in Mongolia provides an opening to conceptualise the state-as-idea through the lens of performativity (Glass and Rose-Redwood 2014; Jeffrey 2013; Reeves 2014) and highlights the political struggles of administrators *and* herders (sometimes one and the same) as they engage with a range of potential patrons. A focus on the performative aspects of governmentality puts a greater emphasis on the relational aspects of power relations as people act creatively but within constraints. The second aim of the paper is to suggest that concepts of responsibility, obligation, and duty form part of the moral framework of political patronage relations. These notions of responsibility, however, are not necessarily a “responsibilization” in the neoliberal sense of the word, but draw on antecedent socialist frameworks and historical concepts of political membership. In making these arguments, I focus on two government initiatives that were implemented over the course of 2013, which included a government-issued ‘diploma,’ award medal and stamp as well as a government-sponsored logbook that were given to all full-time herders to keep records of administrator home visits and to record herder feedback.

Additionally, I briefly discuss examples of how people reprimand and discipline government leaders in the context of a public meeting for not fulfilling expectations around responsible leadership. In doing so, I return to the cab of Erdene's dusty vehicle, where we search for a pen or calculator, or both, amongst the dried dairy products (gifts from the last stop at a herder's household), to note down the details of our last transaction. In this growing list of transactions, the 'state' emerges in what Alex Jeffrey (2013, p. 3) would call improvisational relations of "performance and resourcefulness," which is a literature to which I now turn.

The State-Idea and Performativity

A significant and growing body of scholarship has problematized the conceptualisation of the state as a unified system operating in a sphere separate from society and presiding over a specific territory. Scholarly attention has focused on the spatial aspects of state organisation, with particular focus on transnationalism (Agnew 1998, 2005, 2007; Agnew and Corbridge 1995; Ong 1999), territory and territoriality (Deleuze and Guattari 1984; McConnell 2012, 2013; Steinberg, Tasch and Gerhardt 2014; Yeh 2013), and state practices (Scott 1998; Mitchell 1999, 2002; Butler and Spivak 2007; Steinmetz 1999) to name only a few paths of analysis. Given this vast body of literature, I situate my work with reference to recent work on performativity (Glass and Rose-Redwood 2014; Jeffrey 2013) and critically engage with conceptual debates on the spatialization of the state (Gupta 1995; Ferguson and Gupta 2002). I also draw on ethnographic investigations of post-socialist states (Reeves 2014; Ssorin-Chaikov 2003; Sneath 2007).

Social scientists have illustrated how bureaucratic practices, knowledge-generating projects, media, public events, and other campaigns produce an idealisation of the state. In some cases this idealisation is expressed through fetish or fantasy (Gordillo 2006; Navaro-

Yashin 2002, 2012; Taussig 1997). Abrams provocatively asserts that the state is a primarily ideological and political construction. He states, “The state, then, is not an object akin to the human ear. Nor is it even an object akin to human marriage. It is a third-order object, an ideological project” (Abrams 1998, p. 76). Abrams argues that the “state-idea” should be studied separately from the “ensemble of institutionalized political power” (1998, p. 75) that contributes to the re-iteration and continual reproduction of the idea of the state. From this perspective, it is possible to argue that the idea of the state is contingent and has been used at different points in history to operationalise political and distributional systems based on systems of patronage, class, markets, and other privileged social statuses (see also Mitchell 1999).

Sneath (2007) makes this argument in his study of historical political formations in Mongolia. He argues that “The history of the region shows no clear dichotomy between highly centralized, stratified ‘state’ society and egalitarian, kin-based ‘tribal’ society, but rather displays principles of descent deployed as technologies of power in a range of more or less centralized polities, ruling subjects engaged in various kinds of productive practices—pastoral, artisanal, even agricultural” (2007, p. 4). Sneath’s argument is important because it shows that the categories of “state” and “tribal” are largely imagined political categories that arose from specific intellectual traditions for political ends. He highlights the endurance of certain sources of political power and statuses in the region over time, such as membership in noble family groups or religious institutions. Although degrees of institutional centralisation fluctuated, distinct features of hierarchical organisation and political authority maintained continuity and were recognisable over time. Zimmermann (2012) supports this view with her examination of discourses of corruption and relations of obligation in Mongolia. Sneath’s

insights are important because they point to the ways in which political groups use the idea of the state to spatially reorganise the distribution of resources and rights to use resources, as was the case during post-socialist privatisation (see Humphrey 2002; Verdery 1996).

While this literature generally agrees that the state is an ideological project, controversy remains about how the abstraction of the state endures in social practice. Ferguson and Gupta (2002) argue that bureaucratic practices, metaphors, and other forms of representation reproduce the idea that states are located in a “vertical” and “encompassing” relationship to society. The state is conceived as both above society (“verticality”) as well as constituting an outward ring surrounding a core of local and family-based spheres (“encompassment”) (2002, p. 982). Drawing from Mitchell (1991), Ferguson and Gupta advance the idea that the vertical and encompassing ideological spatialisation of the state is achieved, with varying degrees of success, within local social practices and administrative routines. The way in which the state is spatially imagined in relation to society has social effects, and they argue that the spatialisation of the state is not incidental to state activity but instrumental for ‘state’ existence (2002, p. 995). The daily work of administration, within for instance, non-governmental and governmental projects, are spaces where hierarchical relations are reproduced and perpetuate the idea that the state is distinct from social relations. Ssorin-Chaikov (2003), in his study of the Soviet administration of the Evenki in Siberia argues, following Foucault’s example of the prison and Ferguson’s (1994) anti-politics machine, that the failures and dysfunctions of Soviet institutions did the work of expanding these institutions in the everyday lives of rural Siberians. These instrumental effects brought the state to life in regions commonly perceived as beyond the reach of the state and informed the rise of the indigenous political movement in Siberia.

Ferguson, Gupta, Mitchell, and others have used Foucault's notion of governmentality to understand how the idea of the state and its imagined spatial characteristics becomes part of political subjectivity. Foucault's work around power and knowledge has provided a key anchoring point in the problematisation of the reified state and scholars' efforts to move beyond the popular conceptualisation of the separation between state and society (Jeffrey 2013). McConnell's (2012) work on the Tibetan Government-in-Exile illustrates the techniques used by the government both to construct its population and position itself as an aspirational state, despite not having its own sovereign territory. McConnell's analysis has forwarded the notion of "governmentalisation to *practice* the state" (2012, p. 93) in order to highlight the relationship between knowledge, population and governance. Foucault's analysis of knowledge-generating practices around the governance of populations, such as statistics, identifies how power is actualised through certain types of discourses, behaviours, and actions (Murdoch 1997; Rose-Redwood 2006). These actions are not necessarily part of formal government institutions, but may be absorbed or formalized into institutions over time. A point that was emphasized in Foucault's later lectures, and one worth returning to here, is that there is not one single rationality of governance, but many "co-existing and competing" governmentalities that are enacted through historically produced power relations (Collier 2009: 99). Overly focusing on government bureaucracies as sources of power distracts attention from understanding how particular people, political parties, social statuses and hierarchies come to dominate groups and legitimate their authority to rule.

Thus, what do these analyses say about the political relations of people living and working in these regions? In addition, who succeeds in gaining authority and resources using the state-idea, and who are less successful? These questions point to the usefulness of Butler's

theory of performativity in understanding how the state is spatialised through everyday relations. Butler defines performativity as “the reiterative and citational practices by which discourse produces the effects that it names” (Glass and Rose-Redwood 2014, p. 10). This theory holds that there is not a pre-existing subject or “sovereign” authority, but that subjects are formed through on-going processes of experience, reflection, and re-iteration. As Glass and Rose-Redwood have stated, “it is only through the continuous assertion of sovereign authority that the collective subject we call ‘the state’ comes into being as a performative effect” (2014, p. 22). Recent work by Jeffrey (2013) builds from theories of performance and performativity to develop the idea of the “improvisation of the state.” Improvisation captures the sense that people act creatively in accordance with their perception of a given situation. This perception is based on prior knowledge and learning, as well as the resources available to them at the particular time and place. Jeffrey draws upon Bourdieu’s social theories, in particular the notions of social, cultural and economic capital, to show how improvisation is “a process that combines performance and resourcefulness” (2013, p. 3). In this way, Jeffrey shows how statehood in Bosnia involves on-going claim-making processes that tie authority to the ability to access symbolic, economic and cultural resources. Interestingly, the concept of improvisation highlights the historical contingency of authoritative claim-making and also shows how the basis of these claims change and are re-worked in different places, based on the unique resources of those places. Additionally, improvisation includes the possibility for corruption and deviant claims to authority, recognising the various means through which state authority can be claimed and also contested.

Examining how the government interacts with herder households, and the social nature of governance as administrators are themselves herders and kin to the local community,

provides further evidence to support the performative terms by which the state idea is built in a place like Mongolia. I further contend that the moral framework of obligation involved in patronage relations contribute to the power of the performance of the state idea. The issuing of ‘diplomas,’ stamps, and medals to herders, which are styled to mimic socialist era awards, are an obvious reference to former rituals of belonging to the Mongolian polity, but today are based on new expectations of relating and acting in relation to government institutions. They offer new resources and formats for herders to engage with government officials and organise their households. These material objects send a message. They provide material to communicate about the state—in critique, praise, or as props for jest. These initiatives become part of herders’ perception of their role as members of a national organization and the government’s formulation of herders-as-political subjects.

Administrative Flows and Porous Households

Bayanhongor province is located in central west Mongolia and is divided into 20 counties. I lived primarily in Ölziit County, located about 20 kilometres from the provincial capital. In 2012, the county had 1021 households registered, 867 of which were herder households (National Statistical Office of Mongolia 2013). I also spent time in Gurvanbulag and Buyanbulag counties in northern Bayanhongor. Twenty-seven percent of Mongolian households were registered as full-time herders in 2012 and Bayanhongor is in the top five provinces with the greatest number of livestock and herders (National Statistical Office of Mongolia 2013, p. 220) which was also badly affected by a series of winter disasters over the last ten years, making it a dynamic location to study the political economy of mobile pastoralism.

Each Mongolian county has an administrative settlement referred to as the “center,” where the local government buildings, school, shops, and at least one gas station are located. These county centers are surrounded by common pastureland that is home to mobile pastoralists or *malchin* (herders). Each county is divided into smaller districts called *bag* and for each of these sub-districts there is a *bagiin darga* or *bag* governor. The county governor and county council governor head the administration and *bag* governors liaise with these officials as well as other clerks, environmental officers, the county vet, doctor, police officers, and other administrative staff. The local residents of the sub-district elect *bag* governors. Herders are officially registered members of a county and a sub-district. Registration status determines voting locations and access to services such as public hospitals and schools.

From 2012-2014, I lived and worked in Ölziit with a local herder family. Due to transportation challenges in the beginning stages of fieldwork, my host family suggested that I accompany their *bag* governor, Erdene, on his rounds around *bag* 1. I had frequent contact with a number of other *bag* governors in all three counties as well as the leaders in the provincial level government. Erdene is representative of a typical rural *bag* supervisor in that he grew up in the *bag* and had many family relations and childhood friends amongst the herder households. Some of these relations took care of his livestock. One difference between Erdene and his colleagues is that he has been the *bag* governor for more than ten years and he lives in the Bayanhongor provincial center rather than the *sum*. When accompanying Erdene, I was a participant-observer in his work; my participation involved tasks ranging from hauling loads of wool to making notes and retrieving tools. His “office” was his home in Bayanhongor province, his well-used car, and the homes of herders that we visited. While travelling around

the district, we both also participated in the work of households, helping to shear sheep, milk goats, herd and water animals, or make dinner.

Administration in rural Mongolia requires almost constant travel between dispersed and mobile campsites. *Bag* supervisors are expected to visit the home of each herder one to two times a month. Herders go to administrative centers for public meetings on a variety of topics, such as decisions over winter shelter possession rights and pasture and water use, as well as county-wide development projects, training seminars, and public budget decisions. Herders often have a secondary home in county centers in order to access school-based education, but the work of administration primarily occurs in the context of home visits at the sites of seasonal pasture encampments.

When Erdene was elected as the *bag* governor more than ten years ago, he travelled by horse and camel to herder homes. His predecessor, Dorj, who held the same position during the socialist period, is a local herder who described his job as involving just as much travel, but the administration focused on organising work groups, distributing inputs such as hay, and meeting work quotas. Today, the *bag* governor is charged with the duty of being a liaison between herders and the government administration. Erdene described himself as being a *zarts* or servant for both the government and the local herder community. The idea of mutual exclusivity between a “state” and local inhabitants is very difficult to support when one sees government as something more akin to role-playing, or another type of work or membership in a group. The majority of *bag* supervisors are both herders and administrators, and are kin to the herders in the sub-district, which is typically their birthplace. Administrative work did not adhere to specific work hours, but was determined by environmental or other social and logistical factors. On one occasion, we rushed to a herder’s camp as an impending rainstorm

threatened to drench wool that we were buying from households for the local felt and carpet factory. Rain-soaked wool is far heavier than dry wool and would ruin the accounting system. County administrators would often work late into the night to finish compiling reports, and *bag* governors might be on the road for days to distribute materials or check-in with households.

In the summer of 2013, two new government initiatives were launched in Bayanhongor. As the local administration and the herders in the district were familiar with my research project, they understood that I was interested in studying the local political economy. While I helped Erdene with his tasks, I did so as his “younger sibling,” a student who wanted to learn more about how things worked. The first initiative took place in June 2013, just before the presidential election, and consisted of the distribution of an official certificate printed by the Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Agriculture called the “Diploma of the Profession of Herder,” an award medal titled “Mongolian State Herder,” and a rubber stamp printed with the head of household’s name and government registration number. The diploma and award medal were distributed to all adult registered herders in Ölzii, regardless of age or gender. The Government of Bayanhongor Province developed the second initiative as a pilot for a national project. It is a “communication notebook,” a government-issued logbook that is kept in herder homes for them to record their suggestions, complaints, and other comments to the government. Administrators are required to make a log at every visit to herder homes with information on the purpose of their visit and the work they did, or any concerns that were raised during the visit.

The initiatives in Bayanhongor specifically target rural herders and explicitly address elements of rural work and pastoralist livelihood practices. They emphasize a relationship

between households, individuals, and a state organisation and invoke the socialist past by framing herders as “state herders.” A perfunctory reading of these efforts inspires a kneejerk critique of devolved forms of governance, neoliberal policy, and efforts to “responsibilise” rural producers. This reading is not entirely satisfactory, however, when one investigates historic government organisation in Mongolia. Central authorities have governed pastoralist households for centuries, where obligations between higher and lower status households were common. There is evidence of political organisation according to membership in local territories controlled by central authorities as early as the 1200s, when households were assigned to decimal sized socio-political units and called on to provide labour, serve post-road stations, perform military service, and provide livestock produce (Atwood 2012). Similarly, anthropologists have shown how political authority was based on age, gender, religious, and family-based statuses. These hierarchies shaped relations with landscapes of which they were a part (Humphrey 1995; Sneath 2010). This perspective provides insight into the links between social hierarchies, pastoralist work practices, and political membership. It also supports an understanding of political organisation as being expressed through moral relations of obligation between people who hold unequal social positions.

In the sections that follow I will present the details of the Bayanhongor government initiatives in Ölzii County to highlight the porous boundaries between state administration and pastoralist households. Then I will examine how the Mongolian government, through its bureaucratic practices, enlists herders as “members” of the state, and to what extent the notion of “responsibilisation” applies in this context. The initiatives explored in this paper suggest that the rural pastoralist economy is moving in the direction of more formalised household enterprises that impact herder political membership and rights to resources. They also indicate

that patron–client relations continue to be an important basis for political authority and resource access.

The New “Mongolian State Herders”

A herder is the master of 1000 professions.

–President Elbegdorj, quoted on the top of government-issued herder diplomas, 2013

About a week before the presidential election in June 2013, I assisted in the distribution of three government-issued objects to about 60 herder households in the district where I lived with a local family in Ölziit County. The objects were: an official diploma for herders, which were presented in a red plastic padded folder with the title “Mongolian National Herder Diploma” embossed in gold letters on the cover; a medal titled “Mongolian State Herder”; and a red official stamp personalised with the name of the head of household and registration number carved into its oval rubber shape. These objects had a strong stylistic resemblance to materials from the socialist era of the 1970s and 1980s, when the government rewarded talented or productive members of livestock collectives with similar material acknowledgements. The socialist administration pursued policies focused on mechanisation, modernisation, and urbanisation in line with the Soviet Union. The medal is a striking replica of the socialist era “Mongolian State Herder” award, featuring the five types of Mongolian livestock in an inverted V shape with the horse at the pinnacle surrounding the Mongolian symbol of state.

The diploma, presented along with the medal, indicates a formalisation and symbolic valuing of herder work in the format of an official, government-issued qualification. The

certificate was printed in colour and divided into two sections. The left side of the page reads (translation from Mongolian):

Diploma of the Profession of Herder

Registration number 0123-46-78910

Tseren Munkhbat of *Bayanhongor* province's *Ölziit* County

“The professional herder certification is being presented to you in accordance with your mastery of the methods, skills, and knowledge of a herder”

Government registration number 0001

At the bottom of the left side are the seals and signatures of the Ministers of the Department of Labour and the Department for Agriculture.

The right side of the page reads:

“This is to certify that *Tseren Munkhbat* is carrying out and maintaining the traditional practices of animal husbandry of which he has mastered and for which he knows the knowledge and methods.”

Following this statement is a list of thirteen points summarising the knowledge and skills that comprise the work of a herder, including “the skills and knowledge to safeguard the [national] border, language, and livestock,” “the ability to work together and labour cooperatively,” and “the ability to pass on the traditions and customs.” Other points include

the ability to make dairy and meat products, to identify livestock qualities such as colour, age, and behaviour, and the knowledge and ability to market produce.

In Ölziit, our party of four consisting of the sub-district governor Erdene, an environmental resource administrator, a local university student and I, distributed the diploma along with the Mongolian State Herder award and stamp to the male and female heads of households. As we travelled over the alternatively sandy and rocky dirt roads of the district to each home, Erdene would call the name of the next family that we were going to visit. We would locate their individually-wrapped and labeled stamp from a flimsy blue and white plastic bag, tearing at the seams and jammed up on the shelf above the dusty seat of our rattling vehicle. Erdene would quickly fill out the blank spaces on the diploma—the name of the individual, their registration number, the name of the province and county. Erdene even mischievously filled one out for me, complete with a registration number, as a souvenir and what I interpreted as an act of playful resistance.

After arranging ourselves on the guest side of the *ger* (mobile dwelling), exchanging customary greetings and explaining the purpose of our visit over freshly served tea, Erdene would gesture for one of us to give the diploma, medal, and stamp to the heads of household. He half-jokingly announced to the herders, “Now you have a profession, congratulations,” playing on a common discourse that portrays herders as being without a profession, unskilled, and uneducated. This juxtaposition makes the diploma additionally valuable by including herding in the category of professional and skilled work. The diploma is a powerful source of symbolic capital as formal education is associated with modern worldviews and “developed” (*hogжилtei*) and “cultured” (*soyoltoi*) subjectivities.

These items were distributed to every full-time herding family regardless of age, including elderly people who were still herding independently in their mid-70s. The families did not expect to receive the objects and often expressed confusion or asked for instructions on when to use the stamp. Erdene explained that it was to be used when they sold their produce, especially wool and cashmere. The items were often tucked away in the locked chests in the northern end of the *ger*, or rested temporarily in a place of honour on the family altar. In this context, the government initiative to distribute diplomas to herders appears to be a way to formally acknowledge and value the work of mobile pastoralists as a valid profession with a set of skills that clearly state a herder's role in the Mongolian State.

Our visits to herder homes to distribute the items also involved other administrative work. Erdene spent more time discussing livestock insurance deadlines and collecting insurance money than diploma-related business. Additionally, the administrators lingered at the houses of friends or relatives, discussing local news, health concerns, or admiring new technology or infant children. We spent time eating freshly-boiled meat at the home of two elderly herders, then made a deliberate stop at the home of a family preparing for the marriage of their son to discuss the preparations, offer support, and have a taste of candy and freshly-cooked noodle soup. The administrative work was getting done efficiently as was critical social bonding that facilitated wider discussion, observation, and nonverbal sharing of space.

The everyday work of administration is varied and involves many different types of interactions, reiterated and performed in the spaces of herder homes where other social rules and hierarchies are at play. The diploma, medal, and stamp contribute to the professionalization of herder work “on paper,” while the distribution of these items takes on different meanings in the context of ongoing local relations. The diplomas appeal to and

reinforce the idea that herders play an essential role in maintaining the traditional culture and environment of Mongolia. Erdene's "congratulations" also frames the diploma in a moment of ironic humour, where the inequalities between countryside and city that this diploma represents become all the more visible. All three objects include the term "Mongolian State Herder" which emphasizes the role of the *herder*—as distinct from others—as a particular type of citizen and member of the Mongolian state. These objects invoke the socialist past through the red colour and the symbolic qualities of a medal and a stamp, which were ubiquitous metaphors of socialist government. In 2013, the type of citizenship that they put forth is one based on a framework for pastoralist household production and political participation that categorize herding households as a "small and medium enterprise" rather than state workers (see Mongolia's Ministry of Industry and Agriculture).

In August 2013, herders in Gurvanbulag County, which is about 240 km north of Ölziit, showed me their diplomas and medals. (I did not take part in the distribution of the diplomas in this area). As I was talking to an older, respected herder in his late 50s, he stood up to show me the long banner of medals hanging from the north side of his *ger*. He explained many of them to me, but stopped dramatically at the recently distributed Mongolian State Herder medal, a shiny piece at the end of a long display of tarnished socialist awards. "From my medalions, this is the most wonderful. This one. Many people may just disregard it. This is a medal called the *Malchin* (herder) of Mongolia, with the state coat of arms and so on."

I had not asked a question or referred to the award; he introduced it into the conversation independently. This was the second time he has been given this award—he received it during the socialist period as well. He explained, "They just gave it to a random person like me. Usually, it should have been given with high criteria." Removing the newly

acquired medal from the banner, he raised it in the air and explained its importance: “It is [important] because it appreciates the fact that *Malchin* consists of a thousand professions in one. Certainly it does! For instance, you can make yoghurt in so many ways; you can brew *airag* [fermented mare’s milk] in many other ways. Technology to make *eezgii* [another dairy product]—Mongolian technology. And then, sewing—abundant in its own techniques, using the Mongolian way. You can also make so many other things using wood. When you are herder, you even learn to forecast weather! For instance, on TV you see people forecasting and analysing weather. But in my region you observe how rodents behave and can forecast the weather.”

For him, the award signified that his skills were important to Mongolian society. As herders, they are sources of innovation and independence as well as protectors of the “Mongolian way.” On the other hand, some herders appear to be ambivalent towards the diploma and skeptical of its association with the political party in power. Using Jeffrey’s (2013) notion of the improvisation of the state, these objects may be considered a resource in which ideas of the state are performed, which occur in herder homes and involve the personal possessions of individuals and their family history, and contribute to their political identity, social status, and values.

The way the government builds relationships with herders retains elements from the past while introducing new economic practices. These initiatives are occurring alongside debates on a new Pastureland law, the increasing reliance of herders on annual bank loans to finance their household (education, marriages, household expenditures, health care, livestock care), and risk-mitigation measures such as livestock insurance and government cash transfer

schemes. The communication notebook is one example of a new approach to building relationships with herders, which occurs in existing administrative routines.

The Communication Notebook

The “Household Communication Notebook,” with the subtitle, “Bayanhongor Province’s Government Logbook” was distributed to herders over the course of 2013. During a county meeting for herders in Gurvanbulag, the governor of Bayanhongor province held up this notebook and said:

This official government “Household Communication Notebook” is in all of the households in the Bayanhongor provincial center and in all of the households in Bayanhongor province. My vision is that at least once a season households will make an entry, which can give direction to our work...This book should be developed as a collaboration between citizens and public administrators and citizens should participate and receive timely access to services, this book can strengthen the conditions for citizen participation and cooperation.

The notebook is placed with households and is meant to comprise an additional means of communication between state administrators and herders. Local government employees, such as doctors, vets, environmental officers, the bag governor, and others use the notebook to log the dates, times, and purpose of their visits. The placement of this logbook in herder homes illustrates the expectation that government employees make frequent visits to families and maintain a strong relationship with them, and this work should be documented in a formal way. This evidence further refutes the common discourse of the “absent state” by scholars and

development experts in rural Mongolia and illustrates how the idea of the state is reinforced constantly within formal and informal local social relations. The government is both a client and a patron of herder households, offering access to a range of resources as a patron while relying on herder patronage to achieve authority over distribution and control of important resources.

In an interview, the provincial governor explained that the communication notebook project was launched in 2013 by the Bayanhongor government as a pilot for a nationwide initiative. He described the goal of the notebook as follows:

Our opinion is that the delivery of government services to citizens, in an open and public manner involving citizen participation, is a very important issue. Government services and the work of the state is to provide services for citizens. In our opinion government services were not being delivered and so organized this method to deliver governmental services to the doorstep.

He seemed to contradict this sentiment a few moments later:

People generally complain a lot about their lives: I need this or I need that. Those people need to understand that they can only improve their livelihood by working and by putting some effort into it; otherwise no one is going to do something for you or on your behalf. It is even senseless to expect the government to help in your life. No one will come to your home, put you to bed, wash and clean you. The man needs to stand up himself on his two feet and labour, and then reap the fruits of his labour. This is

what I want to say. Our political election is all about some people coming and promising that they will improve our lives, only if we vote for that politician. And this is what gives people hope and the idea that something will get better by itself. That's the root of all problems.

