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Words Flying on the Wind: Buriat Mongolian Children in a Chinese Bilingual School

Valerie Sartor

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**WORDS FLYING ON THE WIND:
BURIAT MONGOLIAN CHILDREN IN A CHINESE BILINGUAL SCHOOL**

By

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B.A., Russian, University of South Florida, 1979
M.A., Russian, University of California, 1989

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy
Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Studies**

The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to the Buriat youth and their families, who patiently and kindly helped me to understand something about their lives and culture.

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I heartily acknowledge Dr. Rebecca Blum Martinez, my advisor and dissertation chair, for her unwavering support, patience, and helpful comments. She inspired me to do my best.

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on the language socialization experiences non-mainstream Indigenous Buriat youth from the Republic of Buriatia, Russian Federation, encountered as they attended a bilingual school in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia, China. They migrated in order to start language studies which would eventually allow them to study alternative Mongolian medicine in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia. Both the Russian Federation and the Republic of China are countries in transition. The Russian educational and economic systems have made dramatic changes after the fall of the Soviet Union in December 1991; currently, the economy and educational opportunities are in decline and there is a widening economic and social gap concerning educational and other resources. China, in contrast, began booming economically in the early 1980s, and the Chinese are keen to keep harmonious relations with their ethnic minorities. Consequently, bilingual education in Inner Mongolia and other minority autonomous regions are given national and state funds. This ethnographic study explored the language socialization practices four Buriat youth experienced at school in China, and followed some focal children to Buriatia, to document the language socialization

practices there. Bakhtin is used to discuss how the focal children's identities are impacted as a result of their migration indicating that sociocultural, historical and political factors have caused the Buriat focal children's sense of self to shift and transform over time and place. Findings indicated that ethnic identity and social identity shifted for these children. They appeared conflicted and ambivalent. Buriat youth identities are not just situational and something they chose; the children experienced pressures from their parents and from the school teachers and authorities to speak, behave, and communicate in certain ways. The children resisted in various ways, some rebelled, and returned home. Concepts of being "Buriat" also varied amongst the children, but all agreed that linguistic fluency in Buriat was not essential in defining themselves as Buriats. For these youth and their families, a strong connection to the family practices and their homeland was linked to a strong sense of being Buriat, and linked as well to Buriat spiritual beliefs from Buddhist and shamanistic traditions. These beliefs also are in accord with the profession of alternative Mongolian medicine.

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Prologue: Old Tales, New Lives

I have resisted becoming an academic because the writing I have been obliged to read is often tedious and poorly presented. But I have become a scholar out of a personal desire to document the way modern life as we know it has impacted a small group of non-mainstream youth and their families. These people call themselves Buriats; they are Mongolians who are Indigenous to areas around Lake Baikal, located in Russian Siberia. These people remain important to me emotionally: many are my friends, not simply research participants who may be of academic significance. In writing their story, I hope to present what I have seen and studied in a way that is accessible to ordinary folks as well as to scholars, for their struggle is universal to the human condition. Providing the voices of Buriat participants in this manuscript makes more public their personal narratives, and it is the simplest and clearest venue. I am honored to be able to share those voices. We are all narrative beings, as we all live in biological time; whether we like it or not, our lives have beginnings, middles, and ends. We narrate ourselves to each other in bars and beds, in classrooms and cafes.

At first sight what I am reporting seemed overwhelming to me, and I thought initially that this work seemed too colloquial for the halls and corridors of academia. Yet I hope to grip you, my readers, by presenting an analysis through an interlocking chain of personal narratives and academic evidence. During my research, this jigsaw bricolage has evolved and clarified itself in my mind as further evidence of a pattern regarding politics, education, language use, and language loss among Indigenous Peoples. Having read and re-read the academic literature has made me think more closely about the stories my Buriat participants and focal children have related to me. They spoke constantly about their lives, their languages, and their struggles with life and language in an alien place. Through their

narratives, I understood the irrepressible life of stories, and how these stories connect to the construction of the Self. These words then represent their evolving Selves and its creation in relation to the cultures they create, commenting on the linguistic, social and political forces of these cultures surrounding them.

By doing this work this work, I not only am striving to report on a small Indigenous group in a foreign land but also to situate these people in the larger map of contemporary reality that illustrates how Indigenous languages can be accidentally abandoned and lost. My work is a kind of qualitative pinprick of the socio-linguistic world of non-mainstream peoples. The thesis was generated by my thirst to understand the Buriats and their struggles, and to pinpoint their struggles alongside the larger map of Indigenous peoples engaged in similar battles. Humbly, I serve as a kind of secluded narrator, as not much is written about the Buriats, especially Buriat youth. I hope to present you with an intriguing, glorious and at times sad, collection of tales within tales. The characters include Buriats, other Mongols, Russians, and Han Chinese. The cast includes the young and old, parents and children, friends and rivals. At present, most reside in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia - a remote but culturally significant city in a politically charged autonomous area of the contemporary Chinese world.

These narratives are not meant especially to charm you with any literary worth, but rather to entice and galvanize you, as an interested reader, into understanding the way those unlike yourself may be living and struggling, linguistically and financially, as foreigners in foreign lands. You may, as I, end up admiring the resourcefulness of these people, and the linguistic talents of these multilingual youth.

The presentation of the information is diverse; it will be anthropological, historical, speculative, even encyclopedic, but hopefully, never boring. In reading, please keep in mind that stories never live alone. All stories and all words are branches of a family that we must trace back and forward through time. The particular people in this story encompass generation following generation, and the metamorphosis of these family groups through time and space witness how preserving cultural integrity in today's world has become increasingly difficult. Perhaps their stories will evidence the nature of our modern reality, with its threat of irreversibility regarding language shift, as well as the evidence of linguistic and cultural change in action.

Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter is divided into several sections. I begin by stating the problem and the research questions. I then offer sociocultural background to this study, by introducing the Mongolian peoples, going on to talk in detail about the Buriat.

Statement of the Problem

It is common knowledge that English, as a global language, has become a major contributor toward language loss among Indigenous language speaking communities around the world (Crawford, 1995; Grenoble & Whaley, 1998; McCarty, 2003). Yet little research has focused upon the effects that dominant languages other than English have had on non-mainstream populations: for example, how Chinese as a dominant language impacts Indigenous peoples in China (Hansen, 1999; Harrell, 1993). Research in Chinese bilingual classroom settings examining how the ideologies of dominant cultures impact non-mainstream groups is also lacking. As Spanish in South and Middle American and English in North America have been primary contributors to the loss of Indigenous languages in those places, so too does the ubiquitous language of power threaten Indigenous languages in Asia. More research on non-English dominant languages in relation to Indigenous populations living in Asia is needed, in order to understand more about bilingual education, language socialization processes in schools, and its impact on Indigenous youth in Asia. As in other areas of the world, many Indigenous people in Asia are bilingual or multilingual (Romaine, 1995). This fact is pertinent to my research, as the Indigenous Buriat focal children in my study are already bilingual in Buriat and Russian; they are engaged in learning Mandarin Chinese, as well as experiencing a new variety of the Mongolian language spoken in China.

The heart of this work addresses bilingualism/multilingualism among Indigenous youth, and in this case, the resultant loss of the Buriat language among these young people who have migrated to China for their education. Studies in Western schooling have examined the degree to which Indigenous languages are supported or not. Similarly, Indigenous students in Chinese bilingual schools find themselves in similar contexts. We do not know to what degree languages and cultures are supported in these schools. My research site is a bilingual Mandarin/Mongolian school located in Inner Mongolia, China. The focal children's parents want their children to attend this school in the hopes of creating better social and economic opportunities. Yet, by adding more languages to their children's repertoires, particularly dominant languages, the Buriat focal youth are at risk of losing their Indigenous language.

In fact, around the world, Indigenous peoples are gradually replacing their native languages with dominant languages, such as English or Chinese, in hopes of obtaining better opportunities in life (Nettle & Romaine, 2001). Thus, many Indigenous parents want their children educated in mainstream languages; they may not realize that this education socializes their children to mainstream cultures and can cause young people to prefer the mainstream language over the Indigenous language, and mainstream culture over their own native culture (Fishman, 1991). Yet when Indigenous languages are lost or neglected, so are the cultures and world views that these tongues transmit (Fishman, 1996; Nettle & Romaine, 2001; Romero, 2003). Nevertheless, many Indigenous parents view education offering mainstream languages as one way to help their children thrive in today's global economy (Krauss, 1998). Regarding this study with Buriat focal children, some varieties of the Buriat language are now listed as endangered (Ethnologue).

In addition to Indigenous (Buriat) language loss and Chinese bilingual education practices, this research investigates language socialization in conjunction with issues of identity among focal Buriat children attending a bilingual Mandarin-Mongolian boarding¹ school in Inner Mongolia, China. I regard socialization processes as a basic issue not only for educational researchers like myself, but also for cultural psychologists (Cole, 1996; Rogoff, 2003) and language socialization specialists (Duranti, Ochs, & Schiefflin, 2011; Ochs & Schiefflin, 1984) in sociolinguistics, cultural anthropology, and communications (Carbaugh, 1982). Like these researchers, I share the same goal: I want to understand children/youth/people in context by investigating cultural activities and discursive practices. Ethnographers like me may utilize language socialization frameworks to investigate identity and communicative practices in context.

Language socialization research examines how language practices organize the life span process of becoming an active, competent participant in one or more communities (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). Language socialization studies began in the early 1980s, led by linguistic anthropologists and developmental psychologists (Bayley & Schecter, 2003). My work, like other language socialization research, addresses the overlap between “language” (communicative practices) and the social world, with the aim to pinpoint the role that language plays in socializing novices into local meanings. This in turn influences novices’

¹ Some work in English has recently been published regarding Chinese boarding schools for minoritized populations and also regarding the relationship between US boarding schools and Chinese boarding schools. Some dissertations of note are: A comparative study of the educational policy for Native Americans (1887--1928) and Chinese ethnic minorities (1912--1948) by Mao, Xinyuan, dissertation published in 2011.

Uyghur students in a Chinese boarding school: Social recapitalization as a response to ethnic integration by Chen, Yangbin; dissertation published in 2006.

State schooling and ethnic identity: A study of an inland (boarding) Tibet middle school in the People's Republic of China by Zhu, Z. Dissertation published in 2004.

Although this subject has great import, it does not seem directly relevant to my research questions. In the future I hope to address this topic in detail.

behavior and communicative practices, as well as their worldview and sense of self. Edward Sapir said long ago that: "Language is a great force of socialization, probably the greatest that exists" (Mandelbaum, 1951, p. 15; 1985). Ochs and Schiefflin (1984) rephrased Sapir years later by stating that children are socialized through language while also being socialized to use language. Likewise, Vygotskian sociocultural theory affirms that language is the means to create meanings for specific purposes in socially defined activities (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1991). Finally, Bakhtin (1981) postulated that meaning and identity are socially constructed through language, in the form of a dialogical process conveying language that existed in the past, and also language that exists in the present. This study uses both Vygotskian sociocultural theory and Bakhtin's ideas to further reinforce the language socialization framework.

In this qualitative study, I explore how attending a bilingual Mandarin-Mongolian school impacts the daily lives, language choices, and evolving identities of Buriat school children, by asking: Can the focal children maintain their Buriat language and a positive Buriat identity while they are being socialized inside this Mandarin-Mongolian bilingual school? This research documents not only how the focal children acquire communicative competence in Chinese but also how they use Chinese based Temut, a variety of Mongolian related to Buriat, and how, if at all, they employ Russian and/or Buriat at school. The bilingual educational method there is submersion, with two track choices for international/foreign students. They may attend classes in Chinese only, with the main focus being upon acquiring Chinese language fluency (with teachers often translating into Mongolian), or they may choose to go into the Mongolian track, where all classes are taught in Mongolian, except the Chinese language lessons.

Research Questions

Specifically, my dissertation research questions center on language socialization in regard to the Buriat focal participants studying in a bilingual school located outside their country of birth and culture. The focal children are bilingual in Russian and Buriat Mongolian: these young people know two languages and some of them may be literate in two alphabets: Cyrillic and Latin. They were also becoming proficient and literate in Mandarin Chinese and/or Temut, a variety of Mongolian related to Buriat and spoken in Inner Mongolia, and written in Old Classical Mongolian script. Teachers at their learning environment employ a different variety of Mongolian because Hohhot, the city where the school research site is located, is situated in Inner Mongolia, People's Republic of China (PRC). In contrast, the focal children are from Ulan Ude, Russian Federation. Hohhot has approximately three million residents, with the majority population (87%) being Han Chinese (2010 Chinese Census), who speak Mandarin Chinese and/or the local Chinese dialect; some Inner Mongolians speak Temut, or other Mongol varieties.



Figure 1. Map of China

Source: <http://www.chinahighlights.com/map/china-provincial-map/>

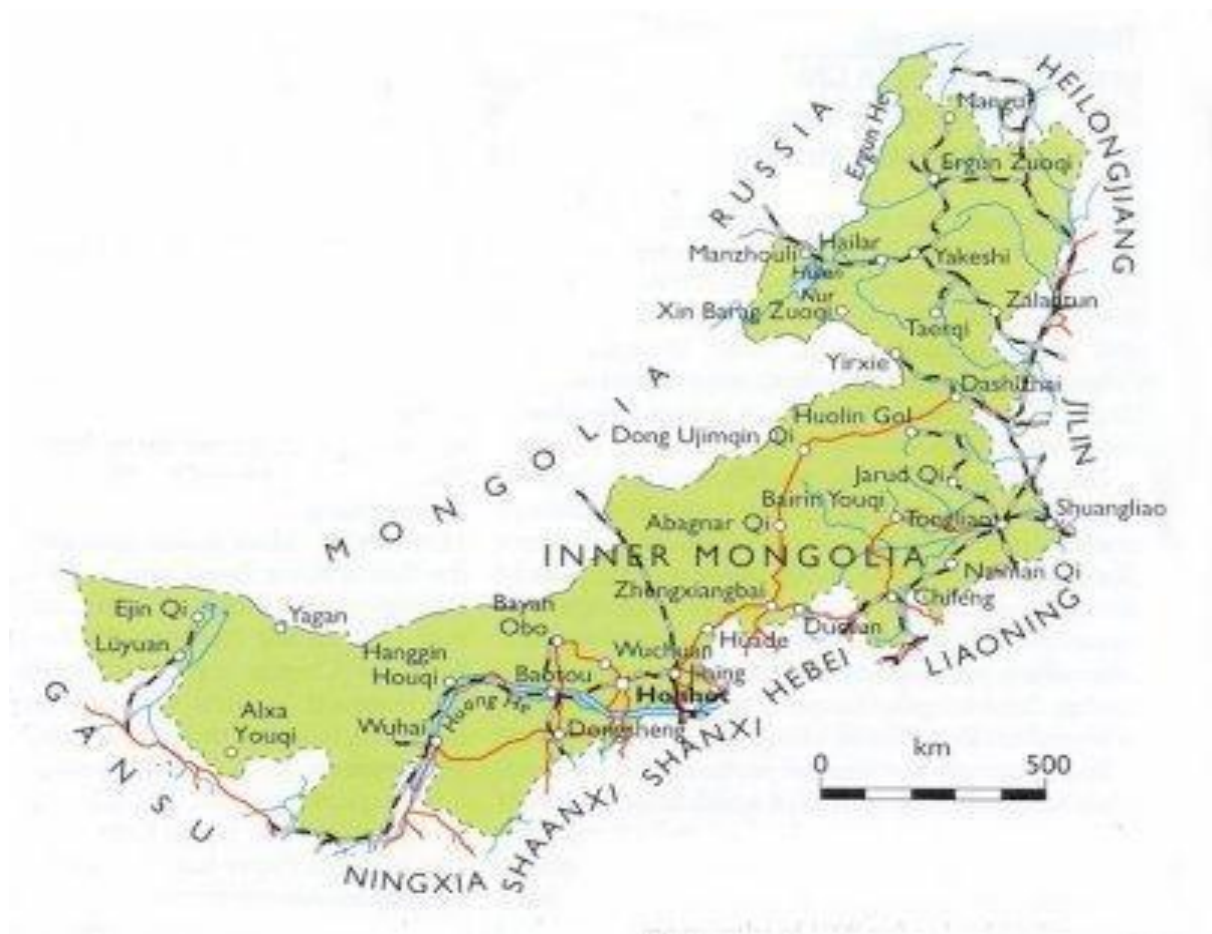


Figure 2. Map of Inner Mongolia

Source: <http://factsanddetails.com/china/cat15/sub103/item446.html>



Figure 3. Russian Federation (Courtesy CIA maps online).

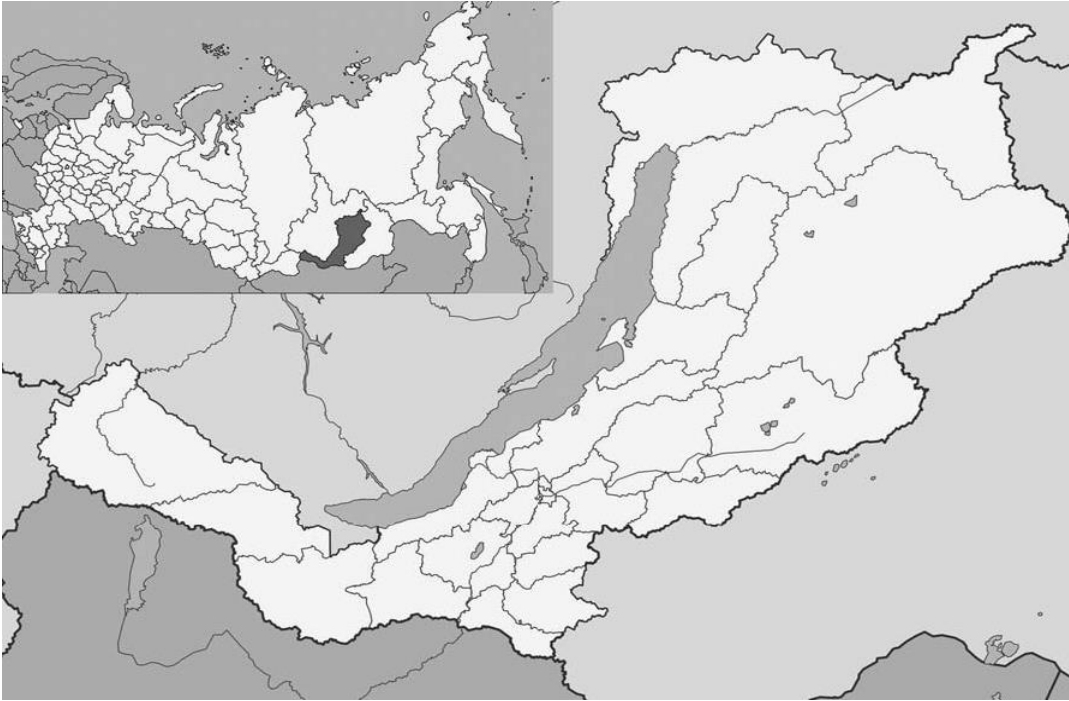


Figure 4. Buriatia within the Russian Federation. Buriatia Territories before Putin dissolved (Graber, 2012).

All of these considerations come together in my work as I ask:

1. How are Buriat children socialized to multilingual identities?
2. What language socialization processes do Buriat youth undergo?
3. How does this language socialization (using Temut, (a variety of their Mongolian language), learning Chinese, speaking Buriat, and speaking Russian) impact their identity?
4. What sociocultural, economic and historical factors have contributed to the ways the Buriat focal children currently use language at the bilingual school, in their home, and in various other domains?

Background of the Study

The Buriats I met in North China are Indigenous² people from Ulan Ude, Buriatia, Russian Federation; these people identify themselves as (Mongolian) Buriats. I identify myself as a cordial friend to many of them, with one family in particular being very close to me. As a small group, these Buriat adults have been traveling to China since the early 2000s; they also brought some children from their community in Ulan Ude to Hohhot to have them educated at a bilingual Mongolian-Mandarin boarding school. The Buriats I have met and befriended in North China have told me that they are seeking a better life, better education, and better economic opportunities for themselves and their children. They are far from their Indigenous homeland in Buriatia, yet they tell me that they feel comfortable in Chinese Inner Mongolia.

Buriat Mongolians are not well known to Western people, but some Americans may know of Lake Baikal - the deepest fresh water lake in the eastern world. To help orient my readers, I now offer a brief introduction to the Mongolian people, followed by an overview of the Buriat people. The literature review will further discuss the Buriat in terms of socialization practices, as well as discuss the educational policies and practices carried out in the People's Republic of China (hereafter China) China and in the Russian Federation (hereafter Russia).

² There is no universal and unambiguous definition of the concept of "Indigenous peoples", since no single accepted definition exists that captures the diversity of their cultures, histories and current circumstances. However, all attempts to define the concept recognize the linkages between people, their land and culture.

A widely used working definition of Indigenous peoples, proposed by the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations, argues that Indigenous populations are "...those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems".

Accessed at: http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=14203&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html on March 13, 2012.

The Mongolians. The following historical overview of the Mongols is relevant to this study, as Buriats are members of the Mongolian people, and because the social, economic and political position of the Mongols has changed significantly over time. Moreover, with the breakup of the former USSR, and the economic restructuring of China, Chinese authorities, as well as Russian Federation leaders, are concerned with keeping borderland Indigenous groups peacefully inside their political ken. Yet this balancing act is a double edged sword: powerful countries such as China wish to appear supportive of diversity and multiculturalism, yet they also wish for these peoples to assimilate and become homogenous, loyal citizens of the state. The fact that my research site is a Mongolian-Mandarin bilingual school which seems adequately funded, and which attracts outside Mongolian groups, offers me as the researcher a unique sociocultural and sociohistorical study opportunity.

Most Americans think of Mongols (also called Mongolians) when they hear the name of Genghis Khan. In 1203, this formidable Mongolian military genius united the Altaic speaking nomadic tribes under the name of “Mongols.” Under Genghis Khan, the great Mongolian Empire, known as “The Golden Horde,” began. At its zenith in the late 13th and early 14th century, this vast empire, ruled by descendants of Genghis Khan, stretched from what we now know as China/Korea to Iraq/Hungary. In fact, Kublai Khan, Genghis Khan’s grandson, established the Chinese Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368). However, the Golden Horde crumbled by the end of the 14th century, weakened by internecine fighting among Mongol rulers and nobility, and by numerous wars carried out in Central Asia, China, and the Middle East (Weatherford, 2004).

By the end of the 17th century, the Chinese (Qing Dynasty) invaded what we know as Outer Mongolia; in 1912, with the collapse of the Qing Dynasty and the advent of the Chinese Revolution, Outer Mongolia regained its independence from China (Schwartz, 1968). In 1924, Outer Mongolia was overrun and colonized by the Soviets (Schwartz). The Mongolian People's Republic remained a satellite country of the former USSR until 1991 (Martin, 2001). Currently, Outer Mongolia stands as an independent but economically struggling nation (Rossabi, 2005).



Figure 5. Map showing the Three Mongolias

Source: The Best of Mongolia. http://www.e-mongol.com/mongolia_geography.htm

In contrast, in 1947, after the Chinese Civil War, Inner Mongolia became an autonomous region within the Chinese People's Republic; it is currently more prosperous than Outer Mongolia (Bulag, 2003). Buriatia, the third Mongolian homeland in Russia's Far East (Siberia), was first invaded by colonizing Russians in the 1700s. In 1923, Buriatia became an autonomous minority region of the USSR. After the collapse of the USSR in 1990-1991, Buriatia realigned with the Russian Federation (Montgomery, 2005).

Clearly, Mongolian peoples have been greatly impacted by historical forces. Both the Buriat and the Inner Mongolian peoples have been dominated by first imperialistic, then communist nations that have imposed cultural, linguistic, and social values on them. Both the Buriats and the Inner Mongolians have affiliated with these imperialistic/communist powers, which, over time, have imposed both culturally lenient *and* assimilative policies on them. One of my research questions addresses this issue of how past history impacts the contemporary Buriat focal children.

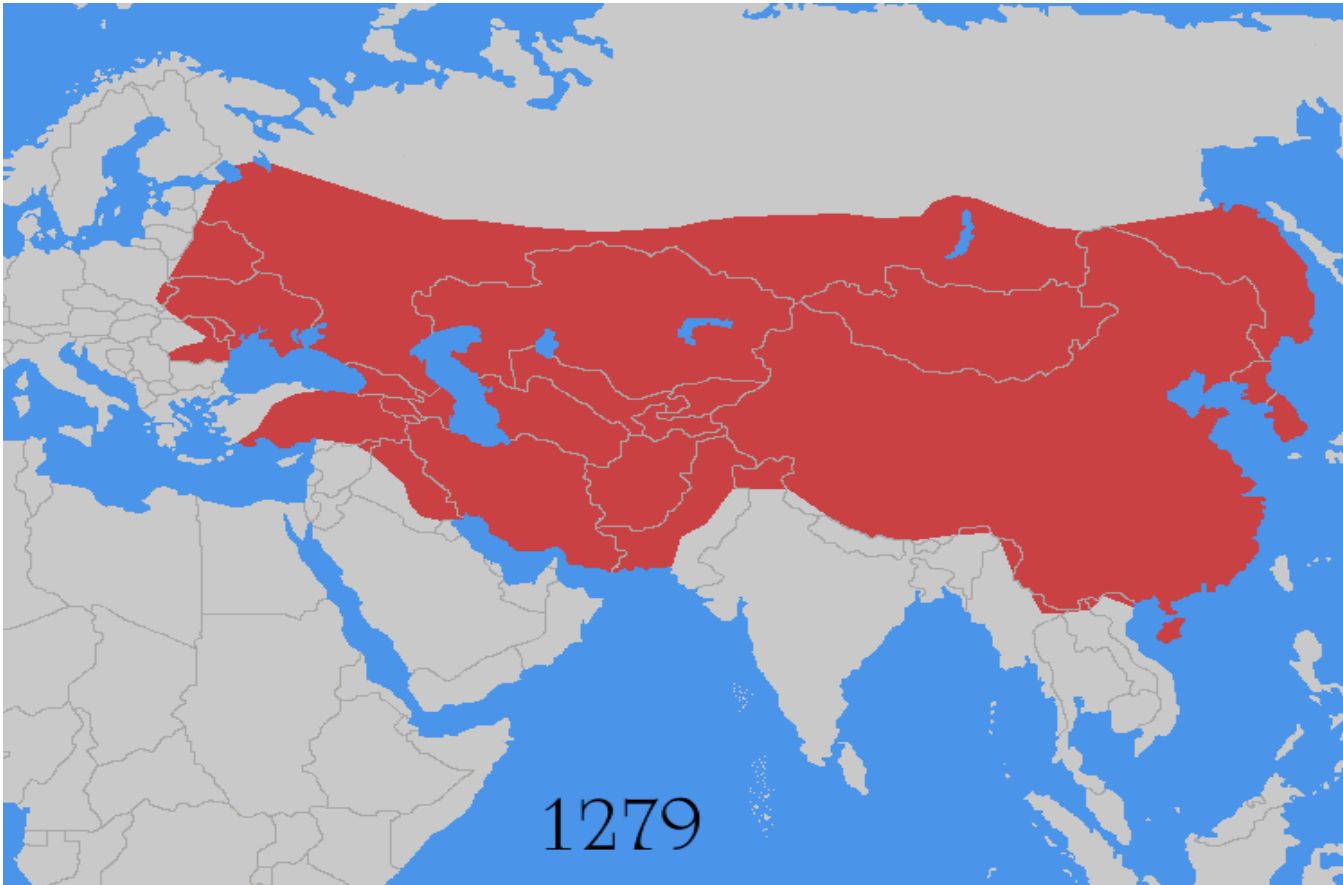


Figure 6. Empire of Genghis Khan at its Zenith.

Source: <https://plus.google.com/111747097008464146883/posts/AR2U85S9QUK?pid=5707409161108236850&oid=111747097008464146883>

Outer and Inner Mongolian languages. This section is designed to situate the reader and describe the linguistic complexity of Inner Asia. The Buriat focal children in this study encountered many linguistic challenges, not just in regard to acquiring Mandarin Chinese, but also because they interacted with other Mongolian speakers at the school.³ Inner Mongolians and Outer Mongolians and the Buriats all use a different language variety of Mongolian. The variety/varieties the Buriat children heard at school were not easily understood by the focal children.

As an Altaic language, Mongolian languages are closely related to the Turkic languages, such as Uzbek, Turkish, and Kazakh, and more distantly to Korean and perhaps, to Japanese (Poppe, 1970). (See Figure 7). In Outer Mongolia, 89% of the population speaks a dialect of the Mongol language; there are also some Kazakhs, Russians, Koreans, etc., living in Outer Mongolia (www.ethnologue.com). Except for the dialect of the Buriat Mongols in the Russian Federation, most Mongol dialects spoken in Outer Mongolia are easily understood by native speakers of the language (Poppe, 1970) and Khalka Mongols are the dominant population, comprising over 75% of the existing speakers. For hundreds of years, Khalka Mongols have been romanticized by foreigners as the pastoral nomads of Outer Mongolia's high steppes and mountains (Sanzheev, 1973). A sub-group of Khalka from the Ulaanbaatar region speaks and writes the standard language in Outer Mongolia; they also control the local government and politics (Gordon, 2005; Rossabi, 2005). The remaining 12-15% of the Outer Mongolian population speaks a variety of western or northern Mongol dialects: *Dorbet*, *Dzakchin*, or the southeastern *Dariganga*. These people live in the far western or northwestern Mongolia (*Facts about the World's Languages*, 2001).

³ This is not to mention the fact that the school also offers English as a foreign language to students.

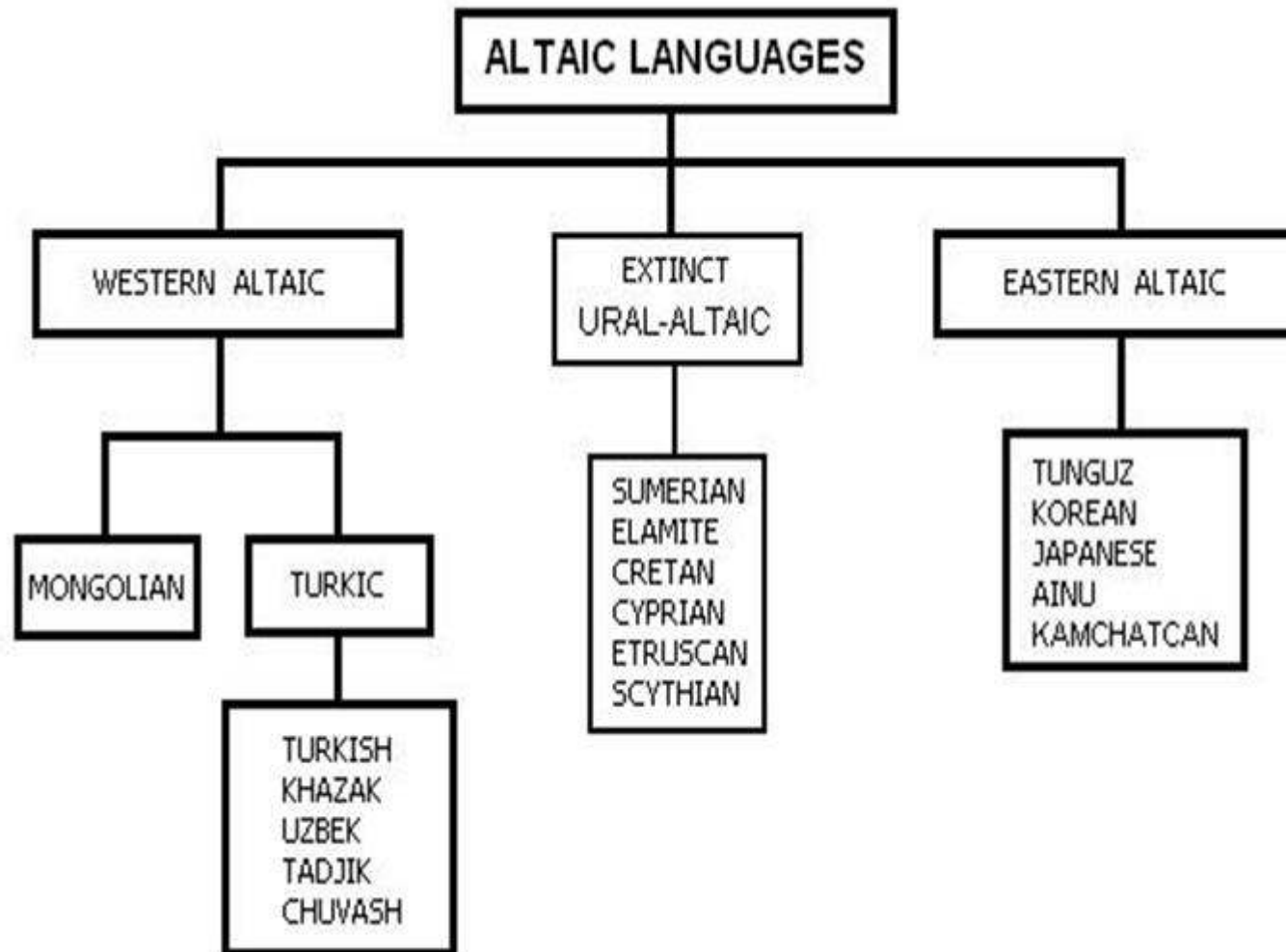


Figure 7. Chart of Relationship of Mongolian to Other Altaic Languages

Because of this diversity in language, non-natives may have misconceptions, linguistic and cultural, regarding the Buriat focal children while they are living in China.⁴

This section has briefly outlined linguistic diversity among the Mongolian peoples to situate the focal children for this research.⁵ The Buriat focal children, although bilingual, experienced, Mandarin Chinese, at the bilingual Mandarin-Mongolian school. They encountered different spoken and written varieties of Mongolian (Temut & Khalk), and they faced cultural differences from Han Chinese, Inner Mongolians, and Outer Mongolians.

Writing systems. Over time, the Mongolians have employed multiple writing systems. This is relevant to my research as the Buriat focal children, as well as some of the Mongolian participants (adults and children) were literate in multiple scripts.

Mongolians have a long history of literacy. The earliest Mongolian writing systems date back to the 6th century A.D., when Mongols adopted the writing system of the ancient Sogdians, possibly via Uighurs (Avery, 2003; Gordon, 2005). This script, later called Old Mongolian, Uighur, classical, or vertical script, is still in use today in Inner Mongolia,⁶ along with Chinese characters (Bulag, 2003). Vertical script writes words from top to bottom, and from right to left. From 1269 until 1368, the so-called h'Pags.pa, or square script was used. (See Figure 8). It was created by h'Pags.pa Lama (Laird, 2006). This script was based on Tibetan and Indic scripts and employed for religious purposes (Laird, 2006). In the 1940s, the Latin alphabet was briefly used in Outer Mongolia (Weatherford, 2004).

⁴ See appendix for linguistic charts regarding the Mongolian language family. Also, for an excellent overview of why and how Mongolian peoples have settled where they are today, please refer to Martha Avery's *The Tea Road* (2003). Beijing: China Intercontinental Press. She also provides many ancient maps from the 18th century.

⁵ See appendix for more information.

⁶ And only in Inner Mongolia, as the Soviet powers eliminated and suppressed this script in Buriatia and in Outer Mongolia. There are very few Outer Mongolians under the age of 60 who are literate in this script.



Figure 8. Ancient H'Pags.pa, or square script sample

In Outer Mongolia, traditional Old Mongol script was replaced by a Cyrillic alphabet between 1941 and 1946. Today there are some efforts to revive it, as well as efforts to implement English as the second official language in Outer Mongolia (*ESL Magazine*, 2008). In Outer Mongolia, English and to some extent, Chinese as well, have replaced Russian as a lingua franca since the collapse of the USSR in 1990, resulting in independence of Outer Mongolia, with the last Soviet troops leaving in 1992 (Rossabi, 2005).⁷ In 2004, the ‘official’ writing system of Outer Mongolia again turned to Old Mongolian script, but signs and texts are still written in Cyrillic, with Latin letters also being popular, especially among young Mongolian people.⁸

Likewise, in Buriatia, until 1931, the vertical Old Mongolian writing system was used. (See Figure 9). During Stalinist times, from 1931-1937, a Latin alphabet was enforced

⁷ Although many young Outer Mongolians have reported to me that Mandarin, English, and Mongolian are needed in order to get a ‘good job’ in Ulan Baataar.

⁸ Personal observations, 2012.

(Gordon, 2005; Martin, 2001). This orthography was then replaced by a version of the Russian Cyrillic alphabet, which remains the standard writing system of contemporary Buriat (Montgomery, 2005).



Figure 9. Classical Old Mongolian Script.

The focal children in this study have learned a variety of languages and scripts. In Buriatia, they learned the Cyrillic script to use with Russian and Buriat. In school and on the Internet, they learned to use Latin letters. In China, they have had to learn Chinese characters, and also Chinese *pin yin* (a form of Latin letters with a different pronunciation pattern than English). Some children also have learned Old Classical Mongolian script, which had been used in their country from the 17th to the 19th century, but was repressed as Soviet leadership imposed the Cyrillic script upon all Soviet citizens. Old Classical Mongolian script, however, is necessary for those focal children who will attend the Hohhot medical institute, as the alternative Mongolian medical practices were first translated from Tibetan into Mongolian in the 15th and 16th centuries. Later, some of these texts were also translated into Mandarin Chinese. In sum, for educational reasons, up to five different writing systems have been presented to these young Buriat learners. (See Figure 10).

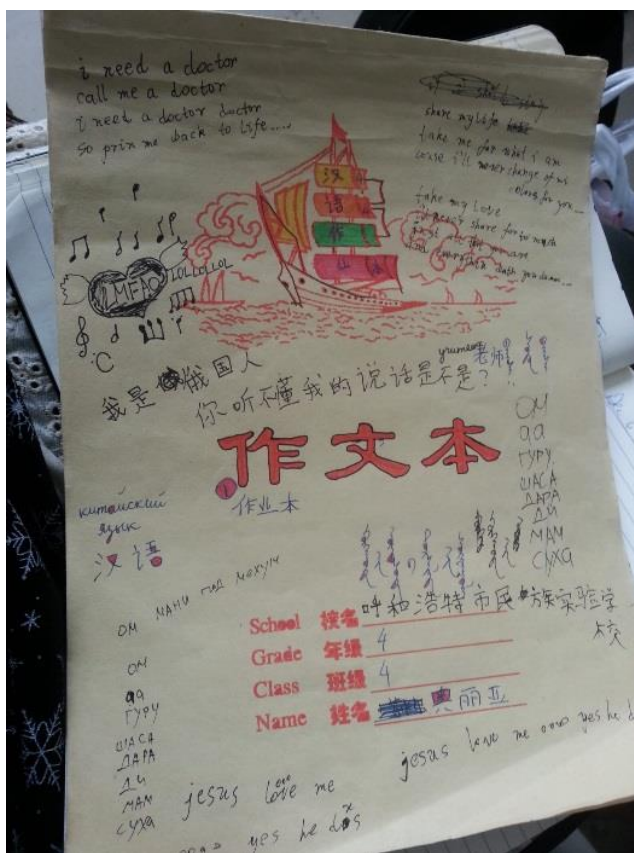


Figure 10. Example of Focal Child's Multiple Script Use.

The Buriat language. Buriat (also spelled as Buryat) is spoken primarily in the region surrounding Lake Baikal in Republic of Buriatia, Russian Federation (see Figure 11), but some Buriat speakers also live in northwestern China and northeastern Outer Mongolia (Montgomery, 2005) (See Figure 12). Approximately 450,000 (318,000 in Russia; 65,000 in China; 65,000 in Mongolia) Buriat speakers are alive today (UCLA Language Materials Project).⁹ Buriat, like other Mongolian dialects, is part of the Altaic language family. The

⁹ During fieldwork in Buriatia, I asked many Buriat speakers about their literacy rate in Buriat: the majority of people told me that reading and writing in Buriat is rare, because everything of economic and educational value has been presented in the Russian language. Additionally, Buriats proudly told me that among the Siberian Indigenous Peoples, they (Buriats) have the highest literacy rate in Russian. There are statistics about literacy rates throughout Buriatia, but without separating ethnic Russians and other groups from the Buriats;

Statistics of literacy rate among Buriat citizens:

Buriat language has thirteen primary dialects (Gordon 2005). Each exhibits similar syntactic and morphological properties; however, these Buriat dialects vary from each other with respect to their vocabularies and phonological properties (Poppe, 1960). The variety of Buriat spoken in the region west of Lake Baikal (Khorī) is more influenced by Russian than the dialects spoken east of the lake. Significantly, the Khorī dialect - the standard language variety in Buriatia and the variety of the focal children - differs considerably from other types of Mongolian dialects spoken in Outer Mongolia and Inner Mongolia, China (Poppe, 1960). Thus, Mongolian speakers of dialects used in Outer Mongolia and China experience some difficulty¹⁰ understanding Buriat dialects from Buriatia. Additionally, Buriat speakers of different varieties in the Russian Federation have high mutual intelligibility. Inside the Russian Federation, the nine principal Buriat dialects are: *Alar*, *Barguzin*, *Bokhan*, *Ekhirit-Bulgat*, *Khorī* (4 subgroups), *Nizneudinsk*, *Oka*, *Tunka*, and *Unga*. The dialects of Buriat spoken in northwestern China, however, are *Bargu-Buriat* and *Aga*. In northeastern Outer Mongolia, the *Aga*, *Sartul*, and *Tsongol Buriat* dialects are spoken (*Ethnologue*; Poppe, 1960). The focal children in this study have varying degrees of fluency in the Buriat language, for reasons discussed later.