I first became aware of the notebook when I travelled with Erdene on his variety of work trips in the fall and winter of 2013. On one occasion, we were accompanying the environmental officers while they gave out information to herders about an upcoming county meeting. They were also tasked to arrange for each family to participate in harvesting five kg of hay per sheep or goat, to collect herder feedback, and begin to register households as small and medium industries. Upon arrival in a herder's home, one of the environmental officers would ask the host if they had a communication notebook. Herders without a notebook were issued one and told to keep it in a safe location. The environmental officer logged the date and nature of our visit, including a summary of any important information for future reference. At the visits, herders were encouraged to write their own thoughts, complaints, and suggestions in the notebook. The officer explained to a herding family during a home visit, "The aim of keeping this family record book is to exchange information. Is not only to record what we have done but also to get your feedback, complaints, and requests."

While the majority of herders are literate and most completed primary and secondary school, the written format seemed out of place given herders' communication practices that value face-to-face communication about important issues. Also, it was unclear how the government planned to use the logs. Herder suspicions over back-dealings and concerns that written feedback could lead to negative results made the notebook a potentially risky medium

of communication. Herders seemed more likely to communicate via cellular text message, in person, or a phone call, if they had access to phone service for personal or specific questions. Take, for instance, this exchange between an environmental officer and an older herder during a home visit in the summer of 2013:

Herder: I would like to make a suggestion about the *sum*'s activities.

Officer: I'll give you a sheet of paper so please write it on the sheet.

Herder: No, I would like to tell it to you. You are from the *sum* administration, aren't you?

Officer: Really? Okay.

Herder: Why is it that the local administration office allows one person to do two jobs?

Officer: Who is doing this?

Herder: Delger makes money working as a garbage collector. He works at the steam boiler's place at the same time!

Erdene: Please make a note of his feedback.

Officer: Oh I'll write it down.

Herder: Yes, how is one person allowed to do two jobs? There are so many people who are unemployed.

Officer: Mmmm, yes okay, I'll write it down.

Herder: It is too much. He attends private functions, he makes money for himself. I would like to highlight this. You know, there are many unemployed people around and it's not my intention to have our relatives employed instead of them. My sister, for instance, already has a job now. All these workers from the administration are relatives: look at Agii, for example, she works together with her husband. Now that we live in democracy, people need to speak

up. It's not just me who is big-mouthed. Basically, people who want to be employed need to... by the way I am sure Tsegee is already collecting some coal on the road.

Erdene: Yes, that's true.

Herder: Isn't it the case? You can easily take one of these unemployed and put them to work at the boiler. The administration always talks of supporting poor people. But instead allows one person to do double jobs. That man collects garbage and makes loads of money. Every month he collects 2000 tugrik from each family, and count how many households there are in *sum* center! Its a load of money.

This exchange is important because it shows that administrative home visits are spaces where herders advocate for their perceived rights based on their history in *Ölziit* and utilize their social position to make these claims. During this exchange, the herder referred to the *sum* official as her “younger brother” (*minii duu*), immediately positioning herself in a position of authority. She spoke in a particular way, melodically drawing out and emphasising certain words to strengthen her points. She identified specific people and the actions and behaviour of these individuals, which are well known in a small community. She also addressed the specific decisions of *sum* officials in creating what she considers to be an unfair employment situation. Additionally important, during home visits the host is placed differently than he or she would be at a public meeting. These are resources that she uses in this improvisational encounter.

In this context, the communication notebook is somewhat lifeless. It is a reminder of these encounters and symbolises the mutual responsibility of government administrators and herders to participate in each other's lives. Herders have been charged to take care of, value, relate to, and communicate through the notebook. So far, it is an additional prop in frequent

and already existing visits to herder households by county administrators. It has become a part of the “script” between herders and government administrators and it will be seen to what degree the information logged will be used to facilitate provision of services or herder’s claims to equal access to *sum* resources. The notebook does highlight the differing styles of leadership practiced by *bag* governors and the types of relationships they maintain with households in their district. Erdene has little interest in the notebook, but his cell phone is constantly ringing. Alternate forms of communication and contact, such as the phone calls and unplanned meetings between administrators and herders, are key ways in which political subjectivity and the organisation of government is shaped. Herders solicit people in positions of authority in order to access a range of resources. They do so differently based on their placement in a constellation of relations, including their age, gender, and history of herding in the region. Each person’s perception of his or her rights in relation to the administration is different and improvisational.

State membership, rights, and responsabilisation

Over the course of 2013, government administration in Ölziit was not limited to the initiatives discussed above. Additionally, government work involved seasonal and ongoing events and tasks, of which the communication notebook and issuing of diplomas were one small part. Amongst these events are the twice-annual counting of household livestock; holiday events and ceremonies; county and *bag* meetings; as well as the ongoing administration related to pasture use and dispute resolution, insurance, pensions, doctor visits, and the buying and selling of household livestock products. The purpose of this section is to suggest that concepts of responsibility, obligation, and duty are important to the way in which the Mongolian

government enlists herders as “members” of an imagined state. These notions of responsibility involve antecedent socialist frameworks and historical concepts of political membership.

In this section, I return briefly to the public *sum* meeting mentioned above, where the provincial governor emphasized the importance of using the communication notebook. This meeting took place in November 2013 in Gurvanbulag to discuss *sum* development and review the government’s work of the prior year. The herders and other residents of the *sum* vigorously and publically critiqued the government officials in moral terms, even likening them to children that needed training and discipline. A resident of the *sum* stood in front of a microphone placed in the middle of the hall and directly addressed the *sum* governor:

I really don’t know how you felt about your presentation, or how these people of the Governor’s office felt about it. However, for a young person like me who lives in this *sum*, your report has been awful. You shouldn’t insult our people by presenting such a report. This work carries responsibility. You should think about how to present your report, and how to prepare for it... I would like to request that you develop yourself and learn to plan ahead before you do the job like this in the future. The reason why I am telling you this is because I am embarrassed at your irresponsibility. You couldn’t even read correctly. If you really cannot read, you should have practiced it beforehand to understand it. If so, you wouldn’t have made this mistake. This was worse than a 5-year-old boy’s writing and presenting.

Prior to this critique, an elder herder stood up and addressed the provincial governor with detailed feedback on his views on giving awards to herders, in which he compared the

criteria for receiving awards during the socialist time with the current criteria for receiving them. He felt that the government was devaluing herder work by emphasising the quantity of herds over the quality. He ended his statement by saying:

Finally, a few words on duties. These ideas of working hard, or enforcing discipline and responsibility, they are just gone nowadays. No one takes them seriously. For instance, people who work for government or state agencies, irregardless of whether that person is doing a good job or a bad job, they are still in their position. Those who work hard need to be rewarded, and those who cannot deliver results, they need to be disciplined, or changed. Maybe that way, we can see at least some results. It was just my personal opinion.

During this meeting, there were other detailed presentations by herders and *sum* residents that discussed the degenerating moral fibre of the county, the duties and obligations people had to each other in improving the *sum*, and directing resources to the hospital or school in order to make it a more livable place. Given the frequency of critique around neoliberal governance that claims herders are the targets of responsabilisation, how does the notion of responsabilisation fit into these instances of local politics? Is this term applicable to the rural administration and the government initiatives in Bayanhongor?

Responsibilisation is a form of govern-mentality and has been identified with a particular brand of neoliberal morality that valorises individual market-based relations (Lemke 2001; Shamir 2008). Responsibilisation implies that authoritative bodies, such as NGOs and governments, change the format by which households access resources, claim rights, and

achieve agency by pinning these processes on individual self-initiative through market-based mechanisms. Responsibilisation idealizes a separation between state and society, where individuals are responsible for their own self-care and provisioning. The examples from Bayanhongor show that neither is the case. State administrators and herders belong to the same community and the boundaries between them are not set, but identities are dependent on the context in which they are performed. Also, while it is the case that there is a powerful discourse around “being responsible,” which is especially evident in the case of the communication notebook, this initiative marks responsibility between political roles rather than an ushering in of an individual market-based model. Unequal access to markets and other resources, such as education, is a subject of political debate, but responsibility is often about leadership, morality, and development. It is about the role of patrons to uphold their political responsibility to provide resources that government subjects are not in a place to access.

Ericksen (2014) similarly found concepts of responsibility draw on past socialist frameworks in her insightful analysis of archival material from Southern Bayanhongor province. Her analysis focused on contemporary discourses of responsibility, discipline, and hard work around winter disasters called *dzud*. Although Ericksen suggests that historically rooted moral ideas about responsibility play a role in politics, she is more concerned with instances of “blame the victim” in which herders who lose animals in such disasters are framed as lazy. In my view, concepts of responsibility play out in a context where an individual’s authority to rule is being discredited; they are likened to untrained children and not worthy of respect or, if viewed in another light, patronage.

The Mongolian government initiatives that link rural identities and practices of mobile pastoralism with membership in the state through “Mongolian State Herder” medals and

diplomas, as well as establishing a log book for communication with local administrators offer a glimpse of how performances of the state locate certain resources in systems of patron–client relations, which have broader social purchase in the organisation of Mongolian society.

Conclusion

This paper has argued that the “state” in Mongolia is an ideological entity and should be studied as such, and not mistaken for, as Abrams (1998) has said, a “human ear” or an institution like “human marriage.” This is not to underplay the proliferation of materials that tie political subjectivities to the state-idea, including the bodies we inhabit. Recent work on performativity can serve to further home in on the spatialized human and non-human relations and material conditions that give rise to the political salience of the idea of the state. Glass and Rose-Redwood (2014) draw upon Butler’s (1990) concept of performativity to forward understandings of politics as a perpetually open and produced category.

The previous sections discussed two recent government initiatives in Bayanhongor in order to show how government practices are part of systems of patronage and how the idea of the state is an important resource for the performance of these relations. I have shown that governance as a set of social relations is enacted through historically relevant forms of social organisation that have maintained continuity over time, which draw on antecedent socialist frameworks based on economic participation and good citizenship as well as corporate community membership in territorial resource use that has been identified as a fundamental aspect of historic Mongolian social organisation (Atwood 2012; Sneath 2007). The mix of practices also points to how specific brokers within these networks can accrue large incomes within the gaps of state and society, a point Jeffrey (2010) has stressed in his work on youth political “fixers” in India. In Mongolia, the introduction of market capitalism and its financial

system has added a new dimension to past approaches of resource allocation and social organisation. These new aspects are being re-articulated in ongoing systems of patronage between differently placed actors.

By drawing upon ethnographies of rural work practices in Mongolia, this article provides material to help understand some dimensions of rural politics and to move beyond discussions that attempt to measure the degree to which a state is “there” or “not there.” I critically engage with Ferguson and Gupta’s (2002) critique of the universalisation of state-society relations in order to problematize the idea of the state by examining the circumstances in which this notion is variously performed in the context of ongoing, improvised relations of power. Additionally, the concept of improvisation considers the spatial and temporal dimensions of political power that deserves more attention in analyses of the “spatialization” of the state. Two government initiatives that were implemented over the course of 2013, which include a government-issued “diploma,” award medal, and stamp as well as a government-sponsored logbook, point to how the government builds the framework for membership by recalling and building on past political forms. These items become part of the improvisational encounters between governing authorities and political subjects, as people act with the resources available to them at a given moment. In this way, administration is strongly linked with pastoralist livelihoods and is built around and in reference to local social contexts and physical environments.

The performance of administrative roles occurs in the sites of herder homes and points to the multiplicity, variety, and frequency of these events. The two government initiatives described in this paper problematize the notion of responsabilisation and its applicability in understanding how the Mongolian state works in rural areas. Rural administrators do not

explicitly advocate market-based models for accessing resources or claiming rights. Rather, discourses on responsibility and irresponsibility have taken shape around citizenship and political participation. Additionally, notions of social disorder and a breakdown in systems of obligation and respect, which are frequently cited by herders as social problems, need to be examined in addition to and beyond conventional neoliberal critiques.

Contrary to scholars' anticipation of an absent state in rural Bayanhongor, I observed an administration that was very involved in managing herder affairs with frequent contact via county meetings, phone conversations, home visits, and other seasonal events. Government representatives typically grew up in the regions where they work and own livestock. They play multiple roles in the community. The paternal state of the past may have given birth to a commercial one, which has new modalities of governance that deserve further investigation. In both "political rationalities," practices of patronage and patron–client relations are important to individual access to resources and distribution. This research forwards the idea that in order to move beyond the notion of the reified state, we need better terms to describe systems of governance. Patronage is one direction that scholars of the state might pursue in future research, which would yield fruitful conceptualisations of modern systems of power relations. Valuable work has already been done on this subject in the post-socialist context (Alexander, Buchli and Humphrey 2007; Humphrey 1998, 2002; Reeves 2014; Verdery 1996, 2003) as well as South Asia (Chandra 2004) and Mongolia (Murphy 2014, 2015). Future empirical research is needed to understand if certain individuals or groups rely more on patron–client relations than others and under what circumstances.

The formalisation of household herding through the distribution of diplomas and such initiatives as the communication notebook should be seen as part of a wider process of

governance and the changing nature of rural work and herders as subjects in Mongolia. It is important to conduct fine-grained analyses of these processes in order to avoid missing out on new understandings offered through deep engagement with the field. The extent to which “neoliberal” means anything to the herders in Bayanhongor, for example, is questionable, yet there are many ways that herders can enhance our understanding of governance and being positioned at a “transnational local” that deserves sensitive attention.

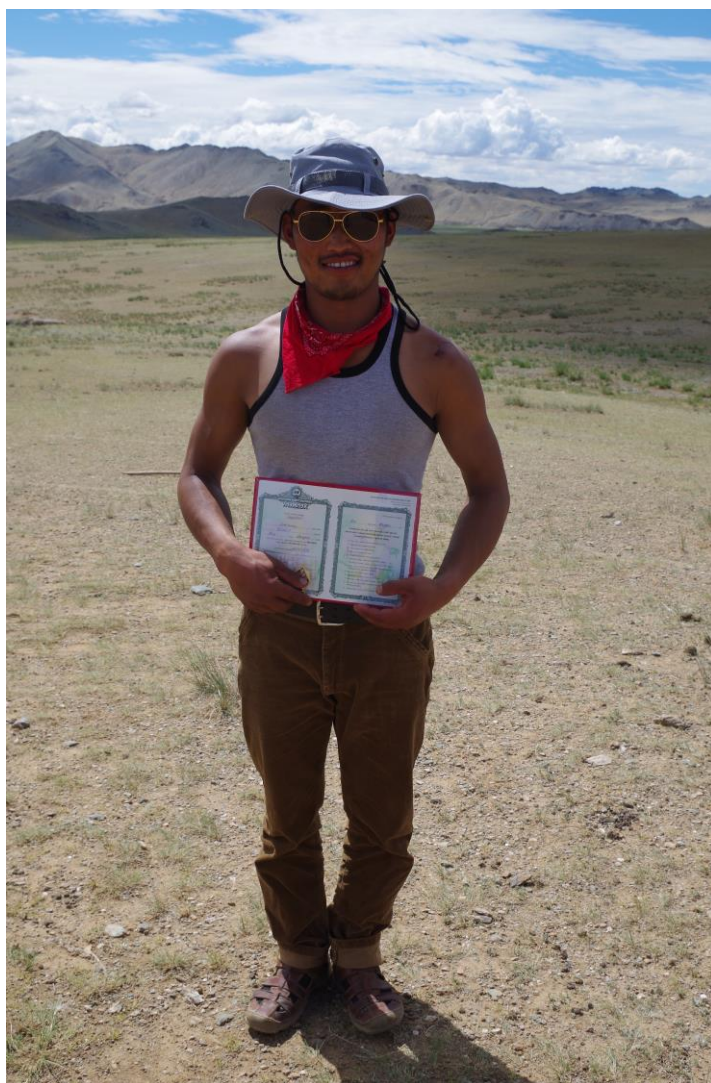
Working with herders and administrators in rural Bayanhongor shows that public administration—the state—is active and present, herders are part of active social and political networks, and these networks include frequent coordination with local governmental administrators and even required participation in administrative management procedures and decision-making processes such as district meetings. The government initiatives that specifically target herder households has created a special status for herders as a specific type of subject, which is open to critique by herders as well as the administrators who are charged with playing the role. This research shows that herders are actively navigating changing economic, environmental, and social terrains, both within and beyond the market and highlights the complexity of governance in dynamic rural communities.



Photograph 7: Awarding Mongolian State Herder Diplomas)



Photograph 8: Explaining the Mongolian State Herder Stamps



Photograph 9: Mongolian State Herder Diploma and Medal



Photograph 10: Mongolian State Herder Stamps



Photograph 11: Public Meeting in Gurvanbulag



Photograph 12: Household Visit with Bag Governor and Sum Officials

ARTICLE 3:

The role of kinship in negotiating territorial rights: exploring claims for winter pasture ownership in Mongolia*

Abstract

This paper explores the role of kinship in herder claims for winter shelter ownership in rural Mongolia, where pastureland currently is designated as state-owned property in the national constitution. Drawing on ethnographic research conducted amongst mobile pastoralist households, I show how contemporary winter pasture rights are structured by political relations based on custodial land use practices. I highlight the ways that herders negotiate territorial rights through appeals to established regional families and how these appeals are mediated by local government administration. From this analysis, I argue that concepts of kinship in the political economy of pastoralism should be re-examined in light of current debates around land legislation in Mongolia.

Keywords: Mongolia, pastoralism, territory, land use, kinship, ownership

*Submitted to *Inner Asia* and currently in press

Introduction

On a late June evening in 2013, we heard loud shouts outside the thin felt walls of the summer *ger*. Other members of the household were tying the goats into a line for milking with the neighbouring *ail*, or household, with whom we shared the encampment. The shouting was pointed and angry, not the kind of sounds usually associated with milking goats. A serious fight had erupted between Ochirbat and his brother-in-law, the heads of the encampment's two households. Tensions between the families had been running high prior to this fistfight. Ochirbat and his wife had recently returned to their native birthplace after living in Ulaanbaatar for over a decade to facilitate their daughter's marriage and resume a rural livelihood. Before their return, their daughter and 200 of the family's sheep and goats had resided with Ochirbat's elder sister. The transition was proving to be rife with family politics. The next day, the conflict still unresolved, we packed up and moved about 500 metres northeast. Moving camp in summer was straightforward, as summer encampments were not formally regulated by the government, though some coordination was involved with neighbouring families. The majority of families in the area where I worked camp within a kilometre of the main river during the summer months. If the fight between Ochirbat and his brother-in-law occurred in the winter, however, moving camp would have been much more complicated. The complications would have stemmed not only from freezing temperatures, but from the position of Ochirbat's family in a constellation of local power relations that structure territorial rights.

This article examines the role of kinship and concepts of kinship in herder negotiations for territorial use rights in rural Mongolia. I will draw upon ethnographies of rural work amongst pastoralists in the central west province of Bayanhongor, such as Ochirbat's

experience, to examine how concepts of kinship continue to be implicated in winter pasture use rights and the formalisation of these rights in state contracts. In this sense, kinship does not exclusively refer to common-descent lineages, but also concepts of sociality, personhood, and moral discourses that are articulated in kinship terms. In taking this approach, I build upon David Sneath's (2007) concept of kinship as a "technique of power" (p. 195) in the political economy of pastoralism in Mongolia. I specifically focus on the interaction between well-established families and outsiders seeking rights to examine how herders use concepts of kinship to negotiate for rights to use winter pastures. I argue that concepts of kinship shape power relations and contribute to herders' ability to claim rights to use land resources where mobility is a central livelihood practice. These rights are largely established through customary tenure practices prior to the contemporary formalisation of land rights through state contracts.

In making this argument, I juxtapose literature from the field of rangeland management with the anthropology of mobile pastoralism to challenge the claim that rural areas lack formal and informal regulatory institutions. I show, conversely, that customary land tenure systems structure land use rights, adhere to a common value system, and have a long history in the political economy of pastoralism in Mongolia. Additionally, customary land tenure systems are articulated in well-established formal government administrative structures. These points are especially clear in analysing differing experiences of well-established families and newly emigrated families as they seek to formalise rights to use winter campsites through state contracts. Well-established families are much better positioned to formalise their rights than new families due to their history of occupancy, links with other established families and local government officials, membership in administrative decision-

making bodies, and moral authority as members of an ancestral homeland. Families from outside of the region as well as newly-married households secure use rights by negotiating with well-established families, working within a system based on custodial land tenure, which is sanctioned and supported by government administrators.

Restructuring Grasslands

Grasslands, distinguished by arid environment and limited vegetation, constitute 80 per cent of Mongolia's territory (Sternberg 2012). Mobile pastoralism is a primary rural livelihood, which approximately 40 per cent of Mongolians rely on today. This reliance is reflected in Article 5.5 of the 1992 National Constitution which names livestock as state-protected national wealth as well as Article 6.3, which specifically excludes pastureland from private ownership and designates pastureland as state land, open for utilisation by all Mongolian citizens (Sanders 1992). The policy of maintaining open access pastures ordered by custodial land use practices enables herders to practice mobility and flexibility in response to changing climatic conditions, varying seasonal pasture resources, and the needs of different types of livestock (Humphrey and Sneath 1999). As such, policies that might curtail herds and their pastures are politicised and controversial. For example, a proposed pastureland law as well as legislation related to mining practices contributes to the high-pitched nature of these debates (see for example Byambajav 2015; Jackson 2014).

Debates on land use in rural Mongolia have largely revolved around governance, couched in the technicalities of grassland ecology. Despite constitutional protection of open access pastureland, the privatisation of state assets is a central component of Mongolia's economic restructuring programme, which began the transition from state socialism to capitalism in the early 1990s (Kamimura 2013; Nixon and Walters 2006). Along with

privatisation, decentralisation is a prominent objective in political reforms, government policy toward herders, and in World Bank-led rural development programmes (Mearns 2004b; State Great Hural 2009; World Bank 2014). Privatisation and decentralisation intersect in debates about grassland management and tenure amongst international development experts, scholars, and government officials, with some advocating private property tenure, some supporting open access, and others proposing new institutional frameworks. Interestingly, there is a common starting point in these debates, which generally links grassland degradation with ineffective or nonexistent regulatory institutions.

Claims made about the breakdown, ineffectiveness, or nonexistence of regulatory institutions has led to contradictory conclusions. Anthropologists, such as Sneath (2004) critique economic restructuring programmes by arguing that reforms focused on privatisation have led to the atomisation of households and a breakdown in strong, centralised regulatory institutions, such as the socialist cooperatives, which organised migrations, provided technical inputs, emergency supplies, and absorbed household risks in the past. He argues that the breakdown in strong regulatory institutions as a result of market reforms has created conditions that increase herder insecurity and has led to preventable widespread livestock deaths from winter natural disasters since the end of socialist era (Sneath 2001, 2002, 2004).

Similarly, rangeland management scholars claim that there is an “absence” of “formal and informal regulatory institutions” in rural Mongolia (Fernandez-Gimenez 2002, p. 59). They argue that the lack of regulatory institutions and ineffective governance has contributed to grassland degradation and they support the institutionalisation of community-based resource management as a key solution (Fernandez-Gimenez et al 2012; Upton, Moore, and Nyamsuren 2013). Rangeland scholars have critiqued Mongolian land tenure laws, which

were developed between the mid-1990s and early 2000s to establish a formal legal framework for winter pasture leasehold tenure, for being ineffective and impossible to implement (Fernandez-Gimenez and Batbuyan 2004; Janzen 2011; Upton 2012) because local authorities frequently re-interpret laws to fit local contexts (Mearns 1996, 2004b).

Many who support the privatisation of grasslands argue that mobile pastoralists cause land degradation through reckless, unregulated grazing of livestock. A 2007 FAO report indicates, “Current weak and contested tenure rules mean that herders do not have adequate incentives to use pastures in sustainable ways. This leads in places to increasing anarchy of use, overstocking, poor distribution of grazing pressure with overgrazing in some places and undergrazing elsewhere, and greater herder vulnerability of natural risks” (Swift 2007, p. 9). The Mongolian government is currently drafting a new Pastureland Law, which is considered by international experts to be a “principal law for managing the grasslands” (Hannam 2014) in order to “overcome many of the problems that stem from *lack of land ownership*” (my emphasis, Hannam 2014, p. 161). Earlier Hannam states, “Mongolian grassland is not valued so its regulation and management have been avoided in the past. Herders continue to graze their livestock on pasture unrestrained, where there is a high competition for good pasture” (2012, p. 418). The portrayal of herders as lacking land use systems reveals the failure of international experts to recognize the legitimacy of customary land tenure systems that structure use rights. These systems have adapted to a variety of state administrative structures and have wide currency and a long history amongst local communities.

State and parastatal administrative agencies have a history of claiming that mobile pastoralists have ineffective governance systems, characterised as being nonexistent, economically irrational or unproductive, despotic or backward to justify development

interventions, land reform, and in some cases forced displacement or sedentarisation. Pastoralists have been restricted from grazing territories by conservation projects (Chatty and Colchester 2002), or to make way for new types of production, such as agriculture or mining (Salzman and Galaty 1990, p. 15). Bocco (2006) analyses the history of sedentarisation programmes in the Middle East and emergent trends of sustainable development in “combatting desertification,” which open up new frameworks for managing pastoralist territories. In her study of early World Bank development interventions amongst pastoralists in East Africa, Dyson-Hudson (1985) illustrates the false assumptions about pastoralist livelihoods encased in a project that attempted to establish a ranching model system in the region. She critiques the essentialisation of pastoralists as unchanging and existing outside of contemporary social and political systems and identifies the “unreal” assumptions that enabled these interventions. In some instances, seemingly benign programmes that proclaim health care and education provision to mobile pastoralists often have contradictory effects by splitting households, reducing mobility, and making pastoralist livelihoods more tenuous and vulnerable to economic and environmental shocks (Krätli et al. 2013). Dyer provocatively demonstrates the undermining effects of UNESCO’s Education for All inclusion policy toward mobile pastoralists in India, which, by labeling pastoralists as “hard to reach,” reproduces political and social marginality (Dyer 2014).