-- Уровень образования населения отдельных национальностей Республики Бурятия (<http://kizhinga.ru/index.php/ru/smi/130-interes/521-2010-01-03-09-32-23>)

-- Буряты стали вторыми по образованности и последними – по владению родным языком (<http://www.baikal-media.ru/news/society/210996/>)

-- В Бурятии растет уровень образования (<http://www.vtinform.ru/vti/147/63207.php>)

¹⁰ The focal children all have varying degrees of difficulty in understanding and communicating.



Figure 11. Autonomous Regions Buryat territories of the Russian Federation in 2011. Aga and Ust'-Orda were dissolved as autonomous administrative units in 2008, but they remain important to local conceptions of Buryat territory. (Maps by Graber (2012))



Figure 12. Where Mongolian is Spoken in China

Source: UCLA Language Materials Project <http://lmp.ucla.edu/Profile.aspx?menu=004&LangID=79>

The Buriats. Most modern day Buriats live in three countries: Siberian Russia, northern Outer Mongolia, and/or Chinese Inner Mongolia (Montgomery, 2005).¹¹ Today, approximately 400,000 Buriats live in the Russian Federation; they are the Russian Federation's largest Asian ethnic minority and the titular nationality of Buriatia (Khilkhanova & Khilkhanov, 2004). Lake Baikal, the world's deepest freshwater lake, lies inside Buriat traditional homelands. The lake is considered a sacred entity for all Buriats.

¹¹ Also, in the 1920s, to escape from the Russian Revolution, two diasporas took place: to Inner Mongolia and to Australia. Participants told me that there are approximately 8,000 Buriats in Chinese Inner Mongolia, but there are no informal or formal sources regarding how many Buriats settled in Australia.

Buriats, as noted, speak a northern Mongolian language (Poppe, 1965), yet, in addition to linguistic differences, since ancient times the Buriats both resemble and differ from other Mongolian peoples by their ways of life, which range from nomadic herding and hunting to (later) sedentary agricultural practices (Krader, 1954). From ancient times, however, Buriats, like other Mongolians, have been followers of what the Western world calls shamanism, or what the Mongols call *tengriism*¹² (Bira, 2004). For hundreds of years, however, many Buriats have combined these practices with a form of Tibetan Buddhism¹³, brought to them from their neighbors, the Khalka Mongols, who are the majority Mongols living in what is now Outer Mongolia (Montgomery, 2005).

In the 17th century, the Buriats in Siberian lands fell under the Russian imperial yoke (Forsyth, 1991, 1992). It can be argued that Buriat Indigenous people experienced similar trials and oppressions that Native American Indigenous peoples endured from the White Americans (Montgomery, 2005). For example, in the 17th century, Buriats living in western areas were forcibly converted to Russian Orthodox Christianity; all were made to pay taxes (*yasak*) to Imperial Russia. Over time, Buriat lands and pastures were invaded by greater and greater numbers of Russian and non-Russian immigrants (Forsyth, 1991). These included Cossacks, priests, peasants, explorers, convicts, exiles, outcasts, and even revolutionaries. Non-natives soon outnumbered the Indigenous population (Forsyth, 1992).

This infiltration of alien cultures and ideas brought by the Russians often negatively impacted the Buriat because it changed their traditional, nomadic lifestyle and forced them to adopt Russian ways of living and the Russian language (Montgomery, 2005). Russian

¹² For more information please refer to Bira's excellent article. Long ago, tenggerism/tengriism spread from the Mongols to the Turkish peoples; it is still a present day phenomenon in many parts of the world.

¹³ Please see the Appendix for information on Buriat mythology, spiritual beliefs, shamanistic practices and kinship norms.

authorities and church leaders criticized, even condemned, Buriat spiritual practices. Consequently, Buriats resisted the overtures of the Orthodox Russian Church; they also violently resisted the land reform laws the Tsar mandated in the 19th century (Peck, 2011). During the Russian Revolution, the Russian Civil War, political extremism and purges under Stalin, as well as industrialization and the two world wars, Buriats in all three areas (Russia, Mongolia and China) suffered and struggled to survive.¹⁴ During the Soviet era, when Stalin tried to collectivize the Buriats in the 1930s, many fled the country and/or killed all their livestock (Montgomery, 2005). During the Stalinist years (1937-1953), Buriats endured an overwhelming forced assimilation of the Russian language and culture, which included denigration of their language and culture. Many also suffered and/or lost their lives in Stalin's Great Purges (Martin, 2001). Under Stalin, the Buriat intelligentsia¹⁵ in Russia endured immense losses in people and valuable cultural knowledge (Montgomery, 2005). The Buriat language was no longer taught in schools, lamas and religious leaders were tortured and killed, and many innocent people lost their livelihoods and/or their lives (Humphrey, 1996). Buriat homelands were also lost. In 1937, the Soviet government imposed an unexplained transfer of large parts of the Buriat Republic to surrounding territories; some scholars speculate that Stalin wanted to downplay the Buriats' linguistic and cultural connections to Mongolians in the south (Montgomery, 2005).

¹⁴ The influx of new ideas also allowed the Buriat the opportunity to develop a sense of national identity: by interacting with the Russian Church, with some Buriats going on to receive classical Russian education sponsored by the clergy, these Buriats began writing about their culture, history, and also presenting their Buriat world view as valid and worthy of preservation (Peck, 2011).

The exact number of those who perished is unknown, but runs into the tens of thousands.

¹⁵ The intelligentsia (from Russian - интеллигенция from Latin - *intelligentia*) is a social class of people engaged in complex mental and creative labor directed to the development and dissemination of culture, intellectuals and social groups close to them (e.g., artists and school teachers). The term has been borrowed from the Russian language, a transliteration of "интеллигенция". Initially the term was applied mostly in the context of Russia and later the USSR, and had a narrower meaning based on a self-definition of a certain category of intellectuals. In this context, it refers to those highly educated Buriats who could speak, read and write in Buriat and in Russian.

By the early 20th century, immigrant outsiders outnumbered Buriats in their homeland; with this outnumbering and more urbanization, the Buriat language continued to lose power and prestige (Humphrey, 1996). Nevertheless, in 1924, the Buriats established autonomy and created the Buriat Republic (Montgomery, 2005), but in 1937, as mentioned, Stalin forced the new republic to shrink her borders. Soviet rule also imposed a new written language that replaced the classical (vertical) Mongolian script. This script was initially a Latin based alphabet but changed quickly to the Russian based Cyrillic script (Khilkhanova & Khilkhanov, 2004). Yet ironically, under Soviet rule, the Buriats expanded literacy rates and generated a new genre of literature (Montgomery, 2005).

Because of Buddhist practices brought to the Buriats in the 17th century (discussed in another section), Buriat educational policies had thrived before the Soviets invaded their lands. Also, as an Indigenous culture, the ancient ways of living, Indigenous knowledge, and spiritual practices unique to the Buriat people had been passed orally from generation to generation via oral practices and written practices (Krader, 1954). With the 17th century adoption of Tibetan Yellow Hat Buddhism, literacy and education in the form of Buddhist temples and monastery schools (*datsans*) offered Buriats moral and spiritual knowledge, and a way to consolidate and preserve Indigenous knowledge (Montgomery, 2005).

The Russians had first made contact with the Indigenous peoples of Siberia in the late 16th century. Their aim was mercenary: the Russians wanted tribute, called *yasak*, in the form of furs. At that time, throughout Europe and Russia, fur, especially sable and marten, were often used in place of money (Forsyth, 1992). Starting in the 18th century, the Russian Orthodox Church established a few missionary schools, but these schools were dependent

upon wealthy benefactors, and often closed within a year or two. Many Indigenous peoples in Siberia continued with their oral traditions, and had no system of writing.

The Buriats, however, were different in this respect. Living in the south, and to the east and west of Lake Baikal, they had their own system of literacy and native education, which was totally unrelated to Russian language and culture. This is because the Buriats had frequent interactions with their Mongol brethren; Buriats also had paid tribute (in the form of furs) to the Khalk,¹⁶ who had adopted a script (Classical Mongolian) since the 13th century. Additionally, other Mongolians used this script (Selengela, Sartuul, Songol).¹⁷ These Mongols, being nomadic, traveled through Buriat traditional homelands. Consequently, sometime in the 1600s, Mongols brought Tibetan Buddhism to the Buriats, furthering literacy (Montgomery, 1996).

Buddhism spread slowly but surely among the Buriats, who merged their shamanistic beliefs with Buddhist beliefs (Forsyth, 1992). By adopting Buddhism, some Buriats became literate in two non-Roman and non-Cyrillic scripts: Classical Mongolian *and* Tibetan. These educated Buriats created advanced centers of higher education in the forms of monasteries, which served as places for higher learning practices: spiritual, philosophical, ethical, and medical.¹⁸ At first these monasteries were portable yurts, (*dugan*), but soon many permanent wooden structures were built (*datsan*). By the mid 1700s, over 30 *datsans* stood in Buriatia, with over 5,000 lamas and 125,000 Buriat believers (Montgomery, 1996:5). At the same time, under Russian and early Soviet rule, some Buriats and other Indigenous peoples of the Far

¹⁶ Russian colonizers disrupted this relationship by claiming the furs for themselves.

¹⁷ In opposition to traditional Chinese thought, Martha Avery (2003) attributes the invention and use of paper, as well as the postal system - what we call the pony express- to Turkic peoples who allied with the Mongolian Empire under Genghis Khan.

¹⁸ For example, Bata-Nimah, a focal child, lived near the famed Goose Lake Monastery, one of the few monasteries not destroyed.

East experienced secular education in the form of grammar schools that taught in both the Indigenous language (Buriat) and Russian, but this education aimed to russify and assimilate Indigenous peoples of Siberia (Humphrey, 1996; Montgomery, 2005).¹⁹

In fact, Russian imperialists and Soviet leaders after Lenin did not view their nation's ethnic and cultural diversity as an asset.²⁰ Historically, Russians have perceived this diversity as a dangerous threat to national unity (Martin, 2001). To generate a unified state and stable society, Soviet leaders who ruled after Stalin died in 1953 tried to eliminate Indigenous political, social, and cultural institutions in favor of dominant Russian mainstream ones. Ironically, during the post-Stalin Soviet era, the Soviet leadership used propaganda to depict Indigenous ethnic minorities in their republics as a "friendship of nations," happily coexisting under the rule of their "elder Russian brother."²¹ (Humphrey, 1996; Martin, 2001; Montgomery, 2005).

Until recently, little has been written about the Buriats from either an insider or outsider position. In 1986, however Dr. Caroline Humphrey, a world expert on the Buriat, helped found the Mongolia and Inner Asia Studies Unit (MIASU) at Cambridge University, thus extending knowledge about Buriats and other Indigenous peoples in this part of the world. Dr. Humphrey herself has written numerous articles and books on the Buriat, beginning in the 1970s, when she began researching the Buriat in Buriatia. She has examined

¹⁹ Peck (2011) explains how the Russian Orthodox Church was divided on the issue of teaching Buriats in Buriat, or teaching in Russian. The influential Archbishop Veniamin, who ruled in Irkutsk from 1862-1892, (with a short 3 years away during this term) insisted that Buriats be educated in Russian only, in order to convert them AND to make them in Russians. He wanted to eradicate Buriat language and culture in order to turn the converted Buriats into soldiers and citizens for the Tsar.

²⁰ It should be noted, however, that Lenin, however, was a great advocate of supporting linguistic and cultural diversity.

²¹ Actually, the Buriats are the elder brothers to the Russians, for it is they who have lived from time immortal in their homelands, with the new, younger brothers (Russians) coming to invade and colonize. Also ironic is the fact that Mao copied the Soviets in designating the minority peoples in China as "little brothers;" again the minority peoples lived on their homelands long before the Han invaded.

other groups of Mongolian peoples in Inner and Outer Mongolia, as well as the politics of post-Soviet life. All of her work remains an excellent guide for anyone interested in the Buriat or other Mongolian peoples. Earlier, Lawrence Krader, an American anthropologist from the American Southwest, in the 1950s and 1960s, wrote detailed papers about Buriat intellectuals, religious practices, and shamans. In addition, Dr. Marjorie Balzar of Georgetown also has written about Siberian shamans, along with the more popular author Anna Reid. Dr. Robert Montgomery has studied the history of the Buriat during the Soviet era; like Anna Peck, he was interested in examining the ways in which Buriats received education, either from the Russian Church or from Buddhist monasteries. Finally, Martha Avery, a multilingual Chinese/Mongolian/English translator, also researches the Mongolian peoples in relation to the Han Chinese.

During the Soviet era, the Buriats, like many other Indigenous inhabitants of Siberia, were not given voice even in non-Soviet studies, which “have concentrated on either Russian exploration and settlement or economic development of their region, and even many of the best of them have failed to mention the original inhabitants and rightful owners of Siberia as an afterthought, if at all” (Montgomery, 2005, p. 9). In Russian only, a few general works on Buriat history are available; *The Historical and Cultural Atlas of Buriatia* (2001); *History of the Buriat-Mongol ASSR* (1954-57); and *An Outline of the Culture of Buriatia* (1972). As these latter two books were published during the Soviet era, they are laden with the so-called progressive effects of Russian hegemony and noticeably silent on most of the negative effects of Russian and Soviet rule over Indigenous and minoritized peoples. Anthropologists, however, have concentrated on documenting Buriat shamanism and other aspects of their culture.

Fortunately, during Gorbachev's glasnost period, several Buriat historians published books in Russian about Buriat past and present; Shulunov's *Bitter Fates* (1991); Bazarov's anthology called *Unknown Pages of History of Buriatia* (1991-1992); Chimitdorzhiev's *Who are we Buriat-Mongols?* (1991-1992) and *The Buriat Mongols: History and Present* (1991). Additionally, in 2001, Anna Reid published *The Shaman's Coat*, a book describing Indigenous cultural survival in Siberia during the post-Soviet era. Also in 2001, Terry Martin published his now classic *The Affirmative Action Empire*, which documents the rise and fall of Soviet indigenization (*korenizatsiia*), a policy that temporarily privileged local languages and cadres in national autonomous regions where minority peoples resided. Dr. Humphrey has recently published works ranging from Buriat shamans, past and present, sociolinguistic work on Buriat women and chat, to Buriat life during the Soviet and post-Soviet eras.²² Finally, more and more Indigenous scholars, such as Khilkhanova and Khilkhanov (2004), and other around the Russian Federation, are starting to publish.

²² Karl Marx Collective: *Economy, Society and Religion in a Siberian Collective Farm* (1983)

- (ed. with Stephen Hugh-Jones) *Barter, Exchange and Value* (1992)
- (ed. with Nicholas Thomas) *Shamanism, History and the State* (1994)
- (with Urgunge Onon) *Shamans and Elders: Experience, Knowledge and Power among the Daur Mongols* (1996)
- (ed. with David Sneath) *Culture and Environment in Inner Asia* (1996)
- (with Piers Vitebsky) *Sacred Architecture* (1997) [This is a popular work]
- *Marx Went Away, but Karl Stayed Behind* (1998)
- (with David Sneath) *The End of Nomadism? Society, the State and the Environment in Inner Asia* (1999)
- (ed. with A. Tulokhonov) *Kul'tura i Priroda vo Vnutrenneyi Azii* (Culture and Environment in Inner Asia, in Russian) (2001)
- (ed. with David Sneath) *Dotugadu Aziiya-yin Soyol kiged Baigal Orchim* (Environment and Culture of Inner Asia, in Mongolian) (2002)
- *The Unmaking of Soviet Life: Everyday Economies After Socialism* [Heldt Prize] (2002)
- (ed. with Catherine Alexander and Victor Buchli) *Urban Life in Post-Soviet Central Asia* (2007)
- She also has many articles about the Buriat: See the reference section for a complete list of her work.

After the collapse of the USSR in December 1991, many Indigenous peoples gave vent to their ire and unhappiness regarding Russian chauvinism. Some, like the Chechen and the Azeris, acted more violently than others (Martin, 2001) The Buriats remained peaceful. In 1993, The Republic of Buriatia (formed in 1992) signed a bilateral treaty with the Russian Federation. Today the Buriats are attempting to revive and validate their culture, arts, religious practices, language,²³ and economic situation (Graber, 2012; Montgomery, 2005).

In sum, current and pertinent works about the Buriats, their culture, their resistance to Soviet policies, and their history, currently come from several sources: Robert Montgomery's (2005) in-depth history, Caroline Humphrey's anthropological investigations about collectivization and aspects of the Buriat culture; various articles in Russian by Russians, French (by Robert Hamayon) and English (especially Lawrence Krader) regarding cultural norms; and one contemporary language and identity, by the Buriat couple Khilkhanova and Khilkhanov; *Language and Ethnic Identity of Minorities in Post-Soviet Russia: The Buriat Case Study* (2004); and finally, Kathryn Graber's (2012) dissertation, *Knowledge and authority in shift: A Linguistic ethnography of multilingual news media in the Buryat territories of Russia*. Finally, part of my research addresses how the Buriats from Buriatia view other Mongolian peoples, such as the Temut and other Mongolians who live in Inner Mongolia, China.

²³ In Buriatia, a group of cultural figures have launched on YouTube an

>> appeal to their co-ethnics to speak Buriat as much as possible

>> ([youtube.com/watch?v=ZIPQoRTozU4#t=53](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZIPQoRTozU4#t=53)<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZIPQoRTozU4#t=53>>).

>> They have also launched an online petition to Vyacheslav Nagovitsyn,

>> the president of the Buriat Republic, to do far more to promote the

>> use of the Buriat language there

>>

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What is Buriat Culture? In writing this section, I realized that it was impossible to present a unified view of Buriat culture to my readers, and that I, as an outsider, can never fully understand Buriat culture. As we all experience the postmodern era, the idea of any culture as belonging to a single people through time or through some specific process of ethnogenesis is now thought to be a process that is actually a mishmash of muddled and elusive concepts. (Appadurai, 1996; Jackson, 2009). The notion that one may perceive culture as a form of stable social order has given in to the idea of culture in flux, even of crisis of culture. This is because changes in our modern lifestyle have dislocated and disrupted the structures and processes of what ordinary people and anthropologists view as “traditional culture” (Hall, 1992). Nevertheless, this section attempts to offer a Buriat cultural overview of the Buriats I knew, interacted with, and studied.

First, using a historical perspective, I present a “traditional view” of Buriat culture, examining significant cultural processes of the Buriats through time. I begin with the period before the invasion of the Russian imperialists in the 17th century. Next, I explain how the Russians and how Buddhist thought have altered Buriat cultural perceptions, from the 17th century up to the advent of the Soviet regime in 1917. Finally, inside this text I offer the reader Buriat contemporary narratives - the voices of the Buriat focal children and their parents - so that they may define Buriat culture as they currently perceive it, noting that by using Bakhtin’s (1981) focus on the dialogic aspect of communication I could then postulate how these Buriat children created dynamic and multiple identities dependent upon their political and physical location, as well as their linguistic and cultural context. Their narratives foreshadow why Buriats from Russia, and other Indigenous peoples, may have challenges when living and studying in China.

Traditional Buriat culture up to the 17th Century. The current Buriat Republic is part of the southern frontier of Siberian of Russia; Mongolia is directly south. Buriats constitute 27% of the titular nationality; they are related to the Mongolians²⁴ and are predominantly Buddhist although shamanism is widespread and fused with Buddhist beliefs (Quijada, 2012). Over the centuries, Buriats, being traditionally nomadic, have lived in Siberia, Mongolia, and China. Approximately 249,500 Buriats resided in the Buriat Republic as of the 1989 census (24% of the Buriats globally), while 35,600 Buryats lived in Outer Mongolia and between 6,000 and 7,000 in Inner Mongolia in China (Mansheev, 2009). Of the Mongolian group, they are the northernmost of the complex pastoralists; for centuries, they have herded cattle, sheep, goats, horses, and some Buriat clans (obag) have also herded camels. Unsurprisingly, Buriat mythology offers a significant place to bull ancestors,²⁵ as well as depicting magical horses and sheep (Krader, 1954).

Pastoral culture. Buriat animal husbandry depended on many factors: natural and climatic conditions, ruler's policy, economics, and individual nomadic traditions for various groups. Out of necessity to seek forage, Buriats who lived in arid zones were highly nomadic; in contrast, Buryats of sub-arid zones only moved two or four times a year. Those Buriats who raised cattle and yaks moved twice a year, living in permanent dwellings from

²⁴ According to the Buriat researcher, Darima A. Nikolaeva (Winter 2008-2009), in her footnotes about her people: "Buriats were established as an ethnos as a result of many centuries of contacts among various ethnic components. However, the Mongolian component still comprises the core of the ethnos, being present in different portions among various Buriat tribes. The territory of their contemporary settlement is a vast strip of the forest steppe and mountain taiga zone stretching from Nizhneudinsk in the west to the upper reaches of the Amur River in the east. The area west of Lake Baikal is traditionally called Cisbaikal, while that to the east is called Transbaikal. At the same time, the whole territory is traditionally called the Baikal region, or ethnic Buriatia (Abaeva and Zhukovskaia 2004, p. 8).

Anthropologically, most Buriats belong to the Central Asian type of the northern Baikal race of Mongoloids. In the ethnographic literature, general geographic concepts are used to describe them according to the territory where they have settled: *western* (Cisbaikal) or *eastern* (Transbaikal). *Western* Buriats, for the most part, led a settled life, engaging in agriculture, fishing, and seminomadic herding. *Eastern* Buriats engaged in nomadic or seminomadic herding (*Istoricheskoi' turnyi atlas Buriatii* 2001, pp. 258–70)." See map in appendix for further clarification.

²⁵ Please see a picture in the index revering the bull ancestor via contemporary Buriat art.

September to May and moving to summer pastures from June to September. Other Buriats, with sheep, goats, and horses, migrated four and more times a year, spending three months at summer pastures (Mansheev, 2009).²⁶ Livestock was herded slowly, to preserve the animals' body weights. The Eastern and some Western Buryats continued this nomadic life until the mid-1930s (Mikhailov, 1996, p.130).

Today, in more remote areas of the Buriat Republic, herders still drive livestock from summer to winter pastures, but these herders complain of problems relating to taxes, mobility, and economics. For example, a herder from Kyatka, a friend of one focal child's family, told me that his family feels this lifestyle does not allow them enough profit today to provide adequate care for their animals; "It is a poor living in money but a rich life with animals and nature," he said. Это бедная жизнь в финансовом смысле, но богатая - в плане животных и природы.

Nomads such as the Buriat had (and some still have) extensive intuitive and practical knowledge concerning their environment and animals. They understood meadows and pastoral ecology, as well as the psychology of their animals. This knowledge has been transmitted from generation to generation, as well as information concerning the best pastures for horses versus sheep or cattle. The herders traditionally kept oral histories of nutritious and harmful grasses. According Mansheev (2009), Buriats had identified "strong" and "weak" grass, with strong grasses having a slightly sweet taste, and making their animals healthy and fat. Buriats also examined their horses' manure: if droppings were black, big, solid but not hard, the grass on the pasture was considered nutritious. Finally, if mice lived in

²⁶ This is still true of a focal child's (Bata-Nimah's) relatives.

the grass, this was another sign that the grass was tasty and healthy for grazing animals (Batueva, 1931).

Buriats often made their winter camps in wind-proof places not far from mountains and forests. They chose protected hollows and valleys with water and thick grass. In these camps, the Buriats built wooden homes close together, as well as sheds, barns, and animal houses. People in these camps managed everything communally. Everyone in the camp was related by blood. The nomadic unit for these settlements was called ‘*buluk*’ (or *bwleg*) (Mansheev, 2009).

Being a patriarchal society, Buriat fathers ruled these households, with the eldest son taking over after the father’s passing.²⁷ Non-kin camps camped ten to twenty kilometers apart, but all these winter camps moved together when summer arrived. At this time, Buriats prayed together before breaking camp, asking the ancestral spirits (*tengri*) of the area for safe migration. After the 17th century, when Buriats had accepted Buddhism along with shamanism, lamas would also recite their prayers at these settlements. Grazing lands and camps were returned to, generation after generation, until dominant powers (Russia and China) with their politics concerning borders and border control, restricted Buriat and other Mongolian peoples’ nomadic mobility. Today, most Buriats are not herders, and many urban Buriats have never ridden a horse. An Ulan Ude Buriat told me:

We still love the horse, the nomadic life, but one must eat, and few of us can herd horses and cattle successfully. This is why, too, we see our Outer Mongolian brothers are pure. They are still living the true nomad’s life. Мы по-прежнему любим и

²⁷ Among the Mongolian herders, a system of branding animals reflects these kinship patterns; so, when a Mongol travels, he can read the political landscape of place by noting branding patterns (Humphrey, Humphrey Waddington, 1974).

лошадей, и кочевнический образ жизни, но нужно и чем-то питаться, поэтому мы занимаемся пастьбой коров и лошадей. Также и по этой причине мы видим наших братьев из Монголии "чистыми". Они живут настоящей кочевнической жизнью.

Community social organization. Before the advent of the Russian Cossacks, adventurers, and colonists, Buriats lived communally as a cluster of tribes around the western and northern shores of Lake Baikal in south-east Siberia. Their cultural arrangement is based upon patrilinear descent; it is still so, and the Buriat focal children in this study can trace their lineages. Buriats are careful and consistent with their genealogy, and directed at remembering and honoring the agnatic relationship, which is established by determining a common ancestor and tracing the genealogical line vertically to and from him. Although all Buriats trace their descent from one common mythical ancestor, although this creature may differ from group (clan- obag) to group. Two of the four focal children in this study named their animal as the bull. Thus, Buriat society was and still is organized vertically through time (Krader, 1954).

Traditionally, in theory, all Buriats are related to each other by blood ties, and people with close kinship ties lived nearby each other, in a nomadic kin village called an *ulas* (Humphrey, 1973); many rural villages are still organized this way, and people depend upon their kin for help, especially when economic times are hard; "I would go to my relatives before I go to the bank; besides banks are cheaters," Я бы предпочел сначала пойти к моим родственникам, перед тем, как пойти в банк; кроме того, банки обманывают said one Buriat focal adult.

Clans (*obags*) can be large social groupings. Eastern and southern Buriats have had more stable political organizations than the western Buriats, for two reasons: First, for centuries they were allied with their Khalk neighbors to the south, paying tribute (*yasak*) to them in furs to keep peaceful relations, and to have use of the other Mongolians ancestral homelands for grazing livestock. Before borders were established by China and Russia, Buriats migrated with their herds around the areas we now know as southern Siberia and northern Outer Mongolia (Forsyth, 1992). When Imperial Russia authorities and the Chinese Manchu (Qing Dynasty) negotiated a border between the Russian and the Manchurian empires in the 1680s, this created the political conditions in which the Buryats could emerge as a separate people from other Mongolian groups (Humphrey, 1996). The focal children in this study are from the Selenga River and Khori Buriat groups, who traditionally are called the Trans-Baikal Buriats. These groups, like the Khalk, have historically been more oriented toward Buddhism than the western Buriats. The second reason is that the western Buriats and those living north of Lake Baikal have endured more russification due to the easier access of their location (Forsyth, 1992). “Go to Irkutsk; that is more of a Russian place than our Ulan Ude,” Съездите в Иркутск, это более русский город, нежели наш Улан-Удэ, a Buriat grandmother related to a focal child in this study, told me in the summer of 2013. (See Figure 13).

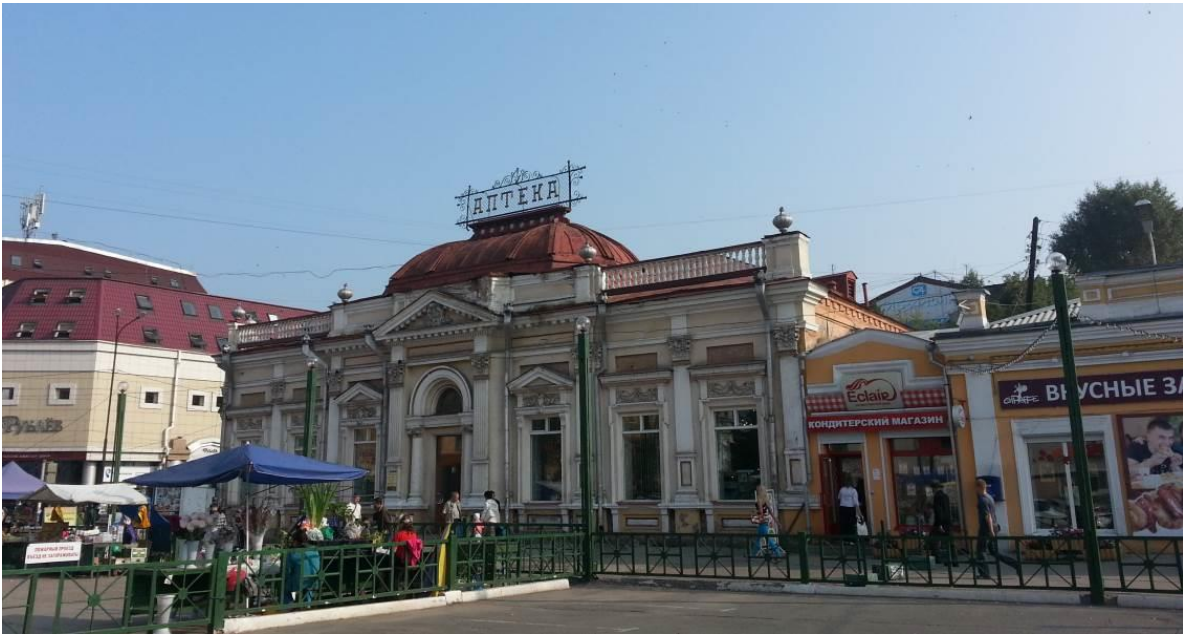


Figure 13. Irkutsk Central Market.

As Buriats are traditionally communally oriented as a society, until the advent of Russian invaders, they had not participated in any kind of centralized, governmental political organization (Humphrey, 1973). Segmentary patrilineal clans and descent-groups, called *esege* 'father', or *yahan* 'bone ', are organized into a personalized genealogical hierarchy, and most political positions were traditionally inherited in the male line (Krader, 1954).

Humphrey (1973) recounts, that when conducting fieldwork in 1967, she interviewed many Buriats, who could recall up to nine generations of patrilineal ancestors; additionally, some Buriats also remembered complete collateral descent lines of many generations. Likewise, Ippei (2004) recounts that Buriat shamans must know a family's ancestors²⁸ in order to work

²⁸ This has been confirmed by a Buriat participant, who is now studying to become a shaman.

effectively; Ippei also states that the Buriats, among the Mongolian peoples, are particularly careful to remember their ancestral bloodlines.²⁹

This concern for male ancestors rests in the traditional belief that men possess a supernatural quality called *udxa*, which gave them the right to certain kinds of social positions; for example, one line was for chiefs, another for shamans, etc. (Ippei, 2004). Contemporary Buriats also continue to trace their descent through the male. Buriat friends have commented that is better to take an outsider as a wife than to watch an outside group adopt one's son. "It is a pity my son married that Russian girl, but it is better for her to join us - we Buriats can mix the blood and still remain Buriat," Жаль, что мой сын женился на той русской девушке, но, в то же время, присоединиться к нам - лучше для нее: мы, буряты, можем оставаться бурятами даже в смешанном браке, said the father of my godson to me before his son's marriage to a Russian Slav in summer 2013 (see picture in appendix). Intermarriage is one way that Buriats may position themselves in society.

Although the Buriats lived communally, in the past, their societal structure was divided into three social classes: aristocratic, commoner, and slave (Krader, 1954). Historically, slaves were captured outsiders, often Evenki or Even peoples, both Indigenous peoples also living in Lower Siberia. In fact, one Buriat mother of a focal child told me that the reason she and other Buriats did not like being labeled as "Indigenous" was because this term Soviet scientists used regarding the Evenki, and "they were our slaves." Они были наши рабы. In the Buriat world view, the aristocrats were members of the senior descent line (rank order of birth in relation to founders of other descent lines of the same generation),

²⁹ In contrast, David Sneath (2010) writes that Outer Mongolians, since independence in the early 1990s, are trying to trace their genealogies, having lost much of this information during the Soviet occupation.

while the commoners were the juniors in birth. In the past, Buriats also kept track of their separate social strata and genealogical descent, because each reflected different religious phenomena. This in turn was reflected by the Buriat intellectual life, religion, and mythology.

Shamans and societal order. Much has been written about shamans and shamanism,³⁰ Buriat or otherwise (Balzar, 2012; Humphrey, 1996, 2002; Ippai, 2004; Krader, 1954; Reid, 1994). Yet for the Western mind, shamanism is hard to describe and even harder to understand. I feel that this spiritual practice should be viewed with great respect. Among the Buriat, shamans could be men or women; there was also a parallel kind of force in blacksmiths.³¹ Buriat shamanism consists of doctrines, beliefs, rites and myths, and includes a spiritual hierarchy and a cult of a supreme being. The following material which I now summarize from Krader (1954), who stated that all his information was initially collected from the 1870s through the 1920s, via direct sources: Russian-educated Buriats, whom he named as Agapitov, Khangalov, Dzamtzarano, Mikhail Bogdanov and Garma Sandzeyev, and those who collaborated with established Russian scholars, such as Krol', Klements, and Popov. (See Appendix A for additional information).

As Buriat society had three social classes, a Buriat man also had three parts: body, breath and soul. Additionally, the Buriat spiritual world contained more triple divisions. For

³⁰ An excellent sourcebook on shamanism in Inner Asia is: Harvey, G. (Ed.). (2003). *Shamanism: A reader*. Psychology Press.

³¹ Nikolaevna (2008-9) reports: Legends state that among many Buriat clans female shamanic deities acted as patrons of shamanic initiation. For instance, among the Unga Buriats, the zayanka (spirit, deity) Khan-Lukhar, daughter of Uhan-khata, was considered to be the patron of shamanic initiation, and the patron of white shaman blacksmiths was Éilik-Mulik, sister of the nine sons of Bozhintoi. According to legends, she was the first of her siblings in the blacksmith trade and was the most important figure.” There is an appendix section outlining some aspects of Buriat shamanism for those interested. (Khangalov 2004, p. 364).

The status and influence of female shamans in society in no way pales against men (shamans and blacksmiths). They also could be white (sagani odeÁNgon) or black (kharan odeÁNgon). Like shamans, shamanesses had full cult trappings of their rank: a shamanic whip, sword, horse staffs, drum (khésé), shamanic crown (maikhabshi), cloak (orgoi), and so forth. See Appendix on shamans for more information.

example, Buriats felt that the soul was divided into three kinds: the soul inside man, which resides in the bones.³² The second soul can fly out of the body and transform itself into another creature, such as a wasp or bee; it can do things without the man being aware of its actions.³³ This second soul lives in the trunk of a human body, often in the organs; it gets frightened easily; children can lose these souls, and shamans may help them be recovered. This soul is also invoked when shamans wish to heal people of illnesses. Significantly, this soul does as the man does; if he rides a horse, the soul rides too; and will continue to do the actions of a human after the man has died.³⁴ The third soul marks the passing of a man's life; it goes to join the *tengeri*; the spirits. Notably, every Buriat participant in this study has professed belief in *tengeri*.

Buriat *tengeri* (spirits) are also organized into triple divisions (high, middle, lower) and they are key to Buriat spiritual beliefs. The highest *tengeri* live in heaven and take care of mankind; shamans have the ability to invoke these two lower ranks, who act as intercessors between man and the highest *tengeri*. These spiritual ideas documented by Krader (1954) are preserved in the mythology and cosmology of the Buriats; I have seen children's books in stores in Ulan Ude which document and illustrate these ideas. Among the focal children, I noted a sincere belief in spirits, both of the *tengri* type and, perhaps due to global forces, of the Disney type (zombies, space aliens). Some of the Buriat focal children's parents were hesitant to speak to me about their shamanistic beliefs until they knew I had also consulted a shaman. Then these Buriat adults told me that the spirits were present and

³² Which also lives in animals and is why Buriats are uneasy around broken bones in man or beast, considering that this harms the soul. "Broken bones are bad omens," a focal child told me. "They bring bad stuff." "Сломанные кости - дурное предзнаменование", - сообщил мне ребенок. "Они приносят дурные вести".

³³ A young Buriat participant, aged 21, told me many stories relating to this.

³⁴ Two focal Buriat boys confirmed that they "knew" this and believed it to be true.

accessible in nature as well as in Buddhist temples, and that people could use intercessors, such as lamas or shamans, and they could also pray to the spirits independently.

Some traditional Buriat cultural practices. The number three, and its multiples (9, 99, 90) are significant to the Buriats. For example, communal sacrifices, called *tailgan*, are generally celebrated three times throughout the year.³⁵ Traditionally, a Buriat bride at her wedding fed the hearth fire³⁶ three times with bits of fat, and then sprinkled the clothes of her husband's father three times with fat as well. When walking around an oboo (a sacred spot, usually a cairn with rocks - see picture), one circles three times; Buriat friends also walked three times around sacred places in *datsans* (Buddhist temples). Shamans are said to have the ability to cure people only for three or nine years. Finally, there are 99 heavenly spirits of the first rank (*tengeriner*) (Krader, 1954).

Traditionally, after people had settled in their summer pastures, Buriats performed the sacred rites centering on *tailgan*. This ritual, linked to Buriat migration and lifecycle, acknowledges reverence to the sky, earth, water and local spirit owners of the area. During the *tailgan*, a Buriat shaman calls upon the chief spirit-protector of the area, asking him for good grass, fat livestock, protection against diseases, and other misfortunes (Shaglanova, 2002: 218, 220). At the close of the ceremony, another celebration is held, which is similar to the Mongolian *nadaam*, which all Mongols celebrate in the warmer months. Today, the *nadaam* celebration is a joyful kind of *tailgan* often open to the public that consists of people

³⁵ This was confirmed by focal parents, who, however, told me that sometimes they cannot conduct three celebrations annually.

³⁶ In ancient Buriat culture, fire was a sacred feminine energy, and people venerated fire in two ways. In both cases, the sacrifices were carried out by women and asked for sacred substance and abundance. The first veneration was a family ritual, a domestic morning sacrificial offering. The second was associated with the fire cult: it was supposed to make people prosperous: "Clan offerings to fire were conducted on the occasion of major holidays, the commencement of spring and fall, when good fortune was summoned by summoning the deity of fire"(Galdanova 1987, p. 35). My Buriat friends, male and female, still make sacrifices to fire, especially when they are traveling and camping outdoors.

gathering together for several days to participate in and/or watch wrestling competitions and horse races. Traditionally, the Buriats also at this time danced *yeokhor* – a communal round dance (Mansheev, 2009).

Bull cult. Another traditional and ancient rite for certain clans of Buriats, widely practiced before the 17th century advent of Buddhism, centered upon the bull. Humphrey (1973) describes this bull cult, with its ritual, in detail. Briefly, Buriat shamans served the ancestors, the bull being a key deity in many rituals. The myth concerning the sacred Buriat bull deity, called Buxa Noyon, implies that the bull ancestor commands all aspects of fertility. According to Humphrey (1973:18):

This becomes an important ideological point in the context of human conception and birth. Buriats believe, within the context of this system that it is by contact with the bull that men's fertility is guaranteed. The 'cult' of the bull provides the occasions on which this contact may take place. It has three important manifestations in Buriat life. The first is the annual lineage sacrifice (*tailgan*); the second is the consecration of a living bull as an incarnation of Buxa Noyon (*ongon buxa*); and the third is the 'invocation' of the bull at the wedding ceremony.

Humphrey also reports (1973) that this bull cult still existed in remote areas around western Buriatia during the Soviet era. When I asked participants about the bull cult, some of them knew little about this deity. But when I visited a modern art gallery exhibiting Buriat work, I understood that the bull and its cult was remembered in the minds of some Buriats. (See Figure 14).



Figure 14. Buriat bull ancestor (gallery exhibition, Ulan Ude, August 2013)

Ongon. Buriat culture contains significant and powerful signs, called *ongon*, which were used in the past for religious and ritual use. These symbolic drawings were hung on trees, during weddings and sacrifices. I quote Humphrey (1973:19) as she is the world expert³⁷ on this subject: She refers to *ongons* in reference to the bull cult:

These drawings are not simply realistic or literal representations of bulls- this function is much better performed by transforming a living bull from the herd into an *ongon* incarnation. The drawing conveys ideas or makes a statement. I would suggest that the ideas conveyed by the drawings are similar to those recounted in the wedding speech, but that since they are conveyed by graphic rather than linguistic means, the

³⁷ Her dissertation work centered on this topic in the early 1970s; she has gone on to become a world expert on the Buriats and the Mongolian peoples, among other things.

function of the *ongon* is to some extent complementary to that of the speech. In order to make an *ongon* which correctly represents a group of ideas (i.e. a deity), rules must be followed. It is just as impossible to jumble up pictures of people and animals on a bit of cloth and call this an *ongon* as it is to string together words without observing grammatical rules and call this a sentence. The difference is that while the wedding-speech has a diachronic form whose structures are relatively difficult to appreciate, and indeed may not be manifest until the speech has finished, the *ongon* drawing has a synchronic form where structures are more immediately apparent.

Children in this study did not recognize the concept of *ongon*, although several Buriat elders were delighted that I knew of the concept.

Buriats after the Russian Imperial Invasion in the 17th Century. The new Soviet government administratively unified the so-called Buriat Republic (Buryatskaya ASSR) founded in 1923 (Montgomery, 2005).³⁸ Initially, under Soviet rule, Buriat traditional economy remained livestock herding, with people being somewhat nomadic, especially in regions east of Lake Baikal. But gradually Buriats began living permanently in wooden houses that were actually eight sided yurts. This housing had been used previously for summer and winter camps, and it differed from the more mobile felt yurts of the Mongols in Mongolia (Nikoleavna, 2008-2009). Because Buriats have lived in more forested areas than other Mongolian peoples, they often used wood to build housing structures. Over time, Buriat nomadic practices also became merged with Russian farming (Forsyth, 1992). Additionally, the traditional Buriat food supply differed from Mongols to the south in Mongolia: the Buriats had opportunities to hunt forest animals, to fish, herd livestock, and to grow

³⁸ See map to understand how some Buriat territories have shifted from USSR times to modern Russian Federation times.

vegetables. They traded with the Russians, as towns began to emerge in Siberia; some Buriats migrated to larger settlements and stopped living nomadically (Humphrey, 1973).

Three gifts. Another key difference between Buriats and other Mongols was revealed to me by two elderly Buriats living in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia. They said that long ago Buriats had accepted three “gifts” (see Figures 15, 16, and 17) from the Russians, starting in the 1700s. As far as I know, no one has written about this from an academic or anthropological perspective. The first gift was the milk separator: this device allowed the Buriats to create an entirely different genre of dairy foods than other Mongolians. In fact, for centuries, Buriats have produced and eaten soft cheeses, sour cream, heavy cream, and a kind of cream bread - which none of the other Mongolians ate, as they had to air dry their food stuffs, particularly meat and milk - which produced hard but lasting food. Second, the Russians gave the Buriats a small, fast kind of chariot, which allowed Buriats to move themselves and some belongings much more quickly than using the traditional Mongolian carts. Third, the Russians gave the Buriats the light plough, which allowed Buriats to engage successfully in agricultural practices, expanding this food supply options and further affecting their nomadic way of life. In sum, these three tools, along with their forest and lake environment, caused Buriat culture to differ from the steppe and desert culture of other Mongolian peoples.



Figure 15. The milk separator.

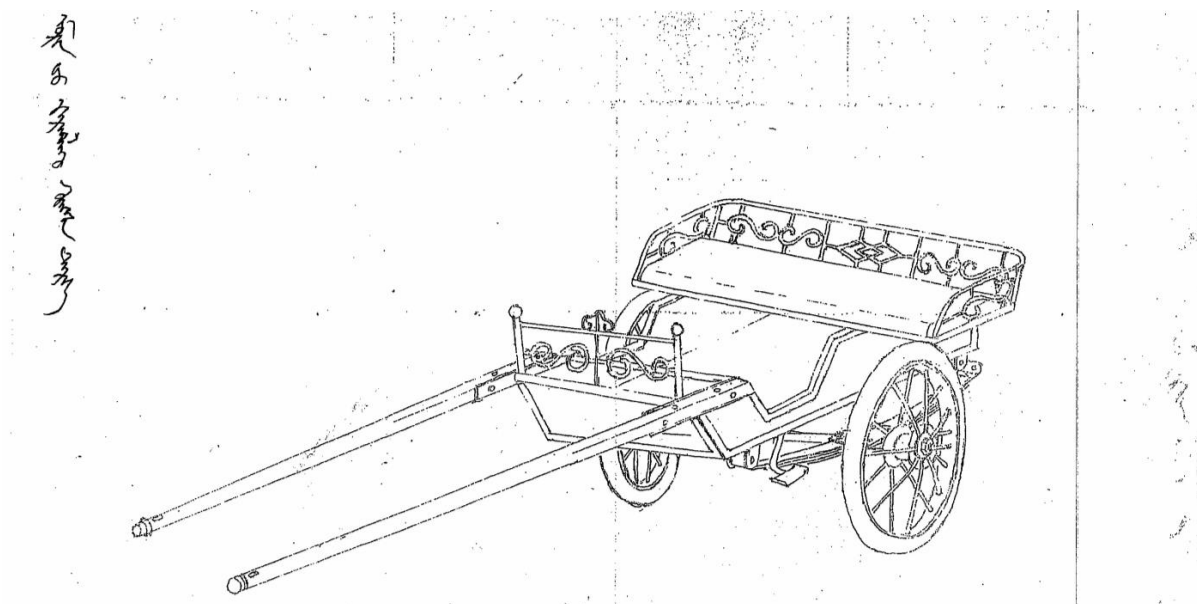


Figure 16. The light chariot (Grandfather's drawing).

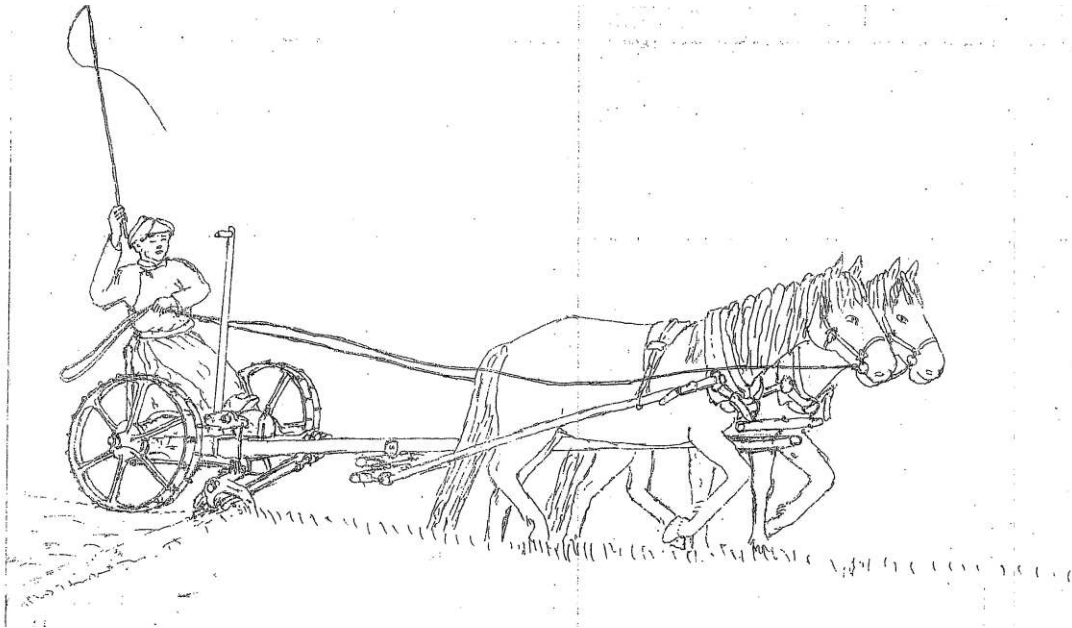


Figure 17. The light plough (Grandfather's drawing).

It should be noted, however, that the Russians, as any invader anywhere, were not particularly welcomed by the Buriat. According to Soviet sources (Montgomery, 2005), the Buriats voluntarily joined into the Russian Empire, and later, with the USSR; this is not true.³⁹ Instead, Buriats put up great resistance during both invasions (Forsyth, 1992). Unfortunately, regarding the Cossacks and Russian settlers, the Buriats had ineffective weapons. Gradually, their lands were overrun by oncoming Russians, who forced them off their best pasture lands and treated them as second class citizens (Forsyth, 1992). Earlier, during the Russian Imperial Era, Buriats had sent pleas and delegations to the Russian Tsar, who ignored them (Humphrey, 1973).

Later, in the 1900s, as the Trans-Siberian railroad was expanded, more Russian and Soviet settlers flowed into Buriatia, and many Buriats became geographically divided, as the

³⁹ There is also a long debate in Buriatia about whether the Buriats voluntarily joined the Imperial Russian Empire. <http://arigus-tv.ru/news/item/5868/> Ариг Ус:

Russian settlers demanded prime real estate for their towns and farms (Forsyth, 1992). When the tsarist government decided to allot equal shares of land to both farmers and herdsmen, the Buriats revolted. Another reason that they began violently to become nationalistic was due to another outside force: Tibetan Buddhism (Montgomery, 2005). Buriats resisted the Russian Orthodox monks; they wanted to adhere to their fusion of shamanistic and Buddhist spiritual practices. Today, contemporary Buriats have told me that they “accept and tolerate” the Russians; that they cannot do otherwise, as Buddhists.

Buddhism in relation to Shamanism. Buddhism, as a religious practice, brought in the late 17th to 19th centuries to the Buriats, also brought nationalism via literacy, as Buriats resisted the attempts of Russian Orthodox missionaries to both convert and russify them (Peck, 2012). Gradually, Buriat shamanist practices became fused with Tibetan Buddhist practices. Over time, many of the shamanistic deities merged with Tibetan deities. Around Buriatia, Buddhist monasteries appeared and thrived, nurturing an educated elite that grew among the Buriat population. Like traditional Catholics, many Buriat families dedicated a son to the monastery, where he studied to become a monk, and perhaps later would achieve the higher rank of lama. Buriats educated at lamaseries (datsans), were proud their history and culture. During the Imperial Russian Regime these educated Buriats stood at the forefront of the nationalistic movements opposing the tsar’s land reforms that gave traditional Buriat lands to incoming colonizers (Forsyth, 1992).

Buddhism was not challenged initially by the Tsar of Russia because the Russian government saw Buddhism “as a civilizing practice, superior to shamanism” (Quidada, 2012:140). In fact, in 1741, the Russian Imperial Empress Catherine the Great mandated Buddhism as a state religion, second to the Russian Orthodox Church (ibid). This ruling was

not generosity; Russian authorities wanted to limit and control the number of Mongolian monks entering Russia by legalizing the religion. In 1764, in the Ivolginsky monastery, the head leader of the Buddhists in Buriatia, the Pandito Khambo Lama, was recognized as the administrative authority over all Buddhists. Buddhism flourished. Up to 1917, Quijada (2012:140) reports that there were 47 monastic complexes around Lake Baikal. During the Stalin years in the 1930s, all monasteries had closed. In addition, during the Stalin years Buriat lands had been divided into three areas, and almost all the Buddhist leaders, as well as other Buriat intellectuals and professed shamans, were killed and tortured (Humphrey, 2002). In 1946 the Ivolginsky monastery near Ulan Ude reopened. Until 1989, however, only two monasteries in Buriatia, under the administrative offices termed the *Traditional Sangha* were officially allowed to operate (Quijada, 2012:140). After 1991, however, Buddhism in Buriatia again regained public popularity⁴⁰ and support (Balzar, 2012).⁴¹

Especially for the Eastern and Southern Buriats, Buddhism grew in popularity in with shamanism. In the 1900s, perhaps one fifth of the adult Buriat population were Buddhist lamas (Peck, 2012), while devout Buriats all sought to make pilgrimages to holy sites in Mongolia and Tibet (Humphrey, 1973). Among the Buriats, monasteries developed great economic power. In addition to Buddhist scholarship, with the advent of Western liberal ideas, (carried by the Decembrists exiled to Siberia), some notable Buriat scholars, such as the orientalist Dorzhi Banzarov (1822-55), appeared. At that time, Buddhist intellectuals also

⁴⁰ The institutionalized Traditional Sangha, however, after 1991 has been in competition with other Buddhists: local Buriat lamas, Tibetan exile lamas, the Green Tara Women's monastic movement, and a group called Karma Kagyu (Quijada, 2012:140).

⁴¹ Yet the foundational religion of the Buriats was and still is shamanism, which is based on the idea of nature spirits who may 'possess' human beings (Humphrey, 1996). These spirits can be invoked by shamans to aid people in need (Reid, 1994). According to Mandestam Balzar (2011:3), the three defining characteristics for shamanic power surviving over time in Siberia are due to the fact that the shaman is spiritually selected, often against his will; he or she mediates among complex cosmological worlds for a purpose; and the shaman suffers throughout a lifetime of pain in order to become more attuned and empathetic in solving problems that are often, but not always, about healing.

became trendy in St Petersburg;⁴² consequently, a Buddhist temple was built there, which still stands and holds sway over all kinds of Russian Buddhists (Peck, 2012).

Perhaps the most famous of all Buriat lamas is Agvan Dorzhiev (1853-1938), who served the Tsar's interests in Tibet, and was later accused of being a spy by the British (Hopkirk, 1994). Dorzhiev was an educator and a reformer. He sought to expand the traditional theological, philosophical, medical, artistic education in Mongolian *datsans*. His ideas caused a resurgence of thinking about Buddhist culture in general, as well as new debates concerning ethic, politics, and the Buriat role under the Tsar (Humphrey, 1973). Dorzhiev was well-known to the Buriat participants in this study.

Many Buriat participants also told me that they have a saint-like lama, called Dashi-Dorzho Etigelov. He served as the 12th Pandito Kambo Lama of Eastern Siberia from 1911 to 1917. Today, his corporeal body resides in the Ivolginsky monastery, which is still located on the outskirts of present day Ulan Ude (Quijada, 2012). According to the Etigelov Institute, which is part of the *Traditional Sangha* administration in Buriatia, Lama Etigelov foresaw the upcoming religious persecutions of the Bolsheviks, and told his followers to flee into Mongolia. He himself did not leave, but chose to go into a state of deep meditation. In 1927, the lama's followers claim that his soul entered nirvana. Etigelov had previously instructed his students to check on his body every 25 years. In 1955, and again in 1973, his body was exhumed; he was exhumed a third time in 2002 (Quijada, 2012). His body currently rests in the monastery, in a separate temple building. His body is encased in glass. Devout believers say that Etigelov's body is still alive and warm to the touch; that he is a living relic.⁴³

⁴² It is trendy again at this time to be Buddhist, or to consult with a Buddhist doctor, according to my Buriat participants.

⁴³ I have paid my respects to him with a Buriat focal family in August 2013.

Scientists have also been allowed to conduct tests on his body; Buriats report that he is not embalmed, nor has his body degenerated.⁴⁴ In any case, this veneration of Lama Etigelov symbolizes a broad resurgence of religious belief among the Buriat during the post-Soviet era. During my fieldwork, Buriat participants conducted with each other, and with me, an ongoing dialogue about the meaning of science and modernity, and its place in the Buriat world views grounded in religion and tradition. Several Buriat families took me to visit Etigelov, as well as shamans, lamas, and sacred spots.

Buddhism has influenced Buriat culture in many ways. For example, Buddhism has impacted the way that Buriats started to perceive the female sex, from the 1800s onward. Some anthropological writings about Buriats pre-Buddhism extol the freedom and power of ancient Buriat culture regarding women,⁴⁵ suggesting that Buriats may have once had a great mother goddess, and more of a matrilineal society than the present patrilinear society (Krader, 1954). After the 17th century, however, with the advent of Tibetan Buddhist practices, women's bodies were perceived as impure and dangerous, especially if the woman were menstruating. It could be that Buddhism was also instrumental in either emphasizing or creating many female demons, who currently appear in Buriat mythology.⁴⁶ Moreover, Buriat traditional culture of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries reflects women's

⁴⁴ I was able to view the saint in summer 2013.

⁴⁵ In Buriat mythology, goddesses who personified the mother were the supreme deities. The demiurge Ékheburkhan is the ancestral mother of all the gods. According to the story, at first Ékhe-burkhan lived in darkness and primordial chaos. Having decided to separate earth and sky, she made a wild duck, which dove into the water and brought out dirt in its bill. From this dirt she formed the earth mother Ul'gen' and created plants and animals on top of her. From the sun, Ékhe-burkhan gave birth to the good Manzan Gurme, from whom fifty-five good deities descended. From the moon sprang the evil Maias Khaara, who gave birth to forty-four evil deities. The first people also appeared on earth thanks to Ékhe-burkhan. On the sunset side she created the female principle; and on the sunrise side, the male. They met, coupled, and the first man and woman were born (Tokarev 1982, pp. 674–75). (from Nikaleavna, 2008-2009)

⁴⁶ With the spread of Lamaism, caves, a symbol of the womb in Buriat myth, began to be considered a focus of female unclean power. As Galdanova writes, lamas declared that caves are *shudkhér éryn bélég*—"the sexual organ of the female *shudkhér* (devil, demon)" (Galdanova 1987, p. 38).

subordinate position, with many taboos based on a misogynic sacred/ritual standard denigrating women in their legal, economic, moral, and other rights (Nikolaeva, 2008-9). Throughout Buriat history, women were expected to give birth and care for the home and hearth.⁴⁷ Yet older women have always been respected: Buriat matriarchs over the age of forty five who had sons, wealth, and good health were (and still are) highly respected in their communities.⁴⁸ In ancient times, these matriarchs wore their hair in a certain way⁴⁹ as a symbol of their good fortune; or *sülde*.⁵⁰

Concepts of fortune, space and direction. For all Mongolian peoples, the concept of fortune links to the idea that fortune cannot just be acquired or lost accidentally. Buriats and other Mongolians conduct rituals to bolster, beckon, and collect fortune of various kinds. Mongolians feels that two kinds of fortune—*sülde* (potency) and *hiimori* (vitality) can be depleted, but they can also be restored via rituals (Humphrey & Ujeed, 2012).

Mongolian peoples believe that a person may receive many kinds of fortune. Buriat participants always spoke of Buddhist karmic fortune, which is based upon how one acts in all current and previous lives. These Buriats also followed an astrological concept of fortune, based on birth time, zodiac, and they frequently consulted a special Buddhist calendar which told them when to travel or make decisions. (See Figure 18). Additionally, as Humphrey & Ujeed (2012) mention, Buriat participants also felt that the concept of destiny impacted them and their families, with negative events being possibly corrected by consulting a shaman.

⁴⁷ Buriat focal mothers confirm that this is still true today.

⁴⁸ This is still true today, according to female Buriat participants.

⁴⁹ Her hair was let down and braided in three braids. A palm's width below the chin, one of the braids was looped and then braided further. From that time on, the woman had to braid her hair only this way (Badmaeva 1987, p. 68).

⁵⁰ This hairstyle is no longer the case.

Finally, a Buriat friend told me “Sometimes luck just happens, such as the way we met.”

Иногда удача случается прямо у нас под носом.



Figure 18. Buriat Buddhist calendar.

One of the various types of Mongolian fortune is called *sülde*: this concept links to “ideas of ‘personal brilliance’ (*chog*) or ‘strong-heartedness’ (*zirüken tamir*). Everyone has *sülde*, but in some it is weak and in others strong, and furthermore it fluctuates” (Humphrey & Ujeed, 2012:154). Buriats also feel that *sülde* is a kind of life force not only necessary to create vitality, but it is also needed for successful procreation (Skrynnikova & Batoeva 2002, pp. 11–37). *Sülde* exists outside people, in natural objects, and for Buriats, it resides especially in feminine objects such as caves and fire. Humphrey & Ujeed (2012: 154) state:

“Sülde is raised up, boosted, flown (as one flies a flag), scattered, and shed (as with light)...Its parallel in the Tibetan world is *hiimori*, literally, ‘air-horse’ (Tib. *lung-rta*), also called *salh-yn mori* (wind-horse) by many Mongols.” They also argue that “Mongolian peoples feel that affirming chance is a process of diffusion of the self—that is, it transcends the delimited, materially organized self and thereby creates an impersonal kind of individuation” (ibid).

In effect, a Mongol, in asking and/or being granted fortune, becomes a part of what the Buddhists call the Great Nothingness - a part of the void, as it is from the indistinct whirling of the wind in the sky, and from the beseecher’s attention toward the infinite sky, that fortune arrives. Nameless times I have watched Buriats in Outer Mongolia and in Buriatia (but not in China) with great seriousness and/or with mad joy make milk or alcohol offerings toward the sky. “In the Mongol rites for *sülde* and ‘throwing’ *hiimori*, the actor is still individuated in a way, but not in terms of his personality, name, or social status, for the entire imagination is ideally cast outward—to cosmic images, and to the abstraction of fortune. This is a consciousness without interiority” (Humphrey & Ujeed, 2012:163).

In addition to this unique Mongolian way of perceiving good fortune, Humphrey & Ujeed (2012) also argue that the perception of space among Mongolian people, such as the Buriat, is different than that of Asian or Western people, particularly those who come from agricultural cultures. Pedersen (2003: 238) explains that peoples from nomadic cultures emphasize “places at the expense of spaces,” while sedentary agricultural people emphasize “spaces at the expense of places” (ibid). This means that farming cultures, such as the Han Chinese, or Russians in Siberia, whose landscapes are ordered by bounded fields of crops and rice paddies, contrast with nomadic cultures, such as the Mongolian Khalk and Buriat, who

perceive landscapes as infinite, empty, and temporary. Thus, nomads view land and landscapes very differently than farmers. Nomads use land for setting temporary camps, it is not meant to be carved up and organized and owned. Symbolically, nomads look up to the sky for spiritual power while farmers look down to the earth for abundance and fertility. A Buriat focal father confirmed this, telling me that Russians and Chinese look down at the earth, while nomads, like himself, always look up.

Humphrey & Ujeed (2012) assert that people who engage in nomadic migrations have a more flexible sense of space and time. Humphrey states that traveling nomadically can be perceived as a spatial liminality, ‘traveling that is not traveling’ into and out of the otherness, which is, paradoxically, a notional emptiness that serves as the foundation of the nomadic way of life (Humphrey 1995: 142–143). Thus, for a nomadic person, home can be located in many places, as one migrates toward certain pastures seasonally. Pedersen (2007: 317) states “the whole point about nomadic migration is for the world to repeat itself: one moves to be the same.”

In connection to fortune, Humphrey & Ujeed (2012) feel that this condition of living among empty, free spaces and being oriented vertically toward the vast nothingness of the sky influences the way Mongolians such as the Buriat perceive ‘chance.’ Like the wind, fortune and chance are unpredictable, outside of themselves, yet always nearby. For many Mongolians, seeking good fortune is encased in rituals,⁵¹ whereby Mongolians go to high

⁵¹ Two Buriat focal children knew many rituals, and talked to me about the need for these ceremonies in order to preserve luck. One child admonished me when I did not know the right thing to do upon reentering a house after I had forgotten something (I was supposed to stick out my tongue for luck).

places⁵² to address the spirits by making offerings to the wind. In exchange, the spirits may grace one with fortune.

Traditional Buriat women, family and daily culture. By the late nineteenth century, Buriat “Codes,” “Judgments,” and “Laws” in Buriat areas legally affirmed traditional laws and customs concerning the interrelations between men and women (Nikoleavna, 2008-9). Women had fewer rights than men, with *kalym*, or bride price, being determined and set by her father. After being married, a woman was dependent upon and subject to her husband’s family. She had limited rights of inheritance should her husband die. In public ceremonies (except her own clan’s *tailgan*), women were excluded. Krader (1954), suggests, however, that in ancient Buriat culture women gathered to celebrate their gift of fecundity in sacred spots (such as places near water, and caves, both of which symbolize femininity in Buriat culture), and then the women may have joined with their men who had also conducted masculine rituals nearby.⁵³

During the 9th century, Buriat husbands could easily divorce their wives, but wives could not leave a marriage without the husband’s consent. Until the Soviet era, Buriat females were expected to work inside the homes,⁵⁴ give birth, and take care of children. They kept house and tended livestock, working from dawn to dusk. Their men were dominant over them; daughters and wives accepted this unequal status. Yet some women achieved respect

⁵² For the Buriats In archaic times, female festivities were probably held on mountain tops. T.D. Skrynnikova writes that in the original archetype, the sun—the ancestral mother of all creation—was at the top of the center of the world (2006, p. 73)

⁵³ During fieldwork, I noted that men and women still tended to separate into two groupings, perhaps because of these traditional patterns.

⁵⁴ In ancient Buriat culture, fire was a sacred feminine energy, and people venerated fire in two ways. In both cases, the sacrifices were carried out by women and asked for sacred substance and abundance. The first veneration was a family ritual, a domestic morning sacrificial offering. The second was associated with the fire cult: it was supposed to make people prosperous: “Clan offerings to fire were conducted on the occasion of major holidays, the commencement of spring and fall, when good fortune was summoned by summoning the deity of fire” (Galdanova 1987, p. 35). My Buriat friends, male and female, still make sacrifices to fire, especially when they are traveling and camping outdoors.

and high status as they aged. For example, K.D. Basaeva, in her monograph *Sem'ia i brak u buriat* [Family and Marriage Among the Buryats] (1980), indicates that at times, a wife/mother's position was equal to her husband's.⁵⁵ Successful Buriat matriarchs were recognized as making vital contributions to the family and kinship collective. A wife kept house, she brought forth children, and she correctly supported her husband's position in society.

Mature mothers and grandmothers were and still are acknowledged as the carriers of culture and etiquette among the Buriat; they can voice their opinions⁵⁶ regarding marriage choices and property rights. These women could also be present at the same table with men during meals and entertainment (Nikolaevna, 2008-9). During my fieldwork, I noted that Buriat women did eat, talk, and gain the respect of men; however, many women also tolerated negative behaviors of their husbands. When I asked them why they put up with infidelity, disappearing husbands, and a lack of financial contribution to the household, one Buriat focal mother explained that her mother had trained her to endure and be patient with her husband, in order to hold the family together through easy and hard times.

Conclusion

This section has offered an overview of Buriat culture, in order to give the reader some perspective on the Buriat world view. To better understand the focal children and parents and Buriat community that participated in this research, this section has strove to

⁵⁵ The names of a number of Buriat clans originated through the maternal line. For example, according to an ethnogenic myth, the daughter of a swan, the beautiful Khangin, was once caught in a hailstorm and became pregnant. And then the Khangin clan came from her son born of a hailstone. A myth explains the origin of Buriat clans through the line of an ancestral mother: a swan maiden gave birth to eleven sons, who later became the founders of the eleven Khora clans (Galzuud, Khargana, Khuasai, Khubduud, Baganai, Sharait, Bodonguud, Gushad, Sagan, Khuudai and Khalbin). Among Cisbaikal Buriats, two children are featured in the story—a boy, Sharait, and a girl, Khangina. The offspring of Sharait live in Nukut Aimak, while those of Khangina live in Alar Aimak (Tugutov 1992, pp. 164–71).

⁵⁶ One Buriat grandmother called me aside in Summer 2012 and berated me severely for never having successfully given birth.

present the past and the present, to demonstrate how Buriat reality has evolved over time. For example, male and female interactions among Buriat children and adults are not like those of westerners. During fieldwork, I observed that Buriat boys and girls, men and women, did not mix freely. Additionally, the Buriat beliefs in chance and ancestral spirits, who can be invoked for help and protection via a shaman; and the concept that Buriats are communally oriented, that they seek to support their kith and kin, were core cultural concepts for my participants. Buddhist doctrines for the Buriats have emphasized literacy; in fact, for the focal children in this study, the reason for their education in China rests upon the Buddhist practices of their parents, who desired that their children become not medical doctors in the western sense, but rather traditional healers skilled in Mongolian and Tibetan medical arts. This parental wish can be seen as a reflection of the sense that Soviet ideology, promoting science and western medicine, is no longer respected or idealized among many contemporary Buriats.

During the Soviet era, in which many of the Buriat parents grew up in, Soviet science reached an ascendancy (Quijada, 2012). Many Buriats of this generation of native Siberians sought to become members of the educational elite, as intellectual labor was prestigious and highly paid. When the USSR collapsed, however, Buriats and other Indigenous peoples in Siberia sought to regain their traditional religious and spiritual practices, which often incorporate healing (Balzar, 2012). This rethinking of Soviet ideology extolling western science and knowledge has now confronted traditional Buriat world views, which include and fuse shamanistic practices with Tibetan Buddhism.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ An example: today, one may study psychology in Buriatia, but it's not popular, because people, when they feel uneasy internally, consult shaman or lamas, not psychologists or psychiatrists (Quidada, 2012:143). The decay of Soviet institutions

Thus, for the Buriats, concepts of illness and soul sickness are being renegotiated in post-Soviet times. Buriat participants and focal Buriat parents in this study have expressed a general loss of faith in the post-Soviet medical systems. One Buriat parent, a western trained doctor, said she had lost much of her faith in the Russian medical system because it was expensive, understaffed, lacking in equipment, and some doctors were corrupt (taking bribes). Consequently, many Buriats, such as those in this study, now turn toward alternative, more traditional forms of healing - as a practice and as future profession for their children. They have decided to bring their children to North China to receive an alternative medical education, by first having them learn the two necessary languages and scripts to attain their goal: Mandarin Chinese and Old Classical Mongolian.

Chapter Two: Context - People and Place

As a qualitative researcher, I now offer a detailed description of the context and the participants involved in this research project. This chapter is subdivided into several subsections, including an initial description of the participants, the focal community, and the school research site. Information about the philosophy and politics of education regarding the school and education in China is presented in this section. Additionally, I offer a day in the life of each of the four focal children, not only to present their portrait in words, but also to help situate and identify these young people in sociocultural contexts – in China and in Russia. These portraits also indirectly illustrate my positionality as researcher in relation to the young focal Buriats and their parents. In following chapters, greater depth on positionality, as well as Buriat and Chinese culture, is also introduced.

The Buriat Community in Hohhot

Buriats who created the micro-community of Buriats studied in this research first migrated to Hohhot, Inner Mongolia, China, in 2004. Three families made the initial journey. They came because one of the three families had met a Chinese born Buriat man, Bata (all names in this manuscript are pseudonyms). He had traveled to Ulan Ude on business ten years before. In the early 1920s, his grandparents, along with a colony of fleeing Buriats, had settled in the northern grasslands of Hulunbeir, Inner Mongolia, China, to escape the ravages of the Russian Civil War. After he traveled to Russia, Bata got acquainted with Russian Buriats living in or around Ulan Ude. He convinced some of them to migrate to Hohhot, the capital of Inner Mongolia, arguing that superior educational resources existed in Chinese Inner Mongolia. Bata told the Buriats that a fusion of traditional Tibetan, Mongolian and Chinese medical practices could be learned at a medical institute in Hohhot. These Russian Buriats, being Yellow Hat Buddhists (followers of the Dalai Lama), decided that giving their

children this honorable profession – a doctor being also a spiritual healer for Buddhists (Laird, 2006; Mandelstam Balzar, 2011) – was an ideal educational opportunity. Consequently, families made plans, trekked to Hohhot, and were met and helped by Bata and his extended family. Bata, a devout Buddhist, helped these Russian Buriats for no gain, monetary or otherwise. (See Figure 19).

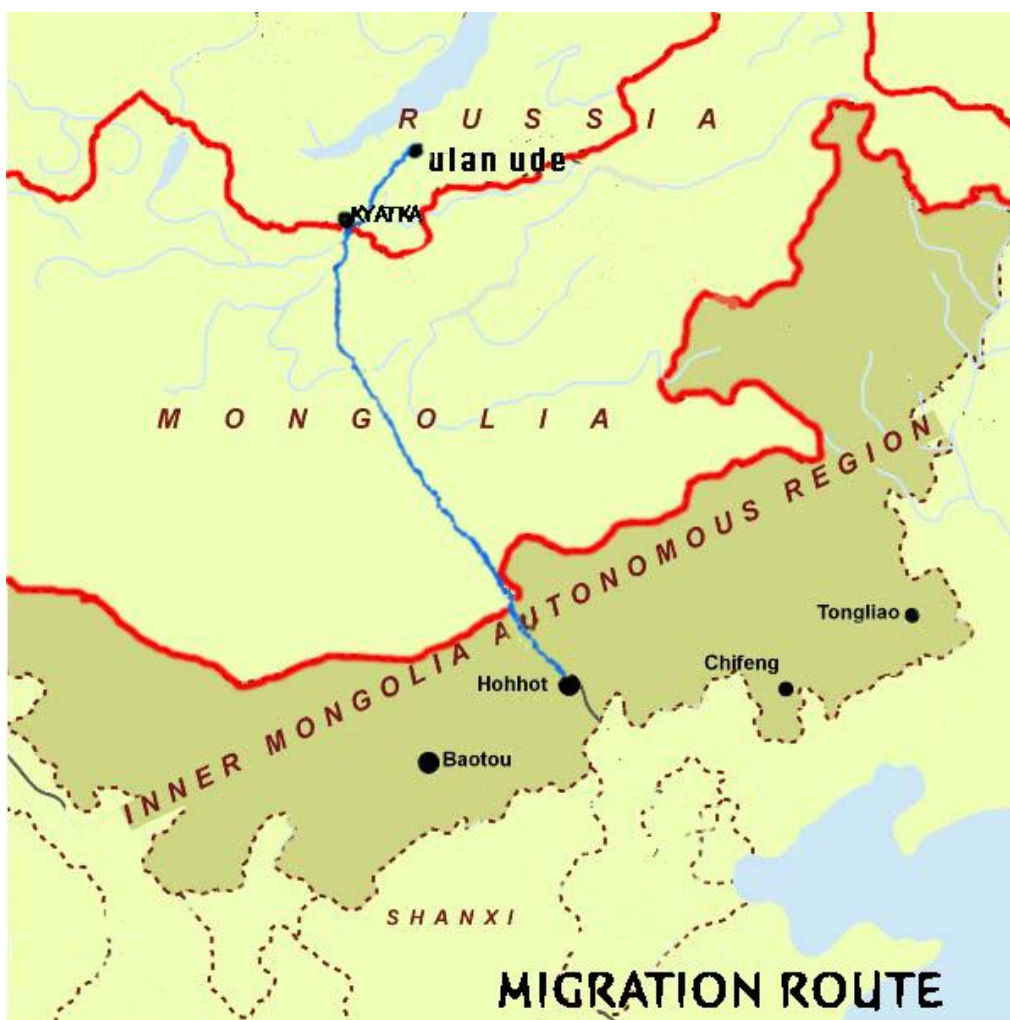


Figure 19. Focal Children’s Migration Route.

(Author’s drawing)

Soviet Mongolians (Buriats and Outer Mongolians) had lost these ancient Indigenous healing arts during Stalin's purges in the 1930s (Montgomery, 2005). Likewise, the Chinese had shut down Indigenous medical institutions during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) (Dikötter, 2010). After the Open Door Policy in the early 1980s, Chinese authorities again allowed and supported to some extent this type of ancient medical training. Because of the Inner Mongolian ancient historical connection with Tibetans, Mongolians, and Chinese (Laird, 2006), Hohhot remains one of the few places on earth where Tibetan/Mongolian healing arts can be learned. To qualify, students must be literate in Old Mongolian script, Chinese characters, and depending on advanced specialities, also know some Tibetan. To prepare the young Buriat students to become literate in Chinese and Old Mongolian, Bata suggested that Buriat children first attend a Mandarin-Mongolian bilingual school, located in Hohhot, built in the late 1980s, to promote Indigenous language education, thus reaffirming communist policies toward China's so called 'minority peoples.' (Feng, 2007). Bata explained that this bilingual school held special intensive Chinese language classes for non-Chinese Mongolian students.

Overview of the Focal Children

Ultimately I had four focal participants, all Buriat youth (12-16 years old) from Buriatia, Russian Federation. Two girls, Surana, aged twelve and Katya, aged twelve, were from Ulan Ude, the capital city, one in the outskirts of Ulan Ude. One boy, Bata-Nimah, came from Kyatka, (near the Outer Mongolian and Russian border). The fourth child, a boy named Mergen, was born in a rural region but his guardian, an aunt, lived in Ulan Ude, and later, Irkutsk, a Russian city outside of Buriatia about twelve hours by train. I found the focal children by informally asking around the Buriat community. One parent mentioned my

project to another, and within two months of my arrival in Hohhot, I had six participants, but two Buriat boys I later dropped. This was because one participant was not comfortable chatting with me (Donduk, aged 16) and one graduated early (Zhargal, aged 15). Other participants included parents, teachers, and city locals (Han, Mongol or Buriat). I also interviewed Mongols and Buriats at my host university, and in Buriatia.

Although there are a few Christian Buriats, due to missionary influences, all the Buriats I interviewed, young and old, observed a fusion of shamanistic/Buddhist beliefs. Additionally, all the young Buriats in this study initially⁵⁸ seemed fluent, even dominant in the Russian language, as opposed to Buriat. They all consumed a diet that could be considered a mixture of Russian and Mongolian cultures. Their dress was western, their primary writing /literature carried out in Cyrillic (Russian), while their behavior appeared both Russian and Buriat. For example, the Buriat focal children silently and docilely obeyed their parents, accepted a profession chosen by parents, learned and respected Buddhist and shamanistic practices from their parents, and some professed that they would even allow their parents to approve a marriage partner. They all also bathed communally, and enjoyed spending time together with their extended family members.

The Buriat focal youth dressed like Russian Federation peers, spoke excellent Russian, used Russian websites, and had Russian friends back in Buriatia, as well as some had Russian (Slavic) kin. Other Buriat participant youth I interviewed mentioned how living in China, the Internet, and contact with foreigners had “broadened their outlook” and caused them to consider other ways of living, “more international, less like Russian style,” and they also wanted “freedom from parental power.” American and British rap music videos and

⁵⁸ I later discovered that Bata-Nimah had excellent fluency in Buriat.

movies especially caught the young Buriats' attention. To offer a sharper image, each focal child is highlighted, by describing one day in each youth's life.

Educational Politics

The Inner Mongolians, under Chairman Mao, established the first minority autonomous region in China in 1947 (Bulag, 2000, 2003). The modern Chinese state remains keen on keeping "borderland minorities;" Mongolians, Tibetans, and Uighurs, from attempting to secede from China, given the breakup of the USSR in the early 1990s (Han, 2011). Thus, in the 1980s, many bilingual practices and educational concessions for Chinese minorities were reaffirmed and enhanced (Feng, 2007).⁵⁹ My research school site, a combined primary and middle school, was also an experimental school developed along these lines. In recent decades, this school has offered places to non-Chinese Mongolian students, and to other international students; Japanese, Korean, Russian, Central Asian, etc. During fieldwork only Outer Mongolian and Buriat international students attended.⁶⁰ As a combined primary/secondary school, it had a dormitory for foreign students and Inner Mongolian children from the northern grasslands. Buriat parents chose Hohhot because such bilingual and medical education was unavailable anywhere else; it was reasonably priced;⁶¹ and because other, local Buriats helped them to settle in Hohhot comfortably.

⁵⁹ In fact, at this time, Inner Mongolian intellectuals constructed an experimental immersion kindergarten, where the children studied only in Mongolian (Bulag, 2003). Shortly afterwards, in 1982, another offshoot, the "Mongolian Nationality Primary Boarding School" was created, with eight Mongolian immersion classes divided into three grades. During the summer break, school leaders sent students to the grasslands, to learn real language and culture from "pure" Mongol-speaking herders (Bulag, 2003).