Grassland reform measures focused on restoration in pastoralist territories in China and India have been referred to as “environmentality” (Agrawal 2005) or “green governmentality” (Yeh 2005) in anthropological analyses (see also Murphy 2014a, Murphy 2014b; Williams 2002). Yeh (2013) shows how the Chinese policy of “converting pastures to grassland” is tied to a state development agenda that characterises herders as destructive, lazy,

and unproductive, and attempts to transform the political subjectivity of Tibetan pastoralists (Yeh 2013) through a process of market and modernity-oriented re-territorialisation. National and international analyses of grassland management try to make sense of herder land use by focusing on grasslands as “resources” and herders as “resource users” without attending to how power informs and structures the construction of territory and landscape through rules around customary land tenure in combination with local government administration. In Mongolia, pastoralism and the state have been intertwined for centuries, making the characterisation that pastoralism in the market economy context is occurring outside of regulatory institutions worthy of further investigation.

By drawing attention to how herders establish use rights to winter campsites, which are essential in Mongolian pastoralism, I seek to shift debates about land use from a focus on ecological explanations to the local politics. I highlight the multiple interests and power relations that shape the nature of Mongolian pastoralist territories by focusing on the role of kinship within these systems. I develop the argument that formal *ovoljoo* contracts for winter shelter possession are claimed through custodial tenure practices, where concepts of kinship play an important role in legitimizing rights. To this end, I examine the experience of four families in a sub-district of Ölziit County, Bayanhongor in order to illustrate how their negotiations for winter pasture rights played out in territories structured by formal and informal regulatory institutions. The families include Ochirbat, a returning native of the region; the well-established household of Buya and his extended family; Bataa and Purev, a young non-native family; and Tsogoo, an older non-native family from a southern county. These families are representative of the different social positions of herders in this rural area.

Winter Pasture Use Rights in Ölziit, Bayanhongor

The central west province of Bayanhongor is amongst Mongolia's provinces with the greatest number of livestock and herders. I primarily lived and worked with herders in one *bag* (the smallest administrative division in rural Mongolia) in Bayanhongor province's Ölziit county from 2012–2014. Additionally, I researched in Bayanhongor's northern counties of Gurvanbulag and Bayanbulag. The administrative center of Ölziit is located approximately 20 kilometres from Bayanhongor's provincial center, off the paved road that serves as the main transportation line to Ulaanbaatar. The *bag* was home to 189 officially registered herder families in 2013 (personal communication, *sum* administration). Their livelihood depends on livestock, which they herd by motorcycle, foot, horse, and on rare occasion, by camel. Goats were the primary source of milk, which differentiates this area from other regions to the north where herders primarily milk yaks and cows. Beyond herding, some families work at the local gas station or part-time in the provincial center (i.e., as security guards, mechanics, selling milk or fuel). There is a newly established chicken farm to produce eggs and a cow farm. There is also a new, still developing, initiative around sea buckthorn production. Additionally, the environmental officer reported instances of herders exploring for gold using metal detectors and illegally poaching wildlife such as marmots and wild sheep and goats. Ethnographic material from Ölziit's sub-district offers fairly typical examples of how land tenure is negotiated by herder households. The proximity of the provincial capital distinguishes this area from more remote regions.

Winter campsites feature centrally in local disputes over land use in Ölziit. Winter campsites are referred to as *ovoljoo* in Mongolian (Bawden 1997) and include shelters, corrals, livestock, and pastureland in the vicinity of the home. Well-sheltered winter camps

are valued because they provide shelter, warmth, and security for livestock during the extreme winter and good conditions for the livestock birthing season in early spring, when many young animals can easily freeze to death in extreme temperatures (Fijn 2011). These resources have historically been subject to disputes and regulation by central authorities because of their value in the pastoralist economy (see for example Atwood 2012; Bawden 1982; Sneath 2002) and they continue to be regulated by the current Mongolian government.

Herders in Ölziit generally move to four seasonal campsites, though shorter migrations also occur within seasonal pastures. Mobility is practiced in the form of daily browse and graze, as well as seasonal migrations, in response to changing environmental conditions, which in turn affect livestock lactation schedules. Herder work routines, grazing needs, and related movement of herds conducted during summer months are different than fall and winter and tied to changing volumes of milk production and milking routines. Local power relations also shape how herders practice mobility and the locations of their seasonal encampments. Technology, such as mobile dwellings, mobile phones, solar power, access to motorized vehicles and cash to maintain them; pack animals; local environmental knowledge and animal husbandry skills; social networks, labour, and other forms of capital contribute to a household's capacity to be mobile.

Customary land tenure also enables household mobility. Sneath defines Mongolian customary land tenure as “custodial,” a system in which “agencies had conditional rights to use territory and always within a wider socio-political framework. Indeed, in the past, land, livestock, and people were constituent elements of sociopolitical domains ruled by distinct authorities” (1993, p. 166). Sneath differentiates Mongolian notions of “ownership” (*ezemshil*) based on regulated access and custodial occupancy of place from Western notions of exclusive

or private ownership over resources like land. The Mongolian concept of “ownership” indicates the social position of an actor, as one who is lord over or head of a social group or resource (for example, the head of a family or a polity). The owner (*ezen*) is positioned as a particular status in relation to other human and non-human inhabitants, usually legitimated through the occupancy in and use of territory and the relations of obligation this entails. Ownership, as Sneath suggests, can be understood as a political designation with a basis in social patriarchal hierarchies.

To understand how ownership status is expressed, negotiated, and achieved within these relations, it is necessary to unpack the terms by which power is built. Expectations around obligation between kin, and patron–client relations that adhere to concepts of kinship, are structuring elements in this political economy. Sneath has used historical evidence to substantiate how concepts of kinship have been used as an instrument of power in steppe political structures and administrative systems (2007, p. 197). In contemporary practice, Humphrey (1995) identifies the construction of local territories through chiefly and shamanist moralities and related modes of interacting with the landscape. “Chiefs” represent the archetype for human authority and their seniority is typified in elderly men. Pedersen (2006) likens elderly men to the “absolute centers” of nomadic society, and patrilineal kinship is represented by the metaphor of bone (*yas*) (Empson 2011, p. 17; Park 2003). Household heads, symbolically elderly men, ensure their right to use land resources and community and livestock well-being by cultivating harmonious relations with spiritual entities in the landscape.

One significant way this occurs is the *ovoo* ceremony, which takes place at the site of rock cairns, or *ovoo*, which are usually situated on mountain tops, passes, springs, etc. This

ritual event engages nonhuman entities, also referred to as “masters or owners” of specific places, in order to safeguard the ongoing success of future generations of households headed by patriarchs in local homelands (Humphrey 1995). Sneath (2014) describes contemporary *ovoo* rituals, which are carried out by the president and high-ranking male representatives of the Mongolian state, as “cosmopolitical” in that they involve non-human entities as political actors. He writes, “...these practices are also cosmopolitical in a local sense in that they speak to everyday relations of power and frequently address questions surrounding the custody and legitimate uses of the local environment” (p. 465). These rituals also attach political power to physical locations. In this sense, concepts of kinship extend beyond inter-human relations to structure rules over land use and human obligations to respect land-based authorities. As Empson articulately expressed, “land and people reciprocally bring one another into existence” (2010, p. 124). These relations are expressed as a patron–client, senior–junior, and older sibling–younger sibling dynamic and are performed through the use of respectful language and gestures, positions of body, and expectations of obligations between these positions.

Kazato (2006) provides a provocative explanation of how both kinship and occupancy manifest in a distinguishing feature of a winter campsite, call *buuts*. *Buuts* consist of an accumulation of dried dung, sometimes several metres deep, over many winters and provides bedding for sheep and goats, which prevents livestock from getting frostbite on their feet and legs. He describes the *buuts* as a mark of family history embedded in the landscape, which provides evidence of custodial land use over time. Kazato corroborates the entangled nature of kinship and use in herder’s claims over a winter campsite. While many herders legitimate their

claims by illustrating a long family history of using the site, the basis of these claims lie in continual use and occupancy, which can be proven by the presence of *buuts*.

In contemporary Mongolia, family relations and fictive kin form networks that bridge rural and urban spaces, and have become an important means to access resources in the environment of economic crisis, shortages, and unequal distribution of resources since the end of socialism (Mandel and Humphrey 2002). Access to goods and services are often mediated through family-based distributional networks. A simple example is the provision of meat and dairy products by herders to urban relatives. As with many post-Soviet societies, Mongolian mutual help and kinship networks have become further inscribed since the fall of socialism, when shortages of goods and economic uncertainty required alternative means of accessing resources (Humphrey and Sneath 1996a, 1999). This statement is echoed in post-socialist contexts in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, such as Croatia, where rural agricultural producers provided food security and cultivate relations of belonging to place and homeland during the transitional period (Hann 2003; Leutloff-Grandits 2003, p. 168; Verdery 2003). The post-socialist economic crisis, restructuring and decentralisation programmes have positioned certain families with more political and economic resources than others. These power dynamics and the importance of family as a distributive unit also play a part in strategies for resource negotiation, but are beyond the scope of this paper.

Laws of the Land

In Bayanhongor, the two most common types of formal land tenure are land ownership (*gazar omchlol*) and land possession (*gazar ezemshil*), which are defined in the 2004 Mongolian Land Law (Fernandez-Gimenez and Batbuyan 2004). Land ownership designates land as a private possession that can be bought and sold. Typically this form of ownership applies to

land plots and houses in administrative centers or cities. Land possession is based on a contract with the state. According to the *bagiin darga* (*bag* governor) in Ölziit, winter campsites are available to herders for 30-year contracts for free, with administrative fees of about 18,000 tugrik, or about \$15. Summer and fall campsites are not available for such tenure, while spring pastures may be separate from or part of winter locations. In order to obtain a contract, a herder must be registered as a member of the sub-district and must be granted approval from the herders of the sub-district. The issuance of new winter camp possession contracts are decided in herder council meetings hosted by the government administration in the county administrative center. In Ölziit, the *bag* governor stated that the first meeting to establish legal possession of winter campsites through the contract system amongst the herders was in 2002.

According to the *bag* governor of Ölziit, the establishment of new winter camps (*ovoljoo*) is subject to certain criteria, such as maintaining a distance of 2–3 kilometres from another family's winter camp. If a herder household wants to establish possession rights for an *ovoljoo*, they will present their case at the *bag* herder council meeting. They can establish a winter camp contract only if the majority of already established herders from the *bag* agrees. Similarly, any unresolvable conflicts between herders regarding winter pasture use are addressed during the herder council meeting. The *bag* governor explained that he does not adjudicate these disputes, “is it not possible for me to say that one person is bad and to say the person that I like is good and it should be given to that person? For this reason if problems arise they decide themselves, the citizens decide themselves.” This policy brings custodial land practices into play as non-native or outsider herders negotiate for rights with more established families, who are often related to each other. The local government in Ölziit is an

active and formal regulatory agency that sanctions and supports the custodial land use system and also participates in local “cosmopolitical” rituals. In this sense, the local government is also legitimated through relations cultivated through custodial relations and practices.

The ethnographies that follow illustrate how winter pasture rights are negotiated through custodial land tenure practices in the context of administrative regulations. Often herders seeking to formalise their rights do not gain majority approval from the area herders if they fail to illustrate their claims to a pasture, which often occurs through occupancy and kinship relations or historical ties to place. The ethnographies demonstrate that newly-arrived herders need to cultivate relations with established families before they can buy a winter contract.

Return to Homeland: Establishing Rights within Changing Relations

I met Ochirbat’s family in 2004, when they lived in the outskirts of Ulaanbaatar and worked odd jobs to send three of their five children to school in the city. In 2012, Ochirbat and his wife, Saraa, both raised in herder families in rural Bayanhongor, returned to Ochirbat’s birthplace to support their youngest unmarried daughter and facilitate the establishment of her household. In the summer of 2013, after Ochirbat’s family separated from his brother-in-law’s encampment in the wake of their fistfight, the family’s plans for winter were unclear.

Ochirbat had a few options. He could resolve the conflict with his brother-in-law and spend the winter at his parents’ traditional winter campsite, which was under the occupancy of his brother-in-law. His disabled elderly mother, who occupied that site over the course of her lifetime, resided in a *ger* in the Bayanhongor provincial center with Ochirbat’s eldest daughter. Her *ger* was located on the property of Ochirbat’s elder sister’s son (the son of said brother-in-law), and both Ochirbat and his elder sister alternated in travelling to the provincial

center to take care of their mother. Due to Ochirbat's long absence from his birthplace, he was no longer officially registered in Ölziit and it would take time to transfer the paperwork from Ulaanbaatar. This left his youngest daughter, KB, as the longest residing member of his immediate family in the Ölziit pastures. She was officially registered as an Ölziit herder in the *bag*, though she did not have any claim to use a winter campsite of her own as she had always resided with the brother-in-law's family.

Another option was to camp with another relative or close friend in the *bag*. This option depended on the reliability of the household in question. It was also possible to place his herds with a friend or relative and winter in the provincial center or in Ulaanbaatar with his other children. At the time, KB was engaged to a relatively poor local herder with a small herd. This situation opened up the most tenable possibility for a secure winter camp. KB's wedding took place in the late summer and Ochirbat and Saraa moved next to her newly-established household. It was by way of KB's marriage to the local, established herder, who did have a formal *ovoljoo* contract, that Ochirbat was able to secure winter pasture for his livestock, which he combined with his son-in-law's herd. This situation was satisfactory for a number of reasons, as KB's husband looked after the herd while Ochirbat spent time in the provincial center on caretaking duties, and Saraa was available to help KB with her newborn son. A number of other factors impacted their household operations. Saraa often needed medical treatment in Ulaanbaatar, removing her from the household for long periods of time. KB's husband worked part-time at the local gas station and he often called a friend to herd for him during his 24-hour work shifts. In this case, winter campsite use rights were greatly impacted by the strength of regional family networks to facilitate access to resources as well as obligations around labour provision for both elderly and junior family members.

While Ochirbat is a native of Ölziit, his absence from the region in combination with the seniority and long-term occupancy of his elder sister and brother-in-law at the site of his parents' winter site superseded his claim. Also, Ochirbat was frequently needed in the provincial center to provide care for his elderly mother. Given this complex situation, Ochirbat secured a winter campsite through his daughter's marriage to the local herder. In the absence of the marriage, Ochirbat's other options involved staying in the encampment of an established herder that he considered as friend/"elder brother" (*ah*), in an adjacent *bag*. He would not have been able to move to a winter site based simply on environmental features. Rather, Ochirbat's decision-making process was informed by his relationship with other herders in the area, his position as a returning member of the community, as well as caretaking obligations in the provincial center, amongst other concerns. In this case, family relations played a strong role in Ochirbat's experience securing winter pasture rights. Not all of these relations were harmonious, nor did they have a deterministic effect on Ochirbat's decision. Rather, he had a variety of options that were strongly informed by family relations and the opportunities and constraints these relations presented. Although he is not a registered member of the *bag* based on his long absence from the region and despite the complex family politics involved with his return, his ability to secure an *ovoljoo* was negotiated within the framework of family ties, their status in relation to government administration, and the availability of environmental resources.

The Ovoo Ceremony

The experience of a well-established family also points to the importance of customary land tenure in regulating use rights to winter campsites. Dorj was the *bag* governor during the socialist period and an elder in the region. He was often found on the back of a horse, herding

his livestock with a long lasso pole and mirrored sunglasses. In mid-September 2013, we encountered him at a well near his fall camp and he instructed us to accompany him to a neighbouring area. We drove across the plateau, golden-white with *ders* grass¹, until we reached a high point overlooking the winter home of Buya and Chimeg, a couple in their early 30s, who were raised in the area. Buya is Dorj's nephew, an energetic herder with a happy-go-lucky attitude. He camped with his younger brother in the summer months and their households were generally in proximity to each other. The two brothers had married two sisters from the region.

About 30 people were gathered at the top of the rise, including Buya and his wife and children, his sister-in-law and her children, the brothers and sisters of Dorj and their children. It was a family gathering, with Dorj's extended family travelling from Ulaanbaatar and distant provinces to participate in the event. Upon arrival, Dorj immediately disappeared in search of large-sized rocks. Tsagaana and a group of men piled up stones to build a new *ovoo*, or stone cairn. A Buddhist monk sat on a rug facing Buya's winter camp in the distance. When the *ovoo* was completed, Dorj's sister set up a pile of soft round biscuits, round flat dairy products, and candy on a flat stone. A dung fire was lit and incense placed on top. The men struggled to light small oil candles in the nooks of the rock cairn exposed to strong wind. They partly covered the *ovoo* with a sheet to act as a wind-break. As these arrangements were being made, I asked Dorj's adult niece about the event. She explained:

This is to consecrate and respect the homeland of our father and mother, where they stayed. Tsegee, Dorj, the other two elderly people you see, and I are the

¹ This grass is also known as feather or needle grass. Botanists formerly classified it as *Stipa grandis* but it has been re-classified as *Achnatherum splendens*.

children of one household. There were nine [children] in total, now there are five left. This was my father and mother's place and was the homeland for many generations. Now my elder aunt's son Buya stays here, we are here to respect and worship this winter camp with a custom for worshipping the land. Mongolians are people who protect nature and worship the land. This ritual is the most important for doing that, you see.

She went on to explain that they do not conduct the ritual every year, but consult with a Buddhist monk to determine the right time to do it. She continued,

This winter place is a place of respect, this land is a treasure, and we are expressing our thanks for the land and water sources. This is a good custom, it is time to pay respects to our father and mother's place, and we are respecting the treasured mountain upon which we herd our livestock. By burning the horse dung we are purifying the world, and we are erecting the *ovoo* to bring about purification.

The ceremony began with the family sitting on the ground behind the monk, who read prayers in Tibetan. He gestured toward the winter camp with his instruments, at one point dipping a multi-faceted metal dagger (*purev* or Tibetan *phurba*) into a bowl of milk tea and flicking it in the direction of the winter site. He distributed a small amount of uncooked rice grains to everyone in the gathering, then we held the rice in our palms and made circular movements with our hands as we spoke the words *huraa huraa huraa* to help beckon fortune after the

monk rang his bell. The elders in the group were invited to make libations of milk and circle the people sitting on the ground and the *ovoo*. The ceremony ended with everyone being served tea and eating the food.

Buya had three other close relatives who were herding in the area as well as family members who worked and resided in the *Ölziit* county center. These bonds were re-affirmed during the *ovoo* ceremony, which connected family continuance to livestock and the land itself. Family, livestock, and land were treated as co-dependent. Dorj's family, Buya and his brother's family, Tsegee and her family are a multi-generational, well-established family network in the sub-district and have claim to much of the winter pasture of the white *ders* plateau area.

Themes regarding winter pasture use rights emerge from spending time with different families in the area. First, families with a long history of occupancy, evidenced in a previously established *ovoljoo* and *buuts* and strong, multi-generation family networks amongst herders, contribute to the strength of their winter pasture use rights. These relations contribute to household security in winter months, especially during the labour-intensive time of preparatory work in the fall. Although Buya's younger brother wintered in a different location, they both owned trucks for transportation and were located a short distance from each other in case of an emergency. Buya often assists his elder aunt, Tsegee, who has a disabled husband. In preparation for winter, he provided a large load of mineral salts for Tsegee's livestock, which he collected from a salt marsh region with his truck. His family coordinated their winter meat slaughter with Tsegee and her husband. Buya is also involved in activities such as repairing area wells and reporting illegal mining in the area. He is firmly situated in the *Ölziit* territory through links with kin, continued occupancy of place, and upkeep and use of key

resources such as the salt marsh and well. The *ovoo* ceremony re-affirms this history of relations and is a means of ensuring continued positive relations between family, livestock, and the land. The *ovoo* ceremony acknowledges the power of fellow land-based “owners” in ensuring future household fortune and the co-dependent nature of these cycles of reproduction.

A second theme is the continued relevance of customary land tenure, based on custodial land use practices, in establishing winter pasture use rights prior to the formalisation of land tenure through the state contract system. Likewise, the local government administration’s active involvement in herder household economies should not be downplayed. The local government has encouraged herders to buy *ovoljoo* contracts and Buya formalized his tenure prior to the *ovoo* ceremony. As Sneath (2002) has discussed, Mongolian concepts of “ownership” can be understood as a political designation with a basis in social patriarchal hierarchies. These hierarchies are reiterated in rituals such as the *ovoo* ceremony as well as moral discourses and everyday practices that stratify power relations. The terms of this stratification is often in kin-terms, even in the absence of actual kin relation or descent.

In contrast, families who have moved to Ölziit county from the areas to the south lack strong kinship ties in the sub-district, though they are in continual contact with *sum* administration through household visits. Purev and Bataa, for example, are the same age as Buya and his wife, but their parents and extended family live in a different county. Although Purev’s father is a well-known and successful camel herder, he is more than a day’s drive away and unavailable to provide support or extra labour on a daily or weekly basis, or to provide child and livestock care when Purev needs to go to the provincial center for supplies. The experience of outsiders seeking winter pasture rights is negotiated differently than

established households because they lack the social capital to retain occupancy of newly established camps. I will discuss these dynamics in the next section.

Outsiders Seeking Rights

In this section, I relate the experiences of two unrelated households who migrated to Ölziit from Jinst county. Both households have lived in the Ölziit region for at least seven years. I relate the experiences of these households as a means to highlight common processes of negotiation for rights to use resources in Ölziit. The first is Bataa and Purev, 29 and 30 years old, respectively, in 2013. They have a herd of 70 sheep and 400 goats and two daughters—an infant of about 1 year old and a 5-year-old who entered school in the fall of 2014. Upon marriage, both were given animals by their parents to start their household. They refer to themselves as “Gobi people.” Purev was raised in the southern regions of Bayanhongor. He is one of seven children and only one other brother is a herder. Bataa is from Jinst to the south and was raised by a family who specialized in herding horses. Her one younger brother lives in a distant province and herds cattle for a farm. At the time of writing, the couple did not have a winter campsite leasehold though they felt pressure to obtain a contract at the next opportunity.

Bataa explained that the winter contract is “needed,” and they will obtain one by the official requirements. She said that there are problems, such as quarrels between people, if one does not obtain a possession contract. They plan to obtain a contract during a *bag* herder council meeting in the spring, and she explained that their ability to obtain a contract depends on support from the local herders, many of whom are indigenous to the area. Unlike Buya and his extended family, Purev and Bataa do not have a strong a local support system. Purev explained that they do not have enough labour and childcare makes managing the livestock

difficult. When they need to obtain supplies or leave the campsite, they make arrangements for a friend from the provincial capital, about 25 kilometres away, to come and herd the livestock while Purev is away. Bataa and Purev's custodial tenure was not contested by established herders, as they lived in a rocky outcropping at the southern border of the sub-district, but they did feel pressure to obtain a contract to secure their winter camp in the case that their tenure came to be questioned in the future.

The second family is a middle-aged couple with eight children, also originally from Jinst county. Tsogoo and his wife Naraa have resided in the Ölziit area for 15 years as of 2014. Their youngest child is attending high school and another son recently returned to the household from army service and plans to take over the family's livestock. Their other children live in the Bayanhongor provincial center and in Ulaanbaatar. This household was displaced multiple times as they sought to establish a winter campsite close to a well that is used by Dorj and Buya's family. In each instance, they were unable to successfully negotiate with the herders in the area to secure pasture rights for the winter because they established their camp within two kilometres of established households and failed to gain the approval from area herders to override this rule. They were forced to return to their summer grazing area for the remainder of the year.

Tsogoo and Naraa spend time in the provincial center with their son's family, and have a larger *ger* set up there. They leave their younger son in charge of the livestock, including camels, horses, sheep and goats, in their absence. In the late fall of 2013, their first move to winter pastures was near a rock outcropping close to a central well in the region where Buya and his relations lived. Their households were spread out and not within eyesight of the next, dispersed over the plateau-like area known for the abundance of tall white *ders* grass. Despite

the apparent distance between camps, Tsogoo's family was within two kilometres of other winter camps. In October 2013, I travelled with the *bag* governor, a vet, and the local doctor to each household as part of the supervisor's normal government service rounds, which occurred at least twice a month. We stopped at the home of Tsogoo and met with his wife. The governor told her that two or three families had complained to the county governor about her family's intention to build an *ovoljoo* shelter at that location. The families felt Tsogoo's household was too close and requested them to move. Tsogoo's wife, Naraa, was surprised and exclaimed, "Now where are we supposed to move? Where are we supposed to go? What a difficult thing this is!" The governor suggested that they meet with the area herders and come up with a solution through dialogue. She explained that they met with three of the area households and were planning to meet with two other families. Then she asked the governor for the names the herders who had complained about their winter camp location to the local government council. The governor again suggested that they resolve the issue by discussing the problem amongst themselves through informal home visits.

When I visited the household again the following month, winter was well underway, but the questions about Tsogoo's winter pasture were still unanswered. The following is a conversation between the *bag* governor and the heads of household during a routine visit to herder households.

Tsogoo: There is not much you can find in this area with a distance of more than 2 km from other households. I am trying to keep my camels near here. I built a winter shelter here already and so has B.

Bag Governor: In the case of B, he also needs to leave.

Tsogoo: What about the winter shelter? Do you think his winter shelter will be demolished?