⁶⁰ In the summer, this school organizes trips to Outer Mongolia to help the Chinese Mongolian youth to experience, absorb, and understand "true" Mongol culture (personal communication). The school director stated that his school is "modern, prosperous, and well funded."

⁶¹ 10,000RMB per year for room and board (6.2 RMB = 1USD).

The Primary Research Site: The Bilingual School In Hohhot

In 2012, the school had 1,760 students attending a total of 36 classes; approximately 20% of the students board at this school. In May 2011, 17 classes were taught only in Mongolian language, 9 classes were bilingual (Mongolian and Mandarin); three classes were taught in Korean and Mandarin. During my research year (2012-2013) there was no Korean class. In 2010 and 2011, the school had four levels of language track classes for foreign students who were studying Chinese and Mongolian; in 2012 it offered two levels, in the Chinese track; primary and middle level courses at all levels in Mongolian. From 2010-2012, more than 90 percent of the students were Chinese Mongolian children from Hohhot. In 2011, more than 100 students came from Outer Mongolia, Russia, Korea, and Japan. In 2012, there were 67 Outer Mongolians, 10 Buriats, one Kalmyk, and three Kazakhs. In 2012, the school had 88 teachers, all of them ethnically Mongolian by self-identification (six from Outer Mongolia), with educational levels above professional college; that means they had three years of university teacher training, with 70 percent of them holding additional advanced teaching certification.

In this study, one focal girl, Katya, attended classes in the Mongolian track, in which all of her nine classes were taught exclusively in Mongolian, with Chinese and English taught as second or foreign⁶² languages. Most students⁶³ in this school attended this track, as they were Inner Mongolian youth whose parents wanted them to become fluent in their

⁶² This designation is tricky; According to Moore (2008), “the distinction between second language (a nonnative language used in the speaker/learner’s daily life) and foreign language (a language studied by the speaker/learner in a formal instructional setting removed from the target language community) is a problematic one. This may be particularly true in postcolonial, multilingual contexts (p.176). In the school context, Mandarin was taught in the Mongolian track as a ‘foreign language’ but all the children, excepting Katya, in the Mongolian track were already bilingual in Mandarin and Mongolian, often with their fluency in Mandarin exceeding their fluency in Mongolian.

⁶³ A few Outer Mongolian children attended, but the majority sat in the Chinese intensive classes.

heritage language, Temut Mongolian. In principle, these classes were free for young students who were Chinese citizens, but not free for those coming from outside of China. Please refer to the charts in the appendix for information about classroom seating and schedules.

This school, however, had made great efforts in the last decade to focus on attracting Mongolian young peoples from outside of China. The motives, according to the school director were manifold: the school hoped to create good relationships with other Mongolians. This both served as a way for the Han Chinese rulers to present themselves as benign and friendly toward Mongolians, perhaps for commercial and political reasons. It also allowed the Inner Mongolian administration to reach out an educational hand that served to reestablish pan-Mongolian friendship. The school's principal, as discussed later, felt like others interviewed for this research that Outer Mongolians were "pure" Mongols, and he wanted to have some of their "purity" infused into the school.⁶⁴ Finally, the school generated income by having foreign students pay tuition and room and board when they came to study at this school.

Some detail regarding the way the school organized classes in terms of language is now presented. To accommodate Mongolians from outside of China the school offered international students two options: to either enroll as a regular student, taking classes in the (Temut) Mongolian language, or to choose an alternative, intensive Mandarin Chinese language track. Most students attended the Mandarin intensive because their parents had specific goals for their children: to learn Mandarin literacy in order to qualify for a Chinese institution of higher learning, or to use the Mandarin fluency back in Outer Mongolia for

⁶⁴ The school principal told me that every year the school recruited a few teachers from Outer Mongolia. The school leaders also made yearly or biannual trips to Outer Mongolia, to build relationships and to recruit students.

future work. Outer Mongolian Parents and students spoke Mongolian as their first language, but their script (Cyrillic) was different from that of the Inner Mongolians (Classical Old Mongolian), as explained previously. Although Mongolian parents were proud of Old Classical Mongolian, they felt that Mandarin literacy was more important.

In the case of the Buriat, however, whose parents wanted their children to become doctors of alternative medicine, the children were required to learn both scripts. Most Buriat parents placed their children in the Mandarin Chinese track, and then arranged for their children to be tutored in Classical Old Mongolian. They considered Mandarin to be more difficult, as well as more important (as Chinese was considered a superpower and the script held more prestige than Old Classical Mongolian), so their focus was to have the children learn Mandarin primarily and Mongolian secondarily. There was also a sense that the Buriats, being Mongolian in ethnicity, would somehow absorb Mongolian more easily than they would learn Mandarin.

The Chinese track, with three focal students, was directed at international students, which, during the year of my observations, consisted primarily of young Outer Mongolians. These young foreign students ranged in age, from as young as nine or ten to their teens (14-16). They also had differing experiences at their home country schools in terms of subjects studied, classroom sizes and teaching methodologies. The Chinese language was taught for six hours a day. Other classes, however, such as optional mathematics, science, physical education, art, computer, and music, were offered, but because many of the Outer Mongolian and Buriat children were attending to study just Chinese, some did not attend these classes. Those that did attend remarked to me that the level of difficulty for math and science was lower in China than in their home countries. .

Unlike the Inner Mongolian students, these international children were not going to have to take standardized tests to rise from primary to middle to high school to university level education. Instead, they were just trying to gain enough fluency in Mandarin Chinese in order to pass the HSK - the standardized Chinese language test, a gatekeeping test that resembles the English language TOEFL test. Some of the Buriat children also were studying Old Classical Mongolian, with tutors being the schools Mongolian track instructors, in order to qualify for specialized education. Becoming literate in this script was necessary for their future medical studies.

Chinese classes were held during the same time frame as the Mongolian track classes; approximately from 8-12, then 2-4 or 5. On Saturday mornings, the school offered an additional three hours of class.⁶⁵ (On Sundays, the Buriat students' day off, many children attended a paid, three hour tutorial in Old Classical Mongolian in their tutor's home). In the Chinese track classes, all the teachers⁶⁶ were Inner Mongolians but they spoke in Mandarin Chinese. As mentioned, these teachers frequently code-switched, using Temut-Mongolian words, phrases, and sentences, which the Outer Mongolians could understand easily, but the Buriat students told me that they struggled to understand.

The Buriat children told me that these teachers were generally kind to all their students. They wanted the children to succeed, and they considered the Buriat and Outer Mongolian children as "their Mongolian" students. The teachers did not show any preferential behavior toward certain groups. In the case of Katya, the mixed race Buriat girl, the teachers tried to accommodate her negative behavior by simply overlooking it. They did

⁶⁵ Saturday classes were considered routine in Hohhot for primary, secondary and high school students.

⁶⁶ One participant, a school graduate, mentioned an Outer Mongolian teacher, with who he played chess.

not discriminate against her; they simply tried to avoid any conflicts. The teachers also respected the quiet and restrained behavior of the Buriat boys; several told me that they understood how difficult it must be for them, as compared to the Outer Mongolians, with whom communication from Temut/Khalk made their learning experience a bit easier. Several teachers had traveled on vacation to Outer Mongolia, but none had been to Russia; a few told me wistfully that they would like to make such a trip, to better understand the Buriats.

Nonetheless, despite kind feelings toward students, teaching was not communicative. These Inner Mongolian teachers kept a tight rein on all their students, disciplining them at times corporally, and controlling student movement, activities, and information. Teaching was invariably lecture format, with teachers during the first half of classes tediously writing information that covered the entire two blackboards, their back facing the students, as students scrambled to copy character by character into their notebooks. There were no handouts or e-files. During the second half of class, the teacher would use a pointer and explain a character, adding more script. If any time remained, the teacher would speak the character and have students pronounce it four times, chorally. There was never any sentence building, or any kinds of creative activities involving agency on the part of students in regard to the information they received. All the classes, including the Chinese “conversation” class, were conducted in this way. Chinese conversation classes differed in that conversational scripts and dialogues were expected to be memorized by heart. During classtime one half the class recited one person, then the other half reciting the second speaker’s words. This was repeated several times.

I define this school a “bilingual school” - this concept requires clarification. In some sense, the school resembled a heritage language school, created to foster and nurture the

Mongolian language among members of what China calls the Mongolian minority people. Yet the teachers used two languages: Mongolian and Mandarin. They taught Katya's Mongolian track exclusively in Temut Mongolian, but I often heard teachers chatting to each other in both Mongolian and Mandarin. Students in this track always switched to Mandarin during breaks and physical exercises periods. Most urban Hohhot children who attended this school had better command of Mandarin than Mongolian. Some of them had a parent whose mother or father was Han Chinese; these children had little or no grasp of Mongolian and teachers would code switch to Mandarin to accommodate their needs, just as they code switched to Mongolian for the Outer Mongolian students. There was, however, a population of domestic boarding students from various regions around Inner Mongolia,⁶⁷ whose fluency was better in Mongolian than in Mandarin; these children often spoke a different language variety⁶⁸ than that taught at the school. They were invariably placed, however, in the Mongolian track, because they had to pass standardized tests and the courses offered in the Mandarin track did not teach to these tests – they promoted Mandarin fluency for passing the HSK (Chinese standardized language test) exam instead.

According to the school director, this school was created to support and sustain Mongolian language and culture for all who profess Mongolian ethnicity. This primary school, consisting of grades 1-6, was closely affiliated with a Mongolian language secondary school also located nearby its grounds, and a nearby Mongolian immersion kindergarden.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ I do not know the number

⁶⁸ There are many varieties of Mongolian spoken in China and in Inner Mongolia; these varieties are closer to Temut, the standard at the school, than Khalk, the Outer Mongolian children's standard, and Buriat, the Buriat children's heritage language.

⁶⁹ Chinese work units (*dan wei*) often make it hard to separate different groups (schools, work units) as is done in the Western world.

Many students who go through the primary levels at this school go on to attend the adjacent secondary school. According to the director, the majority of the students were urban Inner Mongolian youth, but the school also recruited and hosted Inner Mongolians from the northern grasslands of Inner Mongolia, and from the more arid western regions of Inner Mongolia. For Inner Mongolians, the school, like other Chinese government schools, was free of charge, but parents had to purchase textbooks and uniforms. (International students paid a large tuition and/or room and board fee up front at the beginning of the year; in 2012 it was approximately two thousand US dollars, almost the same fee I paid for my Chinese lessons, but I also paid another one thousand US for a private dorm room every semester). Non-local students received room and board at the school in a special dormitory, which was separate from the international student dormitory.

Chinese (Inner Mongolian)⁷⁰ boarding students had eight children to a dorm room, with communal bath and toilets down the hall; international dorms housed three or four to a room, with a bath and toilet in the room itself. There were two older ladies or gentlemen who slept (they actually lived there year round and often served in the cafeteria) on each hall and served as dorm moms and dads. The school had a cafeteria where three meals were served each day. These Inner Mongolian students were taught in the Mongolian (Temut) language; one focal child, Katya, in this study attended the Mongolian language track of Grade Four (Approximately Grade 6 in the USA). She studied ten subjects, including homeroom, and optional art/dance/music, in Mongolian, but her Chinese language class was taught as a foreign language from Monday to Friday. The Chinese teacher only spoke Chinese in class. This focal child did not attend Saturday classes for the students studying in

⁷⁰ I was told that at times Mongolians from Xinjiang, GanSu and other provinces had attended this school.

Mongolian. Next to the school was a new, underground garage where students parked their bicycles, and where the school's higher officials parked their cars. There was no street parking around the school, and street parking in general was lacking in Hohhot, as the city was not designed to have many private cars. (People routinely drove their cars up on sidewalks to park randomly and clumsily, and this scattered frightened pedestrians).

According to Linda Liu, an English university professor in Hohhot, many Mongolian families chose to place their children in the Mongolian only schools because it was possible for a child of Mongolian ethnicity to go from kindergarten through college entirely in the Mongolian language. Professor Liu said that Hohhot currently had three excellent Mongolian language kindergartens, five secondary schools, and various universities and institutes where students may choose to study entirely in the Mongolian language. In addition, she reported that students of Mongolian ethnicity could enter university with lower standardized test scores, and that they may defend their theses or dissertations in Mongolian as well.

“But very few Mongolians do this,” she said to me in English. “Because they realize that they must be extremely fluent in Chinese (Mandarin) in order to get a job after graduation. In fact, most Mongolian families try to give their children a good grounding in Mongolian language from kindergarten and perhaps through grades 1-4, but then they switch their children to Han (Mandarin) schools in order to prepare them for exams: the middle school entry exams, the high school exams, and the university exams. These tests are very competitive, and despite the favored lower scores for minorities, parents feel their children should study in Mandarin. They want their children to pass with high marks...and these tests are in Mandarin, not Mongolian, so it is critical to have high fluency, no matter what ethnicity you may be,” Linda Liu explained.

At the school, the children in the Mongolian track had varying degrees of fluency in Mongolian; their parents may or may not have taught them the language, for various reasons. First, some parents had been raised during the Chinese Cultural Revolution, where speaking Mongolian could have led to torture, imprisonment, and even death for themselves or their family members. In the 1960s, learning and using the Mongolian language was viewed as being unpatriotic and anti-Chinese (Sneath, 2010). A second reason is that some Mongolian parents and their parents had already assimilated to Chinese customs and norms; this assimilation process began in earnest in the first decade of the 20th century in Inner Mongolia, with many high ranking Hohhot families with political positions spoke and used only Mandarin to show loyalty to the government (Bulag, 2004).

Later, in the early 1980s, when the Chinese government began its Open Door liberalization policies, state authorities revalidated Chairman Mao's language and cultural mandates that gave minority peoples rights to study in their own languages. Mongolians, along with China's other legally recognized (55) minorities, began to feel safe in promoting their Indigenous languages at home and at school. The Chinese government allocated funding for schools such as the the research site. Notably, because the Inner Mongolians were the first minority group align under Chairman Mao, because the IMAR is located along the Outer Mongolian border, and because of the extreme suffering that many Mongolians endured during the Cultural Revolution (Dikotter, 2010), funding for Mongolian minority education has been generous. This school, for example, is noted as prosperous, and teachers have told me that their pay is "quite satisfactory."

Parents I chatted with reported that they were proud of being Mongolian, of having their children enrolled at the school, and that Mongolian language fluency was essential to

being Mongolian. They also were proud of the school, and the fact that it was in excellent condition, had hardworking teachers, and the fact that Mongolians from outside of China came to attend classes. Having non-Chinese Mongolians brought the school status in the parents' eyes, because they, like many other people I interviewed, considered the Outer Mongolians as more "pure" Mongolian (this is discussed in the Literature Review).

In fact, the director of the school told me that he went every year to Ulan Bataar, Outer Mongolia, to advertise his school, and recruit students. He reported that there was often a waiting list for international students from Ulan Bataar. Sainaa, an Outer Mongolia girl of sixteen, who had excellent English fluency, told me that she preferred to study in China, because she felt that Chinese was necessary for success in Mongolia. She explained that her parents did much business with China, and that it was interesting to live in China, the most powerful country in Asia. This girl also wanted to visit the USA and/or England, and hoped that her parents would also send her there sometime.

The Outer Mongolian students who were peers to the Buriat focal children had completed their primary school education in Ulan Bataar. They came to Hohhot, like the Buriats, to attend the special intensive Chinese classes offered by the school. In 2012, there were less than 100 Outer Mongolian and Buriat students combined who studied at the school; approximately 50 international students were enrolled. The intensive Chinese track consisted of two groups, a first year (beginning) and second year (intermediate) group. Some of the students in the intermediate group had received one year of Chinese language studies in their home countries.

The Chinese track lessons differed significantly from the Mongolian track lessons, in that they were designed to primarily teach these students Mandarin Chinese, in order to

eventually pass the standardized Chinese language exam (HSK) and either go on to Chinese high school, an institute (vocational or medical), or university. Qualifications for these categories differed, so it was up to the parents and the school administrators to decide how to supplement Chinese lessons with other courses. Because these students were not Chinese citizens, their parents had more leeway in determining the optional classes, and the students could also elect not to attend certain classes, if they or their parents felt that the home country had already provided a firm base in that subject.

Thus, the bulk of the classes in this track focused on Chinese literacy skills, with the language classes being divided into various components: Reading class (primer); grammar (primer readings with grammar highlighted); HSK vocabulary (handouts); dictation and writing (texts gleaned from the two books mentioned), and listening (tapes and talks played with vocabulary written on the board). In 2012, other optional classes included mathematics (which many Buriats said was low level and not useful, as they had already learned these skills in Russia), physical education (in which they often had no instructor, but were free to go to the underground gym or outside track on their own); as well as options in English, Chinese history, art, and computer. The Buriats complained that the computer class was not really a class: students went up to the fifth floor, where there was a large room containing 60 desktop computers, but no access to the Internet. My observations indicated that, during this period, the teacher was frequently absent, and students just played simple computer games, and chatted with each other. (In my months of observations, I never met the computer teacher, nor did I observe any formal instruction in learning to use computer for educational purposes. Children learned, apparently, these skills at home and on their own).⁷¹

⁷¹ Buriats and Outer Mongolian children seemed to have better computer skills and savvy than Inner Mongolian children.

These two groups of Intensive Chinese held classes side by side on the first floor of the main entrance, in a wing that was reserved for administration. Down the hall to the left was a main stairwell; to the right was the primary Grade 1. In the basement below the first floor was a large underground gym, consisting of a basketball court, lockers, and a small kiosk where students could ask for basketballs. Baseball was not played at the school; basketball was popular, as it is all over China. On the second floor to the seventh floors the various grades held their classes; the higher the grade, the higher the floor level. On the eighth floor the school director had his administration offices, which differed from general administration that was housed on the first floor. Teachers' offices were grouped together in large offices on the various floors. The ninth floor consisted of a large stage for talent shows and other performances; windows on either side of the walls offered striking views of the city. All children were required to climb the stairs; only adults - teachers, administrators, and guests, were supposed to use the stairs.

In terms of the school's design as a structure, I now make some final comments. Bathrooms were Chinese style, with squat toilets, and unlockable doors for privacy (many schools and universities have no doors); as elsewhere in China, water was economized, so bathrooms, although they were cleaned regularly by janitors who worked during school hours, could be located by smell. Both adults and teachers used the same bathrooms; only the higher administration people had private toilets. The school was concrete block; outside, heading toward the main gate, marble tiling had been laid; in the winter it was very slick and younger students skated and slid upon the iced marble with great joy, while I plodded very carefully, hoping not to fall and injure my spine (see appendix for picture).

Another safety concern I had was the school's window structure: all the windows could be easily opened by students or adults, and there were no safety locks on windows on any of the floors. Katya, a focal student (see picture in appendix) often rested her back in the corner, against such a window. She and other students often opened these windows during breaks, peered over the edge, and played near open windows; this made me very nervous during my observations, but the teachers seemed to think it quite safe. In the winter, teachers and students frequently opened windows because the heating system was more than adequate: it became stuffy and overly warm, so a blast of frigid winter air woke everyone up. Unlike the Russian schools I observed, there was no coatroom for students to place their heavy winter clothing, so desk areas were piled with layers of coats and clothing as students peeled on and off their clothes, as they became warm or cold.

The cafeteria was extremely clean, and could feed up to three hundred students at a time; students ate Chinese-style stir fried vegetables, with very little meat or fish, but they could eat as much as they liked. Boiled water, as opposed to tea (in Russian cafeterias) was served as a drink; students could also sit longer than 15 minutes (as in Russia) to eat, because they had a two hour break before afternoon classes began. Which brings me to my final point: In China, all students at the primary level, (as well as secondary level), study longer than students in Russia. As mentioned previously, Chinese competition in education is very severe, and even young primary students have no free time to simply relax, or to choose to do leisure activities that might enrich their minds or strengthen their bodies. For detailed discussion of this, in the appendix, please refer to the excerpt from Professor Liu, discussing her son's schedule and her views about the pressure. Also note how Surana, a Buriat focal

child now in Russia enjoyed her day, as opposed to how the Katya, another focal child in China, enjoyed her day. The contrast is significant.

School Socialization Practices

Assessment. As in other Chinese schools, students must pass standardized tests (in Chinese only) to graduate from middle school to high school (Tsung, 2009); high school students must pass a standardized college entrance exam which ranks their scores to determine which university they may attend, if any (Borchigud, 1995). Because testing is only conducted in Chinese, all students face difficulty in obtaining institute and university places if their Chinese literacy is not adequate. They also face job pressures to speak, read and write excellent Chinese.⁷² In sum, like other non-mainstream students around the world, these Buriat children faced (and still face) many linguistic and cultural challenges, as they deal(t) with the sociopolitical issues of being non-mainstream outsiders, living under Han rule in northern China. The politics of post-Soviet Russia, plus contemporary Chinese communism, laced with capitalism, impact these focal children, and deserve further study.⁷³

A major force of Chinese school socialization focuses on standardized testing and constant assessment. Testing in China is an ongoing process, from primary school through university. This testing socializes children to further conform and to obey. In addition, testing sends the message that others will evaluate the child's worth, which is based upon national

⁷² Thus, many Inner Mongolians see such bilingual school schemes as useless and bilingual schools are steadily losing their students to Chinese schools in recent years (Bulag, 2003). This school, however, still has support from Mongol intellectuals and cadres, "who supported the establishment of the school and invested much emotional capital with political metaphors" (Naran Bilik 1998:72); it is financially supported by the state and regional governments, to display state support toward minority language and educational rights (ibid).

⁷³ Moreover, along with rising capitalism, today's modern world has increased the speed in the way students as individuals, and as cultural groups, think, feel, and respond to their world and the people in it. First, there have been enormous changes in media development. Second, there has been increased human migration patterns have impacted all students, including the Buriat (Appadurai, 1996). Digital media (Internet, cell phones) and the ease of migration offer Buriat youth greater access to more kinds of resources, both tangible and intangible, that can both socialize them and help them transform their identities (Gee & Hayes, 2011). Future research on this digital socialization practices subject is necessary.

criteria established by the Chinese State.⁷⁴ Independent, creative thinking is not part of the Chinese curriculum. Another aspect of testing in regard to socialization focuses on where one belongs in society. Chinese schools introduce the need for intense competition, which establishes hierarchies between students, and instills the idea that children, as future workers, must be competitive in order to gain a place in order to survive in Chinese society. It is only at the university level when competition somewhat lets up.⁷⁵

During my research, many university students confirmed over and over to me how important networking in college was for their future careers. This led me to speculate that Chinese socialization in regard to school testing practices actually has two aspects. First, in primary and secondary schools, students learn to conform and obey authority without question. They learn to work hard, discipline themselves to doing rote, dull tasks, and to memorize huge chunks of information. They learn to value themselves by the assessment of others who have power over them, and to respect authority. Those who pass the tests needed to gain entrance in universities go on to a second phase: building vital social networks that will gain them, hopefully, a higher income, and steady work.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Constant testing also teaches children to tolerate a lifetime of arduous, often dull tasks. Significantly, in most Chinese tests, only one answer can be correct; even essay questions have “correct” responses. Answers are fed to students by teachers; children are expected to memorize answers. This process instills children with respect for authority, they learn to accept and believe arbitrary knowledge from authorities as correct and *comme il faut*. Chinese testing practices (and other standardized testing and assessment practices around the world), in effect, socializes children to view the world in a one-dimensional, hierarchical fashion, where one’s place is determined by others more powerful than one’s self.

⁷⁵ University students can relax a little and socialize with each other. “This is the time to really build our social networks, which are just as important, if not more important than grades or intelligence. That’s why getting into a good school is so important: it’s the contacts,” one Chinese graduate student reported. One’s place in society is dependent upon how one establishes “面子 *mian zi* - face” and “关系 *guan xi* -connections.” In brief, I define Chinese *mian zi* as the positive social value that a person has internally and from others, which gives a person status, dignity, and worth, whether real or perceived. I define *guan xi* as a person’s dynamic, ongoing series of social networks, which can be cultivated across socioeconomic class and cultures. Proper behavior and learning to interact effectively with others in school teaches students how to develop face and how to establish successful social networks.

⁷⁶ The degree is a necessary credential but the contacts are crucial for employment, especially coveted employment. “The best job in China is a government job, what you call civil service,” said Dr Yang, an economics professor. “It is a job for life, and has many benefits. To get this position, you must have excellent connections. It also is a job where some work hard, while others get the credit. You must understand our system (hierarchy) in order to accept this way of working.”

The Chinese State completely controls the domains of work and education. In fact, the government has intimate, absolute control over the ways all schools are run, public and private, minority serving and Han serving.⁷⁷ Assessment is also a government affair, with testing nationally standardized and monitored by the state and by regional authorities. This constant testing and constant competition results in a student population measured and evaluated by the state - a population of future workers that are molded to meet the needs of the Chinese state, and most importantly, of a population that will not think to oppose the absolute authority of those ruling in the name of the Chinese government.⁷⁸ Now I discuss how Chinese school socialization processes contrast with Russian school socialization. This macro difference, illustrated by Philip's (1983) participant structures, reflects a core difference in Chinese teacher-centered schooling versus modern Russian student-centered practices.

Parental expectations. Chinese education served over 220 million students in 1995 (Cheng 2000). Chinese parents, especially fathers, and sometimes mothers, work long hours, in the hopes of creating a better life for their children. "Success here (in China) is measured in terms of economic success," said a university professor; "Men are chained to their work. Few change jobs, and salaries don't get raised regularly. But people are grateful for work; there are too many people, and not enough jobs." In the same way that adults are chained to

⁷⁷ Moral and patriotic educational practices are mandatory, as well as literacy and other academic knowledge. All textbooks are regulated; all materials used in the classroom must be approved by governmental authorities. There is no private press in China and Internet websites and social networking sites are monitored and/or censored. My research site, a bilingual Mandarin-Mongolian school, is owned and operated by the government. The administrators at this school are all Party members. Because it is a minority serving institution, each high administrative position (principle, vice principle, head of department, etc) is twinned: there is a regional Han administrator working side-by-side with his equal counterpart, a Mongolian administrator. Both watch each other, and both are watched by higher ups in the national government.

⁷⁸ Testing is also a big business, with profits ostensibly going into government coffers. Foreign students must pass a Chinese language proficiency test to enter an institute or university, as well as take a yearly, extensive health examination, and hold a current visa. Foreign students receive their visas through their schools. Finally, as elsewhere in the world, foreign students must adhere to school rules and to the established law.

the jobs, Chinese children are chained to their schools. They attend one school for many years and spend long hours in school, and many hours doing homework. Children do not often change schools and they are expected to view their studies as a job, which will secure their future and provide them with a way to eventually care for elderly parents. “No one is really free...First we provide for them (children), and then, later, they provide for us, that is the Confucian Way,” explained Wang Jie, my Chinese foreign language tutor. Chinese parents seek to get their child admitted to the best school possible, and they will go to great efforts to help their child succeed. Education equates with success; success means steady work and income.

Confucianism in relation to Communist ideology. Confucian thought is alive and well in today’s modern China. Confucianism continues to impact 21st century Chinese civilization; in ancient times, it was the "state religion" of imperial China. This philosophy also has had great impact on the Chinese education system for centuries. Even today, with China evolving and having become a global superpower, the ancient concepts developed by Confucius live on among the Chinese people, and they are incorporated into China’s modern educational system. Confucianism derives from the teachings of the Chinese sage Confucius. His ideas encompass a complex system of moral, social, political, and religious thought.

What is Confucian Thought?

Confucianism (儒学; rúxué) is considered an ethical and philosophical system, which rose as the main state ideology during the time of Emperor Wudi in the Western Han Dynasty (206BC- 8AD). Orthodox Confucianism was significant in establishing the ideological foundation in the feudal society of ancient China. It remains a base of the Chinese communist ideology today. I now briefly introduce Confucian thought, by discussing its

relationship to the following concepts: rites, relationships, filial piety, loyalty, humanness, the perfect gentleman, and meritocracy. Next, I briefly discuss Confucian ideology in relation to the Chinese State and to the Chinese educational system.

1. Rites

Lead the people with administrative injunctions and put them in their place with penal law, and they will avoid punishments but will be without a sense of shame. Lead them with excellence and put them in their place through roles and ritual practices, and in addition to developing a sense of shame, they will order themselves harmoniously. (Analects II, 3)

Chinese society is known for its concern about face, which can mean that people must behave properly, show respect to others, and also receive respect. The quote highlights not only how the law and ritual differ, but also illustrates a key difference between Western and Eastern societies. Laws keep citizens under mindless control, whereas rituals instill strong behavioral norms that cause people to behave properly in order to avoid losing face.

Traditionally, for the Chinese, internalized behavior holds more power than any kind of administrative penalties. This means that Chinese children are socialized at home and at school to conform to Confucian norms. In Confucian thought, the Chinese character "rite" (禮, lǐ) is complex, with the meaning ranging from politeness/propriety to accepting/understanding one's correct place in society. This hierarchy distinguishes people by age, gender, and position in home and work, outlining a person's duty toward others and vice versa. Ritual socializes and internalizes correct behavior, which becomes formalized. By following ritual Chinese people hope to cultivate themselves and fit smoothly into society. As in the past, everyone has a proper place in society which is identified and strengthened via protocols and ceremonies.

2. Relationships

Likewise, Confucianism hierarchies address relationships between people, who have differing duties arising from their status in relation to others. A person may have different duties with different people; as a son in relation to parents and elders, and as a father in relation to children, as a senior in relation to younger siblings, students, and coworkers. The young must revere and serve their seniors, but elders should also be benevolent toward juniors. This theme is highlighted by filial duties on the part of children toward parents and elders, and by the great concern of parents toward their children. Children who go to school are often trying to excel because it will bring honor to their parents; likewise, parents will sacrifice financially to help their child get the best possible education. After children graduate and enter the workforce, they will give back to their parents, by supporting them in their old age. Children also feel great respect and affection to their teachers, especially those who have helped them to succeed academically. As adults, former students may revisit their schools and bring their teachers small gifts.

3. Filial Piety

In Confucian thought, filial piety (孝 xiào) is one of the greatest of virtues; it transcends death (hence, ancestor worship) and must be shown towards both the living and the dead. Children show respect and obedience to their parents, especially to their fathers. In addition, piety also encompasses five cardinal relationships (五伦; wǔlún): 1) ruler and subject (君臣 junchen); 2) father and son (父子 fuzi); 3) husband and wife (夫婦 fufu); 4) elder and younger brother (兄弟 xiongdi); 5) between friends (朋友 pengyou). Over the centuries, the importance of filial piety has been incorporated into Chinese law. A criminal,

for example, is still reviled and punished more harshly if a culprit has committed the crime against a parent. Likewise, in schools, from kindergarden onwards, pupils learn to respect their elders, to obey them unreservedly, and to look to the past for wisdom.

4. Loyalty

Loyalty is another type of filial piety, addressed toward one's leaders. In ancient times, ambitious young Confucian scholars loyally served their rulers. But because China had historical periods of autocratic regimes, Confucius also advocated obeying leaders who demonstrated great moral rectitude. Rulers also had responsibilities toward those they governed. Likewise, students in China are very loyal to their schools, their teachers, and to their friends.

5. Humaneness

Confucius felt that people matured within the context of human relationships. In addition to ritual and filial piety, the Confucian concept of humaneness (仁; rén) expresses the way mature people should behavior toward each other; this is expressed in the Confucian version of the Golden Rule: "Do not do to others what you would not like them to do to you". Rén is also a political concept. If the ruler lacks rén, his subjects may also lack it. Rén is espoused to keep despots from behaving cruelly toward their subjects. If a ruler behaves inhumanely, he may lose the "Mandate of Heaven;" the right to rule. Benevolent rulers, however, should be obeyed strictly. Students learn about rén from primary school onwards, and teachers offer prizes for both academics and to those displaying rén. This concept is part of a child's moral education.

6. Behavioral Norms

Classic Confucian thought has the term "jūnzǐ" (君子) or "perfect man," an ideal to which everyone should strive. Such a person should be a saint, scholar, and gentleman. Clearly, there is a masculine bias in Confucianism, which has weakened somewhat over the centuries. In the past, the Chinese hereditary elites were expected to act as moral guides for the rest of society; today the Communist Party members are expected to take this role. Such leaders must live a moral life; participate and perform rituals correctly; display filial piety and loyalty; be humane. The opposite of the gentleman was the small person, xiǎorén (小人). In this context small indicates a petty mind and heart, selfish, greedy, superficial, and materialistic man. Teachers speak about this concept to students in their ethics classes; students are praised when they display the qualities of being a "perfect man" (or woman).

7. Meritocracy

By replacing the nobility of blood with that of virtue, Confucius broke the barriers of class. Thus, a Confucian "gentleman" could derive from a common man who had cultivated himself, while a corrupt king's son could be a "small man". Originally, Confucius struggled against ancient Chinese feudal structures; today his ideas are incorporated into Chinese communist thinking, which philosophically also advocates meritocracy.

This Confucian idea of meritocracy was introduced by the Imperial examination system in ancient China. Anyone who passed this examination could be a government officer, a position of prestige and honor to his family. This idea of a state exam has passed on into education, with students from all over China taking the same sets of standardized tests to compete for prestigious places, and ultimately, jobs.

In sum, as a political philosophy, Confucianism considers relationships more important than the laws. This paradigm may lead government officers and others with power, such as teachers, to take their own self-interests, rather than the common interest, into consideration, resulting in corruption and nepotism. In China, in the past and in the present, government salaries have been low, so workers seek ways to add to their incomes. Thus, Confucian precepts have been accused of creating a system that encourages bribes. In education, Confucian thought has extolled the role of the scholar, but Chinese society does not offer educators and professors high wages. Chinese teachers at all levels are highly respected for their work, and, in accord with Confucian thought, they expect complete obedience from their students. Thus, the Chinese educational system differs from western and modern Russian educational models, as teachers have complete authority, moral and rational, in their classrooms.

The Communist Party and Confucian Thought

Initially the Communist Party did not embrace Confucian thought, despite sharing its ideas about meritocracy. In fact, during the Cultural Revolution, Chairman Mao ridiculed Confucius. But in recent decades, Confucian ideas have regained popularity among the government authorities. In China, Confucian study programs exist within the Chinese education system, ranging from specialized kindergarten classes to university philosophy departments. There are also Confucian-themed CEO education programs for businessmen. Confucianism is quintessentially Chinese, unlike communism, which was imported from abroad. The official Chinese governmental overseas cultural and linguistic study centers are even called Confucius Institutes, which offer Chinese culture and classes (and scholarships to

foreign students), and serve to convey positive soft propaganda to the world at large (Paradise, 2009).

Currently, the Communist Party has promoted official slogans indicating Confucian undertones. Clearly, Confucian ideas, with their emphasis on unquestioned obedience to authority, are useful to China's rulers (Ralston et al., 1995). In recent decades, with rising economic and regional disparities, corruption, and social tension, ordinary Chinese people are finding solace in Confucian values (just as some Americans are adhering to Christian values). Moreover, Chinese leaders, who are struggling to maintain their legitimacy and authority in a time when the ideological underpinnings of communism have given way to a more capitalistic open market system perceive Confucianism as a kind of pre-established pure Chinese ideology. This philosophy socializes people to accept their place. More importantly, it also advocates Chinese not to challenge the ruling party elites (Ralston et al., 1999).

Yet there are drawbacks in the way Confucian thought has become the bedfellow with the ruling Han ideology. According to Confucius, those at the top must prove their worthiness to rule. Some Chinese leaders have been caught in corruption scandals, shaming the party as well as the individual. Confucianism does not really address the government's main worries: remaining legitimate while also getting rich. As long as the bulk of the Chinese people continue to improve their standard of living, as long as the economy grows and people prosper, the communists retain their authority to rule. But it is not known whether Confucian or communist ideologies will serve to support the current ruling elite if and when economic growth falters.

Confucianism in Modern Chinese Education

Confucian thought impacts students both at home and in the classrooms. For example, here follows an excerpt of an interview with a Russian mother who has a Han Chinese husband. Their ten year old daughter attends the university sponsored (government) primary school where both the parents work; they also live on the campus in government housing. This is what she said when I asked her about differences between Chinese and Russian parenting and educational systems.

Nina: ...the Chinese way of parenting children is more traditional. It is more traditional and it preserves Chinese traditional beliefs, I mean that Chinese culture, Confucian concepts, demands veneration of ancestors and parents, and, so, on this basis there's the attitude: parents want their child to be educated, parents want their child to follow their advice, so, that means the child must obey. In this way it is traditional, (it is Confucian); it is, so called, Confucian parenting, yes, this system requires obedience to parents, adults, and respect for all elders. The Russian way of parenting has been already affected by the civilized (western) countries. But the traditional Russian parenting, which had existed before the revolution, I think, has been destroyed; children totally obeyed parents (at that time).

... что китайское воспитание, оно более традиционное. Оно более традиционное и сохраняет традиционные, значит Конфуэс устои, то есть, ну вот это китайское почитание родителей, послушание родителей и, соответственно, исходя из этого всё и отношение: если надо учиться, если надо слушаться, то ребенок должен слушаться полностью. Вот в этом смысле это традиционное, (следует Конфуэс) такое воспитание, да, послушание родителей, взрослых, уважение к старшим. Русское воспитание, оно, конечно, испытало на себе зна... очень сильное влияние уже цивилизации. И патри... вот это традиционное воспитание, то, что у на... то, что было в России, конечно, ну это до революции было... тоже такое же, такие же традиции были: полное послушание, подчинение взрослым - это, конечно, разрушено полностью, я считаю.

Nina's comments underscore how Confucian ideas influence children's education. First, Confucius thought commends the role of the scholar as a worthy profession. Second, children must obey and respect all their elders, especially teachers. Nina goes on to explain that the modern Russian system is having some difficulties, because children's rights and

behaviors have changed with the adoption of European norms of education. I asked her why she educated her child in China, rather than Russia. She told me about problems in educating youth in Russia;

Nina: Respect for the child's individuality should be a two-way: the rights of parents shouldn't suffer. Yes. I think a lot about that now, because we've got such kind of a problem when I try to raise my child in a [modern] Russian way. I pay attention to the fact that a child should feel herself free to help to disclose her individuality. But her father sometimes let me know, that it is not the way children are parented here, in China. And, maybe, I was trying to preserve my Russian way of parenting, so, now, I reap the fruits of this...(laughing)... this is really not so good for my child, because now I understand, I was not right bringing this model to our family. Because in this model, the Russian, the western model, children are left to create themselves... and a child becomes a dictator in a family.

Аа, уважение личности ребенка, да, оно не долж... оно должно быть двусторонним, то есть не должны страдать права родителей. Вот. Я... я сейчас много над этим думаю, потому что у нас тоже возникла такая проблема, потому что я со своей стороны Яну воспитываю в русском духе, то есть, это свобода личности, чтобы ребенок чувствовал себя свободным и его личность могла раскрыться полностью, да? Аа... папа старался, хотя он не очень противился, да, но он мне постоянно как-то пок... пок.. давал понять, что, вот, в Китае не так. Но я как-то, вот, была, видимо, сильнее, и сейчас я пожинаю плоды... (смеются) не очень хорошие плоды в отношении Яны, потому что я понимаю, что это... что я в каком-то смысле была не права, вот, привнеся в наш... в нашу систему воспитания детей вот это вот наше русское понимание, да. Я не думаю, что моё вот... сейчас я пересматриваю свои... своё отношение к воспитанию, я думаю, что, вот это русское... русское воспитание, когда идёт... дети предоставлены сами себе, идёт... ребёнок становится мм... диктатором...

VS: Like in America? - Как американки?

Nina: Yes, like in America, and, as I understand, this problem exists both in America and Europe. And there you have a system of juvenile justice... I feel that this has become a big contradiction, when a country allows children everything they want, but at the same moment the rights of parents are violated by this justice, so, it becomes a threat to the family union...

Да, как в Америке, вот я смотрю, и в Америке, и в Европе эта же проблема возникает. И тут у нас возникла еще ювен... ювенальная юстиция, и это становится страшным противоречием, когда ребёнку всё

можно, а права родителей ущемляются таким образом, и это сна... становится уже угрозой для семьи в каком-то смысле...

Nina also went on to explain that, because the teachers had absolute power over their pupils, they could be less empathetic and caring; this might also be due to the large class size in China. Here follows Nina's comment;

Nina: ...I decided, that my child should study at the embassy school for ex-patriot children in Beijing. ... So, we enrolled her in the school. ... she, for first time in her life, experienced a Russian school. She saw there were not sixty pupils in a class, she saw the teacher was actually kind... That really inspired her.

... я решила записать её в посольскую школу на экстернат, в посольской школе есть экстернат... Мы поступили... Она увидела обстановку русской школы, что там не шестьдесят человек, учительница была очень доброжелательна, познакомила её с классом очным, она посидела один урок... Вот это вот, конечно, её очень вдохновило.

In sum, Confucian concepts are respected and honored in modern China, by Chinese and some foreigners alike. Clearly, Confucian moral values also live on in Chinese schools. Students learn how to have successful relationships with people of different ages, how to behave according to the concepts of *rén*. In school, students learn to share and be kind; they also treat each other equally. Clearly, Chinese schools offer academic as well as moral training, per Confucian philosophy.

The Chinese School and Expectations

For the focal children, school culture differed in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia, China from that in Ulan Ude, Buriatia. Some children refused to conform to the broader norms established by the school, and also with the expectations, conscious or unconscious, which their teachers had for them as students. These differences in communicative acts are divided into two sections: 'workloads' and as 'individual versus collective.'

As Field (1995: 54) argues concerning Japanese children in schools, students are suffering from “the soft violence of endless labor,” as they go about their daily lives at school and at home. Japanese youth attend school for long hours during the day, and then their parents take them to cram schools until late at night. Some have private lessons, in math, music, etc, in the evenings and/or weekends. This leaves very little time for play, physical exercise, or even the chance to watch television or play video games to relax. Field (1995:55) calls such Japanese children “pampered hostages” because, although their parents preen and fuss over them, they also make extraordinary demands on their children to perform academically. I observed a similar workload among students in China, including foreign students, who like the Buriat,⁷⁹ also sought to pass the HSK - a standardized Mandarin language test.⁸⁰ Several Buriat children I watched were studying for this exam while also taking online courses for their Russian diplomas via online courses and SKYPE sessions with their Russian teachers.

In addition to preparing for tests, Chinese children work hard because they are socialized to compete with each other to get into good schools and universities. Their parents train and push them, and the Chinese youth I spoke with understood that population dynamics forced them to be highly competitive.⁸¹ Unsurprisingly, some parents begin

⁷⁹ As discussed, the Chinese system of education is standardized (Feng, 2007), with two large tests acting as gatekeepers. Passing the first test, the 中考 zhong kao, allows a student to enter senior high school. Passing the second test, the 高考 gao kao, allows a student to enter college. Gao kao scores are ranked nationally, which means that competition is extreme, as China’s student population is massive. Unsurprisingly, many parents begin preparing their children for these tests as soon as they start grade one. Children also take weekly tests and quizzes.

⁸⁰ All foreign students studying in China must have a recent HSK certificate in order to go on to institutes and/or university studies. The HSK is scaled from one to six, with a minimum of five to enter a Chinese university.

⁸¹ “If you don’t study, and be the best one, you will end up eating dirt and have no money to feed me,” I heard one parent tell her six year old. Because of Chinese population demographics, gaining entrance into a good school is very difficult, even if the official residence address gives students the right to attend.

preparing their children for exams as early as pre-school.⁸² Chinese parents will go to extraordinary lengths to try to ensure that their child will succeed in school.⁸³ In Hohhot, I noted that parents often rented small apartments far from their home towns to be close to the child's school.⁸⁴ Some Buriat parents behaved in the same way; others placed their children in the school's dorms, delegating authority to the school.

Authority. The authority structure Chinese schools use is highly structured in design. “We organize them this way to control them; they are too many,” said Sarancha, a Mongolian language teacher; “Our job is to make them obey, not to play.” At school, every class had a monitor. Every week I noted that each classroom performance was compared to all the other classes at the same level. In effect, the children were socialized to compete with each other in the individual classroom, and within the entire grade, and with other schools in the city, the province, and ultimately, the country at large. They competed individually at times, and they competed weekly as a group; for example, to have the highest Grade 4 math scores among all the Grade 4 classes.

⁸² Because the schools are overcrowded and competitive, Chinese children are socialized at school and at home to behave in certain ways. If children complain about their school workload, their parents will berate them for not thinking of the future, which implies not only getting into a good university, but also eventually gaining a good job which will allow children to take care of their parents in their old age. “As a child, I worried that I would not be able to support my parents,” one university student, an Inner Mongolian girl, told me. “I still worry about this, so I study hard.” Teachers will also tell students to buckle down and work without questioning the load or the subject matter. In Hohhot, a high school Mongolian student showed me her schedule: she had 42 classes a week, not counting her study halls or piano lessons. Chinese students have little or no choice regarding their classes. Often, students do not choose their university major or future job: their parents make this decision for them. Their test scores determine which universities they may attend, if any. “My parents want me to be an accountant because it makes money, but I hate math,” a young university student said. When I asked why she agreed to study something she detested, she replied, “This is China, you must respect your parents. They gave me life.” I heard this explanation dozens of times from students who hated their majors.

⁸³ In the Chinese language, for example, there is a two character word: 陪读 *pei du*, which translates as “helping one's children with their studies.”

⁸⁴ The child's mother or an auntie will move into the apartment and act as a servant to the child, taking care of all her needs, carrying her to school on bicycle, meeting her after school, and watching every evening as the child studies until bedtime. On weekends and evenings, if money is available, private tutors will arrive to supplement lessons. Parents expend much time, energy, and money to support their child's learning.

Unlike Russia, Chinese students are socialized in school *to act as a group, because they are rated and ranked in groups*. Significantly, I observed Inner Mongolian Chinese children who rejected Katya, a Buriat girl, for her non-participation. Perhaps out of fear of her superior size, they did not berate and bully her, but rather ignored and ridiculed her, as her marks constantly brought the class average down. Such group socialization encompasses a serious concern: bullying.⁸⁵ At times, I was shocked by children's behavior toward each other. For example, Katya, who identified herself as "half Russian and half Buriat," said: "They always called me fatty foreigner. I hated going to school. I hate the Chinese." She often begged her mother to let her stay home.⁸⁶

Group behavior also meant adhering to socialization concerning the Chinese government. This issue, (despite the fact that the research site was a Mongolian minority serving institution), was enforced via constant reinforcement in school demanding loyalty to the Han Chinese State. As demonstrated by Shirazi (2012), one key educational focus for all students, was the positive presentation of the government as a benign ruler, a big brother to minority peoples, and in Hohhot, at times, a rewriting of history regarding the Mongolian people.⁸⁷ Conformity to Chinese rule included chalk drawings depicting Mongolian children in Mongolian dress as loyal Chinese citizens; the wearing of 'young pioneer scarves' to show loyalty and enthusiasm to Chinese communism; and all important announcements, written or

⁸⁵ As Fields (1995) reports, in Japanese schools, children are taught to discipline and control each other, often in negative ways. Fields reports that this "soft violence" makes children bully each other, and sometimes the stress makes a child not only uncomfortable but also ill, either physically or psychosomatically. I found this school to be similar to Japanese schools described by Field.

⁸⁶ Another Buriat girl described how frustrated she was by always being told what to do by her classmates; "They treated me as if I were retarded, because I could not speak (Mandarin) and (the teachers) wanted me to follow stupid rules. At night I would scream and curse them in Russian (in the dorms). I had to endure this crap for almost two years."

⁸⁷ For example, I viewed several movies in the Mongolian track class where one Buriat child was studying. These movies presented Genghis Khan as a hero of the Chinese people, despite the fact that it was his grandson who founded the Yuan Dynasty.

oral, were in Mandarin, as opposed to Mongolian. Like Shirazi's (2012) Palestinian boys in Jordan who did not feel motivated to be loyal to an alien nation, a Buriat boy commented; "I didn't grow up in Soviet times. I don't want to start doing this (commie) stuff now."

Summary. As Philips (1972) demonstrated, when teachers' cultures (Anglo) and students' culture (Native American) differ, learning may be impaired or misunderstood. The bilingual Mongolian-Mandarin school system had great teachers who wanted their students to succeed. But these teachers also used a learning style that was teacher-centered, placing their students in tightly structured formations and group oriented styles. These structures opposed the post-Soviet Russian, student-centered teaching style (Holmes et al, 1995) that the Buriats knew. Ironically, despite the fact that the teachers at this school overwhelmingly self-identified as "Mongolian" in ethnicity, their teaching practices and expectations,⁸⁸ hence their participant structures, were almost always in conformance to the Han Chinese ideology.⁸⁹ And in effect, this covert ideology resembled Heath's extended study of three communities in the USA, where certain children were academically challenged by their schools' Anglo-American ideology. In this school, with all children and adults ostensibly "Mongolian," one would expect a sense of solidarity and compatibility. Instead, the Chinese-reared Inner Mongolian children experienced no disconnect, having assimilated to Han Chinese practices (Bulag 2003), while Buriat-Mongolian children remained uncomfortable.

Differences in expectations about teaching and learning confronted, challenged, and angered the Buriats, causing them to resist learning. Such oppositional behavior could also

⁸⁸ These teachers attended the Inner Mongolian Normal University in Hohhot.

⁸⁹ This could be why the Outer Mongolian students also rebelled and resisted: they called the Inner Mongolian grass eaters, and said to me that they were Chinese, not "pure" Mongols: please see section: What exactly is a pure Mongol, for more details.

reflect a Buriat awareness of the Han ideological stance toward Mongolian peoples and languages as lesser than the Han. Although these Mongolian teachers valiantly promoted Mongolian language and culture, like Guardado's (2009) examination of a Spanish Scout troop located in Vancouver, the school's adults, like the Canadian Hispanic Scout leaders, employed the dominant language (Mandarin; English) for high status speech and communication activities, thus reinforcing the dominant ideology as well.

The Four Focal Children

This final section is meant to give the reader an expanded sense of who the focal children are, how they conducted their school and home lives, and how I, as the researcher, was able to observe and interact with these young people and their parents and/or guardians. The children are presented in this order: Surana, Katya, Bata-Nimah, and Mergen. Note: the appendix contains pictures, charts, and other information to help orient the reader to the lives and activities of these children.

A day in the life of Surana in Ulan Ude, Buriatia.

Introduction. This description of one focal female child, Surana, is followed by the description of another female focal child, Katya, because both these Buriat girls attended the same Mongolian language track. In 2012 both girls were close in age and in Grade 4, but in separate groups. Surana, however, returned to Buriatia after three months, while Katya remained in China at school. This description of Surana focuses on her life in Russia;⁹⁰ Katya's description focuses on her life in Inner Mongolia. (I have no data on Katya in Russia because her mother had no plans to return to Russia). By looking at the way both children went about their daily lives in these two countries, I illustrate not only unique differences in

⁹⁰ I did not obtain official consent from Surana and her parents for her to be a focal participant until I arrived in Russia; hence, her life description in China is scant for this reason, as well as the fact that she stayed such a short time at the school.

the children's lives as people, but also significant differences in their communicative interactions, due to the differences in cultural and educational contexts. After the two focal girls are presented, the lives of two Buriat boys, Bata-Nimah and Mergen, follow, with one in Buriatia, Russia, and one in Inner Mongolia, China. Surana's description is long because of the unique opportunity I had in living with her family for one month in Ulan Ude, Buriatia, during the winter of 2014.

As of winter 2014, Surana was almost 13 years old. She was exactly five feet tall, with long, silky waist length coffee brown hair, which her mother dressed into two thick braids when she went to school. On the weekends she dressed her hair in pony tails and chignons, and told me that she liked "to look both traditional and elegant, so her hair will always be long" (чтобы выглядеть традиционно и изящно, поэтому ее волосы всегда будут длинными). She wore western clothes, jeans and T-shirts, and brand name boots and shoes, and was very concerned about coordinating colors and looking neat and fashionable. In 2014 she had a lavender colored down coat, because this color was then considered very popular in Russia. In fact, as compared to Americans, Russian and Buriat women, young and old, take great care with their appearance, and their fashion sense reflects European conservative norms. Fur coats for adult women were also extremely fashionable that year in Buriatia. The young wore both fur and down, and almost everyone wore the large fur hats that reflect the stereotype of Russians, especially Siberians. Nevertheless, there were also western influences: in Ulan Ude there was one tattoo shop, and I heard English language rock music in cafes and coming from the earphones of young people riding public transport. But in terms of dress, most young people dressed conservatively and neatly. This contrasted with the Outer Mongolians in Mongolia, where I saw boys wearing low slung jeans, long hair, and

earrings. In the summer of 2013, I saw some Outer Mongolian girls, even young girls, wearing bright, low cut blouses and dresses, high heels and make-up. In contrast, as I rode the buses and trams around the city of Ulan Ude, I mused that the dress style here reminded me of the American post-war fashions depicted in nostalgic American movies.

For example, at Surana's school in Ulan Ude, all the teachers, young and old, wore dark skirts and light, pastel blouses, with a minimum of makeup, and flat heels. One large bosomed, forty-something woman wore a pearl necklace; the others seemed to prefer thin gold chains and small gold earrings. The men dress neatly as well. For example, upon entering the school, a middle aged guard in dark, pressed slacks, and with a neatly trimmed walrus mustache, guided me to place my coat in the guard robe, where boots and coats are lined up by class. This school, like private homes, is well heated, so unlike the Chinese research school site where children kept on many layers of clothing in classrooms, here one may walk around without heavy clothing. Boys of all grades wore dark solid colored suits and matching ties to school, with v-necked vests; girl wore dark skirts and white blouses, with v-necked vests. The girls' hair was always neatly pulled back; no boy had hair past the nape of his neck. "The school is going back to the dress code of the Soviet era," В школе вводится форма одежды советского периода Surana's mother told me, "Because some girls cried when others wore fancy dresses to school. It is a sign of prestige to dress well, and the school wants the children to study, not try to start a fashion competition." Из-за того, что некоторые девочки жаловались, когда другие носили модную одежду. Модно одеваться – это знак престижа; а школа хочет, чтобы дети учились, а не участвовали в конкурсе красоты. Her mother explained that this year is a transition year, so the students are arrayed in a combination of uniform and their own choice of clothing. Surana, for

example, today was wearing the school vest and white shirt, but her limbs were clothed in brown stretch jeans that have crystal sparkles running down the left leg.

Surana was born in Ulan Ude at the local hospital; her mother was 39 when she gave birth, and Surana is considered a late child, a blessing. She has an older sister (sixteen years older) and who is now married and has recently given birth to a baby boy. The sisters are very close, and they talked on the phone every day. Surana also wants to be her sister's babysitter. Surana's name means "strong" and it is popular name for Buriat girls. Her mother, a doctor, told me that Surana's character is that of a stubborn and fearless child; when she was younger they asked her to sing and dance during holidays, to entertain guests, and she always readily agreed. During my visit, Surana was asked, because a child fell sick, to replace him in the annual Student of the Year Talent Contest, and she agreed, despite the fact that she had only 72 hours to prepare her presentation.

But last year Surana did not stay for the entire academic year in China; she was a student at the Mandarin/Mongolian school for only three months. Her mother and father told me that they missed her terribly. They had reconsidered: she was too young to be living alone without her parents. Upon interviewing them, first in August 2013 and again in Jan 2014, I learned they also had financial concerns and cultural concerns.

"In Russia, schools are free in principle," В России школы свободны в принципе said her mother. "We do pay fees to for renovation, but it is not mandatory; and not all parents agree to pay. We pay. In any case, it costs much less to have her home. In China the school was two thousand US dollars; that's a big difference..." Конечно, мы платим за косметический ремонт, но это необязательно; не все родители соглашаются

оплачивать ремонт. Мы платим. В любом случае, дешевле, когда она дома. В Китае школа обходилась нам в две тысячи долларов, это большая разница...

Her father added, “And we saw that another Buriat child, a boy, seemed to be acting too much like a Chinese.⁹¹ We want our Surana to be Buriat, not anything else.” Мы видели, что один бурятский мальчик вел себя совсем, как китаец... Мы хотим, чтобы наша Сурана была буряткой, а не кем-то другим.

Her mother went on to explain that they were both fluent Buriat speakers, but Surana was not. “If she stayed in China, she would have learned Chinese and Mongolian. That’s wonderful, but we think her learning Buriat and living here will make her more conscious of being Buriat, as opposed to being Russian. The Russians have influenced us so much that we are Russian Mongols, and if she stayed in China, she might forget that she is Buriat.” Если бы она осталась в Китае, она бы выучила китайский и монгольский. Это прекрасно, но мы думаем, что ее обучение бурятскому языку и проживание здесь помогут ей осознать, что такое быть бурятом, а не русским. Русские в такой степени повлияли на нас, что теперь мы русские монголы; а, если бы она осталась в Китае, то скорее всего она забыла бы, что она бурятка.

Yet notably, neither parent spent much time giving Surana language lessons. They seemed to think that she would just pick it up, and they depended upon the school to teach her the Buriat language. Sometimes her mother or father would tell Surana a word in Buriat, especially food words, and ritual greetings for holidays. After the first semester this year, however, the Buriat language teacher left her school, seeking better pay elsewhere. Surana

⁹¹ They are referring to a Buriat boy who came to China when he was six years old and has been in Hohhot for eight years. He went to this school but currently attends the medical institute in Hohhot.

told me that her grandmother, who lives across town, also would speak from time to time to her in Buriat, but complained because she spoke with an accent.

During my stay Surana's parents politely asked me to speak to her in English,⁹² because "English, like Russian, is a language for success." Английский, как русский язык - это язык успеха. They also asked me during my stay to tutor her in English, sometimes along with her friend Inna; I agreed. In contrast, I did not see the parents speak to Surana in Buriat, except to chastise her occasionally in front of me. They used Russian in communicating with her, while they mixed languages while conversing with each other. Because the parents did not formally tutor their child in Buriat, I asked them why, and Surana's father said, "The school will do this, they will find another (Buriat language) teacher soon." Школа сделает это: они скоро найдут нового учителя (бурятского языка). If they told their daughter a word or two in Buriat; when I was living with them, Surana would often try to teach me this word. Whether the school's language program will be effective or not remains to be seen. Now I present a day in the life of Surana.

My observations took place from Jan 20 through March 1, 2014, when I lived most of the time in Surana's home. This winter in Buriatia had been what locals call 'unseasonably warm,' with the average temperatures in Jan being minus 10 to minus 28 (Celsius), as opposed to minus 40 and above. Surana lives in a small apartment owned by her mother, who works as a general MD for the neighborhood clinic. Her father was unemployed; he had worked a minivan driver until four months ago, when the state changed the taxi policy for Buriatia. He had the choice to either take a bank loan and buy the required larger transport

⁹² Indeed, part of my welcome was due to the reciprocal agreement that I tutor Surana daily for 1-2 hours a day in English.

vans, or work as an employee for a fleet owner. Instead, he chose to do neither, and spent much time at home, watching TV.

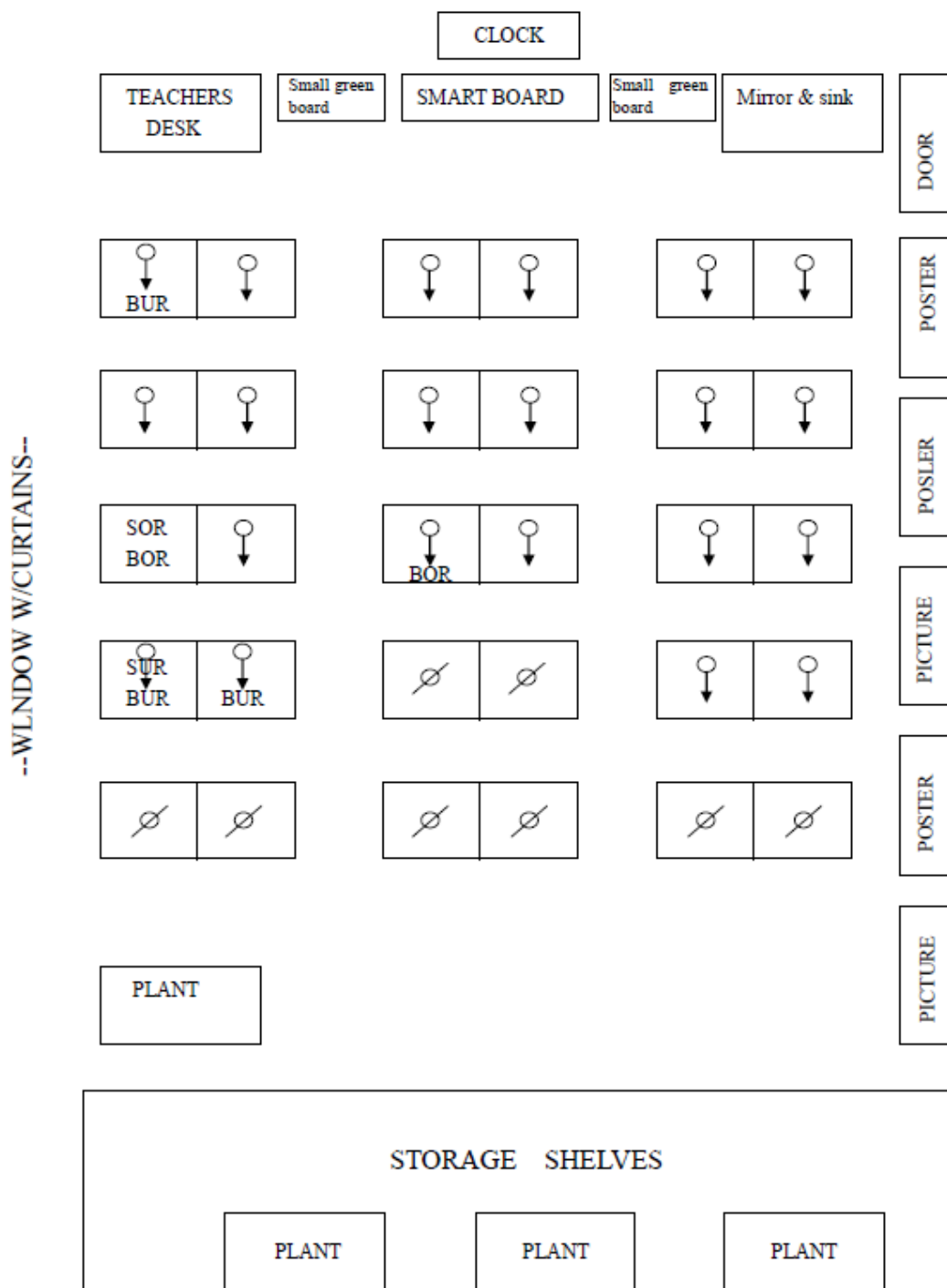
Surana's home was on the second floor of an apartment building built in the late 1980s, during the Soviet era. It was small, approximately 59 square meters, with two bedrooms, and a living room that led to a kitchen. A small outdoor balcony was used as freezer space, especially for meat and fish. There was a bath, and a small, separate toilet. This apartment was considered middle class and in an excellent location because Surana's school, her children's club (*kryzhok* - кружок), a large grocery store, and a small retail store, were all within 10 minutes walking distance. Like other homes I visited and stayed in, the apartment was spotless and quite warm. A Buddhist altar rested on a shelf, alongside the flat screen TV and various souvenirs brought from China: large jade horses, a bronze statue of Genghis Khan, and brightly decorated porcelain vases. Many books (all in Russian) were encased in the matching glass bookshelves below the TV.

Surana's room (8x12 feet) had a large table, on which a tablet ACER computer rested, and a flex lamp. A map of the world (in Russian) hung on her wall, along with a Mongolian scene of yurts and horses (a souvenir from one of many trips to Mongolia). She had Japanese anime drawings on the wall next to the bedroom, which she proudly told me she drew herself. "I adore Japan," Я обожаю Японию Surana said, "I want to study there later." После, я хочу учиться там. She slept on a small cot bed; a dresser drawer, but no closet, contained her clothes. The room was tidy, but not as neat as the rest of the apartment, as Surana is in charge of cleaning and maintaining her own space. Notably, on the wall was an afternoon schedule, because her mother often worked late and the child was left alone to do her homework. Although her father was unemployed, he left the house in the daytime, to

visit his friends and extended family, and his wife complained that he “does nothing to discipline Surana or to regulate her education” ничего не делает, чтобы дисциплинировать Сурану, или следить за ее образованием.

Table 1. Surana’s Ulan Ude Class Schedule

TIME	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
8:10-8:55	Russian Language	Russian Language	Math	Russian Language	IT	Russian
9:05-9:50	Ecology	Math	PE	Literature	Russian Language	Math
10:00-10:55	Buryat Culture	Literature	English	Math	Math	PE
11:55-12:00	Math	Music	History	English	Labor training	History
12:10-12:55	PE	Ecology	Home room	Drawing		English
13:05-13:50			Russian Language			



SEATING PLAN FOR SURANA'S CLASS –ULAN UDE, RUSSIA

Figure 20. Seating Plan for Surana's Class – Ulan Ude Russia 2014.

School life. Surana had class six days a week. Her mother roused her at 6:45, dressed her hair, and told her child to wash. Then they sat quietly together in the kitchen. Her father slept. Surana drank a mug of black tea liberally laced with milk and ate a plate of buckwheat kasha, along with bread and butter and cheese. She thanked her mother for the meal, washed up the dishes, and her mother checked her hair and clothes before she allowed her child to put on her Siberian down coat and fur hat and fur boots. At 7:45 she walked the short distance to School No 27. Her class was small (see Figure 20). She and her parents were very proud of her attendance at this lyceum, because it has an excellent reputation for academics. Students must take a test to enter the school, a kind of basic IQ test, and then, as they went through the grades, they must pass each class in order to remain at the school. If a child failed a course, he could be asked to leave; this did happen. Her mother said:

In Russia, since perestroika, many type of schools have appeared.

В России, со времен Перестройки, возникло много разных школ.

Some are better than others, and this school is considered very good, the teachers have good reputations, but they get low pay (15,000 rubles per month; 30 rubles to the US dollar). This is a problem - teachers leave all the time, looking for better pay. We just lost her Buriat language teacher, so there are no longer Buriat language lessons...

Некоторые школы лучше, чем другие, а эта считается одной из хороших школ, с хорошими учителями, но они получают низкую зарплату (15000 рублей в месяц), при приблизительном пересчете: 30 рублей за 1 доллар. Это проблема: учителя всегда уходят, в поисках лучшей зарплаты. Вот недавно ушел учитель бурятского языка, поэтому у них сейчас нет уроков бурятского.

Surana's school is well known in Ulan Ude because last year it ranked fourth in academic excellence in all of Russia; this is an extremely high honor, and quite unusual, because the ranking includes schools in large metropolises such as Moscow, Kiev, and St Petersburg. The school currently hosts 890 students, with grades 1-11. In the higher grades there are two sections, but below grade seven there are three sections. Surana was now in Grade Five. Her class schedule pleased her, and the fact that there are only 24 students in the class also made her comfortable; "In China there were too many people," В Китае было слишком много людей. She told me, smiling, when she came home from school at one pm. She sat and drank a cup of tea with her mother and me, although she had already eaten with her class at the school cafeteria, which cost \$1.40 per meal and was partly subsidized by the state. When I asked her what she had eaten, she said, "Oh, cutlets (beef) and potatoes and carrot salad" Ох, котлеты с картошкой и морковный салат.

After-school activities. After her classes, Surana often went to play with her friends, or she attended children's club events (кужок; *kryzhok*). She had a schedule on her wall that she tries to follow, as her mother was often at work in the clinic or making rounds. "She is very lonely during the day," Она постоянно одна днем said her mother, "but she is safe here, and her papa is often home now, too" но здесь она в порядке, и папа ее часто дома бывает. When I attended the *kryzhoks* with Surana, I felt that she was not lonely; she had peers her age around her for several hours after school, and they all seemed to be enjoying the activities offered: chess, dance, and drawing. Perhaps her mother missed spending time with her daughter, more than her daughter missed sitting at home with her mother?

Student of the Year. On one afternoon during my stay, the annual Student of the Year Talent Show took place, and I was able to visit Surana's school and observe. I also briefly

met the director of the school, and Surana's mother made arrangements to have a formal meeting to discuss whether I could observe her in classes in the future. A description of the talent show follows, along with her day after school.

Because this talent show was held on Thursday, at 3PM, not many parents could attend. Luckily, Surana's mother had taken time off from work, so she, her husband, and I all walked over to the school together. The security guard told us how to get to the auditorium, and we filed in, along with approximately half a dozen parents. The children came in by classes, settling themselves noisily into the seats (see pictures in the appendix). The auditorium reminded me again of the 1950s in the USA; it had old wooden chairs, bolted to the ground, red velvet curtains for the small stage, and a concrete floor. The children who were to present sat in the first row, looking stiff and nervous, whilst their classmates laughed and talked, and frequently changed seats. Teachers stood in the aisles, watching blandly; a group of judge teachers huddled together in the far end of the first row, preparing their score sheets. The show started with two Grade 10 girls acting as MCs, they introduced the participants, who filed on stage and bowed. This caused the students watching to whoop with joy and cheer their classmates.

This kind of Student of the Year Contest is held in Russian schools across the country. The contest consists of several parts: The first part requires the student to present a PowerPoint portfolio, which flashes on the stage behind the child as she or he performs a skit. "It's very very important that this portfolio reflect the child's ability as well as be creative," Это очень-очень важно, что портфолио влияет на возможности ребенка, так же, как и на возможность проявить творческую часть себя said Surana's mother. "And that it include her classmates, because the judges look at her individually AND as a member

of the group” Судьями учитываются ее индивидуальность и умение взаимодействовать в группе, в том числе и с ее одноклассниками. This second part requires the child to answer academic questions, rather like the US TV show, Jeopardy. Each child is randomly asked two questions that are based on the school’s curriculum. The third part requires the child to display talent, either in sport or the arts.

Surana was chosen to participate for her grade, by accident, and at the last moment, because the boy representing class five had broken his leg. She had little time to prepare for this event, and did not expect to win, but was very excited to represent Grade 5. I had watched her these two days earlier, as she created a PowerPoint on her little ACER notebook, but I went to bed earlier. “She stayed up till 4AM working on the presentation,” Она просыпается в 4 утра и работает над презентацией said her mother, “But I went to bed, too” Но я тоже иду спать. The day of the presentation, when Surana came home at 1PM after classes, she sang her song and danced to have her mother and I give her last minute tips and pointers. Surana had chosen a popular English song, “*I love you like a love song, baby*” and her dancing was also very contemporary and western, with much jumping and hand waving, using rap finger gestures.

The contest lasted three hours. Children became restless but stayed in their seats. Many cheered and shouted as their friends appeared on stage; often the entire class would go on stage to participate as dancers, or to carry props. After the judges had made their decisions and given out prizes of pens and notebooks, we walked home, and chatted about the event. “You know, that blonde Russian boy, he has won first place every year for three years,” Знаете, тот блондинистый русский мальчик, он выигрывал первые места три года подряд said Surana’s mother. “Did you notice his mother, helping him dress and undress?”

He's a big boy; he can put on his own clothes! And she is wealthy, she gives the school all sorts of gifts...it does not surprise me that her child always gets first place” Вы заметили, его мама помогала ему переодеваться? Он большой мальчик, он сам может одеться! А она не бедная, она дарит разные подарки школе... и меня не удивляет, что ее сын постоянно получает первые места.

Differences between the Ulan Ude and Hohhot schools. “Tell me how the school and the contest is different from China,” Расскажите мне, в чем разница между школами и конкуренцией в России и Китае I asked Surana. She smiled, and said, “First, there are not so many, and we all know each other. I know the names of almost everyone in all the grades...and it is cozy here” Во-первых, людей меньше, и мы все друг друга знаем. Я практически знаю имена всех учеников в школе... и это удобно.

Her mother added, “And the talent show, well it is like Soviet times, because the children must demonstrate being in a collective, being a leader and a member of a group, so the judges rule on how the child is supported by her group; that's why they performed a song together - the more the participants for talent, the better. But it is different now, too, because Surana had to show herself as superior, as talented - alone - like you do in the West...”А еще это Шоу Талантов, это, как в советское время: дети должны продемонстрировать умение взаимодействовать в коллективе, умение быть лидером и членом группы, поэтому судьи обращают внимание на то, как группа поддерживает своего товарища. Они пели песню вместе, так как, чем больше участников, тем лучше. Но сейчас все по-другому, потому что Сурана должна показать себя и лидером, и талантливым ребенком – в одиночку – как это происходит у вас на Западе...

And then Surana added, “In China, it was always, just the group, the group, I was known as the Russian girl, but I was in the group.” В Китае постоянно были группы; меня знали как русскую девочку, но я была в группе.

“Do you miss China?” Ты скучаешь по Китаю? I asked her.

“Yes,” да she said. “I want to go back, to learn Mongolian, but I want to go to Japan, too.” Я хочу поехать обратно, чтобы выучить монгольский язык, но я также хочу поехать в Японию.

“It’s always Japan, because of the anime,” Постоянно Япония, потому что тянет в эту страну said her mother.

“But why, Surana, did you choose to sing in English? And dance like rappers? Why?” Сурана, почему ты выбрала петь песню на английском? И танцевать как реперы? Почему?) I asked her.

“Because it’s cool. I like the music, we all know it...that is what we listen to on our phones...” Потому что это круто. Я люблю музыку, мы все это знаем... это то, что мы постоянно слушаем в наших наушниках...she replied. “English is cool, and so is Korean, South Korean. I like the band with 15 Korean boys...” Английский – классный язык, корейский тоже, южнокорейский. Мне нравится группа, в которой участвуют 15 корейских парней...

“Do you listen to Buriat or Russian music?” Ты слушаешь бурятскую или русскую музыку? I asked her.

“A little,” немножка she said, and then she skipped ahead, to be with her friends.

Her mother added, “When she was little, she learned by heart Buriat songs, but they no longer interest her...she does want to design things, in Buriat and Mongolian styles,

because it is very mod here, like your coat, to wear this style.” Когда она была маленькой, она учила бурятские песни, но они не долго интересовали ее... Она хочет быть дизайнером, создавать вещи в бурятском и монгольском стилях, потому что это модно здесь, например такие, как Ваше пальто.

“And because I am a nationalist,” Потому что я – националист interjected her father. “I want her to be Buriat, not Russian, the Russians have changed us so much, we must be Buriat, keep everything Buriat...” Я хочу, чтобы она была буряткой, не русской, русские во многом изменили нас, мы должны быть бурятами, хранить все, что относится к бурятской культуре...

We continued walking, watching Surana as she ran to say goodbye to her friends, both Buriat and Russian.

On Jan 28, 29, and 30, I was able to observe Surana in many of her various classes. Although the time was short, limiting my view and observations, I did notice many significant differences between the educational system and the way it impacted this focal’s child’s life and interactions. First, I present her day at school in class; next, I will discuss differences between Surana’s life at school in Russia as opposed to her life in China.

Surana always gets up early, has breakfast with her mother and walks to school. She arrives at approximately five or ten to eight, and puts her heavy coat in the cloakroom. Then she lines up with her other 23 classmates, and waits for their grade to be allowed into the main hallway, as grades are admitted by rank. On this day Surana had six classes. Her first class was Russian Language, taught by a 50- something ethnic Russian teacher, who told me she had taught for 37 years, and that she has taught most of the levels in this school (grades 1-11). Each class is 45 minutes, and students are paired by two, because each desk sits two

pupils. In this class, as with every other class, students stand and wait for their teacher to greet them; they greet her back, and wait for permission to sit down. At the start of this class, as with all first classes, the teacher showed an eight minute film, with stretching and moving exercises. Students stood and carried out these exercises, then sat to start their lesson, which on this day was concerned with the instrumental case, one of the various declensions for nouns and adjectives in Russian.

Each classroom I visited was the home base of a teacher. Unlike the Chinese bilingual school, the students changed rooms with every lesson, while the teacher remained in her or his room. This teacher had the students' attention the entire class time; she used the Smart board, and asked students to come up in pairs and mark the endings, identify them according to case, gender, and number. She then played a word game, which involved conjugating words correctly. She recited a poem, and had the students write the endings on paper, then compare answers with each other. Five minutes before the bell, she explained the homework, asked for yesterday's homework, and then dismissed her students.

During the break between classes the students ran wild. They congregated in the halls, laughing and pushing each other; some ran directly to their next class, put down their bags and went to join their friends. Surana stood in the hall with another girl and three boys, looking at a video on a boy's cell phone, then a shoving match began, and then played shove and tag until the bell. At the bell everyone raced into the second class, Russian Literature.

Russian Literature was headed by an elderly ethnic Russian woman, a sixty-something woman, on the second floor of the school. This teacher had bright orange hair and kind eyes. After giving the students permission to sit, she asked them about their reading; several students raised their hands and offered a synopsis. The teacher then started asking

questions concerning the symbolism of the place described in the story: an old building on the edge of town. She asked them to think and put themselves in the character's place - the main character was an orphan - and to talk it over with their desk mate. Then the teacher asked the students to talk about the weather and season in the story, and think about why this weather and season were chosen, and why it changed the mood of the story...she asked many thoughtful, abstract questions, and all the students were engaged in answering her queries. At the end of the lesson, she dictated a few lines of poetry about the weather to them, and asked them to analyze this weather described in the poem in terms of the emotions they felt. The bell rang, and all the students again rushed out.

The third class was Geography. This class was decided upon at the spur of the minute, as an administrative assistant came up to some students over the break and told them that their music teacher was sick. So, instead of going into the music classroom, everyone filed into the geography classroom. Perhaps because this teacher was a substitute, there was no real lesson of sorts. Instead, this teacher, a young, heavy-set ethnic Russian woman, put on a National Geographic film, dubbed into Russian. This film lasted 38 minutes. It was about two deserts in Africa, and the students watched it, but not with great attention. The teacher sat in the desk at front, writing, and occasionally looked at the students. Surana told me that teachers were frequently absent, so every morning she checked the board by the main entrance to know where to go. She also told me that if a teacher were absent, some sort of substitute would be found; students never lacked a class if a teacher were sick.

When the bell rang, students rushed up to the third floor, for library class, which takes place only once a week.⁹³ They put their bags and backpacks in a pile near the door and

⁹³ The Chinese school research site had no library on the premises.

rushed downstairs to the cafeteria. It was very crowded and this is the chance students have to eat something before they go home at one pm for a home cooked lunch. The cafeteria has a buffet, where one may purchase tea and sweetbreads, or one may stand in line and purchase a meal: chicken and rice with carrot salad was the dish offered. Surana bought the chicken and gulped it down in less than five minutes, and then rushed back upstairs as the bell rang. The break was 20 minutes, so all the students ate quickly.

The librarian had the students sit, and she gave them a form to fill out to check out books, because this library was newly created. Then she conducted a word test, which was based upon Russian proverbs. During the last ten minutes of class, she invited them to get up and look around, and pick out a magazine to read, and told them they could check out magazines and books for ten days. When the bell rang, everyone went downstairs to Psychology class.

Surana told me that this class meets infrequently, sometimes once a week, sometimes twice a month. The Psychology teacher was a large blonde Russian woman in her late thirties; she had a deep voice and was stern but friendly toward the children. First she discussed how the brain was an organ - and that it needed, like other organs, exercise. She asked the children if a person was born to think, or if a person had to learn to think. They discussed this process for eight minutes, and the children appeared interested. Then she told them that she was going to give them a word association test of sorts. It was very similar to the American SAT test questions, in that she read out a series of words, and asked them which word did not belong in the group. The students wrote their answers, and then exchanged papers to check each other's work. The teacher did not tell them the answers;

instead, she asked them to tell her. She recorded the grades, and discussed some of the questions. The bell rang, and everyone left for the next class.

The last class of the day was Biology, and headed by a female Buriat teacher, of medium height and build, between forty and fifty years old. She wore a black sweater and a grey skirt, and a sparkling black pendant hung around her neck. This teacher had a high pitched voice. After the bell and greeting, she told the boys to make sure their shirts were tucked neatly in their trousers and told the girls to pat and smooth their hair. After they did this and sat down, the teacher directed them to four questions on the board. The children had been studying the various differences between certain kinds of animals, and were examining evolutionary processes. The teacher asked the students to think about the four questions, which discussed change over time in animal body shape and size, and to discuss this briefly with each other. They chatted quietly for three minutes, and then they read a passage from their textbook. Next, the teacher called three children to the board, and asked each child to draw a schematic chart of a certain type of animal. As the children worked, the ones at their desk did the same, and the teacher walked around checking yesterday's homework. When she had checked everyone, she went to her desk, standing, and asked: Are these charts correct? She called other children to come and circle what was the most important event. The students were attentive. This teacher engaged the students just as the grammar teacher had engaged them: This interaction between the students and teacher seemed like a conversation. When a child made a mistake, the teacher would say, "No, I do not agree...Why do I think this is a mistake, class?" and then she waited for another student to respond. A few minutes before the bell, she told the students what their homework would be, and asked them if they

understood the homework requirement. The bell rang, and the children grabbed their bags and rushed out.