Bag Governor: Yes of course, because we have to follow the resolution from the local herder council. You should meet with the other people around here and talk things over with them. Check with them regarding possible places to build a winter shelter and get their opinions about the places. You may find something in the area of *Ulan Tolgoi*. Ask around and see what is going on. It's better to do it like this.

Tsogoo: Isn't the *khonzot tsagaan khad* area within the district?

Bag Governor: Yes, it is.

Tsogoo: I mean as a spring campsite. Are there any people there?

Bag Governor: No one is there.

Tsogoo: That place is very important.

Bag Governor: Yes I understand.

Naraa: Who is staying in the *Zaraa* [local place name] area?

Bag Governor: Which *Zaraa*?

Naraa: On the upper side.

Bag Governor: If you build a shelter in the *Zaraa* area, then it will be in the range of 2 km [of someone else].

Tsogoo: Yes, that's E and K's [place].

Bag Governor: His camp is still in the range of 2 km [of another family]...Since you don't have any small children or infants, or something else tying you here, you should investigate the *Gunii uur* area. Is this not possible, Tsogoo?

Tsogoo: The issue is with our children. This always requires us to make trips to the provincial center. The camels are here. I am not concerned for myself. Our son will take over our heritage [livestock].

Bag Governor: So in that case you should talk with the people in this area and decide where to build in consultation with them.

Naraa: For us the most important thing is for our children to have a winter campsite, nothing else matters. As for us, we are fine because soon we will retire from herding full-time.

Bag Governor: I am sure you will not leave the animals when you retire; you will be here, too.

Tsogoo: Probably. Some of Buya's relatives gave their approval [for us to stay here].

This conversation is important because it illustrates how herders who do not have kinship relations or historical claims to specific areas in the district negotiate for winter pasture rights with area herders under the supervision of the *bag* governor. This type of conversation commonly occurs in Ölziit between the *bag* governor and families. One role of the *bag* governor is to act as a middleman or mediator to provide information to herders about local council decisions. He uses his authority to encourage herders to meet and discuss issues “nicely” or “pleasantly” through home visits in order to enlist support for their occupancy of a place. The two-kilometre rule has become an important criteria and means of regulating winter camp locations. The two-kilometre rule can be overridden, however, if area herders give permission. In this way, interpersonal relations are essential to successfully establish rights. This can be seen in two aspects. The first is in initial establishment of a campsite as legitimate in the eyes of already established households. The second is in formal majority approval of a household's possession rights in the context of herder meetings. If new families can establish themselves as fictive kin or part of the ritual family of well-established families,

then their rights to land use are seen as more legitimate than if they are an unconnected family from outside of the region.

Conclusion

The idea that Mongolian herders operate outside of regulatory systems has perpetuated in a variety of forms in expert writings on rural land since the early 1990s. This idea is being rearticulated in rural development projects and in a draft pastureland law. My research in Bayanhongor does not support the claim that rural areas lack formal and informal regulatory institutions. On the contrary, the ethnographies presented show that contemporary winter pasture rights are negotiated through a complex network of kinship and custodial practices in combination with local government institutions. This material substantiates research on power and territory in the political economy of pastoralism and opens up space for more research on understanding the dynamics of rural administration in Mongolia from the herder household point of view.

Scholars of Mongolia have examined historical state systems and found that regulatory frameworks are often an interaction between local, decentralised socio-territorial units and powerful bureaucracies (Atwood 2012; Sneath 2007). Others have discussed local power relations and value systems based on custodial land use, which adhere to hierarchical relations often expressed through concepts of kinship (Empson 2011; Humphrey 1995; Murphy 2014b, 2015). This article contributes to and furthers the inter-relationship between the political economy of pastoralism, state bureaucracy, and local socio-territorial units. Local governments host herder meetings and structure forums for official procedures that confer legal winter campsite possession rights for families through state contracts, but these rights are often established long before the formalisation process and paperwork occurs. Well-

established families like Buya and his elderly relatives form the centers of local power in the sub-district. Their land tenure claims are based on generations of herding in the area and they actively sought to maintain harmonious relations with land-based entities in private “cosmopolitical” rituals. These rituals also occur as public ceremonies involving established families, which are sponsored and sanctioned by the local government. As Murphy (2014b) has insightfully written in a recent article, “...kin modalities, underlying moral economies of mutual aid and obligation, and spiritual economies of ritual exchange have become central operative mechanisms in a new ecology of power constituted through inhabitation of both human and socio-political communities and as key agents in ecological webs” (2014b, p. 759). Custodial land tenure continues to be actively practiced and used as a means to establish and negotiate for the formalisation of use rights through possession contracts. It continues to be problematic that custodial land tenure is invisible to policymakers who fail to see this system as legitimate or relevant to new systems. Additionally, the Bayanhongor ethnographies call into question the state-society dichotomy by which many scholars and foreign policymakers view these systems.

This article has illustrated how local administrators encourage non-native or “outsider” families to negotiate their rights by visiting established family homes and building relations through everyday exchange and hospitality. Government administrators encourage new herders to “meet nicely and discuss” their interest with established residents as a way to solve problems. This negotiation process occurs in conjunction with new rules, such as the two-kilometre spacing criteria. These criteria can be overridden, however, if use rights are successfully negotiated with area herders. For example, in the summer of 2013, a newly married couple in their early 20s established a new winter camp in Ölziit. They constructed a

shelter using concrete blocks for walls, which was very unusual in an area where other herders make wood constructions. The household built the shelter without permission from area households or approval through the herder meeting system.

Additionally, the young herder built the structure within two kilometres of another winter site. As a youth, he had little negotiating power with elder herders in the area. The sub-district supervisor informed him that he would have to take down his shelter and move to a new area that conformed to the two-kilometre rule. Despite the ruling, the young man did not move his concrete blocks from the region. A year later his possession rights were approved at the formal herder meeting. Although I do not have additional information on this case, it does provide an example of a herder's ability to override the two-kilometre rule. I suspect that he was able to negotiate based partly on the permanent nature of his shelter, which many herders admired as a strong and well-built structure. If he offered to share this shelter with an established local herder, or had a source of other political clout or powerful local connections, then his ability to override the two-kilometre rule and establish formal rights is easier to grasp.

The Mongolian idea of ownership as rooted in occupancy remains an important element in land use rights and deserves further investigation in household negotiations for pasture use. In conversation with a herder regarding how many years he had to be using the winter camp before he was able to buy winter possession rights, he explained that the establishment of a *buuts* is more important than the number of years because it illustrates continued occupancy of the place and distinguishes the place of livestock attached to a specific household.

In rural Bayanhongor, these power relations, which herders themselves make up, inform their decisions to engage in new forms of formal private property possession based on

state land tenure laws. Expert debates about land use in Mongolia need to be situated in the everyday politics of pastoralism in landscapes that are shaped by local and transnational actors. The goal of this article was to explore the everyday politics of pastoralism by examining how herders pursue winter shelter private possession rights and negotiate claims over winter pastures within one rural sub-district. Winter shelters are essential for the survival of livestock in the harsh Mongolian winters. Good quality winter shelters are in limited supply due to the combination of natural and manmade elements that constitute them. Although the Mongolian government established a legal framework for private winter shelter use rights in 1995 (Kazato 2006), in rural Bayanhongor, many herding households have only obtained possession rights since 2012. I contend that the negotiations over winter shelter usage reveal the presence of informal and formal regulatory institutions that shape discourses around rights and political membership in local landscapes. Further research needs to focus on these negotiations and how custodial concepts may be re-worked in the context of household financialisation. Also, it would be useful to have further data on how disputes and their causes are classified by families.

In making these arguments, I contribute to literature on the political economy of pastoralism in Mongolia and in other dryland regions. I want to emphasise the political construction of pastoralist territories and the role of concepts of kinship in ordering power relations, which articulate with changing forms of property, finance, and political subjectivity. Expert research on land use in Mongolia is itself a powerful agent in the construction of rural landscapes and implicated in political structures, and co-exists with other forms and expressions of power based on kinship, land-based cosmological entities, and historical institutions. Concepts of kinship are often overlooked in discussions of land tenure amongst

pastoralists in rural Mongolia and should be re-examined in light of current debates on pastureland legislation.



Photograph 13: *Bag 1* Herder Meeting in Ölziit



Photograph 14: *Bag 1* Ovoljoo



Photograph 15: Dorj Making Milk Libations at Ovoo Ceremony

ARTICLE 4:

Placing absence: Gendered work and the spatialisation of Mongolian pastoralist households*

Abstract

Recent scholarship in geography has productively engaged with the concepts of absence to analyse spatialised social relations and their embodied, material and immaterial dimensions. This literature has largely focused on individual experiences of absence. I approach absence by examining experiences of the gendered nature of household absence amongst mobile pastoralists in rural Mongolia. In critical reflections on rural work, both male and female herders have stressed concerns around the absence of women in rural homes. Absence, however, has long been part of pastoralist livelihoods in Mongolia and different types of absence seem to register at different levels of “visibility.” This article asks the questions: How do Mongolian pastoralist experiences enhance our understanding of the phenomenon of absence, the circumstances under which it is detected, and when it becomes meaningful for certain groups? In Mongolia, absence has different implications for men and women and gendered division of labour and social roles, which are tied to household economies and pastoralist work practices. Drawing from ethnographic field research, the cases contribute to understandings of the co-constitutive nature of space and society, and attempt to dislodge ideas about the fixed nature of households in rural Mongolia.

Keywords: absence, pastoralism, Mongolia, gender, territory, governance

*Submitted to *Gender, Place & Culture* and currently under review

Introduction

Examining experiences of absence has given geographers and anthropologists alike an opportunity to critically reflect on broad themes relating to subjectivity, the production of space, and relationality. Related literature refers to absence as “that which is not there” and that which is “missing” (Bille, Hastrup, and Sørensen 2010, p. 7; Meier, Frers, and Sigvardsdotter 2013, pp. 423–424). Upon closer inspection, defining absence in reference to either the immaterial or the missing or both, leads to different implications for how absence is studied and understood. While absence can take immaterial form, not all are absent. Slippage between these concepts seems to occur most frequently in literature on haunting, religious and spiritual practices (see for example Buchli 2010; Maddern and Adey 2008). Including relations with the immaterial in experiences of absence is problematic. For those who believe in God, this entity is a presence in everyday life, not missing or absent. Similarly, under what circumstances are ghosts absent? Implicit in absence is the sense that there has been a disruption in an on-going relation and an accustomed set of knowledge(s) about interacting with the world (Frers 2013). In order for a ghost to be absent, it would require some previous relationship with the ghost, expectations about where it is placed, and a subsequent disruption in the “presence” of that immaterial entity. Immateriality alone does not beget absence. This article adheres to the definition of absence as that which is perceived to be missing, emphasising the relational iterations from which absence arises.

In order to address the question posed by Meier, Frers and Sigvardsdotter (2013, p. 424), “what gives life to absences,” it is important to develop a more clear definition of what absence refers to and how it is socially experienced. Building from their work, a different approach to the question might be, “when do we ‘see’ absence?” As many have previously

pointed out, absence may not register in corporeal terms because we are not aware that it exists (Spivak 1988). The subaltern, for example, consist of individuals about whom mainstream society may have no knowledge or awareness, yet may shape a common sense about the world. Mohammad and Sidaway (2012) have written about construction workers in Abu Dhabi, who are socially “invisible” to the local population, categorised by the state as a migrant work force with restricted movement, but are responsible for building the infrastructure through which economic and social reproduction continues and the “global hypermodern” city is built (2012, p. 607). To further the point in a different context, for whom is the lack of female drivers in Saudi Arabia an absence? Would it be more likely that absence registers for Saudis when women are outside the home, rather than when they are inside of it? From these examples, it becomes clear that absence is relational. It is experienced by people according to a set of accustomed expectations about relations, and absence is detected differently based on position, and in some cases entire groups of people may be invisible but not absent, and it may be the case that the very act of their visibility may provoke an experience of absence in another sphere (see also Parr and Stevenson 2015; Sigvardsdotter 2013). In this sense, absence has important political implications.

This article furthers these considerations by examining experiences of absence involved in mobile pastoralist livelihoods. Besides securing the environmental needs of livestock in rural pastures, members of pastoralist households spend time in urban and regional centers to access social and economic resources, such as hospital care, education, markets, wage labour, and to participate in political and administrative processes. Due to traditional expectations around gendered social roles, men and women experience mobility and absence differently based on their place in the household, related spheres of work, and

age-related obligations. This article highlights the gendered nature of absence in Mongolia today by focusing on new trends around household splitting. Household splitting refers to the division of a household between seasonal pasture camps and administrative centers. Recently, this strategy has been used to access primary and secondary schooling for children and involves the relocation of some or all members of a household during the school year. In examining the organisation of Mongolian households, I advance debates on absence through an empirical approach and point to the gendered way in which absence is relationally constructed and managed in the context of specific government policies.

While separation and mobility have long been part of mobile pastoralist livelihoods (Barth 1961; Chatty 1996, 2013), herders report female absence from winter pastures as a new trend and concern. Historically, in Inner Asia, it has been women who were left behind by men who engaged in military expeditions, seasonal migrations, or monastic life (Humphrey 1992a). Contemporary absence is now related more to women being away. Examining the changes in patterns of absence in pastoralist livelihoods has the potential to add depth to understandings of broader social transformations that are taking shape in the context of economic restructuring and governance frameworks. These cases provide an opportunity to further scholarship on the geography of absence in a new context by asking, how does consideration of absence illuminate shifting gender relations in Mongolia? What do these absences tell us about social transformations in rural Mongolia and beyond?

This article draws upon ethnographic research on the rural pastoralist economy in central west Mongolia from 2012–2014. Examining experiences of absence in households and rural landscapes provides insight into spatialised concepts of gender and their articulation with government policies that centralise services in urban centers. Such study also highlights the

dispersed nature of households and provides alternatives to imagining them as ideal types. In the following sections, I explore recent literature on the geography and anthropology of absence and situate these discussions in literature on the spatialisation of gender in Mongolia. Then, I draw on a number of cases of herder experiences of absence in order to illustrate the way in which absence is gendered. From this analysis, I argue that experiences of absence may give rise to new ways of performing gender and pastoralist livelihoods.

Geographies of Absence

Absence has become a theme in geographical literature around non-representational theory and has emphasized the relational, political and embodied nature of experiences of absence (Meier, Frers, and Sigvardsdotter 2013; Meyer 2012). Frers (2013) describes absence as an embodied experience because it involves an emotional and psychological response to a sustained change in accustomed relations. Frers (2013, p. 434) writes, “An absence arises in the experience, it is a relational phenomenon that constitutes itself in corporeal perceptions...To be absent, someone or something has to be experienced as being distanced from the place and time where the absence is experienced. Accordingly, an absence necessitates a relation to a lived place-time.” Frers refers to absence as emerging from embodied attachments and a “disruption of expectations” (2013, p. 434). Much of the work on absence explores experiences of missing, remembrance, death and bereavement, as well as loss resulting from natural disaster or economic crisis (DeLyser 2001; Edensor 2005; Højer 2010; Parr and Fyfe 2012; Parr et al. 2015).

In both the geography and anthropology of absence, absence is considered to have paradoxical qualities (Bille, Hastrup, and Sørensen 2010; Maddrell 2013; Meier, Frers, and Sigvardsdotter 2013; Meyer 2012). The paradox of absence refers to the “presence” of

absence in people's lives and its social effects. Absence produces agency and often begets particular material expressions. Maddrell (2013, 2015) discusses these themes in her study of practices of bereavement and remembrance. By demonstrating how grief can be mapped onto shifting physical, psychological, and virtual spaces, Maddrell (2015) illustrates how experiences of absence of the deceased occur in overlapping spatial registers that include, refer to, and move beyond material or representational frames. Many maintain a relationship with the deceased through "ritual or embodied acts," such as religious or spiritual practices, as well as through objects of memorialisation (Maddrell 2013, p. 508). Maddrell's work is important because it provokes us to analyse the agencies emerging from experiences of absence by highlighting how the bereaved re-presence the deceased and cultivate continued relations with them in the landscape, symbolic mediums, and sites of bereavement and remembrance. These practices also highlight the ways in which a person's subjectivity and identity is altered as they experience the absence of the deceased.

Both Frers's and Maddrell's work draw attention to how experiences of absence transform an individual's interaction with their environment in ways that have "social and political consequences" (Maddrell 2015). Bille (2010), for example, discusses how many Bedouin in Jordan who use amulets as protection from the evil eye are met with disapproval from powerful groups that seek to institute a literal reading of Islam. Bille illustrates how the promotion of nonmaterial religious devotion is at the center of identity politics that extends to the circumstances around the settlement of Bedouins and the absence of their tents in the landscape. Bille's work shows how cultural practices are censored and how absence is socially imposed as a form of religious discipline. This absence becomes noticeable in the narratives of Bedouins as they establish footholds in new economic and social situations. Likewise,

Maddrell's discussion of continuing bonds with the deceased points to the agency of absence, as people continue to enact identities in reference to subjectivity-forming relations.

Given the emphasis on the relational nature of absence, it is striking that gender is not examined as a component of these dynamics. Gendered relations may give rise to specific types of absences and inform how absences are navigated. Frers's emphasis on the corporeal, embodied, and relational nature of absence (of which gender is an important element) side-steps a discussion of the particular social circumstances in which absence is felt, performed, and managed in everyday lives. The sources that Frers draws upon with regard to absence are primarily based on personal reflections that prioritise an individualistic contemplative gaze. He does not explicitly identify how his social placement informs this gaze or its associated emotions. While his analysis provides important insights, these limitations illustrate the importance of examining absence ethnographically. While Frers suggests that absence is culturally constructed and managed by behavioural norms, he does not account for the wider social and political effects of absence. The absence of members of households, for example, can create constraints on labour, finances, and rights over territorial resources. It can also involve gendered struggles over social rights, property, and personhood. Physical absence may give rise to new types of being present through alternative work practices, property relations, spiritual and religious practices, and forms of communication. In this way, feminist theory concerning performativity can be applied to understandings of absence, and how these experiences are perceived and managed.

Glass and Rose-Redwood's (2014, p. 2) recent work on performativity has re-focused this term to examine how "political spaces are materially and discursively formed." Though theories of performativity are well suited to examining spaces and experiences of absence, this

framework not been applied conceptually to analysis of absence. Glass and Rose-Redwood draw upon Butler's concept of performativity to forward understandings of politics as a perpetually open and produced category. Butler defines performativity as "the reiterative and citational practices by which discourse produces the effects that it names" (Butler 1993, p. 2; Rose-Redwood and Glass 2014, p. 10). Following from Butler, a well-established literature has discussed the co-constitutive nature of space and gender (Duncan 1996; Massey 1994; McDowell 2015; Nightingale 2006, 2011; Wangui 2014). Drawing from this work, absence becomes evident in everyday life when reiterative practices are interrupted by a missing relational entity, a lack of response, or the silence of an expected or imagined other. Meyer (2012) discusses this performativity in terms of agency and the social effects of absence without direct reference to Butler's concept. Given the appearance of absence in the context of reiterative relations, which include relations with the environment and non-human actors, it seems neglectful to speak of absence outside of performativity.

I approach experiences of absence within Mongolian homes from this point of view. This article contributes to these debates by examining absence in the context of household splitting, which spatially divides households between multiple locations along largely gendered lines—with women moving into settlements for the school year to care for children. In this context, both men and women perceive the absence of women from the rural home as a visible change in rural social relations and a source of concern for labour-strained households. At the same time, women's mobilities enable new capacities for household income and involve negotiations over gendered household roles. Absence was "given life" in the context of gendered relations, and thus absence is experienced differently by men and women, and affects on-going household work strategies. The research is based on ethnographies of

household economies of full-time mobile pastoralists, or *malchin* (herders) in Ölziit, Bayanbulag, and Gurvanbulag counties of Bayanhongor province, located in central west Mongolia, over twelve months between 2012 and 2014. Mobile pastoralism continues to be an important livelihood in Mongolia and employed approximately 27 per cent of households in 2012 (National Statistical Office of Mongolia 2013, p. 59).

The Gendered Landscape

In the recent past, Mongolian literature has included a number of stories about female protagonists who work through challenges faced when their male partners leave for military service or seasonal work (Batbayar 2006; Bulag 1999). During socialism, such stories may have had an instrumental value in forwarding the elevation of women's status, and as Bulag suggests, they valorised women's contribution to the national economy through skilful livestock husbandry. Historically, women were often left alone to manage households and herds while men were occupied in war, herding, or in monastic life. Humphrey writes, "There is a real sense in which the major production of wealth rested on the work of women. In times of peace it was possible for a large proportion of men (perhaps one-quarter of all males in Mongolia) to take up permanent and un-productive life in monasteries" (Humphrey 1992a, p. 180). In this sense, the absence of men from the home was and continues to be a common occurrence and an expected part of pastoralist work, as men might be away for days or weeks at a time while herding or doing other types of work.

Mongolian pastoralist culture involves certain well-established and regular customs (*yos*) on the gendered division of household space and a set of moral orientations around these divisions and related practices (Humphrey 1992b, 1995). These practices underpin custodial land tenure systems on state-owned pastureland. Unlike the private ownership of land,

custodial tenure involves continued occupancy and use of seasonal sites and water sources as well as adherence to social norms that reiterate hierarchies of authority amongst occupants, including land-based spiritual entities (Empson 2011; Humphrey 1995; Murphy 2014b; Sneath 2002). Humphrey (1995) writes of how local landscapes involve non-human agents in these gendered hierarchies of social reproduction. Centers of power for male agency are concentrated in places such as a mountain passes and mountaintops, cairn, and designated spaces within the circular mobile felt tent (*ger*). Humphrey (1995) refers to the gendered interaction between herders and their local territories as making up the “chiefly and shamanist landscape” (see also Pedersen 2006). These relations are further inscribed in informal governing practices based on spatialised senior-junior dynamics (Murphy 2014b).

Household practices around these common understandings of morally correct social relations are surprisingly regular and consistent when visiting herder homes. Each home is spatially divided between designated male and female spaces and the role of women and men and juniors and seniors is predictably followed with room for flexibility and improvisation. Childcare, elderly care, milking livestock, household work (food processing, sewing, laundry, cleaning, maintaining fuel stores) are almost always women’s work. Herding large livestock; slaughtering animals; fixing equipment, vehicles, machines, and wells; hunting; watering animals; and obtaining household water supplies are tasks that are almost always designated as men’s work. Men’s work generally involves a greater range of mobility and longer periods of time spent away from the home, while women’s work ties them to the nuclear home space. Typically, when men are away from the home, women take on male herding work and the role of household head.

While customary gendered divisions of labour in the countryside are evident today, economic crises and the restructuring of Mongolia's political and economic system in the early 1990s were factors in the changing organisation of household economies and social reproduction. While consistent practices around the division of rural household spaces are observable amongst herders, the centralisation of services in urban and regional centers and related government policies that support the urban basis for infrastructural investment impacts how rural households are spatialised through strategies such as household splitting to access health care and education since the end of government subsidies (Janes and Chuluundorj 2004). The reverse gender gap in education and the role of women in the informal economy and regional trade at the time of economic transition from socialism point to gendered mobilities in Mongolia and inform experiences of absence in rural areas (Benwell 2006; Lacaze 2010; Robinson and Solongo 2000). While there are many different types of absence that arise in pastoralist livelihoods, new patterns of absence reveal how these intimate experiences relate with and shape wider political and economic circumstances (see for example Højer 2010).

Cold Hearths and Female Absence in Winter

I first became aware of the specifically gendered dynamic of absence in the context of discussions regarding winter housing and labour arrangements. At the start of the annual school year in September, many families split their households between rural winter pasture camps and administrative centers in order to accommodate young children attending primary and secondary school. In other cases, families completely re-locate to property in centers and place their livestock with friends, family, or hired herders. These arrangements can be complex and often involve the establishment of a second home in centers. In these

arrangements, men typically stay in the winter pastures while women move to the centers. An older female herder from Ölziit explained:

When September comes, wives leave to send their kids to schools. So husbands herd the animals...Then their wives are in the *sum* [county] center and they build up a *ger* [mobile dwelling] like ours. Then the man makes a fire for himself and cooks for himself. If he feels hungry or like he is losing interest, then he would run back to the center. The animals might be without someone to take care of them...Because of the government's policies, lives are directed to the central areas. Regardless of whether they have work or not [in the center], the main thing is to send their kids to school. Otherwise, who would take care of their two-year-old kid going to kindergarden? There is no other way to do this. Thus it is a very tricky situation... Eventually the man in the countryside herding animals might say "I should stop doing this" and he would finish up [sell] his animals and go to the center after their wife and kids. This is the result of our education system policy.

Seasonal household splitting has given rise to a number of interrelated experiences of absence. Herders describe absence in terms of the seasonal movement of entire households out of rural areas during the school year. This involves a sense of the emptying out of the landscape during winter months. While both husbands and wives have to manage in each other's absence, the absence of women is discussed as the most visible. In this way, experiences of absence are gendered and affect the organisation of households and the work of social reproduction. These points are especially clear in male herder narratives on absence.

In the summer of 2013, Bat, a young man in his early 20s, left his position in the national army at his father's request to help manage the family's herd of more than 1000 head

of livestock including horses, yaks, goats, and sheep. Bat's three younger siblings were unable to engage in full-time herding over the winter season. One younger brother was based in Ulaanbaatar and studied Buddhist Tanka painting. Another brother did seasonal work in Ulaanbaatar. While his 13-year-old sister helped with herding during the summer months, she attended school at the local Bayanbulag county center from September to May. During the summer of 2013, Bat divided his time between herding his family's livestock and building a new house on their property in Bayanbulag, located about 25 kilometres away. His mother explained that she was extremely strained by her summer and fall work of milking yaks and horses, preparing dairy products, and food storage for the winter, as well as her other household cooking and cleaning chores. Sometimes she cried in pain as she worked, suffering from migraines and acute joint pain.