All the classrooms⁹⁴ were the same size, and had similar decor, excepting English class. The English teacher, a Buriat woman of about 50, told me that English class had only 10 to 12 students, to give pupils more access to the language. In every classroom, one wall of the room had a few discreet posters, related to the subject: grammar, literature, math, or history. A few pictures of famous Russians in these professions also were interspersed between the boards. The other side of the room contained windows, covered by diaphanous curtains, which matched the paint color of each classroom: green, pastel pink, yellow, or white. In the back of the classrooms I noted wooden storage shelves, used for books and materials. Numerous potted plants were placed in the back of the room. In the front of the room were green chalk boards; some rooms held either a TV, or a Smart board, which all the teachers and students used with ease.

After school Surana invited me to go to the to the local children's club (*kryzhok*) for her dance circle with her. Class started at three, so she sat and did her homework first, and then she used the Internet to relax. At ten to three we set off. We trudged across the street in minus 28 Celsius weather to the old, single story building where the children's club is located. In the dance class were two Russian girls (all older than her, in grades six and seven) plus Surana and her friend Inna. This building houses the other entertainments available to children: music, chess, and/or drawing. In the drawing circle Surana told me that there were many children of various ages; in the chess chess usually eight children, five boys (one

⁹⁴ except the PE class, which Surana told me that in warmer weather PE classes were held outside; in the winter, when I observed her PE class, it was held in an indoor gym that had no bleachers, but basketball baskets at either end. In this class the children practiced throwing balls, running in a group, and bouncing balls in ways that improved their basketball skills.

Buriat) and three girls (Surana as the only Buriat girl), play chess together. These classes are free, sponsored by the state, and they offer extra work to teachers or artistic types, such as Surana's dance teacher, Katya. She told me that her salary as a part time dancer and cashier was not sufficient, and that teaching dance to children was fun and easy enough to do. Surana told me that Inna, a plump, red cheeked Khalk Mongolian/Buriat girl, was her best friend and always went to dance classes with her.

Inna also said that Surana was her best friend, they always played together. Surana met Inna when she was three years old, and they have been fast friends ever since. Inna, however, attends school No 7, a less prestigious school that is located directly behind school No 27. Like girls everywhere, in school Surana has had other best friends, both Buriat and Russian, and generally speaking, her relationships with her classmates are amiable and long term. I asked her parents about ethnic relations at school.

“At this age, there is no distinction between Buriat and Russian among the children,” В этом возрасте нет различий между бурятами, русскими, среди детей said Surana's mother, but she added, “We have always told her from an early age that she must marry a Buriat; we do not want our daughter to marry a Russian.” Мы ей твердили с малых лет, что она должна жениться на буряте, мы не хотим, чтобы наша дочь вышла замуж за русского. When I asked why, she said, “Because our culture is diminishing. We have had Russian influences upon us since the 17th century; other Mongols call us Russian Mongols. Now that perestroika has come and gone, we need to take measures to preserve our culture.” Потому что наша культура идет на спад. С семнадцатого века на нас оказывалось влияние со стороны русских; другие монголы называют нас русскими монголами. Нет,

Перестройка пришла и ушла, нам же надо принимать меры по сохранению нашей культуры.

Surana's father said: "I am a nationalist; that is on reason I called my daughter home. I could work in Germany or in Peter (St Petersburg) but I want to live in my homeland; I am a Buriat. There is a movement now with Putin to send Tajiks and Uzbeks here, they mix and marry, and this, along with the Russians being so many, is meant to mix us up and make us disappear." Я – националист, это причина, по которой я позвала свою дочь домой. Я могла бы работать в Германии или в Питере (Санкт-Петербург), но я хочу жить на своей родине; я бурят. Сейчас возникла тенденция (с Путиным), когда таджики и узбеки стали приезжать сюда, они женятся здесь, смешиваются, таким образом, что наряду с русскими, их становится много, что отражается и на нас, и стирает нас постепенно.

Surana's mother added that the lyceum was 70-80% Russian, just as the Republic of Buriatia is 70% Russian. "They (Russians) outnumber us, and have for a long time, Они (русские) превосходят нас по численности с давнего времени said her mother, "And, as Buriats, we tolerate them, we acknowledge the good they have brought, not the bad. But I wish my child to marry a Buriat, and hopefully she will." И, как буряты, мы толерантно относимся к ним, мы признаем, что они принесли нам хорошее, не плохое. Но я хочу, чтобы мая девочка вышла замуж за бурята, надеюсь это так и будет.

After school, if she wanted to, Surana could go to the local children's club (*kryzhok*) and learn drawing, chess, dance, music, and other activities. These circles are popular because they are free and fun, and her circle's building was nearby in her neighborhood (there are four regional neighborhoods in Ulan Ude that sponsor the *kryzhoks*). As we walked

to the dance circle on Saturday afternoon, I asked Surana what she thought about Russians and Chinese and Mongols. “I look like a Japanese girl, and I adore anima,” Я выгляжу как японка, и я обожаю аниме) she said, “Of course I am Buriat, and, uhh, I speak Russian...I wanted to stay longer in China, even though it was like being in a can of sardines...it was interesting. I did miss my parents, uh...school is easier here, too.” Конечно, я бурятка, и, эээ... я говорю по-русски... Я хотела по-дольше остаться в Китае, даже, чувствуя себя, как в банке со шпротами... Это было интересно." Конечно, я скучала по родителям... и в школе здесь проще учиться.

I asked her to tell me about herself, and she said, “I am a Buriat girl, next month is my birthday...I’ll be 13, almost grown up. I have an older sister, and my family can all speak Buriat. Is that enough?” (Я бурятка, в следующем месяце у меня день рождения... мне будет 13 лет, почти взрослая. У меня есть старшая сестра, и все в моей семье могут говорить по-бурятски. Достаточно?)

I smiled and asked her to tell me about being Buriat. “Well, you should live here, I mean be born here, and have Buriat parents, cause Russians are here but they are not Buriats...and we have our culture...” Ну, Вам нужно жить здесь, то есть родиться здесь и иметь родителей бурятов, потому что русские здесь тоже есть, но они не буряты... и у нас есть своя культура... I asked her what was Buriat culture, and she said that it was important to be close to your family, never let them go, and to speak Buriat, and then she said, “I decided that I am going to design clothes. First I thought I would do things in Japanese style, but now I want to make things Buriat style, but modern, you know?” Я решила, что я буду дизайнером одежды. Сначала, я думала, что буду делать вещи в

японском стиле, но сейчас я буду делать одежду в бурятском стиле, в современном варианте, понимаете?

After we arrived home, and Surana went to her room to read, I spoke more to her mother. She told me that she was worried about western influences more than Russian influences. “It is the Internet, you know, it has changed everyone’ life. Surana can surf the Internet, she sees sexual images from your country (USA) and she knows much more than I knew at 12; I don’t like this. What can I do? I work long hours, I see my child with her phone, listening to wild sounding music, with her friends, boys and girls together...when I was 12, I would never have talked to a boy or hung round a boy....it is a different age, she is too grown up, not so traditional, more independent, more free...it worries me deeply, but what can I do?” Это все интернет, понимаете, он поменял жизнь людей. Сурана может пользоваться интернетом, она смотрит всякие картинки из США сексуального характера, и она знает сейчас больше, чем я знала в свои 12 лет; мне это не нравится. Что я могу сделать? Я работаю долгие часы, я вижу своего ребенка с телефоном в руках, слушающего ужасно звучащую музыку со своими друзьями, мальчиками и девочками, вместе... Когда мне было 12 лет, я бы не разговаривала с мальчиками и не вешалась бы им на шею... Разница в возрасте, она слишком взрослая, не слишком традиционная, более независимая, более свободная... Это очень меня беспокоит, но что я могу сделать?

As we sat in the kitchen and talked, Surana came to her mother and hugged her. “Мама, can I go out and play with Inna?” Мама, могу я пойти поиграть с Инной? she asked.

“Have you done your homework?” Ты домашнюю работу сделала? asked her mother.

“Yes, look,” Да посмотри she said, and showed us both her lessons, and her schedule book.

“Go, then, but take your phone, be back at seven for dinner,” Иди, но возьми с собой телефон, в семь часов будь дома, к ужину said her mother.

At seven Surana was back, and we all ate a simple meal of local fish, fried in butter, potatoes, with tea. Then we sat together and watched an American movie (Superman) dubbed into Russian. Surana left in the middle of the movie to surf the Internet in her room. At 10:30 the parents went to bed, but the light remained on in her room: Surana was on the Internet.

Discussion. I observed significant differences between Surana’s classes and her daily life in Buriatia as opposed to her school and daily life in Inner Mongolia. Regarding the school conditions itself, her Russian school was smaller and had almost half the student population. In China, all the 1600 students were in primary, whereas the total Russian school student body for grades one to eleven was 890 students. Moreover, all were native Russian students; there were no international students. Russian teachers and students greatly outnumbered the Buriats, by as much as 40%. Because Surana’s school had grades 1-11, I also observed that students in older grades were surreptitiously watched by younger students during breaks between classes; these older girls and boys walked in pairs, clung to each other in the stairwells, some even kissed in the hallways, and many of these older students had not yet adopted the school dress code. Along with what Surana might see on the Internet, these older students could be considered as role models for her and others in the younger levels, who noted their actions. This mixing of older with younger students differed from the

primary school in China, where children were always with other children of their age group during school hours.

Another difference concerned mobility. Inside the Russian school the children were free to roam further and without supervision. Students changed their classrooms every hour. They could wander freely between classes, but not leave school grounds. Students could choose, during the long break, to go to the cafeteria and eat, and they chose what they wished to eat. They could run up and down the three levels, or stand in the stairwells. Unlike China, in Russia students went to the toilet without asking permission during classes; they simply got up quietly and exited the room. This expanded mobility was commented upon by Surana when I asked her; she said, “Yes, they treated me like a baby in China, I always had to raise my hand to do anything.”

The third observation about the school’s physical characteristics concerned patriotism. During the three days I attended school, no one said any kind of pledge to their country, no teacher talked about being loyal to the Russian Federation. On the second floor I did note two boards, one was a presentation from a class on “Why I am Proud to be a Russian Citizen’ and the other was titled: “Twenty Years of Rule under the Russian Federation.” What I did see in classrooms, as mentioned, were pictures of individual Russians who had excelled. This distinction between an excellent Russian individual and loyalty to the entire Chinese State was marked to my eyes.

In addition to physical differences between Russian and Chinese schools, my brief observations confirmed that the Russian teaching methodology at School No. 27 differed from the Chinese teaching methodology I observed in the Hohhot bilingual school. Certainly, classes in the Russian school were fifty percent or lower than in Chinese: Surana’s class had

24 pupils, with four of them being Buriats; two girls and two boys, including Surana. (see seating chart in the appendix). This smaller population allowed the teachers to talk more freely with their students; discipline was strictly maintained, but orders and commands were rarely used to keep students in line. The only highly structured interactions consisted of the fixed style of greeting as class was begun and ended by the teacher. Moreover, Surana's teachers all seemed to have a similar methodology: they asked the students questions that were meant to cause them to think, not simply give back memorized or text ready answers. Many teachers also asked the students what they thought, and if they agreed with their peers, or with the teacher. Many, many times, I heard a teacher query: "And why do you think it is so?" (One student, when he heard this why question concerning evolution and wings, said: "Because it's more fun to fly than drive or run, causing the class to burst into laughter). Certainly post-Soviet Russian teachers, like Inner Mongolian Chinese teachers, had control of their classes. Female teachers, as in China, dominated all the classrooms. Nevertheless, perhaps due to smaller class size as well as different teaching philosophies, in Russia the students were more mobile, more vocal, and more able to give voice to their thoughts.

Surana told me that she felt more comfortable in Russia, and that she had more friends here. I asked her why, and she said that it was hard to make friends if you cannot speak together (in the same language); she tried, she told me, to make friends, and she remembered one girl who was her friend in Hohhot, but they did not correspond after she left China. She also commented on cell phones, saying that any child could have a cell phone here, and use it in class, as a tool (calculator, dictionary, search engine), whereas in China it was strictly forbidden. Because she was alone in China and a Russian guest/international student, she turned in her phone every day to the administration, and picked it up as she left

school - so her guardian could keep in touch with her as she took a bus back and forth to school. In Ulan Ude students had free access to cell phones in class but they sometimes abused this privilege.

This brings me to yet another difference: how Surana spent her time in China, as opposed to Russia. In China, she got up at six am, washed up and ate breakfast, and was at the bus stop by seven am, to catch bus number 61 to the school. At this time of morning the buses were already crowded with adults and schoolchildren; it took her 40-50 minutes to get to her stop, and she walked the short distance, five minutes, to the school. At the crossing school guards helped the children cross safely. Surana did not go home during the break because it was too far; she ate in the cafeteria and sat in the classroom, often alone, waiting for lessons to restart; she could not leave the school grounds without permission during the afternoon break, for security reasons. In the late afternoon she piled out with the other students, crossed the street, and rode the bus home to her aunt. (Initially, her aunt took her to and from school, to show her the way, and to chat with me). Upon arriving home, Surana sat until dinnertime, six or six thirty, and did homework. After she had eaten, she was allowed one hour of Internet, then she had more homework until she went to bed at ten or ten thirty.

In contrast to her Chinese school life, Surana's school life in Russia seemed more social. She rose later, and walked across the street to her school. She ate a light lunch at her school, and after school she would either come home and eat with her father and/or mother, and then do her homework until three, when *kryzhok* started. Sometimes she met Inna, her best friend, and wandered around outside in her neighborhood; sometimes she called her mother or father and stayed around the school grounds with her friends there, promising to do

her homework later in the afternoon. Surana was more mobile and more interactive with her peers.

Certainly, it is unfair to harshly judge Surana's life in China as opposed to Russia, as her life conditions and linguistic conditions differed greatly. Yet it is valid to point out that many conditions reflect cultural values that are embedded in the way Surana lived her daily life in China and in Russia. Her life in China was more strictly controlled and regulated and teaching methods differed. Surana had to travel on public transport for long periods, in crowded buses, and she had more homework, more work in general that required her to memorize more than to think creatively. She had to try to adapt herself to new languages (Mandarin and Mongolian), and she had no extracurricular activities to lighten her life. She lived with her aunt, far from her mother and father. Surana told me that her aunt helped her with homework, and her aunt, although she spoke no Mandarin, helped Surana to learn basic Mongolian words. It was difficult for her, yet she did not complain - it was her mother who missed her badly and demanded that she return.

In Russia, Surana had a circle of friends at school, and one best friend, Inna, who lived in her apartment building (Inna attended a different school, and was a grade below Surana). On a regular day, Surana finished her classes at either one or two (earlier on Wednesdays), depending upon her schedule. Together with her friends, (in school, she has a group of three girls, one Buriat and two Russian girls), she sat together and ate lunch at the school cafeteria. In the Russian school, students had only fifteen minutes for lunch, so one student was allowed to go ahead, set the places for her class and helped the cook dish out portions. They could also use their allowances from parents to eat from the buffet, where

hamburgers, meat pies, pastries, and candies were available.⁹⁵ In China, everyone ate the same food, as much as they liked, and they had more time to eat. In Russia, after lunch, Surana went to visit her friends, or she attended “*kryzhok*” (circle). In sum, she had more freedom, more choices, and more friends in Russia than she had in China. Yet Surana told me she would have stayed in China; she had wanted to learn Chinese, as it was “cool” and “exciting” to live in China. “Now I wish I could really learn Buriat,” she said, and added that being Buriat was more important studying in China.

A day in the life of Katya in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia.

Introduction. Katya was twelve years old when my fieldwork began in the fall of 2012. I first met her in 2010, when I came to visit Buriat friends in Hohhot. At that time she was a plump, short girl, with a tendency to stick her finger near her mouth when she talked. At twelve, however, Katya had already started to metamorphose into a slender, somewhat poised, young girl. She was five feet four inches tall in 2012, with long legs, and thin, silky light brown shoulder length hair. Her eyes were gray green, small and deep set, as her mother is a self-professed ethnic Buriat, while her father is an ethnic Russian. Both parents have no higher education; her mother never attended university, nor went on to any kind of institute. I was told that Katya’s father was (and still is) an auto mechanic and he works in a garage that repairs all kinds of foreign cars in Ulan Ude. In Buriatia, Natasha, Katya’s mother, had worked in an office that regulated automobile license plates. This concession was owned by her older brother and she told me that her salary had been excellent, and that she had had enough money to place her child in excellent Russian kindergartens and primary schools. Unfortunately, she quarreled seriously with her brother and her husband. This caused

⁹⁵ Although the food was high in calories I saw no obese children at Surana’s school.

Natasha to leave her job and home in Ulan Ude. She relocated to Hohhot, in Chinese Inner Mongolia.

In China, Katya often wore her hair in a ponytail, and was, like Surana, very concerned with name brand clothing. She particularly liked the European brand called *Zara*. She frequently wore *Zara* jeans, which are low slung, partly denim and partly spandex. They clung tightly to her hips and thighs. In cold weather she wore a short black Russian leather jacket, lined with wool that also fit tightly to her body. Her blouses were also clingy, made of wool or cotton; she did not wear loose T-shirts. Her mother allowed her, despite the school rules against jewelry and makeup, to wear small gold or crystal earrings to school, and every morning Katya would choose a set of earrings from her mother's assortment. She also spent several minutes every day using an eyelash curler to curl her eyelashes, but did not apply mascara or other makeup to her face. This prohibition was made by her mother Natasha, who said that Katya could begin wearing makeup when she turned thirteen.

Katya also liked to use a ball point pen and ink tattoos on her arms and wrists, which was against school rules; her mother said that she had nothing against this, because it was washable. In contrast to the students in her class, Katya's clothing and accessories made her stand out. In contrast, every day her peers (other school children), wore a red and white uniform, with no jewelry, and they had no tattoos. Also, Katya was taller than most of her classmates. Her skin tone, eye color, and long limbs made her appear European more than Buriat; she did not look Asiatic. Finally, her dress style, with the tightly fitting jeans, blouses, and coats, was not the style followed by Chinese and Inner Mongolian children living in Hohhot, who wore loose fitting uniforms. These children seemed to be less conscious of their appearance as males or females than the definite female image which Katya projected to the

world at large. Her dress preferences were “more Russian, more European, more stylish than those Chinese kids” более русского, европейского, склада, более сильные, чем китайские дети according to her mother. Both her mother and her daughter enjoyed looking at Russian fashion magazines, and they surfed the Internet looking at clothing. (Her mother had asked me to bring her different fashion magazines from the US when she briefly met me in 2011: she requested *Vogue*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Elle*). To my American eyes, Katya appeared to me to be older than twelve by the way she dressed, by the changes in her figure since I had seen her a few years earlier, and by the way she was conscious of her body. In Hohhot, young Chinese girls did not emphasize their figures until they began attending university, or started working. For example, Surana, the focal girl in Russia, although she too wore spandex style jeans, seemed to project more of an image as an innocent girl, as opposed to a sexually maturing female.

Likewise, the Hohhot school dress code was conservative, reflecting Chinese traditional values of modesty. Teachers dressed neatly and often wore the same clothes several days in a row. Unlike Russian teachers, the Inner Mongolian teachers did wear jeans to class, but their jeans were new and pressed. The Chinese teachers also favored more brightly colored sweaters and blouses over jeans, or wool and denim skirts and jumpers, but very few of these teachers wore any kind of jewelry; furthermore, no female Chinese teacher I observed wore any makeup whatsoever. The few male Chinese teachers (women outnumbered men by 80% in the school) wore dark slacks and dark shirts, or simple white shirts, neatly pressed. Teachers told me that they had no dress code, but they all dressed conservatively. In China, as in Russia, no female teacher showed any cleavage; no one wore extremely high heels. All female teachers wore stockings, thick in the winter, and thinner in

the spring. Hair was loose or pulled back; no male teacher had any facial hair. Finally, according to the Chinese school director, school uniforms for students were meant to indicate pride and solidarity in one's school, as pupils going home from their classes could identify who was attending which school by the uniforms their peers wore. Katya, like other Buriat focal children, and like the Outer Mongolian students, refused to wear this uniform.

Katya was born when her mother was 34 years old; she is Natasha's third and last daughter. All of Natasha's marriages have been common law; in Russia, this type of arrangement is not unpopular. Her mother told me that Katya was born in Ulan Ude and had attended kindergarten as well as her first years of primary in Ulan Ude. She has two older sisters, and each of Natasha's daughters have a different father. Katya's older sisters are 19 and 18 years old; they both had Buriat fathers, so they look different from their baby sister, and "they pass more easily in China because they look Asian," Они попадают в Китай проще, так как они азиаты said Natasha to me with a smile, adding "As you accompany her to school, people think she is your daughter, not mine!" Так как Вы сопровождаете ее в школу, люди думают, что это Ваша дочь, не моя! This remark caused Katya to beg me to take her to "Amerika" and pretend that I was her auntie. In response, her mother and I laughed, and said maybe someday she would travel the world.

Natasha also told me that she came to China with Katya "after a disagreement with her brother and husband regarding the family business" после несогласия с ее братом и мужем, относительно семейного бизнеса and this disagreement has now lasted for several years. Natasha said that she has "no plans of returning to Russia, it is great to be here, near my two daughters and giving my child a chance to learn Mongolian." никаких планов связанных с возвращением в Россию, хорошо быть здесь, рядом с моими двумя

дочерьми, позволяя моему ребенку учить монгольский. Her two older sisters have been living in Beijing since 2009; they both started studying Chinese at university, but one sister dropped out of school to work as a sales clerk for an online shopping firm called TaoBao. At times, these girls' fathers offered their daughters funds, but Natasha had very little extra cash, and sometimes asked her daughters for small loans of cash.

In 2012, Natasha was working at home as a Russian language transcriber, for a Russian firm. She did her work on a laptop, and sent in her files via the Internet. Natasha was being paid by the word while I conducted research in China. Her work at times was sporadic. Natasha also privately confided to me in September 2012 that her “lover paid for this apartment and contributed money for food and other necessities, and in turn I have taken in his children as my own.” любовник оплатил квартиру и выделил деньги на питание и прочие нужды, в свою очередь, я приняла этого ребенка, как своего родного.

Natasha pointed out to me early on in my visits to her home was the fact that although Katya spoke no Buriat, she and her mother had created a kind of code language to converse between themselves, and that this “mixture of my Buriat and her Chinese Mongol is our secret language, we speak it in Beijing when we want to have secrets from the other girls (her other daughters).” наш секретный язык – это микс ее бурятского и моего монгольского языков, мы говорим на нем в Пекине, когда мы хотим обсудить по секретничать в присутствии других девочек (ее других дочерей). Natasha also insisted that I “pretend” to Katya that she had a father who loved her, because “My daughter does not know we had a falling out, and despite the fact that he is living with another woman and has had a child with this woman, he is her father...she needs to believe she has a real father. I SKYPE him almost every day so she will think we are still married.” Моя дочь не знает, что у нас была ссора,

но, невзирая на тот факт, что он живет с другой женщиной, и у них есть общий ребенок, он по-прежнему остается ее отцом... ей нужно знать, что у нее есть настоящий отец. Я созваниваюсь с ним по Скайпу каждый день, поэтому она думает, что мы по-прежнему в браке.

The Mongolian track. Natasha had several long conversations with me regarding why she decided to place Katya in the Mongolian track of the bilingual school. She initially told me that her Buriat friend, another mother, had convinced her to enroll Katya in the Mongolian track, because this language would be more useful than Chinese when Katya started her studies later in the medical institute.⁹⁶ Natasha said also that she thought Katya, being young and flexible, would simply pick up Chinese. She would learn by living in China, learn from her peers, and learn from her thrice weekly Chinese lessons at the school. But as the months passed, Natasha told me she now had misgivings about the school in general, as well as about the Mongolian track education; “My daughter is bored; she learns quickly and all they do is repeat the same things over and over...she brings home her test papers, she always has high marks...I do not think the school is challenging her enough.” Моей дочери скучно; она быстро учится, и все, что они делают – это повторение пройденного материала снова и снова... она приносит домой ее тестовые задания, у нее всегда только высшие отметки... Я не думаю, что школа дает какие-то новые возможности ей). Natsaha was also concerned that the other students treated her daughter badly, but she did not request a meeting with school teachers and administrators to talk about this issue.

⁹⁶ Another key reason was the fact that this track was free. Very few international students enrolled in this track; it served the Inner Mongolian population who wanted to revitalize their heritage language.

In later conversations, Natasha reported that she wanted to switch her daughter into the Chinese track at the school, because she was no longer confident that the Mongolian language would be useful, but her daughter refused to leave her class. Katya said, “It took me a long time to understand anything...I don’t want (to do) that again.” Я много времени потратила на то, чтобы понять что-либо... Я не хочу заниматься этим снова. During my research Katya remained in Grade Four of the Mongolian track. In fact, Natasha never once went to the school for any reason. She did not request teacher parent interviews, nor was she interested in the school’s talent shows. All of her information regarding her child’s education came directly from Katya and from glancing at the scores and marks her child brought back on test papers. Notably, Natasha did not ask me about her child’s abilities and behavior at school; instead, she *told* me about her child, and remarked several times that she felt her child was gifted linguistically and academically. I remained neutral when she commented about her daughter in this fashion.

Katya’s mother’s behavior contrasted with that of Surana’s mother in terms of parental attitudes toward both the school and their child. Surana’s mother made efforts to plan her work schedule so that she could watch student events offered to the public and held at school. She knew all Surana’s teachers, and frequently brought them small gifts of chocolates during holidays. Surana’s mother also checked her child’s homework, because the school issued a notebook that outlined each class and each day’s assignment. This book was always in Surana’s backpack, and she referred to it herself, as a kind of daily planner. Her

teachers checked off and signed homework assignments that had been completed; this planner also recorded test scores and grades.⁹⁷

In contrast, Katya's mother had an open schedule in terms of her work; it baffled me that she never visited the school or attended any school events. Certainly, Natasha's situation as a foreigner and as a non-native speaker of Temut created communication barriers for her interactions with school personnel and with the people of Inner Mongolia. Yet she told me that she felt comfortable in Hohhot, rather than Beijing or other Chinese cities, because she could use her Buriat Mongolian to shop and make her needs met when she went out to purchase things. Thus, it would have been possible for her to communicate in Buriat Mongolian with the teachers and the school administrators, who would have communicated with her in Khalk or Temut. Other Buriat parents whose children had previously sent children to this school told me that this method was not perfect but it worked well enough for them to show their interest and be present, and that the school was receptive and kind toward this imperfect communication style.

Additionally, Natasha made no efforts to teach her daughter Buriat, despite the fact that her daughter was studying another Mongolian language. Mother and daughter spoke to each other exclusively in Russian, except for very brief games using their "code language." Both told me that they used their code language, (which consisted of mother speaking Khori Buriat and daughter answering in Temut, and some mixing of Russian words and grammar), rarely, often to tease Katya's older sisters. When I visited them for a weekend in Beijing, I

⁹⁷ I was told that many US primary and secondary school teachers do this kind of tracking online for parents. It causes teachers extra work but makes clear what is going on in the classrooms with each pupil.

did not hear them use this code language,⁹⁸ but I was staying at a nearby hotel and not living with them continuously.

Natasha, despite having lived several years in China, spoke no Chinese. She reported that she had no desire to speak or understand it. When I asked her why, she said: “Why should I learn Chinese? I speak Buriat (Mongolian) and can buy what I need (from Mongolians)...my daughters can help me if I need Chinese.” Зачем нужен мне китайский язык? Я говорю на бурятском (монгольском) и я могу купить все, что мне нужно (у монголов)... Моя дочь может помочь мне с китайским, если есть необходимость. At times, Natasha would remark that she disliked the Chinese, that they were rude, and her daughter also would also echo these feelings.

Katya’s mother, however, hired a female Russian language tutor, based at the Inner Mongolian National University, to come once a week and give her daughter lessons in Russian. This instructor, a young Kalmyk woman named Irina, told me that another Kalmyk woman, formerly the university’s Russian instructor (2009-2011), had severely criticized Katya’s Russian language skills when she was the girl’s tutor in 2011. With Irina, Katya sat at a table and learned formal Russian grammar from this instructor.⁹⁹ Katya told me that she did not think it was too much additional work to have language lessons in a third language: Russian, which added to her lessons in Mongolian and Mandarin. This meant, however, that Katya was learning literacy in three to four scripts: Cyrillic, Old Classical Mongolian, and

⁹⁸ Due to time constraints, I unfortunately did not pursue more observations and analysis of their code language, but I find it symbolic of Natasha’s pride in having her child learn a Mongolian language, despite the fact that she spoke to her children in Russian. By encouraging this code, and by acknowledging her daughter with this code, I feel she showed pride in being a Buriat Mongol; more research is needed.

⁹⁹ Bata-Nimah also took lessons in Russian from Irina.

Chinese. She also read, on the Internet and on signs, Latin letters as well, and her mother insisted that Katya received English language lessons from me.

My observations with Katya began almost as soon as I arrived in Hohhot, in late August of 2012. Natasha initially warmly welcomed me into her home, and was pleased that I wanted to observe her child. She told me that “You are welcome in my home - if we had more space I would ask you to live with us, to teach the children (her child and her lover’s two children) English.” Я рада Вас видеть в своем доме, если бы у меня было по-больше пространства, я предложила бы Вам жить вместе с нами, учить детей (ее ребенка и двое приемных) английскому языку. My observations and interactions with the mother and daughter lasted from September 2012 until mid-April 2013. Generally, I would walk from my home (either at the dormitory or later from a nearby apartment) and meet Katya and Bata Nimah, another focal child, and then walk with them to school. I often returned with the children back to Natasha’s home, was offered lunch, and would sit and chat with Katya’s mother while the children either napped, played on the Internet, read books, or did their homework. I then walked back with the children to school, and watched one or both of them until they finished their last classes. Sometimes Katya would leave early, because she refused to participate in optional school activities. She was never challenged by school authorities for leaving early.

Katya’s home was located on the ninth floor of a modern Chinese apartment building, built with the last decade; it was considered modern because it was 15 stories high and had an elevator. Older buildings, such as the universities, only had stairs.¹⁰⁰ The apartment consisted of 55 square feet: two bedrooms, a living room, a toilet with a shower (no bath),

¹⁰⁰ The same is true of Russian buildings in Buriatia; elevators are a sign of new buildings and they indicate prestige.

and a narrow kitchen galley. This building was part of twelve other buildings, and it had a security gate with a barrier that was raised and lowered as cars entered and either parked in the underground garage or on the sidewalks. Katya did not have a room of her own; she slept with her mother in one bedroom, while the other focal child, the boy Bata-Nimah, slept in the second bedroom. Bata-Nimah's older step sister Lera, also lived briefly with them (from September 2012 through January 2013) and she slept on the couch in the living area.

Natasha kept the apartment very clean; the children were expected to help her with cleaning chores. For example, I observed that Katya often cleaned the bathroom, while Bata-Nimah swept the floors of all the rooms, and Lera kept the kitchen spotless. A small Buddhist altar sat in the corner of the living room, but Natasha never lighted any incense or candles, a daily ritual I had observed in other Buriat homes. She and the children did watch a large TV. They showed me a Mongolian language channel that often portrayed nature shows and Mongolian language singers and dancers, but watched Chinese TV stations, especially shows that featured competitions modeled after the American show "The Voice." The children also told me privately that Chinese TV was boring, and that they preferred to surf the Internet, because they could find interesting movies in Russian and English (with Russian subtitles), as well as chat with their friends.

School life. Katya could walk to school in approximately ten minutes. She had to cross one intersection, where safety guards helped direct the children safely across the street. Most children either walked or rode bicycles to school; some had to take buses (like Surana when she lived in China), and some, from wealthier families, were driven by their parents in family cars. In Hohhot, at the time of school opening and closing, there were always traffic jams around Katya's school, as well as other kindergarden, primary and secondary schools.

Bata Nimah walked with Katya, but at times they would separate. This gave me the impression that they were not good friends, or that Bata Nimah, as a Buriat boy, did not want to be associating with girls.¹⁰¹

Katya attended the school five days a week. In her school, classes were only 40 minutes long, as opposed to the Russian classes with 45 minutes. Katya and her mother did not feel it was necessary for her to attend Saturday classes; in fact, on Saturday mornings, the two would ride their bicycles to the local bath house and bathe together for several hours, because at this time most Chinese mothers and children were not using the facilities. On a regular school day Katya woke up at seven am, washed and ate breakfast. Because the kitchen was quite small and narrow, the children took turns eating in the kitchen. Katya and her mother ate first, and then Bata-Nimah and his older step sister ate next. They all usually had black tea with milk, bread and butter, a piece of fruit, and some kind of hot gruel - boiled millet, oatmeal, or rice boiled in milk.

After eating, all the children thanked Natasha for the meal, with Katya speaking to her mother in the informal “you” form, and the two boarding children using the formal “you” form. Then they brushed their teeth, put on their shoes or boots, and set off for school. When I followed Katya, I would walk with the two young people from the apartment to the school, and climb the four flights of stairs, to her classroom. Katya always sat in the back of the room, and refused to move her seat. The Chinese system is to have children rotate seats every week or every month, to offer those with poorer eyesight a chance to sit nearer the front of the room. In contrast to Russian schools, in China, and in this school children did not move

¹⁰¹ Traditionally, Buriat children played and interacted according to genders, but Buriat mothers have told me that things have been changing in recent generations.

from classroom to classroom. Instead, most of the teachers rotated about, with the exception being the music teacher and the computer teacher, who both had specialized rooms for their lessons.

During observations I sat in the back of the room, fairly close to Katya, in a small chair but without a desk. Throughout my observations, as the months passed, Katya never failed to try to whisper or talk to me, or hiss something, poke me, or grab my belongings. This contrasted greatly with the behavior of the other focal girl, Surana, who had ignored my presence during class, and, if questioned by her classmates during the break, would politely and with aplomb introduce me to her friends as a visitor. The focal Buriat boys also ignored my presence when I observed them in school in China. Because Katya's behavior was disconcerting to me, at first I steadily moved my seat further and further away from her, until I realized that this just made her louder and more active in trying to gain my attention. During my observations Katya's teachers ignored her behavior, and never tried to shush her up, never reprimanded her, and only rarely would look at me with a questioning air.

Katya's classes, with the exception of the Chinese language lesson, were entirely conducted in Temut Mongolian. (See Figure 21 for class seating plan). The teacher did not use Chinese at any time while in the classroom. Class announcements were written, however, in both Mandarin and Mongolian, with important events printed only in Mandarin. During classes children would whisper frequently to each other in Mandarin; they spoke Mongolian only when they recited or responded to their teachers. During the breaks, when the teachers exited and the children ran wild, I heard Mandarin Chinese being shouted, spoken, and used, as opposed to Temut Mongolian. During these breaks, Katya would either sit and listen to her iPod or play with her iPad, which often caused a few students to gather around her, hoping

that she would share her toys. Sometimes she did; sometimes she did not. During the mid morning exercise and patriotic announcement activity held outside on the school track and field, school authorities spoke in Mandarin Chinese. Sometimes Katya refused to go outside for this activity, and sat on the window ledge of her classroom, listening to her iPod and watching the activity.

At other break times, she would often stuff her belongings back into her backpack (she openly listened to her iPod or played with her cell phone during classes, which was forbidden) and go into the hall to run, slap, and play with her classmates. At times, they told her she was too rough, hitting them too hard, but she would laugh, and then complain to me if they hit her back with any force. Katya's class schedule was as follows:

Table 2. Katya's Class Schedule

MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	TIME
Mongol	Math	Mongol	Math	Mongol	8:10-8:50
Math	Mongol	Math	English	Chinese	9:00-9:40
Chinese	Chinese	Chinese	Mongol	Math	10:15-10:55
Drawing	Computer	PE	Chinese	Geo	11:05-11:45
AFTERNOON BREAK					
Mongol	Music	Mongol	Ethics	PE	2:40-3:20
HR	English	Mongol	Mongol	English	3:25-4:15
Math	PE	Math	Art		4:25-5:05

Mongol = Mongolian language

Chinese = Chinese language

HR = Home room

Geo= Geography

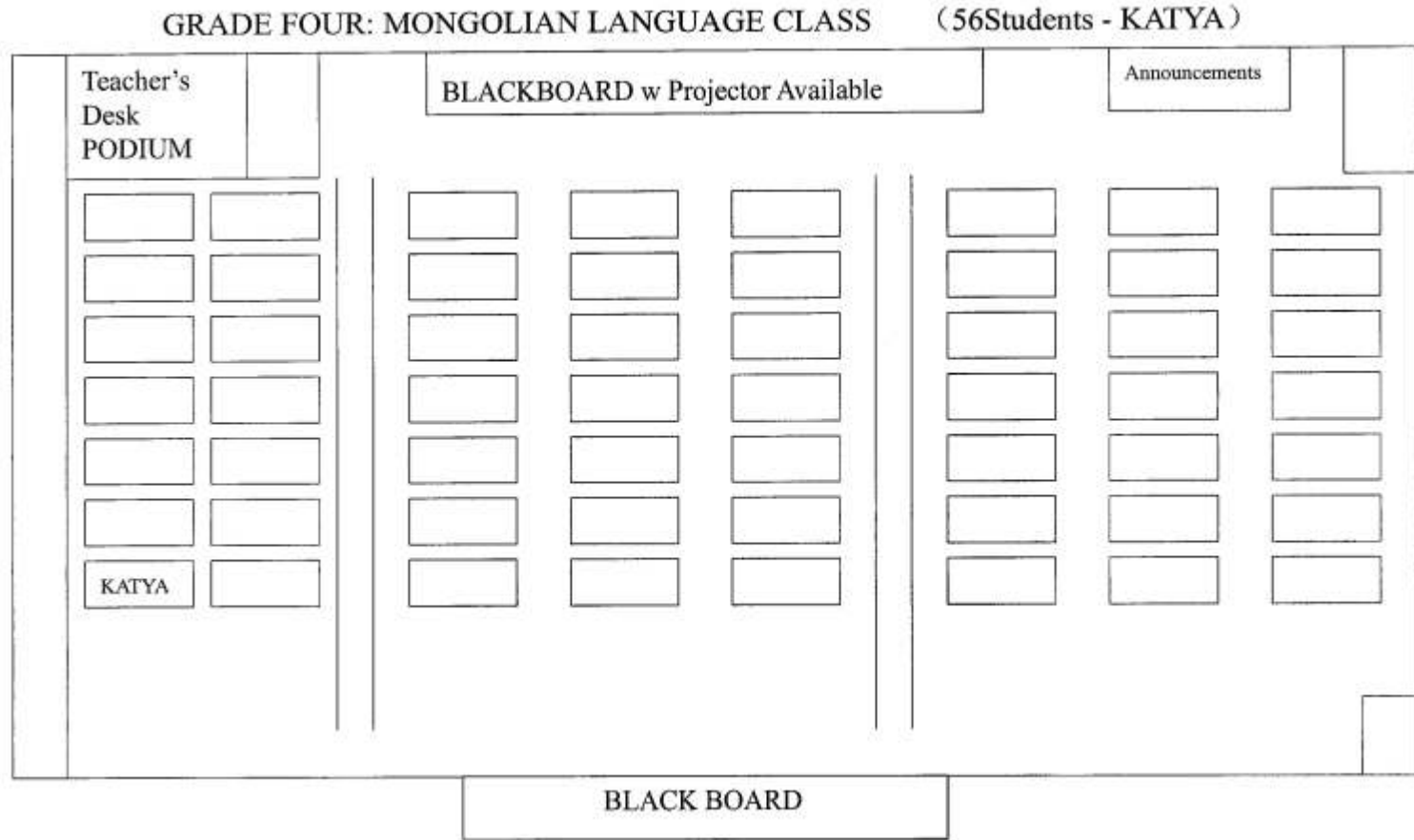


Figure 21. Seating Plan for Katya's Mongolian Language Class.

As I began observing Katya in her classes, I noted that she did not have all of her textbooks. She told me that people must buy the books from a special shop in Hohhot, where Mongolian language textbooks are printed and sold. Although these books are not expensive by Chinese standards, many of them were insufficiently printed in 2012. For example, it was only after the second month of classes that her mother was able to buy her the required geography book. Another point of note was the computer class; as mentioned elsewhere, these computer classes were poorly supervised, and often without a teacher. During my observations, children entered the computer room and simply played video games. No Internet was available. Katya said she did not mind, but she preferred to play video games at this time on her iPad, rather than use the large, dated desktop computers. Her classmates would gather around her to watch her play. The English language teacher refused to allow me to observe her classes, so I have no data on this lesson. Katya remarked that she thought that she spoke better English than her Chinese English teacher, but I cannot verify this. Excepting for the computer class, PE, and music, children remained in their base classroom.