At the start of September, Bat's sister moved into the center and lived alone for about a month to attend school while he and his parents moved to their winter camp about 40 km away. By late-November, Bat remained in the winter pastures as the main caretaker for the family's herd while his parents moved to Bayanbulag to care for their daughter. During a short visit to the Bayanhongor provincial center to collect supplies, Bat explained the hardship of living alone in the winter. "The only thing 'alive' when I get home in the evening is the hot thermos of tea, everything else is frozen." Bat described the work of caring for the large herd as extremely challenging, involving attention to the needs of different animals from the early morning to sunset in temperatures that dropped to -30°C . Separate herds of yaks, horses, and sheep and goats grazed in different places, at different speeds, and involved different environmental risks. In the space of six weeks, he had killed three wolves that were threatening to attack the livestock.

Herding alone is dangerous, Bat explained, and it requires true “heart” and courage. He was resolved in his self-described duty to take care of the family’s herd and to facilitate his younger siblings access to education. At the same time, he confided how lonely and uncomfortable such work could be, how he missed the camaraderie of the army, and how he did not want to spend another winter season alone. The home, once the center of visiting and hospitality between households, had become antisocial and lifeless. Bat’s case is typical for many men who spend five to six months of the winter herding alone. This isolation puts men and herds in precarious positions as unpredictable weather and poor cell phone service prevents rapid response to emergencies.

An older male native herder from Ölziit reflected on concerns he faced with leaving his herds in the care of hired help and identified other risks for men herding alone in the winter. He and his wife live in an apartment in the provincial center during the winter because he feels the work is too difficult at his age. He reflected on herding alone in the winter, “Difficult, difficult, it is inherently difficult. One person must do everything. The person needs to be very hardworking in order to manage it. If someone is not hardworking or drinks alcohol, then one can lose entire herds of sheep and horses, even their home. It is dangerous for a single person to be living like this. Generally, all young men in the county are in this situation.”

Besides the physical discomfort and loneliness involved in men’s experiences of absence, these absences also draw attention to stresses that suggest a need for further research around Mongolian masculinities. The everyday, spatialised practices that occur within a household that designate male roles as *ezen* (household heads) are problematised when men live in “lifeless” homes. This indicates a sense of social displacement in these experiences of

absence. In rural pastures, women typically have less mobility and are more isolated from other households because their work is directly related to activities in and around the home. Especially in households with infants or elderly residents, women's movement is extremely restricted. As women move to administrative centers with children to access school, they have more opportunities to visit others, leave the home, and engage in other types of work. Men's roles, which involve frequent visiting and exchange of news about herd movement, pasture quality, and water, are curtailed as opportunities for social engagement diminish.

The perception that women are absent from rural livelihoods emerged during a half-teasing conversation about marriage in Gurvanbulag. The teasing began because a young herder moved from an adjacent county to marry a local woman. The conversation recorded between my research partner, BD, two men and an elder woman went something like this:

BD: How is it finding a wife in the countryside? Is it difficult, or not?

Dorj: It is quite difficult.

Monkhoo: Laughs

BD: I heard it is getting more difficult.

Monkhoo: Now, it seems like [finding a wife in the countryside] has really become a rarity, don't you think?

Grandmother: [Laughs heartily]

BD: Most of them go to the city then?

Monkhoo: Yeah, basically it seems that they are going away to many different places.

BD: You got married at the age of thirty-three; you got married relatively late.

Monkhoo: Yes, there's no doubt about it. I got married in my thirties...

BD: You weren't able to find anyone from Bayanbulag?

Monkhoo: Maybe it was possible; however, my fate seems to be here [laughing]

BD: Yes, that is so. But it seems that it is getting more difficult in the country. Young people have left for the cities.

Monkhoo: Now, it has indeed become rare.

Grandmother: I would say that women's fate has run away from here.

BD: Women's fate may have run away from there, but certainly it will be alright.

Grandmother: You took your wife from a nice place in the countryside, so now what does it matter?

These experiences clearly point to the gendered nature of absence. On the one hand, absence is “felt” or made visible during interruptions in reiterative gendered work relations. On the other hand, as Mongolian herders strategise to combine rural livelihoods with accessing resources such as primary education for children, these strategies seem to follow expectations around gendered social roles. Men stay with herds in the countryside, while women continue to do housework and care for children. At the same time, women are still responsible for tasks such as milking and caring for young animals, which both makes new demands on their “place” while also creating new types of mobility. Concerns around the absence of women in winter pastures, as well as general feelings about a perceived trend in wider absences of women in the countryside point to the importance of understanding absence in the context of performativity. Absence becomes visible when people are not located where they are expected to be. This reveals insights into the performance of gender in pastoralist households and its articulation with government development policies. The centralisation of services such as

education in urban and regional centers has created a need for women to provide childcare to their children during the school year. In this sense, work is still performed in reference to expectations around gender. At the same time, women's mobility has opened opportunities for new engagements with activities such as the development of businesses. These spatialisations re-affirm the presence of absence for herders by making these new agencies dependent on resources located in centers, further straining labour availability for rural work.

Spatially Divided Labours

Bat's mother indicated the difficulties she faced while carrying out her household and herding work. She communicated these difficulties primarily in terms of physical pain and emotional stress and she perceived additional female labour as important to her personal well-being and the well-being of the family. Female experiences of the absence of women emerged at different moments. These experiences point to the unique circumstances in which Mongolian women's experiences of absence are formed as they maintain multiple responsibilities. Also, these absences show a striking multitude of locations in the organisation of a household at any given time as people move between a variety of places to access services such as education, health care, financial resources, part-time work, markets in urban and semi-urban areas while still maintaining rural livelihoods. In Oman, Harasiis pastoralists hire Baluchistani labourers to fill absences in the rural home (see Chatty 1996). This kind of expatriate labour is not evident in Mongolia yet, though contract labour is gaining traction.

Ochirbat's family typifies the dispersed and interconnected fluidity of household forms that give rise to absence as herders move between different sites of social reproduction. This family has a complex spatial identity and history. Their five grown children live in Ulaanbaatar, the Bayanhongor provincial center, and Ölziit county. During the time of

economic structural adjustments in the mid-1990s, Ochirbat's wife Naraa (both are native to rural Bayanhongor) was a "suitcase trader" for a short period of time after the Chinese border was re-opened. They decided to move to Ulaanbaatar with two of their five children in order to access the education system there. Naraa has serious health problems, which require frequent visits to the hospitals in Ulaanbaatar. Their other three children grew up in Ochirbat's mother's household in the rural pastures of Ölzii. By the summer of 2013, after over a decade living on the outskirts of Ulaanbaatar, Ochirbat and Naraa had resumed lives as herders. During the years that they lived in Ulaanbaatar, their livestock were placed with Ochirbat's elder sister and were taken care of by his youngest daughter, KB, who lived with his sister. Due to advanced age, Ochirbat's mother was unable to walk and had relocated to the Bayanhongor provincial center, where she lived with Ochirbat's eldest daughter, KJ, in a small *ger* on property owned by another relative. Also in the house lived KJ's eight-year-old son and eight-month-old daughter. KJ herself had a full-time job working at the local elementary school as an English teacher. KJ's husband lived a day's drive to the South and visited about one weekend per month.

There was a serious shortage of labour in the house to take care of the elderly grandmother and the baby when KJ was at work. A number of solutions were enacted to temporarily fix this shortage. Ochirbat would leave his herding work with KB and would travel to the provincial center on his motorcycle to take care of his mother and granddaughter for a week here and there. Alternatively, Ochirbat's elder sister would leave her home in the countryside and take care of her mother and look after her niece. In the absence of both, KJ's eight-year-old son would miss school in order to look after his grandmother and sister, which was extremely problematic as he had limited capability to take care of their infant and elderly

needs. While this situation seems extreme, it is fairly typical for families who juggle caretaking responsibilities with herding and devising other means to finance expenses such as health care and medicine, education, fuel, car repairs, etc. Families from all three counties where I worked recounted similarly dispersed, labour and cash-strained households.

The experience of Tsevelmaa, a herder in Gurvanbulag, sheds further light on the complexity of household organisation. The gendered nature of work and absence is revealed in the strategies herders adopt to combine herding with accessing resources in centers. She has two daughters, five and ten years old. Regarding her winter housing arrangements, she explained “my household [husband and livestock] winters in the countryside, I winter in town with my two children.” She started wintering in town when her children started school. Her mother joins her for the winter and moves back to the countryside over the summer.

Tsevelmaa recently took out a loan of approximately \$3500 for materials and equipment to start a women’s sewing cooperative with three other local women. Tsevelmaa makes Mongolian *deels*, a type of traditional dress used by herders, for extra cash. “As a herder, there is no cash, we have no possibility of making a monthly salary, also this year cash is even more difficult to get ahold of because there is no one buying livestock right now.” For this reason, she feels that the extra income from sewing is “not a bad thing.” Tsevelmaa is planning to send her children to school for their final two years of high school in the provincial center (240 km south) after they graduate from the local school. She describes two difficulties affecting her herding livelihood as problems with rural water sources for livestock as well as problems with labour. “Well, with many livestock our lifestyle is decent but, more importantly, taking care of the herd with only one or two people is *a lot* [of work].”

Conclusion

By examining experiences of absence in Mongolia, this article has contributed to recent debates in geography and anthropology by highlighting the gendered nature of absence. I have argued that absence is made visible in the context of performative, gendered social relations, where a noticeable change in expected social placements occurs. Mongolian pastoralist experiences of absence provide evidence to support the claim that absence is made visible when familiar expectations around the places and times of gendered work relations are altered. Both gender and performativity are useful frameworks for exploring absence as part of broad transformations in social relations. In this way, absence has important political implications by revealing aspects of social reproduction that were previously “invisible,” including the exposure of taken-for-granted power relations. As Maddrell (2013) has argued, the embodied nature of absence has the potential to change subjectivities and identities through the practices of the re-spatialisation of relations in reference to a deceased being. This approach to understanding absence can be usefully applied in other contexts.

This article has shown that changing types of absence in rural households point to the dynamic ways in which herders in Mongolia relate with regions and people outside of their locality. This dynamic movement of family members and livestock between different locations forces us to re-think the assumptions about the organisation of pastoralist households today. The commonality of absence in rural Mongolia today shows that households are experiencing similar patterns of constraints around providing primary education to children, procuring cash, and having access to centralised services such as health care and education. As scholars studying themes of absence have shown, absence often is associated with emotions such as loneliness, nostalgia, grief, worry, and uncertainty. These emotions appear in

Mongolian experiences of absence. More research is needed on the experiences of absence amongst herders who have relocated to urban areas and their conceptualisations of relations with the land. The importance of maintaining relations with non-human actors in Mongolian landscapes and the impact of the absence of herders on these relations is an area for further research, which would shed light on conceptualisation of landscape beyond merely a thing to be looked upon or gazed at.

Finally, this article has suggested that absence is key to understanding the political nature of transformations in rural landscapes. The prevalence and the general regularity of forms of absence indicate that changes in household organisation are happening at a broad scale. As an elderly herder pointed out, government policies around primary and secondary education, the centralisation of society and social resources in urban areas, and aspirations related to ideas of modernity all contribute to the movement of herders out of rural homes and into settled areas. On the other hand, this movement is not entirely uni-directional. Urban relatives spent time with rural relatives during the summer months to contribute labour and detoxify from life in congested and polluted urban areas. Since the economic collapse of the Soviet Union and Mongolia's subsequent economic crisis and restructuring programme, the lives of men and women have been affected on multiple scales. Although this issue has not been given much critical attention amongst scholars of Mongolia, there is a pressing need for further research on absence in rural Mongolian households and how this absence relates to different perceptions of uncertainty from the perspectives of men and women. Beyond Mongolia, more empirical studies of absence are needed to understand the political implications of why absence is revealed in some cases and not others, and what absence tells us about our expectations about how people and things are placed in the world.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

In the preceding sections, four journal papers were presented on herding work practices in relation to education, local politics and administration, territorial rights, and gender. These papers address debates within Mongolian studies and the fields of anthropology and geography more broadly. In this section, I will take an elevated view of the project in order to tie the arguments of the four papers together and expand upon their focused subjects in order to advance understandings of transformations in Mongolian pastoralist livelihoods. I begin with a summary of the research objectives and guiding questions followed by a discussion of the arguments in each paper. This section furthers the individual analysis provided in each article while drawing parallels between the materials presented in the articles. I argue that the changing meaning of work, herding, and social relations in rural Mongolia needs to be understood through attention to power and political history. Ecological analyses of pastoralism and conventional neoliberal critiques of postsocialism distract attention from the importance of ongoing relations of power, relations which did not abruptly cease at the end of socialism but continue to be improvised with the establishment of financialised, capitalist economic systems. The conceptual lens of performativity can be usefully applied in these analyses in order to move beyond the idealisation of the state and the household. From these combined analyses, I present a set of recommendations for scholars and policymakers working in Mongolia and in other regions in order to think about work and rural households in new ways.

Summary

The purpose of this thesis was to understand the relationship between pastoralist work practices, social values, and household reproduction in rural Mongolia. The project emerged from a background in studying and working with pastoralist households in Mongolia since 2004 and my observations of economic and social development policy changes over this time period. Questions about the survival of pastoralism as a way of life were reiterated over the course of 2009–2010, when a severe *dzud* killed the livestock of about 12,000 families (Sternberg 2010). This disaster brought to the fore many assumptions about pastoralist livelihoods in Mongolia. Evidence of these assumptions can be found in the international news media coverage of the disaster. Political discourses and development policy that evaluate pastoralist livelihoods negatively have a long history beyond the Mongolia context. These discourses are varied. In Mongolia, some suggest that pastoralism is a potentially outdated and unsustainable way of life, while others contend that herders do not adhere to government regulations and are positioned as actors “outside” state institutions. Others forward the idea that herders are impoverished and incapable of governing themselves without external intervention (and thus also operate outside of mainstream society). Herders are occasionally portrayed as either tragic victims of a neoliberal economic system or the perpetrators of unsustainable grazing and the cause of grassland degradation. Such “discourses of deficit” are common to pastoralists worldwide (Bocco 2006; Chatty 2013; Dyer 2014; Dyson-Hudson and Dyson-Hudson 1980; Krätli 2001; Krätli and Schareika 2010). A classic interpretation of the 2010 *dzud* involved questions such as the one posed by a World Bank analyst on a blog, “How much of this is Mother Nature and how much is a result of the continuing environmental

degradation caused by man?” (Sayed 2010). His post resulted in a detailed online discussion by scholars, development experts, and others on the cashmere industry, World Bank policies, mining, climate change, and herder decision making. In the discussion, participants each advocate different approaches to understanding this proposed problem of sustainable pastoralist livelihoods without examining the political circumstances in which this question is being posed, and how these questions contribute to the “legitimacy of rule” (Jeffrey 2015; Jeffrey, McConnell, and Wilson 2015) of a particular idealisation of the welfare state.

In reaction to the *dzud* disaster, a substantial effort went into establishing institutions, “frameworks” for governance, and a number of programmes around rural livelihoods and governance, including livestock insurance, rural development funds, and other bureaucratic systems. There has been a mushrooming of literature around rangeland management, land use, and projects to implement community-based grassland management across Mongolia (Fernandez-Gimenez et al. 2012; Upton 2008, 2012). This idealisation of herders as grassland resource users, bounded to territories, herds, and pastures, reiterates many assumptions about herders as existing outside of state regulatory frameworks since the breakdown of the socialist planned economy. These ideas have social and spatial effects. They become common points of reference in 2014 and 2015 debates on land legislation and the regulation of pasture use (see Kamimura (2013) for further discussion). The disregard to local politics and resource distribution in these debates prompted my interest in understanding how rural work was changing and how power relations played out in these contexts.

In seeming contradiction, these discourses of deficit are juxtaposed with discourses that celebrate pastoralism as a romantic cultural tradition, source of national identity, and the basis of social values and *Mongol yos* (the Mongolian way). These celebratory discourses,

while emphasizing cultural heritage and ancient history, also contribute to an idealization of herders as being part of a more pure, timeless past. Images, songs and music videos (such as the popular singer Javhlan's 2013 song *Khar Kharkhan Kharts*), poetry and other forms of artistic expression invoke strong emotions that connect the Mongolian landscape to concepts of kinship and belonging. These forms of expression make up an affective geography and contribute to a sense of social cohesion, which ties the individual experience to the collective "we;" as Thomas Eriksen (1998, 2002, 2011) and Yael Navaro-Yashin (2012) have discussed, these identity politics can also lead to great instances of violent exclusion and political inequality.

The representation and even glorification of the Mongolian national homeland in terms of the rural home, herding work practices and related gendered divisions of labour, and connection to nature in many ways accomplishes Appadurai's (1988, p. 37) "spatial incarceration of the native" by essentialising and depoliticizing herder livelihoods. Appadurai originally developed this idea to illuminate the history of ideas in anthropological social theory and to demonstrate how the category of "the native" is implicated in knowledge production about human groups. Bocco's (2006) work on expert representations of the Bedouin illustrates a similar framing based on an ecological approach to analyzing pastoralist society. He writes, "The socio-economic categories adopted by experts are never confronted with the social categories used by the interested parties themselves. Thus, when Bedouin settle, experts consider them to have disappeared as a distinctive social group" (p. 309). This process of categorization has implications for members of these groups to negotiate for rights and access government-based resources. Ferguson (2010, 2015) has pointed out that Appadurai's idea of spatial incarceration is evident in the unequal hierarchies that give some

people access to great wealth, connections, and mobility while others are ‘stuck’ in place, lack entitlement to a share of wealth or development promised by the modernist vision, and even experience a sense of moving back in time (recall Verdery’s 1996, p. 227 “transition from socialism to feudalism.”). The vast literature on processes of change in post-socialist and postcolonial environments points to the importance of understanding the intersections between moral frameworks, power relations, and spatialized social reproduction.

In an effort to more closely understand these dynamics, this project emerged from an interest in studying pastoralist livelihoods based on long-term engagement with the field and to build upon detailed research that was conducted by scholars such as Humphrey and Sneath (1996a, 1996b, 1996c, 1999) in the early years of structural adjustment reforms. In order to understand how pastoralist households are organised and function on a daily basis, I conducted ethnographic field research focusing on pastoralist work, household activities, and decision making for 12 months from 2012–2014. My goal was to learn about the lives of participants based on their critical reflections, perceptions of events, observation of their actions, as well as participating in their households and work routines in order to experience first-hand the physical, material, and corporeal aspects of what it means to do herding work in Mongolia today. The project was designed to address gaps in understanding pastoralist livelihoods in the context of ongoing macroeconomic instability, legislation around rural land management, pasture use, and grand narratives of development from organisations such as the United Nations and World Bank. This project was also driven by a desire to understand more about concepts of social change based on the actions and decisions of people as they lived their lives. In this way, I have been concerned less with formulating a theory of what happens to people and more interested in examining what people do. Thus, I am interested in exploring

how events unfold and the daily negotiations, conflicts and resolutions people make based on their unique placement in the world.

The guiding questions of the project were:

- a) To what extent do the changing conditions of work in rural Mongolia affect the terms by which people and things are valued?
- b) How do rural Mongolians negotiate their position as mobile pastoralists within changing governance systems?

The methodological approach involved extensive participant observation, semi-structured and informal interviews, mapping, and surveys over the course of 2012–2014. The research focused primarily on a sub-district of Ölzii county, Bayanhongor province with secondary field sites in Gurvanbulag and Bayanbulag, two counties in the north of Bayanhongor province. Moving with herders and administrators provided a broad perspective on how households are spatialised and the flow of resources between different rural and urban sites. Participating in the lives of herder households over the course of four seasons revealed the different work routines, constraints, and concerns that would not have been possible to understand through short-term research. Long-term research also allowed me to observe the build-up and resolution of conflicts, identify inconsistencies, and compare my ideas with the actual unraveling of events. Long-term engagement with the communities of Ölzii, Gurvanbulag and Bayanbulag is significant because it reveals information that may be overlooked through the rapid research and interviewing techniques employed by international consultants and research teams. The ethnographic methodology I employed involved developing close relations with the community of herders with whom I lived. The close and frequent contact that I had with my research participants makes strict quantification in terms

of number of interviews or encounters extremely difficult if not misleading. That being said, my analysis is based on semi-structured recorded interviews with 75 households in addition to countless conversations and observations that I recorded in field notebooks, photographs, and film recordings.

This thesis began with the story of Ochkoo, who like many herders, is part of far-flung networks of family and friends groups who rely on mobile pastoralism as a source of food, income, and knowledge, as well as a point of reference for their identity. In my fieldwork, the expression *maliin buyan*, the fortune of the herd or the herd's fortune, was frequently used to describe the enabling and co-dependent aspects of families and livestock. *Buyan* includes the concept of merit, virtue, and prosperity (Bawden 1997). In this sense, livestock provided sustenance and also enabled people to pursue livelihoods and activities beyond herding, such as higher education, trade, caretaking, and seasonal employment. Livestock are part of individual and family life cycles and histories. As Ochkoo's experience and the ethnographies in the journal articles have demonstrated, pastoralism is part of the creative and constrained performance of everyday life. The following statement by the Ölziit council governor and local herder grounds this point:

It is natural for everybody to wish to educate their children... we, parents, are not going to stick around forever. When we are no longer here one day, children need to be educated and be able to look after themselves. To get an education you need money, to have money you need to look after your herd and monetize it. So in a sense... if you are in there for your children, you ought to be in there for your herd.

This statement highlights how livestock figures into the imagined futures of people as they live their lives with reference to the social, cultural, and economic resources available to them, including government resources such as education. Herders' pursuit of formal schooling for children provides an opening to reflect upon the organisation of local government, of which both livestock and herders are a part. Performativity theory is a useful conceptual tool in understanding social change and political subjectivity because it emphasizes the relational and interactive nature of human subjectivity. Kaiser (2014, p. 123) has written, "It is not only the future that is an open potentiality that makes performativity an eventful process. The past itself is continually remade as events are retrofitted into what has occurred. In this sense, evental performativity is a nonlinear process that reassembles both recollected past and anticipated future." My work has illustrated that herding livelihoods are performed within spatialised relations, where patron–client relations continue to play a strong role in family hierarchies and wider social alliances used to gain access to needed resources. Attention to these relations both breaks down a reified notion of the state as well as an idealisation of the household, which are both prevalent assumptions in the post-*dzud* governance discourses on pastoralism.

Improvisation and Performativity

In my work, I have presented a number of arguments that illustrate how rural work in Mongolia has been de-politicalised through development discourses and ecological frameworks, which group herders into single categories rather than viewing them as heterogeneous individuals who participate in local systems of power, where gender and status hierarchies play an important role in who wins out in accessing resources. As Harriss and Jeffrey (2013) have argued, locating injustice in "structural violence" and making

prescriptions to address injustice by calling for more state action or less state action glosses over the political regimes, technologies of power, and moral authority of elite groups in controlling access to resources. In this regard, scholarship on the political and economic history of Mongolia and other post-socialist regions is of great value to understanding how family networks, migration, and political subjectivities are performed in rural areas. In the articles, “The New Mongolian State Herders” and “The role of kinship in negotiating territorial rights,” I argue that the characterisation of the Mongolian “state” as ineffective, weak, or absent in rural Mongolia obscures the politics of post-socialist distribution, privatisation, and economic liberalisation by avoiding a discussion of the historically produced and spatialised relations from which current and emergent inequalities and relations of dependence thrive. The position that herders exist outside of regulatory institutions forwards specific political agendas and development ideologies, which reflect the spatial inequalities that put not only herders but the Mongolian government itself in relations of dependence with powerful and wealthy patrons. In contrast, I show that both formal and informal governance practices continue to play a strong role in pastoralist work. Within these practices, an individual’s social position based on characteristics such as the history of living in an area, age, gender, personal connections, and access to technology and other resources shape the strategies that herders use to negotiate for their rights and the types of work they do (for example, the number of goats milked, mobility patterns, investments in urban property, sale of livestock products, seasonal work decisions, temporary sedentarization, etc.).

The concepts of performativity and improvisation are useful frameworks to explore the decision making and activities of people who live as herders in rural Mongolia. I found that

herders' actions were shaped by local power relations and other concerns over finances, obligations to relatives in distant regions, and a range of moral beliefs and aspirations. Local social hierarchies were interwoven in the local government administration systems. Also, concerns over accessing important resources, such as formal school for children, involved innovations in household organisation but within expectations around gendered work and family roles. The work of herding shaped individual agency in particular ways. In general, I have focused on herding work and political subjectivity, but I have also discussed herding work in relation to gendered mobilities and absence. In this discussion of agency, the concept of improvisation has been a useful conceptual framework. Improvisation refers to the creative actions of individuals within a structure, which Jeffrey (2015) calls "a combination of performance and resourcefulness." This idea builds partially off of Bourdieu's (1977) notion of habitus and economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capital. In this view, people act from a history of experiences and draw upon the range of resources disposable to them at a certain moment. The non-representationalists would emphasise the corporeal and affective elements of improvisation, accounting for the experiences of fear, loneliness, pride, discomfort, and pleasure that make up one's experience of the world. The cases of herder household splitting illustrate how people act creatively but within constraints, which leads to innovation (change) in social organisation as well as a re-iteration of familiar structures. While households engage in new forms of finance and investment to combine herding with school provision, these innovations are made possible through expectations about women's work and men's work. The contradictions exposed through household splitting create opportunities for households to contest these gendered work roles or to return to them, or pursue other approaches. Very much depends on individual histories, personalities, social position and perception.

As Glass and Rose-Redwood (2014, p. 2) assert, “theories of performativity can be employed to naturalize or subvert the sovereignty of political authority; to depoliticize or repoliticize the body as a locus of corporeal subjectivities; and to reinforce or call into question the taken-for-grantedness of social conventions and the spaces of everyday life.” Thus, a central debate about performativity is around the question of how some practices become more powerful or have greater “performative force” (2014, p. 5) than others. Glass and Rose-Redwood (2014, p. 15), following Butler (1990), contend that “the active human subject does not pre-exist the *doing* of agency but is constituted through the discursive and bodily enactment of subjectivity.” Dyson’s (2014) work on youth agency in the Himalayas forwards the idea of “active quiescence” to communicate how caste and gender become important markers of identity for children in the life course, which are learned and improvised within the context of household and agro-pastoralist work. Children expressed their personality, feelings, and individuality through their work in households and forests. At the same time, children’s actions and work routines changed according to adult expectations about behaviour as well as the changing physicality of children as they grew into adults and took on new roles in the households.

In my work in Bayanhongor, I found that the patron–client relationship, based in concepts of obligation founded on a senior-junior dynamic that is often expressed in kinship terms was a way in which authority was enacted. Clientage was an important type of political relationship that facilitates access to needed resources, services, and protection. Concepts of morality are an important aspect of this dynamic. The continuity of the patron–client dynamic in systems of political organization in rural Mongolia further substantiates my argument that the analytical category of the state distracts attention from relations of power. The articles,

The New State Herder and The role of kinship in negotiating territorial rights” most clearly reflects how the idea of the state is deployed and invoked in ongoing political processes. Moral ideas about responsibility and duty between authorities and subjects are at the center of struggles over ideas about who counts as a rightful ruler and model citizen. Additionally, the privatization process in Mongolia resulted in wealth inequalities and uncertainties that make relations of dependence between resource-rich and resource-poor individuals widespread. Sometimes the dynamics are unexpected—many ‘able-bodied’ young people may depend on pension-receiving grandmothers for access to critical cash. As Ferguson (2015) and Reeves (2014) has discussed, these distributional realities inform how people do kinship and do politics.

The performative force of patron–client relations based on concepts of morality is a recurring theme in the organisation of pastoralist households and it is evident in emergent patterns of household spatialisation as well as spatial relations between people. Important issues related to this dynamic revolve around the nature of recourse access, specifically as resources are physically located in different places. In my paper, “Herds or family? Contradictions in schooling children in rural Mongolia,” accessing education involved difficult decisions around gendered work roles in order to combine livestock care and childcare. Household splitting has created moral dilemmas around how to be in two places at once and fulfill family duties. As a result, many depend on annual bank loans and assistance from well-placed friends and families to access resources. In many cases, these relationships are monetised through seasonal contract herding.

Similarly, in the article, “The role of kinship in negotiating territorial rights,” herders established rights to use winter camps (*ovoljoo*) based on custodial land tenure prior to the

formalisation of these rights through government meetings. The practices of well-established families illustrated that these relations of obligation go beyond inter-human relations and also apply to relations with the land and land-based entities. This article further illustrated that the local administration sanctioned custodial land use practices by encouraging herders to establish use rights through dialogue and good relations. The ability of herders to successfully establish these relations were partly determined by their presence in rural pastures and their ability to leave the home to visit other households. This ability was sometimes constrained by labour shortages or household splitting practices, as herders relocated depending on where their labour was needed.

Pastoralist work is actively used to frame political subjectivities and shape moral discourses around citizenship, identity, and social reproduction. Historically, pastoralism has been an important resource for political elites. In the 20th century, the socialist state valorised the position of herders as state workers and framed herder identities in reference to Leninist ideology in Moscow and the Soviet bloc. Today, although the government no longer provides salaries to herders, it treats herders differently than non-herders by portraying them as a certain kind of subject with qualities that relate with concepts of the Mongolian nation. Additionally, public administrators are highly involved in quantifying livestock numbers, organising local meetings, arranging livestock insurance, and generally participating in local work-related activities. Both papers on the spatialisation of the state and winter territory rights show how the Mongolian government is formalising herding work by distributing diplomas, communication log books, and forwarding herder formalisation of winter pasture possession rights.

Attention to the spatialisation of household economies, including household splitting and new types of mobility, reveals the significance of physical separation, distance, and inequalities between centers of wealth from rural pastures. The papers on household splitting and absence show that herders do not make decisions about mobility and social reproduction based solely on a consideration of environmental factors in relation to livestock. The desire to educate children or the need to access hospitals, markets, or other facilities that are located in settled and urban areas strongly impact the organisation of household and related mobility decisions. Investment in property in centers and annual loan financing are enabled by pastoralist livelihoods. On the other hand, the need to split households has established a new type of pastoralism, which in turn affects rural governance and the organisation of new bureaucratic norms such as the formalisation of land possession titles.

Many studies have focused their analysis of pastoralist livelihoods on rangeland resources without considering the implications that accessing resources located beyond pastures may have on household mobility decisions and labour supply. Pastoralist households typically have complex spatial identities, with family members dispersed between many places for various durations of time. One of the problems faced by contemporary pastoralist households today is the contradiction between economic restructuring centered on privatisation and decentralisation combined with political discourses that uphold livestock as national wealth and herding as a form of cultural heritage. Development discourse can promote certain subjectivities that have contradictory effects for pastoralist livelihoods.

Implications for Practice in Mongolia and Beyond

This thesis offers a critical perspective on the organisation of government, governance, work and performance by examining pastoralist livelihoods in Mongolia. The arguments forwarded

have important implications for analyses of social transformation and theories of social organization. Additionally, the arguments specifically address issues that are important to herder rights and welfare, governmental policy around land use legislation, distribution, and education, as well as implications for regions beyond Mongolia that face similar trends.

The findings of this thesis are significant to studies of social organization and governance because they corroborate the argument that ‘the state’ is an abstract idea with a long history that has been utilized by people to achieve power. I have shown that patron–client relations and the moral discourses around gender, age and kinship that inform these social hierarchies are important ways in which membership in the imagined idea of the state, and government organizations more generally, is performed. If this research was put into practice by development organizations or policy makers, an initial step I would support is to evaluate the goals and uses of the social classification schemes that are currently used to separate people into different categories of development. If the goal of development is to find ways to lessen experiences of dispossession, then a greater focus should be on the class, caste and other systems of dependence that may contribute to these undermined states of being. Current social classification schemes– BPL, herders, farmers, women, children, pastoralists, the unemployed, etc.– homogenize large groups of diverse people with different histories and power relations amongst their own networks. Perhaps this means a re-focus on specifics, grounding social justice in human relations rather than a re-iteration of relations of dependence between wealthy, knowledge-rich international patrons and their clients of development.

Additionally, my research has uncovered the frequency of the term “uncertainty” used by scholars to describe the experiences of people in post-socialist regions and other areas of

the world where employment and cash are in short supply. Uncertainty is an experience that cuts across the social categories listed above. Uncertainty seems to involve a sense of fear, loss, lack of security, instability and feelings of being out of control. Despite the frequent use of this term by scholars and research on how people mitigate uncertainty, I have not encountered as much empirical investigation on what is involved in the actual places, times, relationships, encounters, etc. that constitute the uncertain experience. A focus on social themes such as uncertainty would provide a means to cut across the social categories that currently shape international policy frameworks. That said, regardless of the focus of analysis, multi-lateral development agencies need to take greater responsibility for the political effects of their knowledge generating practices and ideologies.

Regarding implications for practice in Mongolia, my work shows that household organisation and migration decisions are shaped around accessing resources that households perceive to be valuable for their futures. Households explain that the location of primary and secondary schools in *sum* centers, unreliable and poor quality dormitories, and the lowered school enrollment age for children are primary reasons why they take out loans, buy property in centers, and establish a second home in these locations during the school year. Many families want to remain in the countryside, close to their livestock, rather than put livestock in the care of others. The Mongolian government and aid agencies, in consultation with herders, have the capacity to develop innovative infrastructures for education provision for seasonally mobile households to support situated learning. Likewise, infrastructure to support health services, such as pain management for elderly people, could be easily developed. In addition, the Mongolian government and aid agencies should consider investing in better rural infrastructure overall by building reliable wells, water catchments systems, and solar systems

for hot water provision in order to make rural areas more attractive for long-term habitation and offset the sense that all things “modern” exist only in cities. Herders readily invest in new technology including vehicles, solar electricity systems, satellite TV dishes, cell phones, all-terrain vehicles, karaoke and entertainment systems, and other equipment to facilitate their connection and communication with multiple places. Additional technology can be offered to herders in order to facilitate access to important public infrastructure, health care provision, education, and participation in political processes. Mongolia gets over 300 days of sunlight a year, which can be harnessed to improve herder livelihoods and generate electricity locally in order to reduce reliance on the country’s foreign energy resources. The sustainability of pastoralist livelihoods requires political will which puts resources in the control of herders, rather than creating further regulations to control and manage the resources that they work hard to reach.

Recommendations for Further Research

Future research is needed to better understand livelihood change and governance in Mongolia. As this thesis has illustrated, additional long-term empirical research and historical analysis is essential to developing better explanations of social change and household decision making in order to move beyond conventional frameworks. Historical comparative research is needed to understand how administrative structures have changed over time. In particular, archival research on socialist style administrative systems and decision-making events would enhance understandings of how the Mongolian government systems today compare with the past regulation of production, administrative districts, and the development of territorial rights. A close examination of records of events such as *sum* meetings would provide more substantial material to reflect on ideas of citizenship and political participation amongst herders. It would

be especially interesting to compare discourses on governance, the state, and citizenship in the territories along the Chinese border across Central Asia that were under Soviet influence, including Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. The shared experience of collectivisation, work plans, economic crisis, structural adjustment, and privatisation in the context of the geopolitics of the border in these areas would provide an excellent opportunity to take a wider view of statecraft, mobility, and rural livelihoods in the region.

My research has also indicated that aspirations and anxiety around notions of modernity are powerful concepts with social effects that shape how households make decisions around social reproduction. In my experience, spiritual leaders such as Buddhist oracles, monks, and diviners played an important role in providing a sense of peace, stability, and guidance to people in precarious economic and social situations. These interactions also form a type of patronage between spiritual authorities and individuals. For instance, I observed herders giving their spiritual guides large donations such as livestock, money, and other forms of property in exchange for protection from danger, gossip, or other sources of potential misfortune. These practices also indicate the significance of the patron–client dynamic.

On a related subject, another fruitful line of inquiry might investigate the construction industry, urban development, and the housing market in Mongolia. Further, more research is needed on the educational outcomes for children of herders. This research should include a focus on how education is perceived and valued amongst herders, including their own reflections on the common perception that herders are unskilled and uneducated.

The field of Mongolian studies is small and there is need for more critical engagement by scholars of Mongolia on wider disciplinary issues and policy debates. In particular,

empirical studies of property use in rural and urban areas, the housing market, and urbanisation would enhance understandings of social organisation and macroeconomic trends in the country and provide an opportunity to reflect on broader international trends in these issues. Additionally, processes of financialisation, such as the financialisation of the public sector, banking practices, conditional cash transfers, insurance, and non-bank lending practices is an area that deserves further investigation.

Another topic that deserves further attention in my own work and any work on mobile pastoralism is a greater focus on livestock. Livestock are often mentioned in passing as objects attached to households, yet are part of the “affective geography” of mobile pastoralism and are part of household futures. Livestock husbandry involves knowledge, skills, and senses that are not explored in great depth in the literature yet are a significant aspect of daily lives amongst pastoralists, who might spend large parts of the day in contact with animals or animal products, such as milk or wool. In interviews and conversations with Mongolians, herders immediately named livestock as their most valuable possession (*omch*), while non-herders often named education, family, or children. Methods for training livestock, herding techniques, knowledge about livestock nutrition and reproduction cycles figure into local relations in significant ways but these discussions are often overlooked in favour of human to human, or human to land relations.

Finally, very fine scholarship has turned its attention to deconstructing the notion of the state and problematizing the analytical separation between ‘state’ and ‘society.’ These studies provide important information about how power is operationalized. There is more work that needs to be done to understand how people in different positions of power perceive their agency and relationship to governing organizations. Additionally, new communication

technologies, ways of self-quantification and monitoring, as well as material infrastructures in general need to be studied to understand to what degree ‘power’ may be dehumanized and put into artificial intelligence and automated systems. It would also greatly enhance the study of governance to have better data on the geography of spatial inequalities around housing, transportation, access to food, and processes of investment in urban and rural areas. Transportation and urban studies in combination with ethnographic research around questions of governance organizations would provide useful interdisciplinary perspectives.

Conclusion

Pastoralism has been practiced in Mongolia for centuries. Why should its viability suddenly be called into question since the mid-1990s, to the exclusion of other urban-based livelihoods that seem much more tenuous? Although the viability of pastoralism has typically been linked to climate change and environmental disasters, this question has always been a political one. My research substantiates the position that the question of the viability of pastoralism in Mongolia is a question about politics, not the environment. This thesis has examined the changing meaning of work in rural Mongolia. In doing so, it has shown that contrary to rangeland management scholarship and development discourses that portray herders as having little contact with the government in rural areas since decollectivisation, the government actively participates in pastoralist work through everyday administration of economic and social issues. These activities include buying wool, issuing insurance, discussing environmental issues, giving loans, administration related to land use, education, and rural development. We have seen the close, sometimes familial relations that connect herders with local government leaders and staff and the co-constitution of informal and formal governance systems in negotiations over *ovoljoo* winter shelter contracts. Additionally, the government

generates a significant amount of knowledge related to herder economic activities, including a twice annual livestock count for every household, the creation of maps for each seasonal camp, and continually updated demographic information, including the type of birth control used by households. The everyday routines of pastoralist work involve frequent engagement with government administrators, which reveal the interwoven relations and histories between regional families and the local government.

My research suggests that the frameworks by which experts conceptualise issues such as land degradation need to be re-evaluated. Humphrey and Sneath's (1996a, 1996b) work on the Inner Asian grassland, spanning Russia, Mongolia, and China, illustrated that land degradation accompanied declines in the mobility of herds. Declining mobility was linked to distribution and infrastructure problems as well as Russian and Chinese government projects to sedentarize herders or fence in pastureland. These declines reflect the legacy of the privatization process, the post-CMEA economic crisis and inequality in resource access. My research has shown that household efforts to access important resources in settled areas, which are not available in more rural locations, significantly impacts mobility and household migration decisions. Additionally, investment in urban areas and the association of the urban with culture, education, and modern worldviews increases the perceived value and attraction of living in close proximity to cities. For people like KS, who were born in the early 1980s and grew up with economic crises throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, moving away from the countryside and obtaining an apartment was a life goal. Ochkoo's experience reflects this dilemma as well. His description of life in the countryside as *ontsgui* (boring, not interesting, unattractive) reflects dissatisfaction with herding alone while his family and other associates are in the county center. There are many counter-narratives to these negative or ambivalent

positions. Many prefer the countryside life, which has become more comfortable in recent years with technological innovations. There is wide variation in the reasons why people work as herders and the ways in which they conduct this work. An ongoing theme, however, is the problem of infrastructure access. In this way, experts and other policy makers concerned with land degradation need to look more closely at the political economic history of distribution and regional investment in infrastructure in order to understand mobility trends and new patterns of work.

I have advanced understanding of transformations in rural household work practices by examining how herding is part of the performance of political subjectivities and power relations. My work supports a performative approach to understanding how individuals who identify as herders negotiate to access a range of resources in order to reproduce their households. This material can be brought to bear on ongoing debates around power, social hierarchies, and governance. Understanding how relations of dependence are shaped through moral frameworks around gender, age, and concepts of kinship can help to illuminate the operationalization of power in everyday relations. Relations of dependence also include spatialized aspects, which are part of the performance of social roles and identities. To reiterate Massey's argument regarding the co-productive aspects of space and politics, she writes "the spatial is integral to the production of history, and thus to the possibility of politics, just as the temporal is to geography" (Featherstone and Painter 2013, p. 3; Massey 1992, p. 76). This research points to the need for more scholarship on the spatialisation of the state, political membership, citizenship, and territory in order to develop further conceptual frameworks around these phenomena.

My work also illustrates that herding is a form of work to which people return and depart. People who herd livestock for a living are diverse; they have very different life histories and visions for the future. Is it not possible that any one of us can become a herder if we so choose? The rural and herding lifestyle is one important aspect of a person's identity, which involves many places, relationships, and forms of expression. Additionally, the knowledge and skill sets involved in animal husbandry and outdoor survival are learned through close observation, training, and experience. As long as these skills are socially maintained and resources such as water, common land, and other environmental resources are available, then herding is a livelihood possibility. History has shown that pastoralist practices are part of diverse systems of adaptation to extreme environmental conditions and have involved sophisticated communication and decision-making systems to organize access to limited resources. Thus, the concept that mobile livestock husbandry is of questionable viability indicates an impoverished imagination, a narrow way of interpreting potential futures and expressions of the self and social forms. The lived lives of herders and their critical reflections on experiences of social transformation show an alternative truth: the future remains an open political category.

REFERENCES CITED

- Abrams, P. (1998) Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State. *Journal of Historical Sociology*, **1** (1), 58–87.
- Agnew, J. (1998) *Geopolitics: Revising World Politics*. London: Routledge.
- Agnew, J. (2005) Sovereignty Regimes: Territoriality and State Authority in Contemporary World Politics. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, **95** (2), 437–461.
- Agnew, J. (2007) No Borders, No Nations: Making Greece in Macedonia. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, **97** (2), 398–422.
- Agnew, J., and Corbridge, S. (1995) *Mastering Space: Hegemony, Territory, and International Political Economy*. London: Routledge.
- Agrawal, A. (2005) *Environmentality: Technologies of Government and the Making of Subjects*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Aikman, S., and Dyer, C. (2012) Education and Inclusion: Re-Examining the Narratives. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, **42** (4), 177–185.
- Alexander, C., Buchli, V. and Humphrey, C. (eds.) (2007) *Urban Life in Post-Soviet Asia*. Abingdon, Oxon: UCL Press.
- Anderson, J. H. (1998) *The size, origins, and character of Mongolia's informal sector*. Policy Research Working Paper 1916. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.
- Anderson, D. G., and Broch-Due, V. (eds.) (1999) *The Poor Are Not Us: Poverty and Pastoralism in Eastern Africa*. Oxford: James Currey.
- Appadurai, A. (1986) Theory in Anthropology: Center and Periphery. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, **28** (2): 356–61.
- Appadurai, A. (1988) Putting Hierarchy in Its Place. *Cultural Anthropology*, **3** (1), 36–49.

- Appadurai, A. (1996) *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Asian Development Bank (1992) *Mongolia: A Centrally Planned Economy in Transition*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Atwood, C. P. (2003) The Mutual Aid Cooperatives and the Animal Products Trade in Mongolia. *Inner Asia*, 5, 65–91.
- Atwood, C. P. (2004) *Encyclopedia of Mongolia and the Mongolian Empire*. New York: Facts on File.
- Atwood, C. P. (2012) Banner, Otot, Thousand: Appanage Communities as the Basic Unit of Traditional Mongolian Society. *Mongolian Studies*, 34, 1–76.
- Baabar (1990) Buu Mart! Reprinted in: D. Sneath and C. Kaplonski (eds.) *The History of Mongolia: Volume III*. Kent, UK: Global Oriental, 2010, 1028–1038.
- Baabar (1999) The Great Purge. Reprinted in: David Sneath and Christopher Kaplonski (eds.) *The History of Mongolia: Volume III*. Kent, UK: Global Oriental, 2010, 1001–1012.
- Badamkhatan, S. (1981) The Way of Life of Co-operative Herders. Reprinted in: D. Sneath and C. Kaplonski (eds.) *The History of Mongolia: Volume III*. Translated by Baasanjav. Kent, UK: Global Oriental, 2010, 1012–1018.
- Bank of Mongolia (2015) *Monthly Statistical Bulletin, July 2015*. Ulaanbaatar: Mongol Bank. Available from: <http://www.mongolbank.mn/eng/> [accessed 20 September 2015].
- Barnett, S., Bersch, J. and Ojima, Y. (2012) Inflation in Mongolia: Understanding the Roller Coaster. *IMF Working Paper WP/12/192*. Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund, Asia and Pacific Department.

- Barth, F. (1961) *Nomads of South Persia : The Basseri Tribe of the Khamseh Confederacy*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- Batbayar, D. (2006) *The Flying Deer*. Ulaanbaatar: Gcompass Co.
- Batsukh, Ts., Altantsetseg, Ya., and Enkhtsetseg, E. (2013) *Mongolian Traditional Foods for a Sustainable Diet*. Ulaanbaatar: Mongolian University of Science and Technology, Food Engineering and Biotechnology School.
- Bawden, C. (1960) Economic Advance in Mongolia. *The World Today*, **16** (6), 257–270.
- Bawden, C. (1982) A Document Concerning Chinese Farmers in Outer Mongolia in the Eighteenth Century. *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hung*, **36**, 47–55.
- Bawden, C. (1984) Remarks on Land-Use Control in Later Ch'ing Dynasty Outer Mongolia. In: L. En-Shean (ed.) *Proceedings of International Conference on China Border Studies*, Taipei: National Chenchi University, 547–603.
- Bawden, C. (ed.) (1997) *Mongolian-English Dictionary*. London: Kegan Paul International.
- Becker, J. (2008) *Mongolia: Travels in the Untamed Land*. 2nd ed. London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks.
- Benwell, A. F. (2006) Facing Gender Challenges in Post-Socialist Mongolia. In: O. Bruun and L. Narangoa (eds.) *Mongols from Country to City: Floating Boundaries, Pastoralism, and City Life in the Mongol Lands*. Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 110–133.
- Benwell, A. F. (2013) Making Migration Meaningful: Achievements through Separation in Mongolia. *Norwegian Journal of Geography*, **67** (4), 239–248.
- Bernard, R. H. (2011) *Research Methods in Anthropology*. 5th ed, Plymouth, UK: AltaMira Press.

- Billé, F. (2015) *Sinophobia: Anxiety, Violence and the Making of the Mongolian Identity*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Bille, M. (2010) Seeking Providence through Things: The Word of God Versus Black Cumin. In: M. Bille, F. Hastrup, and T. F. Sørensen (eds.). *An Anthropology of Absence*, New York: Springer, 167–184.
- Bille, M., Hastrup, F. and Sørensen, T. F. (2010) Introduction: An Anthropology of Absence. In: M. Bille, F. Hastrup, and T. F. Soerensen (eds.). *An Anthropology of Absence, Materializations of Transcendence and Loss*. New York: Springer, 3–22.
- Bocco, R. (2006). The Settlement of Pastoral Nomads in the Arab Middle East: International Organizations and Trends in Development Policies. In: D. Chatty (ed.). *Nomadic Societies in the Middle East and North Africa*. Leiden: Brill, 302–330.
- Bondi, L. (2005) The Place of Emotions in Research: From Partitioning Emotion and Reason to the Emotional Dynamics of Research Relationships. In: J. Davidson, L. Bondi, and M. Smith (eds.). *Emotional Geographies*. Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 231–46.
- Bourdieu, P. (1977) *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1984) *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. London: Routledge.
- Bradsher, H. S. (1972) The Sovietization of Mongolia. *Foreign Affairs*, **50** (3), 545–553.
- Branigan, T. (2014) Mongolia: The Gobi Desert Is a Horrible Place to Work. [Online] *The Guardian*, 20 April 2014. Available from: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/apr/20/mongolia-gobi-desert-coal-mining>. [Accessed 15 March 2015]

- Bringer, J. D., Johnston, L. H. and Brackenridge, C. H. (2006) Using Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software to Develop a Grounded Theory Project. *Field Methods*, **18** (3), 245–266.
- Bruun, O., and L. Narangoa (eds.) (2006) *Mongols: From Country to City*. Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies.
- Buchli, V. (2010) Presencing the Im-Material. In: M. Bille, F. Hastrup, and T. F. Soerensen (eds.). *An Anthropology of Absence: Materializations of Transcendence and Loss*. New York: Springer, 185–203.
- Bulag, U. (1998) *Nationalism and Hybridity in Mongolia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bulag, U. (1999) Models and Moralities: The Parable of the Two ‘Heroic Little Sisters of the Grassland. *The China Journal*, **42**, 21–41.
- Burawoy, M., and Verdery, K. (eds.) (1999) *Uncertain Transition: Ethnographies of Change in the Postsocialist World*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.
- Burchell, G. (1996) Liberal Government Techniques of the Self. In: A. Barry, T. Osborne, and N. Rose (eds.). *Foucault and Political Reason: Liberalism, Neo-Liberalism and Rationalities of Government*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 19–36.
- Butler, J. (1990) *Gender Trouble*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1993) *Bodies that matter: On the discursive limits of “sex.”* New York: Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1997) *Excitable speech: A politics of the performative*. New York: Routledge.
- Butler, J. (2010) Performative agency. *Journal of Cultural Economy*, **3** (2), 147–161.
- Butler, J. and Spivak, G. (2007) *Who Sings the Nation State?: Language, Politics, and Belonging*. London: Seagull Books Pvt. Ltd.