Katya told me she liked her Mongolian language teacher, Suranchana, very much. This teacher and I established good rapport, as I sat in on her classes for many months, and enjoyed watching her teach. I also liked the textbook, because it had small, colorful pictures and clearly connected language with culture.¹⁰² This teacher, who taught all the Grade Four and Grade Five Mongolian classes, was a young woman, of medium build, in her early thirties. She smiled frequently. We had many small chats, sometimes via my elementary Chinese, and sometimes with the help of a translator. This woman also allowed me to

¹⁰² The bilingual Buriat books I bought in Buriatia, however, were of better paper quality than any textbooks in Inner Mongolia.

interview her twice. In the first interview she expressed surprise that I was not somehow related to Katya, because she said we looked very much alike. When I commented on another occasion that I was sorry for causing any disruption to her class (as Katya had been hissing at me and throwing paper at me, in an attempt to get my attention) this teacher simply smiled, and said she was happy to have me as her guest. Suranchana never asked me any specific questions about my research, but she did tell me that she considered herself a Mongolian nationalist, and that it was good for the school that other Mongolians (Russian Buriats and Outer Mongolians) come and participate as students. She also felt that this school was actively preserving the Mongolian language, and that Mongolian language and culture would never die out in China.

Katya never skipped Suranchana's class, but she often went home early when her morning or afternoon ended with PE or music. "I don't have to do those classes; they're stupid," Мне не надо эти уроки she said as she got up and gathered her things together. "My mom says I don't have to do them." Моя мама сказала что мне не надо. No teacher confronted her with this decision to skip classes, just as no teacher confronted her with her forbidden electronic gear, or with cheating on tests (described elsewhere). Katya appeared to make decisions regarding her courses and her free time that no other focal child in this study had the right to make, and certainly no Chinese student could make. She also seemed the least interested of all the Buriat focal children in performing for her teachers. Yet only twice in all my months of observing her did I see a teacher reprimand her: Once, for throwing a notebook at another student, and once, for sprawling down in her chair and causing uproar by falling out of the chair.

Extra-curricular activities and after-school activities. Katya did not participate in any planned extracurricular activities that were connected to the school. The school regularly organized talent shows, in which the children could display their talents in singing, dancing, recital, or some kind of sport (gymnastics, karate, etc); during my fieldwork, three events were held on the ninth floor, where a large stage and auditorium was located. I attended these events and noted that the two Buriat boys also attended these events, but did not participate. Several times a year, children would choose a talent to practice, and after school, or during PE, their teachers would coach and support their efforts. At these times, however, Katya would reluctantly follow the crowd to the basement gym, but stand by the doorway, waiting to leave. Sometimes, when I was observing her, and class would be cancelled to give time for such practices, she would simply exit and go home early. No one tried to stop her. Several times, as I followed her out of the building, she would say, “See, no one cares, I can do anything I like...” Видите, всем наплевать, я могу делать все, что захочу....

During my observations, I asked Katya if she had any friends. She replied: “My mom is my best friend.” Моя мама моя самая хорошая подруга. I asked this because no one came to visit her from school; Katya had no friends in the neighborhood complex, either. She told me that sometimes her mother took her to visit adult members of the Buriat community, especially during holidays, but that there were no Buriat kids here that she wanted to play with, so she preferred to stay home and surf on the Internet, or talk to people back in Buriatia on SKYPE. I asked her mother who she SKYPED, and Natasha told me that she had a girlfriend in Ulan Ude who remembered her from earlier primary school. I also observed that Natasha had no close friends, other than an Inner Mongolian man Hukjil,¹⁰³ who stopped by

¹⁰³ Natasha eventually revealed that this man was one of her lovers.

from time to time to help her pay bills using a bank card (utility bills were written in Chinese and paid by bankcards). He also occasionally drove her places: shopping, or to the doctor; once to a Russian New Year gathering in a park outside of Hohhot. In return, Natasha kept in a cupboard a carton of cigarettes and a few bottles of liqueur, which she shared with Hukjil in the late evenings, if he stopped by to visit with her. These commodities were also shared with Bata-Nimah's father when he came to Hohhot to visit.

Katya's mother told me that her daughter was her best friend, and that Chinese people bored her. She was not on close terms with any women in the Buriat community, and often made fun of my friendship with a Buriat woman, telling me that "you two are so close it is like kindergarten children." Это дружба как в детском саде. I smiled and agreed, and told her I was very glad to have all kinds of friendships, and hoped we could be friends. This caused Natasha to ask me, repeatedly and forcefully, to teach her child English. Yet

Problems. This after school activity of tutoring Katya in English initially took place in her home. Per my chair's request, I requested that Katya be taught together with Bata Nimah, but Natasha protested violently, in the boy's presence; "He is stupid, he is lazy, and he cannot speak the way my daughter can. Just teach her!" Он дурак, он лентяй; не надо ему - только катя. Yet I insisted on teaching the children in pairs, because my chair insisted, in order to both protect child and tutor. In the end, pairing Katya with Bata Nimah, and teaching in general, did not turn out well. When I first began lessons in Katya's home, Natasha stood by the table, criticizing Bata Nimah and then criticizing me; she often told me how to teach. After the second lesson in her apartment Natasha called me on the phone and asked me to stop by. While I sat in her living room, she said: "My daughter says the lessons are too easy. That the lessons are boring. You are not teaching her well. I insist you teach her

alone, the boy is holding her back.” Моя дочка сказала что урок не трудно - скучно даже - ты хорошо не работаешь...надо только ей дать уроки I stared at her, stunned, and said I would get back to her soon.

After talking with my chair again, I decided to teach Katya in my home, and also invite Bata Nimah for separate lessons, which Natasha tried to block. For these tutoring sessions, per my chair’s suggestion, each child would have to bring a language partner. Lessons could not be conducted individually. This decision caused Natasha to exclaim to me on the phone: “But my child has no friends! I want her to learn without a partner.” Но у дочки нет подржки. Я хочу чтобы она одна занимался. I remained firm about the dyad arrangement. The week went by without a lesson, as Natasha scrambled, looking for someone to study with her daughter. Finally, on the second week, Katya arrived, fifteen minutes late, to her lesson, with a plump young Inner Mongolian girl named Husile. This child was Hukjil’s sister’s daughter, and Katya immediately told me, as she walked in, “I hate her. She is fat and ugly and stupid...” Я ненавижу её - она полная, наглая, идиотка... I ignored this remark in Russian and simply told the girls that they were both 15 minutes late and so this lesson was going to be 30 minutes, instead of 45 minutes. Katya complained and told me I was being unfair; I did not respond. Husile smiled; because Katya spoke in Russian, Husile did not know that Katya did not like her. I began the lesson.

In teaching English, I tried to always use English, and not to revert to using other languages. But during this lesson, as well as subsequent lessons involving Katya, she would repeatedly start speaking to me directly in Russian, completely ignoring the lesson or her language partner. For example, as I was trying to introduce personal pronouns, by giving each girl several different colored marking pens to identify as: ”my” or “your,” Katya said:

“So do you like my sweater? I just bought it, it’s new, and it was expensive.” Ну посмотри нравится мой светер? это новый, было дорогой. When I ignored her remarks, she would often poke Husile and try to speak to her in Chinese. Husile would then look at me baffled, because she did not know how to react. (Husile also later told me that she did not understand Katya’s attempts at speaking to her in Chinese).

Another problem I encountered with Katya in my home was her informal form of address towards me. In Russian, a younger person should address an older person, especially a teacher or stranger, using the formal “you” - but Katya, in my home, used the informal “you” when addressing me. This was not acceptable, so I complained to her mother. Natasha said, “Yes, you are correct, but you are a foreigner, it doesn’t matter...” Да ты правано, неважно, ты не русская I replied that it did indeed matter, and that she should tell her daughter to address me with respect. Her mother finally agreed. Katya, however, in public addressed me formally and in my apartment would use the informal “you,” then giggle and say, “Oops, I forgot” Ооопа, я забыла. Having lived among Buriats and Russians for extended periods, I doubted that she had forgotten. No other children in my research or travels in Russian speaking lands have ever shown me this kind of disrespect.

My difficulties with Katya did not abate over time. She continued, with every English language lesson, to either disrupt the lesson by trying to start a conversation in Russian, or by sitting back on my sofa and ignoring me. She would play with her hair, giggle, shove Husile, or simple stare at nothing. Sometimes she would answer a question, but then she lost focus. This behavior paralleled her behavior in the classroom, and it made me feel that she was having emotional issues, and losing valuable time that could be used to learn something. Her behavior tried my patience, yet I did not criticize her, or inform her mother. I did not feel that

her mother would listen to me, much less believe me. And, as the weeks passed, her mother continued to criticize me, telling me again that her child had said the English lessons were fun but too easy.

After some months, this criticism caused me to confront both the parent and the child. I told Natasha that I would hold a demo lesson for them in their home. That night I bought a little cake, and invited Katya to sit down. Then I reviewed the vocabulary that she and Husile had been studying for the last three weeks, by asking the two girls to give me their spoon, her spoon, his spoon, my spoon, etc. Husile performed with ease, while Katya was baffled. “Please note that this lesson is similar to other lessons,” Посмотрити кто и как учить детей - если ей скучно ей надо слушать чтобы понимать I said to Natasha. “If your child is bored, it is because she is not paying attention” Если ей скучно это так: Она не слушает меня. Afterwards, the mother and child did not thank me for the cake or the lesson. In hindsight, this could have been perceived as an ominous omen.

The following week Katya knocked on my door, and when I opened it, I saw that she was alone. “Where is Husile?” I asked her. Где нусила?

“I don’t know and I don’t care,” she replied. Я не знаю; это не важно.

“I am sorry, but I cannot let you inside with your language partner.” Извини, но ты ни можешь прийти без партнера.

This response made Katya stamp her feet. She called her mother and told her I was being rude, not letting her enter the apartment. Then she handed me the phone. “Who do you think you are?” Кто ты? said Natasha. “My daughter has walked in the dark to your home, and you refuse to teach her?” Моя дочка пошла к тебе вечером и ты откаешь дать ей урок?

I explained that the rule was that children come for lessons in pairs; we had discussed this earlier. I would not break this rule; I was sorry, but my dissertation chair had made this rule, and she was my boss.

“You are without conscience!” Ты бессовестная! shouted Natasha and hung up. I gave the phone back to Katya, and told her goodbye and closed the door. Her anger and insults made me feel very uncomfortable.

Ten minutes later, Katya again knocked on my door, this time with Husile beside her. “I am sorry girls, but I have not the mood to teach you, good night,” Извинити девески, у меня сейчас нету настроение добри вечер I said to them, and closed the door again. This reaction provoked more anger from Natasha, who again called me up, and shouted on the phone: “You are shameless. You have given my child great trauma, she is shaking and upset. How dare you! You should not be teaching anyone!” Ты бесстыдная. Ты причинила моему ребенку сильную эмоциональную травму, она вся трясется и расстроена. Как ты могла! Тебе не следует кого-либо учить! Then Natasha slammed the phone down. I had not said a word in reply.

This final incident with Katya and her mother ended my observations. Without being critical of these people as fellow humans, I can only state that it was very difficult to maintain a harmonious relationship with either of them. Later, I found out that other members of the Russian and Buriat community had experienced similar incidents with Natasha; all had resulted in anger and conflicts. My interactions and the Buriat confirmation suggest that Katya and her mother’s behavior contrasted significantly with that of other Buriat children and families.

Discussion. Natasha and Katya differed in many ways from other Buriat families I observed, especially regarding family ties and relationships. Both mother and daughter seemed very isolated and alone, without extended family or kin around them, or in contact with them. As opposed to the other Buriat families I visited in Hohhot and in Buriatia, they had infrequent visitors, and no meetings or reunions with family members, excepting one short visit to Beijing over Christmas to see Katya's two older sisters. The two other Buriat families in Hohhot that I visited at least once a week always had guests and extended kin coming in and out of their homes. When I visited homes in Buriatia in August 2013 and Jan/Feb 2014, I was often overwhelmed at the comings and goings of relatives and kin.

Furthermore, Bata Nimah and his step sister, who lived under Natasha's roof, never brought anyone into Natasha's home. They went outside to meet their friends. Bata Nimah spent a great deal of time on his bicycle, riding around with Mongol and Buriat boys; he also went to the school's dormitory, to visit Mergen, his Buriat peer and classmate, as Mergen could not leave the school grounds as easily as Bata Nimah could leave his apartment. But Katya never went anywhere. She stayed home with her mother, she surfed the Internet, and she played with a little dog named Rufus, her mother's pet. Unlike Surana, children did not call Katya or knock on her door and ask her to go out and play; her mother also involuntarily admitted when we set up the English tutoring that "Katya had no friends" her own age. The same could be said of Natasha, her mother, who never had a female visitor drop by when I was sitting in her home. Hukjil, a man her age, was her only regular guest; NBata-Nimah's father was an infrequent guest, too.

When I came to visit Katya's mother, the girl would leave her computer and sit with us, sometimes crawling into her mother's lap and her mother would say: "Stop it, you are not

a baby anymore, sit over there and act your age.” Перестань, ты не ребенок больше, сядь там и веди себя, как подобает. Katya also would frequently ask me if she could brush my hair, style my hair, and put bows in my hair. Once her mother laughed and said: “She thinks she is ugly because her hair is so fine and so thin...you have hair like hers but it is thick.”

Она думает, что она некрасива, потому что ее волосы тонкие... у тебя похожие волосы на ее, только у тебя они толще. I allowed Katya to brush my hair in her home, hoping that it would lessen her attempts to grab me and my things in the classroom; in hindsight, I might have refused because she never stopped trying to get my attention in the classroom while I was conducting observations. I also realized from consulting with my chair that Katya was faced with enormous difficulties in China and at her school: as a biracial child who looked European, she was constantly on the defense, and she had a very conflicted sense of her identity. Even the Buriat boys remarked that she was not the same as they: when she claimed to be Mongolian, they had protested and said that she was a Russian girl. Yet her mother had chosen to put her in a classroom filled with Inner Mongolian children, all of whom were a year or two younger than she, and all of whom spoke Mandarin and Mongolian, and not a word of Chinese.

Natasha and Katya also differed from other Buriat participants in the ways they addressed the world. Buriats, as mentioned, are very careful in their speech, and they are conscious of the respectful forms embedded in Buriat and Russian languages. The Buriats I knew, as Buddhists and as shamanistic believers, also tried never to shout or say harsh words to a person’s face or behind their back. One Buriat man explained to me: “The spirits can hear everything, it is not good to say evil, and if you do, you should be prepared to pay the

consequences.” Духи могут слышать все, плохо говорить злые вещи, а если ты это делаешь, то приготовься к расплате за последствия...¹⁰⁴

Additionally, Natasha’s constant criticism of Bata Nimah disturbed me. I noted later how relaxed he seemed in Kyatka, among his extended family. I wondered if part of his involvement in a public bullying incident with other boys (described elsewhere) was somehow connected to living with Natasha’s criticisms, as well as having endured the pressure of attending school in China. After my observations were finished, I accidentally met Bata Nimah’s step sister at the university, as we were both studying Chinese in the same department. To my surprise, this girl told me that she thought I was Natasha’s best friend, because I was the only woman who ever visited her. She also told me that Natasha had warned her to “never ask for English lessons, as she is busy, and I needed to teach her daughter.” Некогда не спроси за урок она занята она должен преподавать мою дочку.

Katya’s mother was a Buriat, but she worked in Russian, read Russian fashion magazines and did not appear to practice any Buriat traditions. Unlike other Buriat families, there were no books about Buriat myths, or pictures of Buriat spiritual leaders in Natasha’s home. She did not celebrate Buddhist holidays. Finally, the fact that Katya could not speak any Buriat, and that her mother made no effort to teach her any Buriat, indicated a focus on Russian culture rather than Buriat culture. Natasha celebrated the Russian New Year, but not the Buriat White Month - an Indigenous holiday that all the other Buriats in my study celebrated and enjoyed.

¹⁰⁴ This kind of care in speech choices, and attempts to always speak in positive ways is discussed in the section concerning Buriat culture; it may be that Buddhist practices from the 17th century have emphasized this type of speech.

Katya was the only focal child who frequently changed her mind concerning her self-identification. Sometimes she told me she was a Russian girl, sometimes she told me she was a Buriat girl, and sometimes she told me she was a Mongolian girl. In English, perhaps to get my attention, she tattooed her wrist two separate times with the words: “Mongolian girl” and “Made in Buryatia.” When I asked her mother who she was, in terms of her ethnicity, her mother said: “She is a mixed blood child. She is both Buriat and Russian.” Она метиска. Она и бурятка, и русская. Natasha also said that she was surprised after the pair had come to China, to understand that her child would be treated differently than her other daughters because she had European features.

Natasha, however, did not tell me, as other Buriats did, that Buriat blood is traced through the father, not the mother, so in other Buriat eyes, Katya would be considered as a Russian girl with Buriat blood. As mentioned, Katya appeared conflicted and unable to decide how to define herself ethnically. She told me she was Russian most of the time, but on at least three occasions she stated that she was “Buriat” or “Mongolian.” Because Katya was attending school in Chinese Inner Mongolia, where all of her classmates looked physically different from her, must certainly have made her feel uneasy on some level. The pressure of learning Temut Mongolian and Mandarin Chinese in this alien environment must also have impacted Katya’s feelings, confidence, and sense of self. Finally, the fact that her mother did not have steady, profitable work, and the fact that her mother had no interest in interacting with the school, could also have influenced the way in which Katya conducted her school life.

Natasha trusted her child, loved her child, and thought her highly intelligent - but as a mother she did not regulate or discipline her child in the way that other Buriat parents did.

Furthermore, Katya's remark that "no one cared" what she did might indicate that she was testing her boundaries and wanted to have them more clearly defined. Both Buriat and American mothers have told me this is a common phenomenon for children her age, and I speculate that because the girl was living in a foreign country, her need for established boundaries might have been even greater than in her home country.

In contrast, Surana's parents always checked to make sure her homework assignments were done before they allowed their child to surf the Internet at night. Bata-Nimah's grandmother told me that she made regular visits to his school in Kyakta, as did many other parents and elders. I was able to obtain permission very easily to watch these children in their respective schools, because the focal children's parents and guardians were well known to the school directors and to the children's teachers. Likewise, I was able to obtain permission to do my research in the Hohhot bilingual school, not because of Natasha, but because of another Buriat mother.

This woman, Darima, had established contact with the school eight years before my research began. When she brought her son to study, she made sure to visit the teachers, bringing them small gifts during holidays (chocolates, cheese) and she often requested meetings with the teachers to find out about her son's progress. In fact, because her son was in the Mongolian track, like Katya, and because he was a Buriat boy who started school with no command of Temut Mongolian, this mother hired a Temut language tutor for her son. During his lessons, she sat with the tutor, and translated to him in Russian what he failed to understand; likewise, she helped the tutor to understand what her son needed to know. In this way Darima became fluent in Temut herself. Darima also brought the director of the school gifts, and helped him to recruit Buriat and Outer Mongolian students, by giving him excellent

contacts in Ulan Bataar and Ulan Ude. Granted, this woman's financial circumstances were, at times, better than Natasha's, but this woman, like Surana's mother, invested much more energy in understanding and interacting with the school as her child was being educated.

I cannot say that Natasha's finances, or her lack of higher education kept her from this kind of participation and interest, but I can say that her lack of involvement impacted Katya's studies. At twelve, she made decisions about her education that caused her to lose study time, and social interaction time. Katya came home with high test scores which she had achieved by cheating; her mother accepted these scores as a product of Katya's hard work and intelligence. Likewise, I wondered how much Katya understood about her mother's relationships with men: her biological father, as well as Natasha's male visitors. Of all the children in this study, Katya's life and potential for the future seemed the most fraught with challenges.

A day in the life of Bata-Nimah in Kyatka, Buriatia.

Introduction. In 2012, I first met Bata-Nimah. He was a beautiful child, on the edge of crossing from a boy to a youth, with dark almond shaped eyes, long black eyelashes, flawless skin, and well-shaped facial features. He was approximately five feet five, with a medium build, and strong muscular arms and sturdy legs. He had no facial hair and perfect, pearly white teeth. His hair was dark, shining, and reached to the nape of his neck. He was living with his step sister, Lera, inside of Natasha's home. His father had first brought Bata-Nimah to Hohhot in 2011, where he had completed one year of schooling, while living in the school dorms. The second year, 2012, however, his father decided to place his son under Natasha's care. This might be because he had a close relationship with Natasha, who was struggling to survive financially, and he wanted to help her by offering her extra income to

care for his son and daughter. He also thought that Bata-Nimah would be happier living in a home situation, among other Buriats. In any case, in September 2012, Bata-Nimah had one room to himself in Natasha's small two bedroom apartment. His step sister Lera had no room of her own; she shared Bata-Nimah's room during the day, but slept in the living room on the sofa at night.

Natasha did not seem to hold much affection for Bata-Nimah. She constantly criticized him, and he rarely raised his eyes or looked at her directly. He and his sister cleaned the apartment to her specifications; they stayed in their room together and studied in this room, while Katya studied in her mother's room. Bata-Nimah did not lounge around the living room. He frequently asked permission after school to take his bike and visit Mergen at the dorms, or Zhargal, another Buriat boy, who was living in an apartment far from the school. Until the bullying incident (described later), Natasha paid scant attention to Bata-Nimah's whereabouts. She seemed happy to have him out of the apartment; she had told me that it was a small space and he wanted to go out to see his friends, which gave her and Katya more space. After the incident, however, she refused to let the boy go anywhere on his own. He went to school and back, watched by Katya, and he stayed in the apartment. Bata-Nimah stopped speaking as much to me after this incident as well.

In school, Bata-Nimah, like Mergen, was very still. He would enter the classroom, nod or shake hands with a few Outer Mongolian boys, and then arrange his notebooks, dictionary and textbooks. He sat still and listened; he did not offer any answers during class. Often, in cold weather, the boy pulled his leather jacket around him, and seemed to use it as a way to ward off any kind of interaction. Like Mergen, in class he constantly looked up words using his Russian dictionary. Like Mergen, he wrote everything that was written by the

teacher on the board, and then translated it into Russian. But unlike Mergen, Bata-Nimah had little English ability, while he understood more Mongolian because he knew more Buriat.

It took several months for Bata-Nimah to warm up to me. He saw me as Natasha's ally and friend. I did not realize how much he disliked her, because his emotions were concealed. Katya once made a remark saying that her mother thought Bata-Nimah was stupid and lazy and bad. If she told this to Katya, he must have sensed it. The unfriendly environment combined with the fact that his own mother had died in a horrific car accident, did not create a warm, empathetic environment for the boy.

I tried not to pester Bata-Nimah. Many days we walked silently to school together. I watched him discreetly go about his school life. Initially he spoke very little to me. He did like to talk to Mergen, and he liked to jump the fence surrounding the back track in order to buy something sweet – either a Coke or some pastry. Bata-Nimah was neither fat nor thin, so I assumed he had enough to eat and just liked to have these snacks. One day he mentioned, however, that when he lived in the dorms he could eat as much as he had wanted, and the food was 'better' than that cooked by Katya's mother.

Sometimes Bata-Nimah played basketball in the gym with the Outer Mongolian boys. He was naturally graceful and quick on his feet. He told me that he liked sports and the socializing, but he would remark to me that Mongolians were "peasants" and then smile. If I asked him about Buriats being Mongolians, he would agree, and say that all Mongolians were brothers, but Buriats were more "civilized" than Outer Mongolians. It could be for this reason that Bata-Nimah never let on to me in China that he understood and spoke good Buriat. In fact, Bata-Nimah initially had told me that he was a Russian speaker, and that his Russian was better than his Buriat.

Because of the school's strict rules and because of Natasha, Bata-Nimah never skipped classes. He sat, still and somewhat attentive, or he looked out the window. He always sat near a window. The boy would rest his chin on his hand and gaze out the window while the teacher had her back turned to the class, writing her numerous Chinese characters. Bata-Nimah, like the other students, copied by hand many Chinese characters on a daily basis. He told me he didn't like to study this much but that it was necessary.

Bata-Nimah had an Adidas backpack, in which he put his textbooks and notebooks. He showed me his notebooks; his writing was beautiful, almost ornamental, very neat and precise. His writing differed from Katya's, which was more drawn out and scrawled. By his handwriting, I felt that Bata-Nimah, in addition to being a natural sportsman, could also be a careful and perhaps artistic soul. Later, as he came to English lessons, he showed me poetry he had composed in Russian. Some of the poems were love poems to a girl, an unknown girl he told me, but I think they might have been addressed to an Outer Mongolian classmate.

When Bata-Nimah came to English lessons I learned more about the child. When he was free of Natasha's and Katya's presence he became a happy, even ebullient boy, and he loved to try to get me to have the lesson outside, not inside. Several times he showed up without a language partner, and because I had so little access to him without the school or Natasha's watchful eyes, I would simply greet him at the door and say: "Let's do our English lesson while walking in the park." This covered me for liability by being in public with him, and he could safely tell Natasha that he had shown up and had his English lesson. We both told Natasha this white lie several times, and I think my cooperation and alliance slowly made the boy talk to me more and trust me a bit.

We walked in the evenings in a park called MonDuHai – right next to the university. This park swarmed with Chinese people of all ages and genders, and it had a large scummy pond, many paths, with many adults doing their TaiChi exercises, or dancing with red flags, or simply walking about. Often I would start to chat with Bata-Nimah in English; he would answer me in Russian. Sometimes he would ask a question, as he was very curious about life in the USA. He wanted to go there because he thought everyone, especially boys, could easily afford to buy expensive cars and motorcycles. He was disappointed when I told him I bought used cars.

Bata-Nimah told me about being a child and learning to ride horses. He said horses are more fun than bicycles but they would not be practical in China, given the dense population and lack of space. He also loved bicycles, and had had one stolen in Hohhot. He said it must have been a Chinese who stole it, because Chinese were poor and liked bicycles. His father gave him money to buy another one, provided that he continued to study hard.

Bata-Nimah also told me about the spirits that lived in Buriatia, in certain spots and acknowledged that he believed in shamanistic practices. To him, they were as normal as breathing air. He also reported that he went from time to time to the Goose Lake Monastery near his home, especially during the Buriat White Month. He did not think the Mongolians in China were really religious, and he told me that the Buddhist temples in Hohhot were all about making money, because “that’s what Chinese people want to do.” He never mentioned the loss of his mother, or made any reference to where she was buried or how he might remember her. I did not ask him direct questions about this loss, as Buriats are very careful whenever the topic of death is mentioned. It would have been rude for me to ask.

Bata-Nimah also never made any direct references to girls. Buriats are very conservative in the way the two sexes mingle. Although it is considered normal for a young woman to become pregnant before marriage, or even to defer marriage to the father of the child, the two genders do not generally socialize freely or mix openly. Bata-Nimah did, as mentioned write love poetry, and his writing could have been partly influenced by Russian tradition – as Russian poets are noted for doing this. He did say that he loved his step-sister, and that he was happy they were together, because she was part of his family.

Natasha told me that Bata-Nimah was a constant liar. He would leave, after telling her he had done his homework, and be gone for hours on his bicycle. The school never reported whether he had completed homework or not to her; or if they did, she paid no mind. The revelation that he might not be studying as hard as he should came when a practice HSK (language proficiency test) was administered and he did not excel; this made Natasha ground the boy for a month but he continued his English classes with me. Natasha's suspension made Bata-Nimah beg me for more lessons in the park. I always agreed, because I too, wanted to be outside, and to have the chance to observe the boy. I liked him, and I felt that his living situation was not optimal. Bata-Nimah seemed to be constantly on guard, both at home and at school.

Kyatka. In 2014, in Kyatka, Buriatia, Bata-Nimah was almost fourteen years old. I was able to visit his extended family in Buriatia in the summer of August 2013, where I met some of his aunts, cousins, and a grandfather. I returned again in February 2014 to visit him during the school year, but was only able to spend one evening with his family, as I was arrested. (Arrest details are described a bit later). In regard to this research, Bata-Nimah's

behavior and language choices in Russia contrast with his life and behavior in China, making it worthwhile to describe him in both cultural contexts.

As in China, when I met him again in Russia in the winter of 2014, he was wearing sport clothes. The boy especially likes the Adidas brand. Under his black winter leather coat he was wearing a red Adidas tracksuit, which looked new. His boots were heavy duty snow boots, and as he removed his boots to enter the house, I noted he was wearing hand knitted woolen socks - a gift from his grandmother. He wore no accessories, had no tattoos, and seemed quite at ease to see me again, as well as happy to be out of the cold and inside with his family members.

During the evening of my winter visit, his grandmother chatted with me freely about her grandson and his life at home and at school in the border town of Kyatka. She explained that the students had no dress code at his school; it was simply expected that children be neat and clean. Additionally, they did not take off their coats before entering classes. Although the classrooms were warm, there was no guard robe to hang coats. I was also told that teachers dressed neatly and simply - “just as all Russian and Buriat teachers should” так же, как и все русские и бурятские учителя должны and that no one wore short skirts or jeans or “showed off their wealth.” производили впечатление своим благосостоянием.

Bata-Nimah’s mother died in 2009, in a car accident that took place in Outer Mongolia, across the border, as his father and mother were returning to Kyatka from a business trip to Ulan Bataar.¹⁰⁵ However, I learned in China that the car was driven by his father, Bata, who was also injured. Consequently, Bata was advised by a shaman to take further medical help in China. With the aid of other Buriat friends, he underwent a series of

¹⁰⁵ Buriats do not talk about death, or say things like “that will be the death of me;” they are very careful in this way.

massages and acupuncture treatments that may have stopped him from becoming paralyzed. Today, Bata's face is partially frozen on one side; the left eye does not blink, but he can use his limbs and walk freely. While he was taking these medical treatments, Bata's father decided that his son should become an alternative Mongolian/Tibetan doctor, and so he decided to place his boy in the bilingual school in Hohhot to gain fluency in Mandarin and Mongolian. Buriat families encouraged him in this decision, and Natasha at this point started her relationship with Bata.¹⁰⁶ Bata-Nimah also had a step sister who was several years older than him, as his father was married previously before marrying his now deceased mother, but they had divorced after five years. His father regularly gives money to his (first) ex-wife, and has assumed financial responsibility for educating his daughter from this first marriage. In 2012, the girl was seventeen years old, and also studying Chinese in Hohhot like Bata-Nimah. She lived for several months with Natasha and her step brother, but then she moved to the student dormitories, where she was enrolled at a local university, Nei Da.¹⁰⁷

When Bata-Nimah was involved in the bullying incident in Hohhot (described elsewhere), his father paid the 10,000 RMB fine immediately, and Natasha told me that he strongly criticized his son. Some months after the fine was paid, Bata-Nima received his passport back from the Chinese police, and his father escorted him back to Buriatia. Natasha continued living in the apartment in China, as rent must be paid one year in advance.¹⁰⁸ The following year she moved to a less expensive apartment and paid her own rent.

¹⁰⁶ The arrangement was that Natasha look after Bata's children like a second mother, but this relationship between the two adults, according to Natasha, also became sexual until Bata remarried.

¹⁰⁷ As of this writing, she is still at university in Hohhot.

¹⁰⁸ Paying key money - rent for one year - is common in Asia.

According again to Natasha, Bata-Nimah's father was concerned that the Chinese might impose additional fines and restrictions, and had decided not to risk allowing his son to continue further studies in China. (This may be due to the similar behavior the Russian police imposed upon me, threatening repeated fines if I remained hours or days longer in Kyatka, as will be described below). Instead, Bata changed his plans for his son's education, and directed him towards a general Russian education, hoping now to have his son focus on sports rather than language acquisition, and medical studies.

He placed his son in the local middle/secondary school in Kyatka, and encouraged the boy to run, wrestle, ski, and exercise in general. I am not describing his school day in the Chinese bilingual school in Hohhot in any detail, because his schedule parallels that of another focal child, Mergen, who will be described next. However, this change in location and study emphasis has impacted Bata-Nimah's communicative choices. Notably, his Buriat language skills became evident to me, and his personality as a happy-go-lucky youth rather than a sullen, secretive child, were also in evidence in Russia.

At school in Kyatka, the director told me that Buriat language is taught at all levels in his school, and that Bata-Nimah, like many local students, is 'bilingual' in both Buriat and Russian. Significantly, while Bata-Nimah was living in China, he spoke only in Russian to his Buriat peers. His father also had Natasha arrange for the Russian tutor to also teach his son Russian grammar, because he wanted his son's literacy in Russian to increase, despite the fact that he was living in China and learning Mandarin. I asked a Buriat participant named Dashka about this. She said:

In Russia, in Buriatia, people will say you are from the countryside, you know, not sophisticated or well educated, if you speak poor Russian...and in many places, like

Kyatka, for example, people, Buriats, we speak Buriat. It's our language, after all. But parents want their children to speak good Russian, it is a sign of being educated, of being well bred...of not being a country bumpkin.

В России, в Бурятии, люди всегда будут говорить, что ты из сельской местности, ну, знаете, люди неопытные, не образованные, если ты плохо говоришь по-русски... и во многих местах, таких, как Кяхта, например, люди, буряты, разговаривают на бурятском. Это наш язык, в конце концов. Но родители хотят, чтобы их дети говорили по-русски, это признак образованности, воспитанности... признак того, что ты не деревенщина.

As mentioned, during my fieldwork, Bata-Nimah had no mother. His father, since his marriage to an Outer Mongolian woman in late 2012, spent much of his time in Ulan Baatar, leaving the boy on his own under Natasha's care in China, and later, to his grandmother's care in Russia. His father did, however, come on occasion to Kyatka on business, and checked on his son; he also, when needed, traveled to China on business. When Bata comes to Kyatka, he remains a day or two in town, and then departs again for Mongolia. He rarely brings his new wife to Russia; she has created a home (which I have never seen) in Ulan Bataar for her husband, and she has sent her daughter, a seventeen year old girl called Annuka, to live in the dorms at Nei Da University, where she is studying Chinese, like her stepsister. Presently, despite being motherless, Bata-Nimah has many female relatives in Kyatka who pay attention to him. The night of my visit three young aunties were present, and I was told there are many other family members who visit regularly, because they come to pay respects to his grandmother.

Bata-Nimah's grandmother told me that she cuts her grandson's hair, cleans his clothes, and feeds him well. He is respectful to her and to other family members, addressing all his elders (as per Buriat courtesy) in the formal "you" form. The evening of my visit to his grandmother's home, I saw that he also was gentle with his cousins, who I observed, crawled over him, peed on him, and threw things at him. None of this fazed the boy, which seems to imply that he was comfortable living with a variety of age groups, and that he felt at home. After dinner, I watched Bata-Nimah sitting on the sofa with his two young aunties and their children; he stroked a toddler's hair, and then picked up an infant child, placing her in his lap. He also played with his cell phone, sending a few SMS messages, and later asked if he could go out and meet friends. His grandmother agreed, and off he went.

Researcher's introduction to Kyatka. Before proceeding further, I would like the reader to note that my second, winter 2014 trip to see Bata-Nimah in Kyatka, Russia, a small, once prosperous trading town,¹⁰⁹ was for me as a researcher eventful, even stressful, and worthy of description.¹¹⁰ As stage actors say: timing is everything. In February 2014, two Buriat participants (Rinchin and Dashka) and I got into a big black four wheel drive pick up truck, whose owner was a young man who apparently worked in some capacity for Bata-Nimah's family. This young Buriat roared us down to the Ulan Ude south-side micro bus station, and just as we arrived an hourly departure bus was getting ready to leave. Loading our bags quickly, we climbed aboard, and started the four hour trip to Kyatka.

But this trip was destined to take more than four hours: after one bathroom/tea break ten minute stop at a place near the famous Goose Lake Monastery (a sanctuary for Buriat

¹⁰⁹ Kyatka was a key city on the Tea Route - details of the town's past splendor are described in *The Tea Route* by Martha Avery (2003).

¹¹⁰ The first trip was delightful, in summer 2013.

Buddhism), we rolled into the checkpoint station. Kyatka is located very near the border; it was a key city for trade, and in centuries past, some of the *crème* of aristocratic Russian society lived and worked here. It is said that ladies imported their hairdressers from Paris, and men sent their coats to be pressed in England (returning months later in tip-top form). This small town hosts an assortment of classical Russian onion-domed churches, many of them having fallen into acute disrepair. The once lovely Parisian style buildings, with hand carved stone facades are grimy and cracked, gone into genteel shabbiness, rather like a famous beauty who is now in late old age and no longer conscious of her looks.

The streets of Kyatka are narrow, with many small alleyways around the city only dirt, and on this trip they were covered with a thick coat of ice and snow. Likewise, the small, colorful old fashioned Russian style houses are wooden, square shaped, with raw chocolate brown wooden walls and robin egg's blue window shutters. Toilets in these houses are outside, inside sits a Russian oven, called a (печка) *pechka*, which warms the interior of these little homes and is also used to bake bread, boil tea, and sleep upon - just as they were used centuries ago. In many ways, Kyatka is a small town lost in time.

But I was not to see the city in a timely or even a researcher's fashion. As we pulled into the border control three kilometers from town, my Buriat friend commented, "So many soldiers working, usually there is only one..." много солдатов больше чем надо... A plump, heavily padded Buriat soldier, wearing his soldiers camouflage, thick felt boots and the ubiquitous fur hat, entered our bus and asked for passports. When he got to mine, he frowned. "I must take it," Я должен его взять he said. My friends protested, and told him to check the visa; all was in order. He nodded, but took the passport and exited. After some minutes the other passengers began to complain. "We are stuck here; this is terrible," He

можно поехать; ужасно, said one elderly Russian, turning and glaring at my friends. We waited. After another five minutes, with more grumbling, my Buriat friends suggested that we exit. Rinchin would call his relatives, and they would take us the last three kilometers into Kyatka after my passport check was finished. So out we went, and the micro bus zoomed off.

The plump soldier invited my Buriat female participant, Daska, and I into the little military hut, where a small stove was burning wood, and I was glad to wait inside. After forty minutes, a young, serious looking blond man drove up in a land cruiser. Sitting with him was a small, dark haired man; both of them seemed to be under 30 years old. They were KGB officers. The blond man had an ominous mien, while the smaller darkish fellow seemed slightly embarrassed, and non-threatening. The blond talked several minutes to Dashka's relative, who had driven up and was waiting to take us to town, and then he walked inside the aluminum hut and said to me: "You must come with me. You have entered a secure zone without official permission. You will be fined 100 rubles." Вы должны поехать с нами будет штраф 100 р. My friends protested and said that my visa was in order, I had done nothing wrong, etc etc, but the man was adamant. He also refused to allow my friends to accompany me. I got into the souped-up land cruiser, the dark haired fellow smiled apologetically, and off we roared toward Kyatka.

The blond man drove into a barbed wire compound, skidded, parked, and led me into a two story building that looked like any other shabby bureaucratic building. The entrance had a gate guard, and the foyer hosted a ripped linoleum floor, with fake parquet patterns, wooden walls, with posters displaying heroes of the various wars, from the 18th century to the present. The blond led me into a large room, where two Buriats, long haul drivers, were sprawled in wooden chairs by the door, looking frustrated, and two soldiers were sitting in

the back, with a huge picture of Putin above their heads, typing. The blond left and the young dark man sat near me, and again smiled apologetically. “You must wait,” подождать надо he said softly and then began to studiously examine his fingernails.

The two soldiers in the back stared at me, noting that I was foreign (my Mongol coat gave it away), and then continued their work. Each man typed with one finger, and apparently, not very accurately. One of the soldiers had a small portable printer; he printed out numerous sheets of paper, several times in a row, cursed loudly and threw them all on the floor. The other soldier stopped finger pecking to whisper endearments to someone in his cell phone. The two Buriats complained to this man, saying they had already waited hours; they wanted their documents, a fine to pay apparently, printed out, and they wanted to go. Work was waiting. The soldiers completely ignored this request.

I sat and waited, understanding that I was under arrest, that the Border Patrol was connected to the KGB and that these men could be vicious and heartless. My heart began to beat very fast. The door had a small glass pane; I got up casually, looked through the pane and saw the blond man in the room across from mine; he was smoking and drinking tea. Waiting was part of the game, I thought to myself, and started my deep breathing exercises, to stay calm. After some time, perhaps thirty or forty minutes, the dark young man told me I was to go upstairs. I said to him, “This is all so very strange to me,” Это мне так странно and he shrugged and said, “Do not be afraid, it is just protocol” ничего, это протокол.