- Buyandelgeriyn, M. (2007) Dealing with Uncertainty: Shamans, Marginal Capitalism, and the Remaking of History in Postsocialist Mongolia. *American Ethnologist*, **31** (1), 127–147.
- Buyandelgeriyn, M. (2008) Post-Post-Transition Theories: Walking on Multiple Paths. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, **37**, 235–250.
- Byambajav, D. (2015) The River Movements’ Struggle in Mongolia. *Social Movement Studies: Journal of Social, Cultural, and Political Protest*, **14** (1), 92–97.
- Byambadorj, T., Amati, M. and Ruming, K. J. (2011) Twenty-first Century Nomadic City: Ger Districts and Barriers to Implementation of the Ulaanbaatar City Master Plan. *Asia Pacific Viewpoints*, **52** (2), 165–177.
- Campi, A. (2006) The rise of cities in nomadic Mongolia. In: O. Bruun and L. Narangoa (eds.) *Mongols: From Country to City*. Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, 21–55.
- Calhoun, C. (1993) Habitus, Field, and Capital: The Question of Historical Specificity. In: C. Calhoun, E. LiPuma, and M. Postone (eds). *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 61–88.
- Cao, J., Yeh, E. T., Holden, N. M., Yangyang, Y. and Du, G. (2013) The Effects of Enclosures and Land Use Contracts on Rangeland Degradation on the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau. *Journal of Arid Environments*, **97**, 3–8.
- Carrier, J. G. (ed.) (2005) *A Handbook of Economic Anthropology*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Chandra, K. (2004) *Why ethnic parties succeed: Patronage and ethnic head counts in India*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Chatty, D. (1972) Pastoralism: Adaptation and Optimization. *Folk*, **14–15**, 27–38.
- Chatty, D. (1996) *Mobile Pastoralists: Development Planning and Social Change in Oman*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Chatty, D. (2006) Boarding Schools for Mobile People: The Harasiis in the Sultanate of Oman. In: C. Dyer (ed.). *The Education of Nomadic Peoples: Current Issues, Future Prospects*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 212–230.
- Chatty, D. (2007) Mobile Peoples: Pastoralists and Herders at the Beginning of the 21st Century. *Reviews in Anthropology*, **36** (1), 5–26.
- Chatty, D. (2013) *From Camel to Truck: The Bedouin in the Modern World*. 2nd ed., Cambridge: White Horse Press.
- Chatty, D., and Colchester, M. (eds.) (2002). *Conservation and Mobile Indigenous Peoples: Displacement, Forced Settlement, and Sustainable Development*. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Chimeddagva, D., Jargalsaikhan, J. and Walters, B. (2000) Macroeconomic Policy and Performance. In: F. Nixon, B. Suvd, P. Luvsandorj, and B. Walters (eds.). *The Mongolian Economy: A Manual of Applied Economics for a Country in Transition*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 41–70.
- Coleman, S., and Collins, P. (eds.) (2006) *Locating the Field: Space, Place and Context in Anthropology*. Oxford: Berg.
- Collier, S. J. (2009) Topologies of Power: Foucault's Analysis of Political Government beyond 'Governmentality'. *Theory, Culture and Society*, **26** (6), 78–108.
- Collier, S. J. (2011) *Post-Soviet Social: Neoliberalism, Social Modernity, Biopolitics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

- Collins, P., and Nixson, F. (1993) Managing the Implementation of Shock Therapy in a Land-Locked State—Mongolia's Transition from the Centrally Planned-Economy. *Public Administration and Development*, **13** (4), 389–407.
- Corbridge, S., Williams, G., Srivastava, M., and Véron, R. (eds.) (2005) *Seeing the state: governance and governmentality in India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Crang, M., and I. Cook (2007) *Doing ethnographies*. London: Sage.
- Da Costa, D., and McMichael, P. (2007) The Poverty of the Global Order. *Globalizations*. *Globalizations*, **4** (4), 588–602.
- Dalaibuyan, B. (2012) Formal and Informal Networks in Post-Socialist Mongolia: Access, Uses and Inequalities. In: J. Dierkes (ed.). *Change in Democratic Mongolia: Social Relations, Health, Mobile Pastoralism, and Mining*. Leiden: Brill, 31–54.
- Davaakhuu, O., Sharma, K. and Bandara, Y.M.W.Y. (2014) Export Performance During Economic Transition in Mongolia. *Economic Analysis and Policy*, **15** (4), 663–675.
- de Castro, V. (2004) Exchanging Perspectives: The Transformation of Objects into Subjects in Amerindian Ontologies. *Common Knowledge*, **10** (3), 463–484.
- de Castro, V. (2007) The Crystal Forest: Notes on the Ontology of Amazonian Spirits. *Inner Asia* **9**, 153–172.
- DeCerteau, M. (1984). *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Delaplace, G. (2010). Chinese Ghosts in Mongolia. *Inner Asia* **12**, 127–141.
- de la Sablonniere, R., Tougas, F. and Lortie-Lussier, M. (2009) Dramatic Social Change in Russia and Mongolia Connecting Relative Deprivation to Social Identity. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, **40** (3), 327–348.

- Deleuze, G., and Guattari, F. (1984) *Anti-Oedipus*. London: Athlone Press.
- DeLyser, D. (2001) When Less Is More: Absence and Landscape in a California Ghost Town. In: P. C. Adams, S. Hoelscher, and K. E. Till (eds.) *Texture of Place: Exploring Humanist Geographies*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 24–40.
- Demberel, and Penn, H. (2006) Education and Pastoralism in Mongolia. In: C. Dyer (ed.) *The Education of Nomadic Peoples: Current Issues, Future Prospects*. New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 193-211.
- Demerath, P. (2000) The Social Cost of Acting ‘Extra’: Student’s Moral Judgements of Self, Social Relations, and Academic Success in Papua New Guinea. *American Journal of Education*, **16**, 196–235.
- Denzin, N. K., and Lincoln, Y.S. (eds.) (2011) *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.
- Derrida, J. (2006) *Archive Fever*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Diener, A. (2011) Will New Mobilities Beget New (Im)mobilities? Prospects for Change Resulting From Mongolia’s Tran-State Highway. In S. D. Bruun (ed.). *Engineering Earth*. New York: Springer Science & Business Media, 627-641.
- Dreze, J., and Sen, A. (1995) *India: Economic Development and Social Opportunity*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Duncan, N. (ed.) (1996). *Bodyspace: Destabilizing Geographies of Gender and Sexuality*. London: Routledge.
- Dupuy, T., Blanchard, W., Blumenson, M., Butwell, R. L., Clinch, N. G., Coox, A. D., Hayes, G. P., Heilprin, M., Herman, V. M., Hunter, S. J., Nihart, B., Romance, F. J, and Ellen

- L. S. (1970) *Area Handbook for Mongolia*. Washington, D.C.: The American University.
- Dyer, C. (2001) Nomads and Education for All: Education for Development or Domestication? *Comparative Education*, **37** (3), 315–337.
- Dyer, C. (ed.) (2006) *The Education of Nomadic Peoples: Current Issues, Future Prospects*. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Dyer, C. (2012) Formal Education and Pastoralism in Western India: Inclusion, or Adverse Incorporation? *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, **42** (2), 259–81.
- Dyer, C. (2013) Does Mobility Have to Mean Being Hard to Reach? Mobile Pastoralists and Education's 'Terms of Inclusion.' *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, **43** (5), 601–621.
- Dyer, C. (2014) *Livelihoods and Learning: Education for All and the Marginalization of Mobile Pastoralists*. New York: Routledge.
- Dyson-Hudson, N. (1985) Pastoral Production Systems and Livestock Development Projects: An East African Perspective. In: M. Cernea (ed.). *Putting People First: Sociological Variables in Rural Development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 157–186.
- Dyson-Hudson, R., and Dyson-Hudson, N. (1980) Nomadic Pastoralism. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, **91** (1), 15–61.
- Dyson, J. (2010) Friendship in Practice: Girls' Work in the Indian Himalayas. *American Ethnologist*, **37** (3), 482–498.
- Dyson, J. (2014) *Working Childhoods: Youth, Agency and the Environment in India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Dyson, J. (2015) Life on the Hoof: Gender, Youth, and the Environment in the Indian Himalayas. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, **21**, 49–65.
- Edensor, T. (2005). *Industrial Ruins: Space, Aesthetics and Materiality*. London: Berg.
- Empson, R. (2010) Enclosing for Growth: Including or Excluding People from Land in North-East Mongolia. In: I. Charleux et al (eds.) *Representing Power in Modern Inner Asia: Conventions, Alternatives, and Oppositions*. Bellingham, WA: Western Washington University, 123–148.
- Empson, R. (2011). *Harnessing Fortune*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Empson, R. (2012) The Dangers of Excess: Accumulating and Dispersing Fortune in Mongolia. *Social Analysis*, **56** (1), 117–32.
- Endicott, E. (2012) *A History of Land Use in Mongolia: The Thirteenth Century to the Present*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Engle, J., and Prizzon, A. (2014). *From Decline to Recovery: Post-Primary Education in Mongolia*. London: Overseas Development Institute. Available from: <http://www.developmentprogress.org/decline-recovery-post-primary-education-mongolia>. [Accessed 10 April 2014]
- Ericksen, A. (2014) Depend on Each Other and Don't Just Sit: The Socialist Legacy, Responsibility, and Winter Risk among Mongolian Herders. *Human Organization*, **73** (1), 38–49.
- Eriksen, T. H. (1998) *Common denominators: Ethnicity, Nation-Building, and Compromise in Mauritius*. London: Berg.
- Eriksen, T. H. (2002) *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives*. London: Pluto Press.

- Eriksen, T. H. (2011) What is a society? *Ethnicities* **11** (1), 18–22.
- Featherstone, D. and Painter, J. (eds.) (2013) *Spatial Politics: Essays for Doreen Massey*.
Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.
- Ferguson, J. (1985) The Bovine Mystique: Power, Property and Livestock in Rural Lesotho.
Man, New Series 20 (4), 647–674.
- Ferguson, J. (1994) *The Anti-Politics Machine: “Development,” Depoliticalization and
Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Ferguson, J. (1999) *Expectations of Modernity: Myths and Meanings of Urban Life on the
Zambian Copperbelt*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Ferguson, J. (2006) *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order*. Durham, NC:
Duke University Press.
- Ferguson, J. (2015) *Give a Man a Fish*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Ferguson, J. and Gupta, A. (eds.) (1997) *Anthropological Locations: Boundaries and Grounds
of a Field Science*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Ferguson, J. and Gupta, A. (2002) Spatializing States: Towards an Ethnography of Neoliberal
Governmentality. *American Ethnologist*, **29** (4), 981–1002.
- Fernandez-Gimenez, M. (1999) Sustaining the Steppes: A Geographical History of Pastoral
Land Use in Mongolia. *Geographical Review*, **89** (3), 315–342.
- Fernandez-Gimenez, M. (2002) Spatial and Social Boundaries and the Paradox of Pastoral
Land Tenure: A Case Study from Post-Socialist Mongolia. *Human Ecology*, **30** (1), 49.
- Fernandez-Gimenez, M., and Batbuyan, B. (2004) Law and Disorder: Local Implementation
of Mongolia’s Land Law. *Development and Change*, **35** (1), 141–65.

- Fernandez-Gimenez, M., Xiaoyi, W., Batkhishig, B., Klein, J.A. and Robin, R.S. (eds.) (2012) *Restoring Community Connections to the Land*. Wallingford, UK: CABI.
- Fernandez-Gimenez, M., Batbuyan, B. and Batkhishig, B. (2011) *Understanding Resilience in Mongolian Pastoral Socio-Ecological Systems: Adapting to Disaster Before, During, and After the 2010 Dzud—Year 1 Report. Report No. 70217*. Washington, DC: World Bank. Available from:
<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/12758/702170ESW0P1200dez000June021002011.pdf?sequence=1>. [Accessed 28 September 2015]
- Fijn, N. (2011) *Living with Herds: Human-Animal Coexistence in Mongolia*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Foucault, M. (1997) Security, Territory and Population in Michael Foucault. In: P. Rabinow (ed.). *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*. London: Penguin, pp. 67-71.
- Fox, E. (2015) Making Cashmere, Making Futures. *Inner Asia*, **15**, 77-99.
- Fratkin, E., and Mearns, R. (2003) Sustainability and Pastoral Livelihoods: Lessons from East African Maasai and Mongolia. *Human Organization* **62** (2): 112–122.
- Frers, L. (2013) The Matter of Absence. *Cultural Geographies*, **20** (4), 431–45.
- Gibson, J. (1979) *The ecological approach to visual perception*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Glass, M. R., and Rose-Redwood, R. (eds.) (2014) *Performativity, Politics, and the Production of Social Space*. New York: Routledge.
- Gordillo, G. (2006) The Crucible of Citizenship: ID Paper Fetishism in the Argentinean Chaco. *American Ethnologist*, **33** (2), 162–176.

- Government of Mongolia (2013). *Achieving the Millennium Development Goals: Fifth National Progress Report*. Ulaanbaatar: Ministry of Economic Development. Report No DDC-330-M-99.
- Griffin, K. (ed.) (1995) *Poverty and the Transition to a Market Economy in Mongolia*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Gupta, A. (1995) Blurred Boundaries: The Discourse of Corruption, the Culture of Politics, and the Imagined State. *American Ethnologist*, 22 (2), 375–402.
- Gupta, A. (2012) *Red Tape: Bureaucracy, Structural Violence, and Poverty in India*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Hahn, A. H. (2013) Because We Once Lived There: Maasai Culture as an Argumentative Resource in the Serengeti. In: *Fourth International Conference on Argumentation, Rhetoric, Debate and Pedagogy*. Doha.
- Hannam, I. (2007) *Report to United Nations Development Program Mongolia on Review of Draft Pastureland Law of Mongolia*. UNDP: Sustainable Grassland Management Project.
- Hannam, I. (2012) International Perspectives on Legislative and Administrative Reforms as an Aid to Better Land Stewardship. In: V. Squires (ed.). *Rangeland Stewardship in Central Asia*. Springer Netherlands, 407–429.
- Hannam, I. (2014) Legal and Policy Aspects of Rangeland management–Mongolia. In: P.M. Herrera, J. Davies, P.M. Baena (eds.). *The Governance of Rangelands: Collective Action for Sustainable Pastoralism*, 156.
- Hann, C. (ed.) (1998) *Property Relations: Renewing the Anthropological Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Hann, C. (ed.) (2002) *Postsocialism: Ideals, Ideologies, and Practices in Eurasia*. London: Routledge.
- Hann, C. (ed.) (2003) *The Postsocialist Agrarian Question: Property Relations and the Rural Condition*. London: Transaction Publishers.
- Hann, C. (2006) *Not the Horse We Wanted: Postsocialism, Neoliberalism, and Eurasia*. London: Transaction Publishers.
- Hann, C., and Hart, K. (eds.) (2009) *Market and Society: The Great Transformation Today*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Haraway, D. (1988) Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective. *Feminist Studies*, **14** (3), 575–99.
- Hardin, G. (1968) Tragedy of Commons. *Science*, **162** (3859), 1243.
- Harriss, J., and Jeffrey, C. (2013). Depoliticizing Injustice. *Economy and Society*, **42** (3), 507–520.
- Harvey, D. (2005) *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Harvey, D. (2006) *Spaces of Global Capitalism: Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development*. London: Verso.
- Heybey, B., and Murrell, P. (1999) The Relationship between Economic Growth and Speed of Liberalization during Transition. *The Journal of Policy Reform*, **3** (2), 121–137.
- High, M. (2008) Wealth and Envy in the Mongolian Gold Mines. *Cambridge Anthropology*, **27** (3), 1–18.
- High, M., and Schlesinger, J. (2010) Rulers and Rascals: The Politics of Gold in Mongolian Qing History. *Central Asian Survey*, **29** (3), 289–304.
- Hitchings, R. (2011) People Can Talk about Their Practices. *Area*, **44**, 61–67.

- Hodges, A., Dufay, A-C., Dashdorj, K., Jong, K.Y., Mungun, T., and Budragchaa, U. (2007) *Child Benefits and Poverty Reduction: Evidence from Mongolia's Child Money Program*. Division of Policy and Planning: UNICEF.
- Højer, L. (2007) Troubled Perspectives in the New Mongolian Economy. *Inner Asia*, **9** (2), 261–273.
- Højer, L. (2010). Absent Powers: Magic and Loss in Post-socialist Mongolia. In: M. Bille, F. Hastrup, and T. F. Sørensen (eds.). *An Anthropology of Absence: Materializations of Transcendence and Loss*. New York: Springer, 149–166.
- Humphrey, C. (1978) Pastoral Nomadism in Mongolia: The Role of Herdsmen's Cooperatives in the National Economy. *Development and Change*, **9**, 133-160.
- Humphrey, C. (1991) 'Icebergs,' Barter, and the Mafia in Provincial Russia. *Anthropology Today*, **7** (2), 8-13.
- Humphrey, C. (1992a) Exemplars and Rules: Aspects of the Discourse of Morality in Mongolia. In: S. Howell (ed.). *Ethnography of Moralities*. London: Routledge, 25–47.
- Humphrey, C. (1992b). Women and Ideology in Hierarchical Societies in East Asia. In: S. Ardener (ed.). *Persons and Powers of Women in Diverse Cultures*. Oxford: Berg, 173–192.
- Humphrey, C. (1995) Chiefly and Shamanist Landscapes in Mongolia. In: E. Hirsch and M. O'Hanlon (eds.). *The Anthropology of Landscape*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 135–162.
- Humphrey, C. (1996) *Shamans and Elders: Experience, Knowledge and Power among the Duar Mongols*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

- Humphrey, C. (2002) *The Unmaking of Soviet Life: Everyday Economies After Socialism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Humphrey, C. (2008) Reassembling Individual Subjects: Events and Decisions in Troubled Times. *Anthropological Theory*, **8**, 357.
- Humphrey, C., Mongush, M. and Telengid, B. (1993) Attitudes toward Nature in Mongolia and Tuva. *Nomadic Peoples* **33**, 51–61.
- Humphrey, C., and Sneath, D. (eds.) (1996a) *Culture and Environment in Inner Asia, Volume 1: The Pastoral Economy and the Environment*. Cambridge: The White Horse Press.
- Humphrey, C., and Sneath, D. (eds.) (1996b) *Culture and Environment in Inner Asia, Volume 2: Society and Culture*. Cambridge: The White Horse Press.
- Humphrey, Caroline and David Sneath. (1996c) *Pastoralism and Institutional Change in Inner Asia: Comparative Perspectives from the MECCIA Research Projects*. Pastoral Development Network Set 39, Network Paper 39b. London: Overseas Development Institute.
- Humphrey, C. and Sneath, D. (1999) *The End of Nomadism? Society, State, and the Environment in Inner Asia*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Humphrey, C., and Ujeed, H. (2012) Fortune in the Wind: An Impersonal Subjectivity. *Social Analysis* **56** (2), 152–167.
- Husserl, E. (2012) *Ideas*. NY: Routledge.
- Ingold, T. (2000) *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling, and Skill*. London: Routledge.
- Ingold, T. (2007) *Lines: A Brief History*. London: Routledge.

- Ingold, T. (2013) A conical lodge at the center of an earth-sky world. In: D.G. Anderson, R.P. Wishart, and V. Vate (eds.). *About the Hearth: Perspectives on the Home, Hearth and Household in the Circumpolar North*. New York: Berghahn, 11–28.
- Ingold, T. (2014) That's Enough about Ethnography! *Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, **4** (1), 383–395.
- Jackson, M. (2013) *Lifeworlds: Essays in Existential Anthropology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Jackson, S. L. (2014) Imagining the Mineral Nation: Contested Nation Building in Mongolia. *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity*, **43** (3): 437–456.
- Jacobs, A. (2010). Winter Leaves Mongolia a Harvest of Carcasses. *New York Times*, May 19. Available from: <http://nyti.ms/1VuUHoW> [Accessed 10 March 2014].
- Janes, C. R., Chuluundorj, O., Hilliard, C. E., Rak, K. and Janchiv, K. (2006) Poor Medicine for Poor People? Assessing the Impact of Neoliberal Reform on Health Care Equity in a Post-Socialist Context. *Global Public Health*, **1** (1), 5–30.
- Janes, C. R., and Chuluundorj, O. (2004) Free Markets and Dead Mothers: The Social Ecology of Maternal Mortality in Post-Socialist Mongolia. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, **18** (2), 230–257.
- Janzen, J. (2005) Mobile Livestock-Keeping in Mongolia: Present Problems, Spatial Organization, Interactions between Mobile and Sedentary Population Groups and Perspectives for Pastoral Development. In: K. Ikeya and E. Fratkin (eds.) *Pastoralist and their Neighbors in Asia and Africa*. Osaka: Senri Ethnological Studies 69, 69-97.
- Janzen, J. (2011) Mongolian Pastoral Economy and Its Integration into the World Market under Socialist and Post-Socialist Conditions. In: J. Gertel and R. Le Heron (eds.).

- Economic Spaces of Pastoral Production and Commodity Systems: Markets and Livelihoods*. Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing Co, 195–209.
- Jeffrey, A. (2013) *The Improvised State: Sovereignty, Performance and Agency in Dayton, Bosnia*. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Jeffrey, A. (2015) The State. In: J. Agnew, V. Mamadouh, A. J. Sector, and J. Sharpe (eds.), *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Political Geography*, 1st ed., Chichester, UK: Wiley, 61–72.
- Jeffrey, A., McConnell, F., and Wilson, A. (2015, in press) Understanding legitimacy: Perspectives from anomalous geopolitical spaces. *Geoforum*.
- Jeffrey, C., Jeffrey, P. and Jeffrey, R. (2008). *Degrees without Freedom: Education, Masculinities, and Unemployment in North India*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Jeffrey, C. (2010) *Timpass: youth, class, and the politics of waiting in India*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Jeffrey, C., and Dyson, J. (eds.) (2008) *Telling Young Lives: Portraits of Global Youth*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Jules-Rosette, B. (1978) The Veil of Objectivity: Prophecy, Divination, and Social Inquiry. *American Anthropologist*, **80** (3), 549–570.
- Kaiser, R. J. (2014) Performativity, Events, and Becoming-Stateless. In: M. R. Glass and R. Rose-Redwood (eds.), *Performativity, Politics, and the Production of Social Space*, New York: Routledge, 121–143.
- Kamata, T., Reichert, J., Tsevegmid, T., Kim, Y., and Sedgewick, B. (2010) *Managing Urban Expansion in Mongolia*. Washington D.C.: The World Bank.

- Kamimura, A. (2013) Pastoral Mobility and Pastureland Possession in Mongolia. In: N. Yamamura, N. Fujita, and A. Maekawa (eds.). *The Mongolian Ecosystem Network*. Tokyo, Japan: Springer, 187–203.
- Kaplonski, C. (1988) Creating National Identity in Socialist Mongolia. *Central Asian Survey*, **17** (1), 35–49.
- Kaplonski, C. (2002) Thirty thousand bullets: remembering political repression in Mongolia. In: K. Christie and R. Cribb (eds.). *Historical injustice and democratic transition in Eastern Asia and Northern Europe: ghosts at the table of democracy*. London: RoutledgeCurzon, 155–168.
- Kaplonski, C. (2004) *Truth, history, and politics in Mongolia: the memory of heroes*. London: RoutledgeCurzon.
- Kaplonski, C. (2006) Exemplars and Heroes: The Individual and the Moral in the Mongolian Political Imagination. In: D. Sneath (ed.). *States of Mind: Power, Place and the Subject in Inner Asia*. Bellingham (WA): Western Washington University, 63–90.
- Kaplonski, C. (2008) Prelude to Violence: Show trials and state power in 1930s Mongolia. *American Ethnologist*, **35** (2), 321–337.
- Kardulias, N. P. (2015) Introduction: Pastoralism as an Adaptive Strategy. In: P. N. Kardulias (ed.) *The Ecology of Pastoralism*. Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado, 1–15.
- Kazato, M. (2006) Local Value and Rights to Winter Camps under Land Privatization Policy in Postsocialist Mongolia. In *Biennial Conference of IASCP (International Association for the Study of Common Property)*, June 19–23. Bali, Indonesia.

- Kerven, C., Steimann, B., Dear, C. and Ashley, L. (2012) Researching the Future of Pastoralism in Central Asia's Mountains: Examining Development Orthodoxies. *Mountain Research and Development*, **32** (3), 368–377.
- Kipnis, A. B. (2011) *Governing Educational Desire: Culture, Politics, and Schooling in China*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Klein, J.A., Fernandez-Gimenez, F., Wei, H., Changqing, D. L., Dorligsuren, D., Reid, R.S. (2012) A Participatory Framework for Building Resilient Socio-Ecological Pastoral Systems. In: M. Fernandez-Gimenez, X. Wang, B. Batkhishig, J.A. Klein, and R.S. Reid (eds.). *Restoring Community Connections to the Land*. Wallingford, UK: CABI
- Konagaya, Y. (2013) The impact of agricultural development on nomadic pastoralism in Mongolia. In: N. Yamamura, N. Fujita, and A. Maekawa (eds.). *The Mongolian Ecosystem Network*. Tokyo, Japan: Springer, 255-267.
- Krätli, S. (2001) Education Provision to Nomadic Pastoralists: A Literature Review. *IDS Working Paper 126*. Available From: <http://www.eldis.org/fulltext/saverio.pdf> [accessed 7 October 2015].
- Krätli, S., and Dyer, C. (2009) *Mobile Pastoralists and Education: Strategic Options*. Working Paper 1: London: International Institute for Environment and Development. Available from: <http://pubs.iied.org/10021IIED.html> [accessed 7 October 2015].
- Krätli, S., and Schareika, N. (2010) Living Off Uncertainty: The Intelligent Animal Production of Dryland Pastoralists. *European Journal of Development Research*, **22**, 605–622.
- Krätli, S., Huelsebusch, C., Brooks, S. and Kaufmann, B. (2013) Pastoralism: A Critical Asset for Food Security under Global Climate Change. *Animal Frontiers*, **3**, 42–50.

- Kraudzun, T. (2012) Livelihoods of the 'New Livestock Breeders' in the Eastern Pamirs of Tajikistan. In: H. Kreutzmann (ed.). *Pastoral practices in High Asia*, 89-107.
- Lacaze, G. (2010) Run After Time: The Roads of Suitcase Traders. *Asian Ethnicity*, **11** (2), 191–208.
- Laituri, M., and Thompson, J. (2012) Situational Geography, Case Studies and Cross-Cultural Collaborative Studies. In: M. Fernandez-Gimenez, X. Wang, B. Batkhishig, J. A. Klein and R. S. Reid (eds.). *Restoring Community Connections to the Land*. Wallingford, UK: CABI, 37-50.
- Latour, B. (2005) *Reassembling the Social: Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lemke, T. (2001). The Birth of Bio-Politics: Michel Foucault's Lecture at the College de France on Neoliberal Governmentality. *Economy and Society*, **30** (2), 190–207.
- Leutloff-Grandits, C. (2003) Coping with Economic Devastation: Agriculture in Post-War Knin, Croatia. In: Chris Hann (ed.). *The Postsocialist Agrarian Question: Property Relations and the Rural Condition*. London: Transaction Publishers, 143.
- Levinson, B. A., Foley, D.E. and Holland, D. C. (eds.). (1996) *Cultural Production of the Educated Person*. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press.
- Maddern, J. F. and Adey, P. (2008) Editorial: spectro-geographies. *Cultural geographies*, **15** (3), 291-295.
- Maddrell, A. (2013) Living with the Deceased: Absence, Presence and Absence-Presence. *Cultural Geographies*, **20** (4), 501–522.

- Maddrell, A. (forthcoming 2015) A Conceptual Framework for Understanding the Spatial Dimensions of Bereavement, Mourning, and Remembrance. *Social and Cultural Geography*.
- Maydar, O. and Rae, J.D. (2015) Territorializing national identity in post-socialist Mongolia: purity, authenticity, and Chinggis Khan. *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 55 (5), 560–577.
- Maekawa, A. (2013) The cash in cashmere: Herders' incentives and strategies to increase the goat population in post-socialist Mongolia. In: N. Yamamura, N. Fujita, and A. Maekawa (eds.). *The Mongolian Ecosystem Network*. Tokyo, Japan: Springer, 233-245.
- Mandel, R., and Humphrey, C. (eds.). (2002) *Markets and Moralities: Ethnographies of Postsocialism*. Oxford: Berg.
- Marin, A. (2008) Between Cash Cows and Golden Calves: Adaptations of Mongolian Pastoralism in the 'Age of the Market.' *Nomadic Peoples*, 12 (2), 75–101.
- Marsh, P. K. (2006) Beyond the Soviet House of Culture: Rural Responses to Urban Cultural Policies in Contemporary Mongolia." In: O. Bruun and L. Narangoa (eds.). *Mongols From Country to City: Floating Boundaries, Pastoralism and City Life in the Mongol Lands*. Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, 290-304.
- Marsh, P. K. (2008) Our generation is opening its eyes: hip-hop and youth identity in contemporary Mongolia. *Central Asian Survey*, 29 (3), 345-358.
- Marsh, P. K. (2009) *The horse-head fiddle and the cosmopolitan reimagination of tradition in Mongolia*. London: Routledge.

- Marzluf, P. (2015) The Pastoral Home School: Rural, Vernacular and Grassroots Literacies in Early Soviet Mongolia. *Central Asian Survey*, **34** (2), 204–218.
- Massey, D. (1994). *Space, Place and Gender*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Massey, D. (2005) *For Space*. London: SAGE.
- McConnell, F. (2012) Governmentality to Practice the State? Constructing a Tibetan Population in Exile. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* **30**: 78–95.
- McConnell, F. (2013) Citizens and Refugees: Constructing and Negotiating Tibetan Identities in Exile. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, **103** (4), 967–983.
- McDowell, L. (2015). Roepke Lecture in Economic Geography—The Lives of Others: Body Work, the Production of Difference, and Labor Geographies. *Economic Geography*, **91** (1), 1–23.
- McMichael, P., (ed.). (2010). *Contesting Development: Critical Struggles for Social Change*. New York, London: Routledge.
- Mearns, R. (1996) Community, Collective Action and Common Grazing: The Case of Post-Socialist Mongolia. *Journal of Development Studies* **32** (3), 297–339.
- Mearns, R. (2004a) Sustaining Livelihoods on Mongolia's Pastoral Commons: Insights from a Participatory Poverty Assessment. *Development and Change*, **35** (1), 107–139.
- Mearns, R. (2004b). Decentralization, Rural Livelihoods, and Pasture-Land Management in Post-Socialist Mongolia. *European Journal of Development Research*, **16** (1), 133–152.
- Meier, L., Frers, L., and Sigvardsdotter, E. (2013) The Importance of Absence in the Present: Practices of Remembrance and the Contestation of Absences. *Cultural Geographies*, **20** (4), 423–430.

- Meyanathan, S. D. (2013) *Portraits of Change: Exploring the Changing People, Nature and Economics of Mongolia*. Ulaanbaatar: Saha Dhevan Meyanathan.
- Meyer, M. (2012) Placing and Tracing Absence: A Material Culture of the Immaterial. *Journal of Material Culture*, **17** (1), 103–110.
- Middleton, N., Rueff, H., Sternberg, T., Batbuyan, B., and Thomas, D. (2015) Explaining Spatial Variations in Climate Hazard Impacts in Western Mongolia. *Landscape Ecology*, **30** (1), 91–107.
- Mills, D, and Morton, M (2013) *Ethnography in Education*. London: SAGE.
- Mitchell, T. (1991) The Limits of the State: Beyond Statist Approaches and their Critics. *The American Political Science Review* 85 (1), 77–96.
- Mitchell, T. (1999) Society, Economy, and the State Effect In: G. Steinmetz (ed.). *State/Culture: State-Formation after the Cultural Turn*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 76–97.
- Mitchell, T. (2002) *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Technopolitics, Modernity*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Mohammad, R., and Sidaway, J.D. (2012) Spectacular Urbanization amidst Variegated Geographies of Globalization: Learning from Abu Dhabi's Trajectory through the Lives of South Asian Men. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, **36** (3), 606–627.
- Morarji, K. (2014) Subjects of Development: Teachers, Parents, and Youth Negotiating Education in Rural North India. *European Journal of Development Research*, **26**, 175–189.

- Morozova, I. Y. (2002) *The Comintern and revolution in Mongolia*. Cambridge: The White Horse Press.
- Mosse, D. (2006) Anti-Social Anthropology? Objectivity, Objection, and the Ethnography of Public Policy and Professional Communities. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, **12**, 935–956.
- Murdoch, J. (1997) Governmentality and Territoriality: The Statistical Manufacture of Britain's 'National Farm'. *Political Geography*, **16** (4), 307–324.
- Murphy, D. J. (2014a) Booms and Busts: Asset Dynamics, Disaster, and the Politics of Wealth in Rural Mongolia. *Economic Anthropology*, **1** (1), 104–123.
- Murphy, D. J. (2014b) Ecology of Rule: Territorial Assemblages and Environmental Governance in Rural Mongolia. *Anthropological Quarterly*, **83** (3), 759–792.
- Murphy, D. J. (2015) From Kin to Contract: Labor, Work, and the Production of Authority in Rural Mongolia. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, **42** (2), 397–424.
- Narmandakh, M., and Khan, T. (2012). Mongolia Quarterly Economic Update. Washington, D.C. The World Bank. Available from: <http://www.worldbank.org.mn> [Accessed 1 December 2014].
- National Statistical Office of Mongolia 2013. *National Statistical Yearbook: 2012*. Ulaanbaatar. Available from: <http://www.1212.mn/en/> [Accessed 29 September 2015].
- Navaro-Yashin, Y. (2002) *Faces of the State: Secularism and Public Life in Turkey*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Navaro-Yashin, Y. (2012) *The Make-Believe Space: Affective Geography in a Post-War Polity*. Durham: Duke University Press.

- Nightingale, A. (2006) The Nature of Gender: Work, Gender, and Environment. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, **24**, 165–85.
- Nightingale, A. (2011) Bounding Difference: Intersectionality and the Material Production of Gender, Caste, Class and Environment in Nepal. *Geoforum*, **42**, 153–62.
- Nixson, F., and Walters, B. (2006) Privatization, Income Distribution, and Poverty: The Mongolian Experience. *World Development*, **34** (9), 1557–1579.
- Nixson, F., Suvd, B., Luvsandorj, P., and Walters, B. (eds.). (2000) *The Mongolian Economy: A Manual of Applied Economics for a Country in Transition*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited.
- Ong, A. (1999) *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logic of Transnationality*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Ovdiyenko, I. K. (1965) *Economic-Geographical Sketch of the Mongolian People's Republic*. Bloomington, IN: The Mongolia Society.
- Park, H-Y. (2003) Metaphorical and Ideological Concepts of Post-Socialist Mongolian Kinship. *Inner Asia*, **5** (2), 143–62.
- Parr, H. and Fyfe, N. (2012) Missing Geographies. *Progress in Human Geography*, **37** (5), 615-638.
- Parr, H., and Stevenson, O. (2015) ‘No news today’: talk of witnessing with families of missing people. *Cultural Geographies*, **22** (2), 297-315.
- Parr, H., Stevenson, O., Fyfe, N., and Woolnouth, P. (2015) Living Absence: the Strange Geographies of Missing People. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* **33**: 191-208.

- Pedersen, M. A. (2006) Where Is the Center? The Spatial Distribution of Power in Post-Socialist Rural Mongolia. In: O. Bruun and L. Narangoa (eds.). *Mongols from Country to City: Floating Boundaries, Pastoralism and City Life in the Mongol Lands*. Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, 82–109.
- Pederson, M. A. (2011) *Not Quite Shamans: Spirit Worlds and Political Lives in Northern Mongolia*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Pedersen, M.A. (2012) A Day in the Cadillac: The Work of Hope in Urban Mongolia. *Social Analysis* 56 (2), 136–151.
- Pedersen, M. A., and Højer, L. (2008) Lost in Transition: Fuzzy Property and Leaky Selves in Ulaanbaatar. *Ethnos*, 73 (1), 73–95.
- Polanyi, K. (1944) *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Portisch, A. (2012) Like Unbroken Cream: Education and Livelihoods among the Kazakh of Western Mongolia. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 43 (4), 385–399.
- Radchenko, S. (2012) Soviet Withdrawal from Mongolia, 1986–1992: A Reassessment. *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 25 (2), 183–203.
- Rak, K., and Janes, C. R. (2004) Reproductive Health in Post-Transition Mongolia: Global Discourses and Local Realities. *Perspectives on Global Development and Technology*, 3 (1/2), 171–196.
- Reeves, M. (2011a) Introduction: Contested Trajectories and a Dynamic Approach to Place. *Central Asian Survey*, 30 (3–4), 307–330.
- Reeves, M. (2011b) Staying put? Towards a relational politics of mobility at a time of migration. *Central Asian Survey* 30 (3–4), 555–576.

- Reeves, M. (2012) Black Work, Green Money: Remittances, Ritual, and Domestic Economies in Southern Kyrgyzstan. *Slavic Review* 71 (1), 108–134.
- Reeves, M. (2014) *Border Work: Spatial Lives of the State in Rural Central Asia*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Reeves, M., Rasanayagam, J., and Beyer, J. (eds.) (2014). *Ethnographies of the State in Central Asia: Performing Politics*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Ressel, C. (2005) Cooperation Strategies in Mongolian Pastoralism During the Socialist Collective Economy. *Inner Asia*, 7, 193-214.
- Robinson, B., and Solongo, A. (2000) The Gender Dimension of Economic Transition in Mongolia. In: F. Nixon, B. Suvd, P. Luvsandorj, and B. Walters (eds.). *The Mongolian Economy: A Manual of Applied Economics for a Country in Transition*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd, 231–255.
- Rose-Redwood, R. (2006) Governmentality, Geography, and the Geo-Coded World. *Progress in Human Geography*, 30 (4), 469–486.
- Rose-Redwood, R., and Glass, M. R. (2014) Introduction: Geographies of Performativity. In M. R. Glass and R. Reuben-Redwood (eds.). *Performativity, Politics, and the Production of Social Space*. London: Routledge, 1–34.
- Russell, N.P., Adya, Y., and Tseveen, T (2000). Role of the livestock and crop economy in the Mongolian economic transition. In: F. Nixon, B. Suvd, P. Luvsandorj, and B. Walters (eds.). *The Mongolia Economy: A Manual of Applied Economics for a Country in Transition*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd, 154-174.
- Salzman, C., and Galaty, J. (1990) *Nomads in a Changing World*. Naples: Instituto Universitario Orientale.

- Sanders, A. J. K. (1992) Mongolia's New Constitution: Blueprint for Democracy. *Asian Survey*, **32** (6), 506–20.
- Sayed, A. (2010) Dzud: a slow natural disaster kills livestock—and livelihoods—in Mongolia. *East Asia and Pacific on the Rise*, World Bank Blog. Available from: <http://blogs.worldbank.org/eastasiapacific/dzud-a-slow-natural-disaster-kills-livestock-and-livelihoods-in-mongolia>. [Accessed 1 August 2015]
- Sen, A. (1999) *Development as Freedom*. Delhi, India: Oxford University Press.
- Schmidt, S., Gongor, G., Kar, K., Swenson, K. (2002) Community Organizing— a key step towards sustainable livelihoods and co-management of natural resources in Mongolia. *Policy Matters*, 741-74.
- Schmidt, S. (2006) *Pastoral Community Organization, Livelihoods, and Biodiversity Conservation in Mongolia's Southern Gobi Region*. In: D. J. Bedunah, E. Durant McAuthur, and M. Fernandez-Gimenez (compilers), *Rangelands of Central Asia, Proceedings of the Conference on Transformations, Issues and Future Challenges*. Fort Collins, CO: United States Department of Agriculture.
- Scott, J. (1998) *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Shamir, R. (2008) The Age of Responsibilization: On Market-Embedded Morality. *Economy and Society*, **37** (1), 1–19.
- Sharma, K., and Davaakhuu, O. (2015) Trade Policy in a Resource-Rich Landlocked Country: The WTO Review of Mongolia. *The World Economy*, **38** (9), 1350–1367.
- Sigvardsson, E. (2013) Presenting absent bodies: undocumented persons coping and resisting in Sweden. *Cultural Geographies*, **20** (4), 523-539.

- Sidaway, J. D. (2012) Geography, Globalization, and the Problematic of Area Studies. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, **103** (4), 984–1002.
- Skees, J. R., and Enkh-Amgalan, A., (2002) *Examining the Feasibility of Livestock Insurance in Mongolia*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank, Rural Development and Natural Resources Sector Unit, East Asia and Pacific Region.
- Smith, R. J. (2015) Ending Poverty in Mongolia: From Socialism to Social Development. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, **24** (2), 159-169.
- Sneath, D. (1993) Social Relations, Networks and Social Organisation in Post-Socialist Rural Mongolia. *Nomadic Peoples*, **33**, 193–207.
- Sneath, D. (2000) Producer Groups and the Decollectivization of the Mongolian Pastoral Economy. In: D. Sneath and C. Kaplonski (eds.). *The History of Mongolia: Volume III*. Kent, UK: Global Oriental, 1067–1088.
- Sneath, D. (2001) Notions of Rights over Land and the History of Mongolian Pastoralism. *Inner Asia*, **3** (1), 41–59.
- Sneath, D. (2002) Mongolia in the ‘age of the market’: pastoral land-use and the development discourse. In: R. Mandel and C. Humphrey (eds.). *Markets and moralities: Ethnographies of postsocialism*. Oxford: Berg, 191-210.
- Sneath, D. (2003) Land Use, the Environment, and Development in Post-Socialist Mongolia. *Oxford Development Studies*, **31** (4), 441–459.
- Sneath, D. (2004) Property Regimes and Sociotechnical Systems: Rights over Land in Mongolia’s ‘Age of the Market. In: K. Verdery and C. Humphrey (eds.). *Property in Question: Value Transformations in the Global Economy*. Oxford: Berg, 161–182.

- Sneath, D. (ed.) (2006a) *States of Mind: Power, Place, and The Subject in Inner Asia*. Bellingham, WA: Western Washington University.
- Sneath, D. (2006b) The Rural and Urban in Pastoral Mongolia. In: O. Bruun and L. Narangoa (eds.). *Mongols: From Country to City*. Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, 140-161.
- Sneath, D. (2006c) Transacting and Enacting: Corruption, Obligation, and the Use of Monies in Mongolia. *Ethnos*, **71** (1), 81–112.
- Sneath, D. (2007) *The Headless State: Aristocratic Orders, Kinship Society, and Misrepresentations of Nomadic Inner Asia*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Sneath, D. (2009) Reading the Signs by Lenin's Light: Development, Divination and Metonymic Fields in Mongolia. *Ethnos*, **74** (1), 72–90.
- Sneath, D. (2010a) Political Mobilization and the Construction of Collective Identity in Mongolia. *Central Asia Survey*, **29** (3), 251–267.
- Sneath, D. (2010b) Producer groups and the decollectivization of the Mongolian Pastoral Economy. In: D. Sneath and C. Kaplonski (eds.). *The History of Mongolia, Volume III*, Kent, UK: Global Oriental, 1067-1088.
- Sneath, D. (2012) The 'Age of the Market' and the Regime of Debt: The Role of Credit in the Transformation of Pastoral Mongolia. *Social Anthropology*, **20** (4), 458–73.
- Sneath, D. (2014) Nationalizing Civilisation Resources: Sacred Mountains and Cosmopolitical Ritual in Mongolia. *Asian Ethnicity*, **15** (4), 458–472.
- Spivak, G. C. (1988) Can the Subaltern Speak? In: C. Nelson and L. Grossberg (eds.) *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 271–313.

- Spoor, M. (1996) Agrarian Transition in Former Soviet Central Asia: A Comparative Study of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. *Europe-Asia Studies*, **48** (4), 615–628.
- Ssorin-Chaikov, N. (2003) *The Social Life of the State in Subarctic Siberia*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- State Great Hural. 2009. *Approval of Government Policy on Herders*. Ulaanbaatar: Ministry of Industry and Agriculture. Available from: mofa.gov.mn [accessed 7 October 2015]
- Steimann, B. (2011) *Making a Living in Uncertainty: Agro-Pastoral Livelihoods and Institutional Transformations in Post-Socialist Rural Kyrgyzstan*. Available from: <http://www.zora.uzh.ch>: Zurich Open Repository and Archive. [Accessed 1 August 2015].
- Steinberg, P. E., Tasch, J. and Gerhardt, H. (2015) *Contesting the Arctic: Politics and Imaginaries in the Circumpolar North*. London: I.B. Tauris.
- Steiner-Khamisci, G., and Stolpe, I. (2006) *Educational Import: Local Encounters with Global Forces in Mongolia*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Steiner-Khamisci, G., and Stolpe, I. (2004) Decentralization and recentralization reform in Mongolia: tracing the swing of the pendulum. *Comparative Education*, **40** (1), 29-53.
- Steinmetz, G. (ed.). (1999) *State/Culture: State Formation after the Cultural Turn*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Stenning, A., Smith, A. Rochovska, A. and Swiatek, D. (2010) *Domesticating Neo-Liberalism: Spaces of Economic Practice and Social Reproduction in Post-Socialist Cities*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Sternberg, T. (2008) Environmental Challenges in Mongolia's Dryland Pastoral Landscape. *Journal of Arid Environments*, **72** (7), 1294–1304.

- Sternberg, T. (2010) Unraveling Mongolia's Extreme Winter Disaster of 2010. *Nomadic Peoples*, **14** (1), 72–86.
- Sternberg, T. (2012) Piospheres and Pastoralists: Vegetation and Degradation in Steppe Grasslands. *Human Ecology* 40: 811–20.
- Strathern, M. (1988) *The Gender of the Gift: problems with women and problems with society in Melanesia*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Strathern, M. (2014) Being one, being multiple: a future for anthropological relations. In: International Union of Ethnographic and Anthropological Sciences, Chiba City, Japan: 15 May 2014. Available from: <https://youtu.be/AcQYFP4PwFs> [Accessed 10 January 2015].
- Swift, J. (2007) *FAO Case Study: Institutionalizing Pastoral Risk Management in Mongolia: Lessons Learned*. TCP/MON/0066. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization.
- Szynkiewicz, S. (1968) The Role of Herdsmen's Co-Operatives in Modernizing the Country Life in Mongolia. In: *Poland at the 8th International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnographic Sciences*. Wroclaw: Publishing House of the Polish Academy of Sciences.
- Tandon, P. (2011) *Project Information Document (Appraisal Stage)—Mongolia Global Partnership for Education Early Childhood Education Project- P125445*. Washington, D.C: World Bank.
- Taussig, M. (1997) *The Magic of the State*. New York: Routledge.
- Templer, G., Swift, J. and Payne, P. (1993) The Changing Significance of Risk in the Mongolian Pastoral Economy. *Nomadic Peoples*, **33**, 105–22.

- Thampapillai, D. J., Hansen, J. and Bolat, A. (2014) Resource Rent Taxes and Sustainable Development: A Mongolian Case Study. *Energy Policy*, **71**, 169–79.
- UNDP (2011) *From Vulnerability to Environment and Human Development. Mongolian Human Development Report*. Ulaanbaatar: United Nations Development Program.
- Unterhalter, E., and Walker, M. (eds.). 2007 *Amartya Sen's Capability Approach and Social Justice in Education*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Upton, C. (2008) Social Capital, Collective Action and Group Formation: Developmental Trajectories in Post-Socialist Mongolia. *Human Ecology*, **36** (2), 175–188.
- Upton, C. (2009) 'Custom' and Contestation: Land Reform in Post-Socialist Mongolia. *World Development*, **37** (8), 1400–1410.
- Upton, C. (2012) Managing Mongolia's Commons: Land Reforms, Social Contexts, and Institutional Change. *Society & Natural Resources: An International Journal*, **25** (2), 156–175.
- Upton, C., Moore, K. and Nyamsuren, N. (2013) *Community, Place and Pastoralism: Nature and Society in Post-Soviet Central Asia. Mongolia Country Report*, F/100 212/A1, 2010–2012. Leverhulme Trust Research Project Grant. Available from: <https://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/geography/people/cu5/docs/leverhulme-mongolia-upton> [Accessed 28 September].
- Usukh, B., Binswanger-Mkhize, H.P., Himmelsbach, R., and Schuler, K. (2010) *Fostering the Sustainable Livelihoods of Herders in Mongolia via Collective Action*. Ulaanbaatar: Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development.
- Verdery, K. (1996). *What Was Socialism and What Comes Next?* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

- Verdery, K. (2003) *The Vanishing Hectare: Property and Value in Postsocialist Transylvania*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Verdery, K., and Humphrey, C. (eds.) (2004) *Property in Question: Value Transformation in the Global Economy*. Oxford: Berg.
- Wangui, E. E. (2014) Livelihood Shifts and Gender Performances: Space and the Negotiation for Labor among East Africa's Pastoralists. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, **104** (5), 1068–1081.
- Williams, D. M. (1996) Grassland Enclosures: Catalyst of Land Degradation in Inner Mongolia. *Human Organization*, **55** (3), 307–313.
- Williams, D. M. (2002) *Beyond Great Walls: Environment, Identity, and Development on the Chinese Grasslands of Inner Mongolia*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Willis, P. E. (1977) *Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- World Bank (1992) *Mongolia: Toward a Market Economy*. Washington, DC: The International Bank for Reconstruction.
- World Bank. (2003) *From Goats to Coats: Institutional Reform in Mongolia's Cashmere Sector*. 26240-MOG. Washington, DC: Poverty Reduction and Management Unit: East Asia and Pacific Region.
- World Bank (2011) *The Impact of the Financial Crisis on Poverty and Income Distribution in Mongolia*. Report Number 65161. Washington, DC: Policy Reduction and Equity Group, PREM Network.
- World Bank (2014) *Project Appraisal Document on a Proposed Credit in the Amount of SDR 16.1 Million to Mongolia for a Third Sustainable Livelihoods Project*. PAD385.

- Washington, DC: Social, Environment and Rural Development Unit: East Asia and Pacific Region.
- Xiaoyi, W. and Fernandez-Gimenez, M. (2012) The Market, the State and the Environment: Implications for Community-Based Rangeland Management. In: M. Fernandez-Gimenez, W. Xiaoyi, B. Batkhishig, J. A. Klein, and R. S. Reid (eds.). *Restoring Community Connections to the Land*. Wallingford, UK: CABI, 209-217.
- Yeh, E. T. (2003) Tibetan Range Wars: Spatial Politics and Authority on the Grasslands of Amdo. *Development and Change*, **34** (3), 499–523.
- Yeh, E. T. (2005) Green Governmentality and Pastoralism in Western China: Converting Pastures to Grasslands. *Nomadic Peoples*, **9** (1), 884–894.
- Yeh, E. T. (2007) Tropes of Indulgence and the Cultural Politics of Development in Lhasa, Tibet. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, **97** (3), 593-612.
- Yeh, E. T. (2013) *Taming Tibet: Landscape Transformation and the Gift of Chinese Development*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Yeh, E. T. and Coggins, C. (eds.). (2014) *Mapping Shangrila: Contested Landscapes in the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Yi'En, C. (2014). Telling Stories of the City: Walking Ethnography, Affective Materialities and Mobile Encounters. *Space and Culture*, **17** (3), 211–23.
- Zimmermann, A.E. (2012) Local Leaders between Obligation and Corruption: State Workplaces, the Discourse of 'Moral Decay', and 'Eating Money' in the Mongolian Province. In: J. Dierkes (ed.). *Change in Democratic Mongolia: Social Relations, Health, Mobile Pastoralism, and Mining*. Leiden: Brill, 83-109.