We climbed concrete stairs, smelling of stale cigarette smoke and stood by a door. Soldiers walked past, looking busy, opening doors, going in and out, and closing doors. It seemed like they were all young, and just playing at being bureaucrats and KGB, because no one stayed in a room long, and when a door opened, I saw young men, some in uniform,

some not, just sitting idly, not even with a computer. It was very odd and somehow unnerving: I am more fearful of the stupid and venal than the intelligent, because stupid people can make dangerous, stupid mistakes, and because I was alone, separated from my Buriat friends. We waited for ten minutes by one door, as the people in charge of me wandered by, but then, from inside the room where I was standing, an order was issued for me to enter. It was a narrow office, with a man sitting at a desk in the back, and two chairs in front of him. “Sit,” Сидите he said, adding, “You understand Russian?” Вы понимаете русский?

“Pretty well,” Достаточно хорошо I answered neutrally.

The interrogation began: “So why are you here, you know this is a border area, a restricted area...foreigners are not supposed to be simply wandering about. Let me see your passport? Where do you live? Who brought you here? How did you meet these people? How long have you been in Russia? Why do you speak Russian? What job does your friend do? How many children does he have? Why do you say you live in China? At your age, a student (incredulous stare) You really speak Chinese? Speak then! Are you married? Where did you study Russian?” Так, почему Вы здесь, это приграничный район, это зона ограниченного доступа... иностранцы не могут здесь просто так находиться. Могу я увидеть Ваш паспорт? Где Вы живете? Кто доставил Вас сюда? Как вы встретили этих людей? Как долго Вы находитесь в России? Почему Вы говорите по-русски? Чем занимается Ваш друг? Сколько у него детей? Почему Вы говорите, что Вы живете в Китае? В Вашем возрасте? Студент (скептически смотрит)? Вы действительно говорите по-китайски? Тогда скажите что-нибудь! Вы замужем? Где Вы учили русский язык?

And then the questions changed; “What do you think of Russia? Why do you think the World War ended? Why were the Mongols able to take over the world? What language is the most difficult: Russian or Chinese? What’s your home state? Does everyone have a car there?” Что Вы думаете о России? Почему, как Вы думаете, Мировая война закончилась? Почему монголы могли захватить весь мир? Какой язык самый сложный? Русский или китайский? Из какого Вы штата? Машины у всех есть?

When this young soldier started asked these kinds of questions, I began to understand that my arrest had several factors: the soldiers had to arrest me, because I was a security threat to them, and because I was a foreigner. But they also were intrigued: they had never arrested an American, much less one who spoke Russian, and one who was a little old lady, a non-threatening woman who unfortunately had insufficient vocabulary to talk about war strategy, and kept wanting to talk about her speciality, multilingual children. So after an extended conversation with this blond chief, he decided either that I was harmless, or that I was no longer of interest because I was not good at discussing war, and he nodded to the dark young man.

We rose, walked down the stairs, and met the surly blond again, who led me to his car. He nervously drove me and his chief to a nearby hotel, where Daska was summoned. She made conversation with these two men, as I stood passively, waiting to be set free. They talked and told her that with the upcoming Olympics, laws had changed regarding the border, that I was either to leave Kyatka, or they were to call and tell the military border police where I was, reporting in regularly. Dashka nervously agreed, and then I shook the three mens’ hands, thanked them, and went upstairs to my room with my friend.

Upstairs, Rinchin and Dashka, perhaps to lighten the mood, treated the entire ordeal as a joke. This baffled me and made me uneasy, as I have had in past decades previous encounters with Soviet and Turkmen police; they were not a joke to me. But my Buriat friends laughed and said the soldiers were just boys, playing cat and mouse with the American; it was not serious, and we could just continue our plan for me to stay here a few days, observe the boy, and visit the family, who were both Rinchin and Dashka's relatives, and go along our merry way. I protested; they laughed again at me and asked if a few boys had frightened me, asked if all Americans were so timid. I shut up, and then asked: "Who will pay the fine, or get me out of jail if this *is* serious?" Кто будет платить если это серьезно. They both laughed again, and said it was time to go meet Bata-Nimah's relatives, eat, and that I should just relax.

After dinner we returned to the hotel and learned that the police had made another visit. After another hour they called and asked where I had gone...then they arrived in person. At this point, it was 9:15pm, three officials again asked for my passport, checked the visa again, photographed my passport again, and then, oddly enough, apologized. "There will be no fine, everything is in order," Нету штрафа всё в порядке the blond said. They left.

The next morning I got up with Dashka to go to the school, to meet the director who we had called last night. He had said that he would allow me to observe the focal child for one full day. We had brought the courtesy bottle of whiskey, the preferred gift for male administrators (females get boxes of chocolates). We were sitting in his office at 8:30 in the morning, discussing classes and the school's history, when my phone rang. It was the KGB ordering me again to tell them where I was located. They were going to pick me up and

question me again. I sighed, apologized to the director, and told him that I hoped I would return before the school day was over.

As it turned out, I was interrogated again, this time for four hours, and then strongly advised to leave town. At one in the afternoon, after paying a fine for entering a border zone territory, I got back on the microbus to Ulan Ude. This is why I have less information about this focal child in his homeland than I do regarding Surana. Now I will present what I have observed about Bata-Nimah, a male Buriat focal child who, like Surana, returned to Buriatia, instead of staying in China to study at the bilingual school.

Bata-Nimah's home. After being released from the KGB border control around seven pm, my Buriat friends and I flagged a taxi to go to see the focal child and his family. As in Ulan Ude, private drivers pick up people and drive them around for small sums. The center of Kyatka has a square, with a large church in disrepair, and a main street with few shops, a small open air market (run mostly by Chinese vendors), a public library, one primary school, and one secondary school. There are no institutes or universities. Around the center, which has narrow paved roads, with numerous potholes, are dirt roads on which the locals live. All the houses in this area are wooden, small (less than 75 square feet), and many seem to be older than fifty years. Dashka told me that newer wooden houses are built on the south side of town, near the border that marks Russia from Mongolia; many are now owned by the Chinese, some by Outer Mongolians.

The taxi driver, a huge burly man wrapped in furs, drove us cheerfully to a small wooden home. There was a six foot high wooden privacy fence around the home, with chipped blue paint, and rusty hinges. We shouted and someone opened the gate (See Figure 22), then we climbed up some small porch stairs, pushed aside a heavy woolen blanket away

from the door, and entered this home. This first room was the dining room, with a small table pushed to the right wall. It had a plastic cover, and much food piled upon it in our honor: a breadbasket, butter, chocolate candies in a bowl, marinated liver strips, mushrooms, potato salad and an onion and carrot salad. Several people were in this home, they slowly became identifiable, as no one introduced me, or told me the family connection.

Daska had a cousin who had married into Bata-Nimah's family. Rinchin was related to Bata-Nimah's grandmother, who was fifty seven years old and proudly told me she had 27 grandchildren. Bata-Nimah, one of her numerous grandchildren, was now living with his grandmother and great grandmother in this little wooden house. Bata Nimah had a small room, almost a cupboard, behind the television, his grandmother slept on the sofa, and the great grandmother slept in the kitchen, where the Russian stove was located (See Figures 22 and 23).



Figure 22. Going to Bata Nimah's home in Kyatka.



Figure 23. Bata Nimah’s Cousin (August 2013).

As I sat, drinking tea and eating the various foods on the table, more people began to arrive. “That’s the wife of Bayer, Larissa,” Это лариса Бауерина жена she said, introducing me. “That’s Soni, another bride, and here are her three children... here comes another bride, that is Julia” Вот приедет Сони другая невестка и вот её трое и приедет сейчас улиа тоже супруга. As we sat, eating marinated liver and freshly steamed *puusa* (Buriat meat dumplings), Bata-Nimah came in. He washed his hands at the sink, and then received everyone’s greetings. Because it was the White Month, a special New Year holiday time for Buriats, the greeting ceremony consisted of the elder holding out hands palms up and holding onto the elbows of the younger person; the younger person holds his hands palms up also, resting his arms on the other person’s arms. Then they kiss cheeks three times, saying in Buriat “Happy New Year” (*Sagaan haraarr*). Especially during this time (but during other holidays as well), people offer each other gifts of money, especially to children and elders. For example, after Bata-Nimah entered, and after Larissa’s three children entered, Rinchin

greeted each person individually, and then gave each child a 1000 ruble note (30 rubles = one USD); he also conducted this small ceremony with the great grandmother, who chuckled and was very pleased.

During my evening with the family, I observed many things in Bata-Nimah's life that differed from his life in China. First and foremost, he was together with his extended family, rather than living under Natasha's regime. He smiled more, and he spoke a great deal of Buriat, perhaps 80%, to his family members, who also mixed in a few Russian phrases as they spoke together in Buriat. This language use was different from what I had heard in Ulan Ude between Surana and her parents, who spoke isolated Buriat words, or very short phrases to their child. Here in Kyatka, all the family members, young (See Figure 23) and old, including the great grandmother, used Buriat as much as, or more than Russian. For example, Larissa started out a sentence saying in Russian, "yesterday at work" *вчера на работе* and then she switched to a conversation entirely in Buriat (unintelligible) and then finished the sentence with, "and so it was" *и так прошел*.

Second, I understood that Bata-Nimah's living space, although smaller than the space in the the apartment in Hohhot, was used differently. Buriats have traditionally been a communal and mobile people; Bata-Nimah had a bedroom where he slept, but if people came to visit, I was told that he slept on the floor, or in another room, and sometimes for extended periods of time. He could also go and visit relatives and eat and sleep with them; in the summer of 2013, for example, when I was visiting his relatives in the nearby countryside, Bata-Nimah was not present because he was staying with other kinfolk in another area. Similarly, when observing Surana, several times relatives came by to chat, eat, and sleep: Ayuna's small apartment hosted seven adults and three children on one weekend during my

stay, and no one (but perhaps me the American) seemed the least bit crowded, or worried about washing and toilet arrangements.

The third thing I noticed about Bata-Nimah's life was that he had several physical chores to do on a daily basis after school. The home had no running water, so every day he was responsible for taking a dolly and rolling large plastic containers down to the communal water source. He filled the sink's reservoir daily. He also chopped wood and kindling for the Russian stove. That evening, Bata Nimah also told me that, in the summer, he was responsible for herding his uncle's cows and horses, and often slept outside in the open air.

"How is your life now here, as compared to China? Do you miss China? How is the school different here from the Chinese school?" I asked him. Here is an excerpt from our conversation.

BN: I miss it (China), yes...it was pretty interesting, living there, it was okay..."

VS: What about your life here?

BN: It's okay. I like my school...

VS: Why?

BN: My friends are here; I can ski, I can go wherever I want with them...

VS: Is this school easier?

BN: Yes. And we have less time in classes. I play sports more here.

VS: Do you remember any Chinese?

BN: Sure. But I don't study it anymore...there's no Chinese class at school; there is a market here, with Chinese people, they sell their stuff...

VS: What are your plans now?

BN: I guess my dad wants me to train for sports, that's okay. That's okay...uh...

BN: Я скучаю по Китаю, да... было очень интересно – жить там – было хорошо.

VS: Как вы живете там?

BN: Хорошо. Мне нравится моя школа...

VS: Почему?

BN: Мои друзья здесь; я могу кататься на лыжах, с ними я могу пойти куда угодно...

VS: В этой школе проще учиться?

BN: Да. У нас меньше времени отводится на урок. Здесь я больше занимаюсь спортом.

VS: Ты еще помнишь китайский язык?

BN: Конечно. Но я больше не учу его... в школе нет уроков китайского языка. Здесь есть рынок, там есть китайцы, они продают вещи...

BN: Я думаю, что мои папа хочет меня тренировать в спорте, это хорошо. Это хорошо... эээ...

I asked his grandmother some questions after Bata-Nimah went to sit on the sofa with all the other children, to watch TV. She told me that her son, Bata, had been a champion wrestler in school, as well as an excellent rider, and that perhaps Bata-Nimah would now also become a sportsman. She explained that Bata-Nimah was currently attending an ordinary school, but the boys from this part of Buriatia were famous for becoming excellent athletes. I then asked his aunties why this was so, and they explained to me that the weather here was harsher, people often cross country skied to get from place to place, and that it was a kind of father to son tradition to excel in sports. Bata-Nimah's grandmother then mentioned that her grandson often met with older male cousins and uncles, to learn wrestling skills. He had studied some TaiKwonDo in China, too.

Bata Nimah might go on to study at a special sports institute, and become a coach, if he did not go into business with his father. Dashka went on to explain that Buriats, as well as other Mongols, were highly respected wrestlers, and that this area around Kyatka was famous as the home of many excellent sportsmen. "It's because historically the Buriats and the Songol men have been the border guards, either for the Mongols, or for the tsar, or for the Soviets...we are in a place where strong men grow!" Это потому, что буряты и монголы были пограничными войсками либо для монгол, либо для царя, либо для СССР... мы находимся в том самом месте, где сильные люди вырастают! she said to me with a smile. When I asked about his Chinese studies being abandoned, Rinchin and his grandmother both

took turns talking, and explained that Bata-Nimah's father had married a Mongolian woman from Ulan Bataar (in late 2012), perhaps to help with business and perhaps for love as well.

“In this area of the world, speaking Mongol and Chinese is useful,” said Bata-Nimah's grandmother, “There has been a long trade relationship, hundreds and hundreds of years, between Buriats and Mongols and Chinese....borders are only new now, but the trade is old. So he can use Chinese again if he starts working for his father.” В этой части Земли говорить на монгольском или на китайском полезно. Между монголами, бурятами и китайцами были многовековые торговые отношения... Сейчас новые только границы, а торговля с древних лет. Ну, он сможет говорить по-китайски, если снова станет работать со своим отцом.

I then asked about Bata-Nimah's father's business, which was unclear to me when I was working in Hohhot. Dashka said: “His father deals in timber...we have special trees in this area of Buriatia, pine and birch and other trees. So my relatives, who live here, they help cut the trees, others, they help move the trees, and Bata-Nimah's father, he makes deals with Mongols and Chinese, sometimes with Japanese, to sell the trees. Do you understand?” Его отец занимается торговлей леса... В Бурятии есть определенные виды деревьев, такие как сосна, береза и другие. Мои родственники, которые здесь живут, помогают рубить лес, вывозить его, а отец Бата-Нимы занимается реализацией леса в Китай, Монголию и, иногда, в Японию. понятно?

Rinchin went on to explain that cutting trees in Siberia was tricky: you needed permits and had to pay the government many taxes. A group of friends in Irkutsk and Ulan Ude helped this family get the proper documents, and consequently, the work of Bata-Nimah's father was financially assisting many people, by offering all sorts of work. Rinchin

added: “We also want to start a furniture business, but so far the Mongolian master won’t teach anyone for less than 10,000 US dollars, that is too much money.” Мы также хотим начать мебельный бизнес, но, пока, монгольский мастер не хочет никого учить за оплату меньше, чем 10000 долларов США, а это слишком много.

Bata-Nimah’s Kyatka school. The school in Kyatka that Bata-Nimah currently attends serves grades five through eleven; approximately seven hundred students attend this school, with some of the pupils coming from surrounding rural regions. Rural students stay with relatives, as there is no dormitory, and rental housing in Kyatka is sparse, with those that are available considered expensive. At school, students attend between one and five lessons a day. School starts at 8:30AM, with all classes being 45 minutes long. After the first and second lessons, students have five minute breaks; after the third and fourth lessons students have 20 minute breaks - at this time they can eat in the school cafeteria, or eat a packed bag lunch. They may not leave school grounds. The fifth and sixth lessons also have five minute breaks. There are no Saturday hours. Bata-Nimah was enrolled in the sixth grade in Kyatka. His schedule was as follows:

Table 3. Bata-Nimah’s Class Schedule

Day	Course
Monday	Russian Language
	Math
	Home Ec
	Home Ec
	Buriat Language
Tuesday	Russian Language
	Russian Language
	Math
	History
	Biology
	English

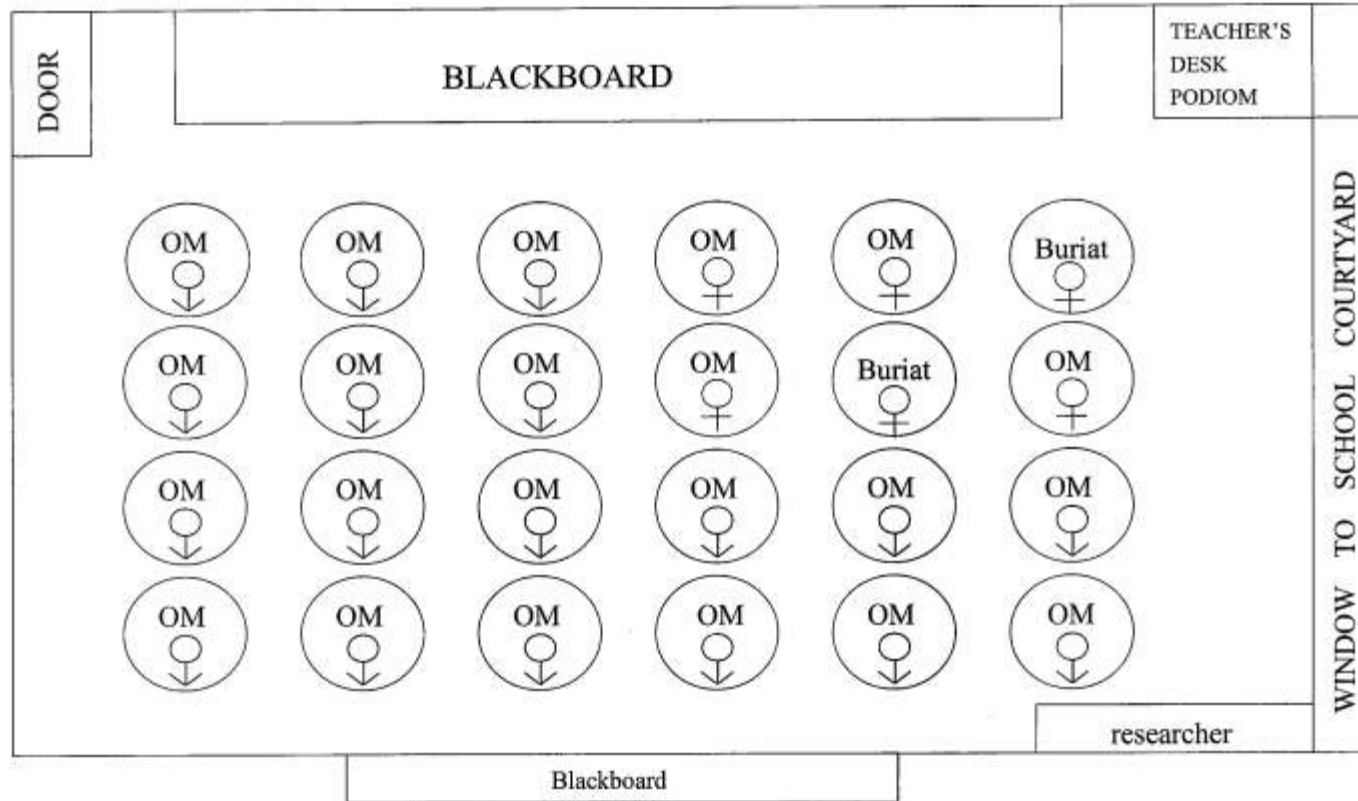
Day	Course
Wednesday	Math Buriat Language PE Russian Language Russian Language English
Thursday	English Russian Language Art- Drawing Math History Biology
Friday	PE PE Russian Language Russian Language Math

I did not see Bata-Nimah's textbooks, but was told that Russian textbooks in schools in Buriatia are now all very similar, because all students now must pass a standardized exam (as discussed in the literature review). I noted that the PE class was conducted outdoors all year round in Kyatka, as opposed to Ulan Ude, which had an indoor gym. Another difference I did see between Surana's school and Bata-Nimah's school concerned the presence of what translates into English as home economics classes. This means, according to a Buriat parent, that his school is what the Russian call a *gymnasium*: an ordinary school. Vocational subjects, such as learning to cook, do construction (hammer, nail, saw), sew (leather and cloth), repair machinery, repair automobiles, and other professions, are emphasized. In the higher grades, these vocational courses are separated by gender: boys repair cars, while girls cook, but in the lower levels boys and girls both learn to mend socks, make basic meals, etc. In Surana's school, which was designated as a *lyceum*, there were no home economics type

courses. Finally, the Kyatka school had no computer classes, and only the small public library offered public Internet access. (Bata Nimah, however showed me his special flash disk called “Beeline” that one used to plug into a computer to get online).

In the winter, Bata-Nimah gets up early, at seven am, and makes sure that the stove is well fed, so that his grandmother and great grandmother will be warm. He brings in wood as needed, and stacks it by the stove. He makes his bed, washes up, and eats breakfast (kasha and tea) with his grandmother and whoever else may be in the house and awake. Then he either walks the 20 minutes to school, or takes the microbus, which is 18 rubles, and drops him off right at the school. During the twenty minute break, he sometimes eats in the cafeteria, and sometimes eats what his grandmother has packed for him. After school is over, he comes home, eats again, does his chores (fetches water, chops wood, fills the sink reservoir with water) and then does his homework. If asked, he helps his grandmother make bread, because kneading the dough is a strain on her hands, and she makes a huge loaf of bread (four kilograms) every Sunday. His grandmother also told me that usually he does his homework and chores quickly, leaving him free to go off to see friends until it is time to have supper, usually around seven pm. “I don’t worry about him,” Я не беспокоюсь о нем his grandmother told me, “He’s a big boy, and there is little trouble a child can get into here.” он хорош не будет никого проблем. This confidence contrasts with that of Surana’s mother, who worried that her child, although ‘safe,’ might be spending too much time around boys. It also suggests that gender differences are cultural, with boys needing less supervision.

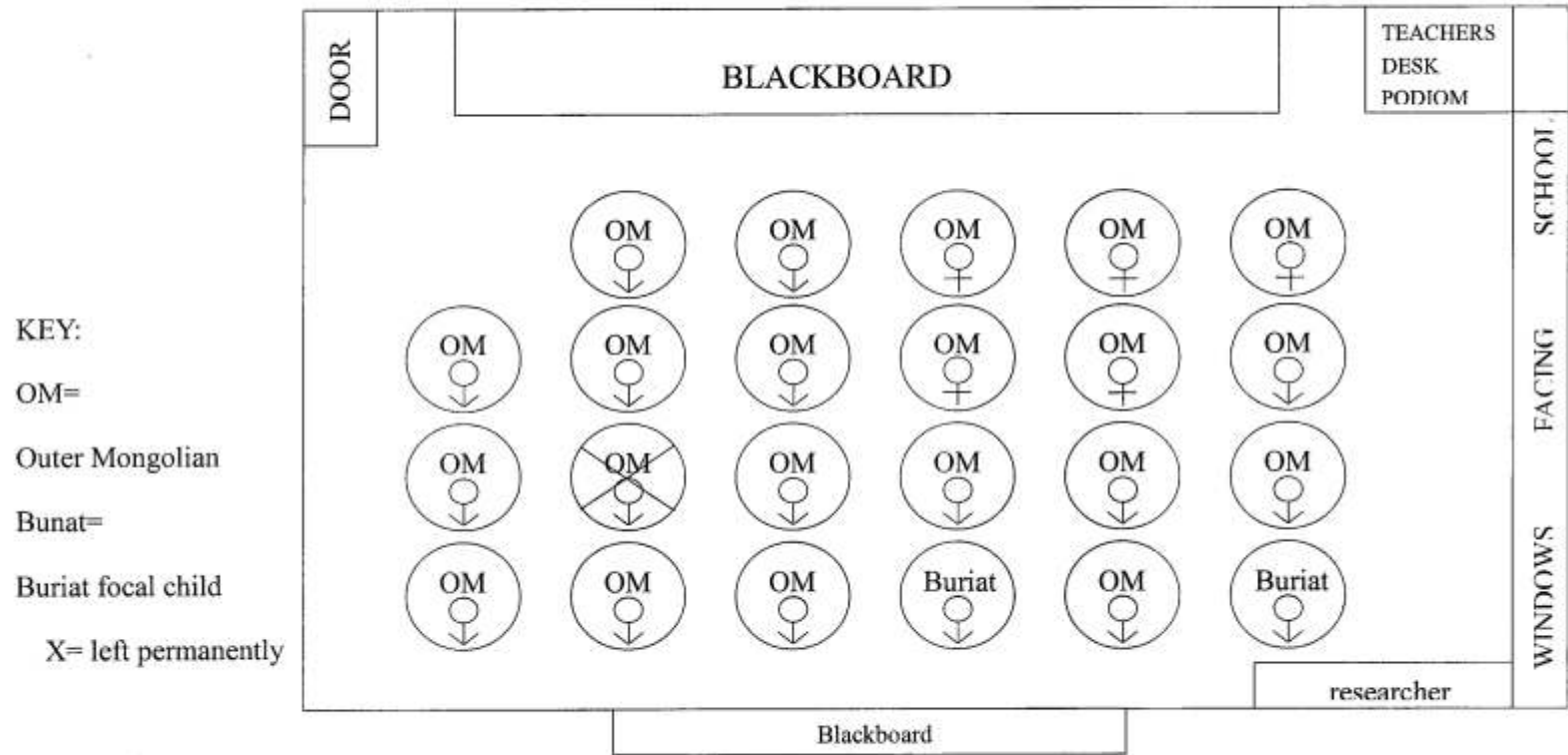
FOCAL CHILDRENS BEGINNING CHINESE CLASS (24STUDENTS)



Note: No real teacher walkway

Figure 24. Seating Plan for Bata-Nimah's Beginning Chinese Class.

Note: No real teacher walkway



INTERMEDIATE CLASS (CHINESE) WITH 2 BURIAT BOYS (22STUDENTS) ONLY

Figure 25. Seating Plan for Bata-Nimah’s Intermediate Chinese Class.

Although Bata-Nimah's school does not have the prize winning reputation that Surana's school has, Bata-Nimah and his family do not seem to mind. Certainly, both sets of parents want their children to graduate and go onto to some form of higher education, either an institute or university or vocational training, because that the general expectation throughout Russian, not just Buriat, society.

Yet after school activities are his own; Bata Nimah's free time also is less organized than Surana's, as there is no *kryzhok* or children's club in Kyatka. I did not observe how Bata-Nimah spends his free time with his friends in Kyatka. His grandmother did not mention any planned entertainment; he does not have a bicycle, as he had in Hohhot. Everywhere he goes, he either walks, takes a microbus, or flags down a local taxi.¹¹¹ I do know he has friends, all of them boys his own age, and that they like to play sports together. Although when he lived in Hohhot he showed me a love poem in Russian that he had composed, his grandmother did not think he had a current girlfriend.

Discussion. Although he is quite young, Bata-Nimah has experienced tragedy in his life, having lost his mother in 2012. After her death, he also endured life living with Natasha, who did not treat him with great warmth or sympathy: she constantly criticized him, even calling him stupid (дурак) several times when I was sitting in her home. His father did not appear to be present during much of his life in China. Bata came to visit Bata-Nimah three times during the year I observed him in Hohhot: first, to introduce his new wife and show this woman Hohhot; second, to meet with the Chinese police after the mugging incident; third, to take his son back to Russia.

¹¹¹ In the summer Bata-Nimah rode his uncle's horses.

In Kyatka, however, Bata-Nimah had more freedom than he had had in Hohhot. He had less classwork, and less homework. He was a member of an extended family group, responsible for chores; he was living with two women who showed concern and affection toward him. He also could wander freely; in the winter, around town, and during school holidays. He spent his summers in the south Siberian countryside, swimming in clean rivers and lakes, wandering the woods, riding his uncle's horses, and tending to his uncle's livestock together with his other male cousins. Significantly, his father did not invite his son to live with him in Ulan Bataar. I have no clear explanation for this, but I speculate that his father wanted to keep his son in a safe place, among trusted family, and to have his son experience a Buriat childhood. The Buriat women also told me, when I asked about this, that a stepmother often rejects children from a previous marriage, and that perhaps his father did not want his son to suffer in this way.

There are some potential drawbacks to Bata Nimah's idyllic scenario which I have presented. For example, last summer Buriat participants showed me with great glee how marijuana grows wild around Kyatka. If these Buriats knew about the illegal plants, so do the local youth. In addition, among the Buriats, sexual relationships may begin quite early, from puberty onwards. For example, Surana's mother told me that her older daughter, Socega, started dating and having relations with her now husband when she was 14 1/2 years old. Thus, what Bata-Nimah does with his time now in Kyatka is his own secret.

Why Bata-Nimah participated with three other boys in bullying others in broad daylight (described elsewhere) also remains a mystery. I did not ask him about this; it would have been inappropriate to bring the subject up, as a guest and outsider visiting his home during the White Holiday month. And even if I had, he might have shrugged it off, as another

boy had, stating that it was just a spur of the moment thing, a mistake. This action, however, has significantly altered Bata-Nimah's linguistic, cultural, and academic education. He is now again encased in Buriat culture, surrounded by family, and no longer expected to study abroad. He did mention to me, in passing, that he missed the hustle and bustle of China, and he said that his friends thought he was "cool" for having lived briefly among the Chinese. I would speculate that few of his Kyatka classmates have been to China, although some of them have been to Mongolia.

In conclusion, when weighing the pros and cons of Bata-Nimah's life, he seemed much better off in Kyatka, and he seemed much more grounded in his sense of self. There are several reasons I assert this: First, Bata-Nimah spoke a great deal of Buriat in Kyatka; he appeared confident, content, and sure of himself because he was living in the Buriat world, and he was loved by his family members. He had responsibilities and duties that he could fulfill, which helped his family. The boy had several maternal family members to help fill the void left by the death of his mother. He was doing well at school; he was healthy. Of all the focal children in this study, Bata-Nimah had the best chance to grounding his identity as a Buriat, to becoming a secure, multilingual youth. He had picked up some Mandarin Chinese; he spoke Russian and Buriat fluently, and I suspect that, because he lived on the border to Outer Mongolia, that he also understood and could use Khalk proficiently. Although he missed China to some extent, his activities and relationships in Kyatka made his life full.

A day in the life of Mergen.

Introduction. This description of the Buriat focal boy, Mergen, is meant to be compared with that of Bata-Nimah, another male Buriat focal child, and it can also be used in comparison with other children as well, for Mergen is the only focal child in this study to

have lived in the dorms of the Mandarin/Mongolian bilingual school. Like Bata-Nimah, he had no living mother. In addition, the whereabouts of his existing father was unknown, for his father left Mergen with his aunt sometime when he was a toddler, after his wife died. Mergen attended the same Chinese track classes as Bata-Nimah; they had become friends a year before I started my fieldwork, as both boys had already experienced an academic year of intensive Chinese lessons together.

Mergen, like Bata-Nimah, was involved in a criminal incident, where four Buriat boys collectively bullied in succession four Han youth not far from their school. Like Bata-Nimah, he was arrested, his passport confiscated, and his guardian aunt was fined 10,000RMB. After the winter holidays had commenced, his guardian aunt traveled to Hohhot and took her nephew back to Russia. She decided not to have the boy continue his Chinese education, and Mergen now attends a lyceum in Irkutsk, a predominantly Russian city that is eight hours north of Ulan Ude by train.

Regarding his description, I have the least amount of information concerning this child, for several reasons: First, he was taciturn and shy.¹¹² Second, he lived in the dorms, which I could only access when they were empty, for reasons regarding privacy; and third, Mergen left the Mandarin/Mongolian school early, due to participating in a criminal incident. I suspect that his aunt paid an additional large fine (or bribe) in order to quickly and smoothly extradite her nephew from Chinese territory.

At the time of my observations of Mergen in 2012 he was fifteen years old, slightly older than the other focal children. He was a slender, small boned boy, approximately five

¹¹² It was also harder to observe and chat with the boys, due to Buriat culture – where gender differences and age differences make interactions more complicated and stiff. Humphrey, C. (1978). *Women, taboo and the suppression of attention. Defining females: the nature of women in society*, 89-108.

feet two inches and perhaps 135 pounds. He appeared physically fragile, and was a quiet child. His hair, with a slight curl, was always cropped close to his head; he had small, beautiful ears, and deep set, lively eyes, giving me the impression of an elfish boy with a sense of humor. But, during most of the times that I watched him, Mergen was solemn and taciturn. He also was a follower, taking the lead from his friend Bata-Nimah, or watching his Outer Mongolian peers from the sidelines. Like the other Buriat focal children, he dressed in the Russian style, with Adidas shoes and PUMA sweatshirts. His clothes were new, expensive, and well cared for, but he wore his clothing carelessly, with shirttails hanging out, and shrugging nonchalantly when teachers would tell him to straighten up his appearance. Generally a conservative, careful child, for one week in November he somehow got ahold of a pair of contact lenses that made his eyes look like they had spirals in them. He wore the lenses with great glee until the teachers finally protested and told him to take them out.

Mergen lived in the dorms. The school divided the living arrangements by age, and also by domestic versus international students. Mergen told me his roommates were three other Outer Mongolian boys, who were also in his classes, and that they were “louder than Buriats, but okay to live with.” “громче, чем буряты, но с ними можно было жить.” When I asked him about dorm life he had very little to say, so I asked the director of the school to show me these rooms where the international students lived.

The dorm areas are located in the same building as the school’s dining hall, which is a wing of the U-shaped school structure. Mergen lived on the third floor. International students board three or four to a room,¹¹³ with a small private toilet and Finnish shower (no tub, just a flex spray hose). The rooms are small, perhaps twelve feet by fifteen feet in size;

¹¹³ As opposed to six to eight in university dorms in Hohhot, with no toilet.

like the school, the foundation is brick and concrete. Each room has a small window. Each student has a desk and a desk lamp, and a small cupboard to place boots, shoes and clothing. Jackets are hung on sturdy hooks attached to the wall. There was no TV or desktop computer provided, but I was told that some international students bring laptops and iPads. Anything valuable is locked in a steel box kept in the dorm monitor/mother's room.

The children staying in the dorms did not own many clothes or have many toys and accessories. What they did have was tidy, their dorm mothers required the space to be neat and organized. Like other buildings in Hohhot, the rooms were well heated in winter. On every hall lived two dorm monitors, usually older women, who the students addressed as "auntie." These middle aged women may also serve as backup security guards for the front gate. There was no bell to waken the students for breakfast before going to classes; the dorm mothers knocked on each door and then opened the doors with their keys, and told the students to get ready for their day.

Mergen was born in the Selenginsk region of Buriatia, and raised in Ulan Ude until he went to China. Upon his return to Russia in 2013, he began living and studying in Irkutsk, as his aunt had been transferred from Ulan Ude to this city. His aunt, a successful banker in post-Soviet Russia, could perhaps be the most prosperous parent/guardian of all the focal children in this study. Galina was 38 years old when I started my fieldwork. I met her in September 2012 for the first time in Hohhot, as she accompanied her nephew again to China. Galina had also visited this city two times previously, because she was interested in taking various Mongolian/Tibetan cures. She did not appear to me at all ill: she was pleasantly plump, with glowing skin, bright eyes, and vigorous movements. Later, in 2014, she confided to me that she was trying to clean her internal organs, as her job demanded that she drink

alcohol and eat fatty foods (red fish) and salty foods (caviar) to successfully fulfill the social obligations of her job. She was also afraid of getting old and wanted to find ways to keep looking youthful, as it was important to her for personal and professional reasons. As a single female Buriat woman and as a successful bank officer, she was unique, because such positions are normally ascribed to men in both Russia and China.

When Mergen became involved in the bullying incident that resulted ultimately in his aunt withdrawing him permanently from the Chinese school, Galina became very upset. A Buriat friend recounted to me that she decided to consult a shaman, despite the fact that she was not really a believer or follower of shamanistic practices. This shaman told her to bring the boy home, but she was hesitant to do so, and instead consulted another shaman. This second shaman told her the same thing, and advised her to hold a ceremony in the boy's birthplace. She decided to follow the second shaman's advice. Because she was occupied with these consultations, Galina did not come until late-February, after the winter holidays had started, to collect Mergen. He was left alone in the dorms, and could not leave school grounds without permission from the school director. I saw him briefly, once, during this time, and he seemed very downcast. He also said to me that he was sorry he had to leave, that he had wanted to become a doctor of alternative Mongolian/Tibetan medicine, and that his chances were now ruined. Galina, however, when I had lunch with her in February 2014, said that Mergen had other options. She felt that he could possibly become a regular, western style MD if he put his head and heart into his studies.

Mergen told me that he understood and spoke very little Buriat. "I used to speak it when I was very little," he told me, "but then things changed." Я говорил немного, когда был маленьким, но потом я перестал." The biggest change was the fact that his guardian

spoke no Buriat to her nephew, and she had no interest in this language. In fact, Galina said to me: “You can be a good Buriat these days and speak Russian; the important thing is to know something about your culture, and our Buriat culture is fused with the Russian culture; it’s a fact. Speaking Russian, or Chinese, or English is much more important for everyone in Russia today.” “Сегодня ты можешь быть уважаемым бурятом и разговаривать на русском; важный момент заключается в знании собственной культуры, в осознании того факта, что произошло слияние нашей бурятской культуры и русской культуры.” На сегодняшний день в России гораздо важнее знание русского, китайского или английского языков.

When I asked Mergen to define the criteria for being Buriat, he replied: “You should have Buriat parents and be born in Buriatia.” “У тебя должны быть родители – буряты, и ты должен родиться в Бурятии.” I asked about language fluency and he, too, said that a person could be Buriat without knowing the language. He also mentioned, however, that Bata-Nimah had picked up more Mongolian than he had, because he understood Buriat, while Mergen had forgotten long ago any Buriat that he once knew. Yet Mergen boarded with Outer Mongolian boys, which made me wonder how they communicated with each other. When I asked Mergen about this, he said that he tried to speak a little to them in Chinese, but the boys often simply ignored his efforts, without malice, simply because it was easier for them to communicate in Khalk. I got the impression that Mergen took his Chinese studies more seriously than his Outer Mongolian roommates, and that he was shy.

My observations of Mergen took place from September 2012 through some of February 2013. In the classroom I often watched Mergen and Bata-Nimah together, as they shared the same classes. In China, September and October are considered favorable months,

because the air is cool but not cold, and the wind will often blow from five to fifteen miles an hour, clearing out any pollution or dust from the air. October also is the month for the Chinese Moon Cake Festival, which is somewhat related to the American Thanksgiving, as both celebrate the season's harvest.¹¹⁴ During these months, Mergen and Bata-Nimah both would get permission to ride their bicycles together around Hohhot on the weekends. This was a source of great pleasure to both boys. Unfortunately, I could not follow them, and they would be gone for hours. What I did learn was that the boys had virtually explored every part of the city, from the Hui district near the center of town, to the White Tower, which was an architectural remnant from the Liang Dynasty and was located past the airport (15 kilometers from the city center). They had even tried to ride up the Qing Mountains, but one of the boys bicycle tires had a flat, and they had hitched a ride back into town. The two boys loved being on bikes, being free from those that monitored and judged them. Being in the open spaces must have compensated as well for living in small cramped areas with strange people. Mergen told me in Buritaia he did not own a bicycle or a horse, but when he was old enough, he wanted to buy an American Chevrolet. Bicycles were kept in a garage belonging to the school; students and guests arriving on bike would pay a minimum fee to have their bicycles stored safely, as bike theft in China is significant.

Mergen's school day. Mergen told me that he got up around 7AM, washed, dressed, and then went with the other students to the school cafeteria. The dining room was unlocked at 7:10am, and students formed a line. It moved fast. School books and school bags were left on tables near the door. Students of the same ages and classes generally ate together.

¹¹⁴ Some Mongolians told me greatly dislike this holiday, and say it holds racist connotations, as in ancient times, Chinese soldiers slaughtered Mongolian herders during this holiday.

Mornings in the cafeteria were quieter than lunch or the evening meals. When getting ready to eat Mergen took a metal tray, metal chopsticks, a small ceramic cup, and passed down the line. He was given a large portion of either rice or millet gruel, along with salted vegetables, and a stir fry mixture of vegetables (usually cabbage, red pepper, slivers of pork). He poured himself either a glass of hot boiled water or weak green tea. Children could eat as much as they want. Mergen reported that the school's cafeteria food was decent but nothing special. After the children were finished eating, they took their trays and plates to the dishwasher's area, where the utensils were sorted and stacked. Then they could play on the school grounds, or sit in the classroom before classes began. Students did not go back to their rooms, which are locked until the afternoon break. As mentioned, boarding students could not leave school grounds without passes.

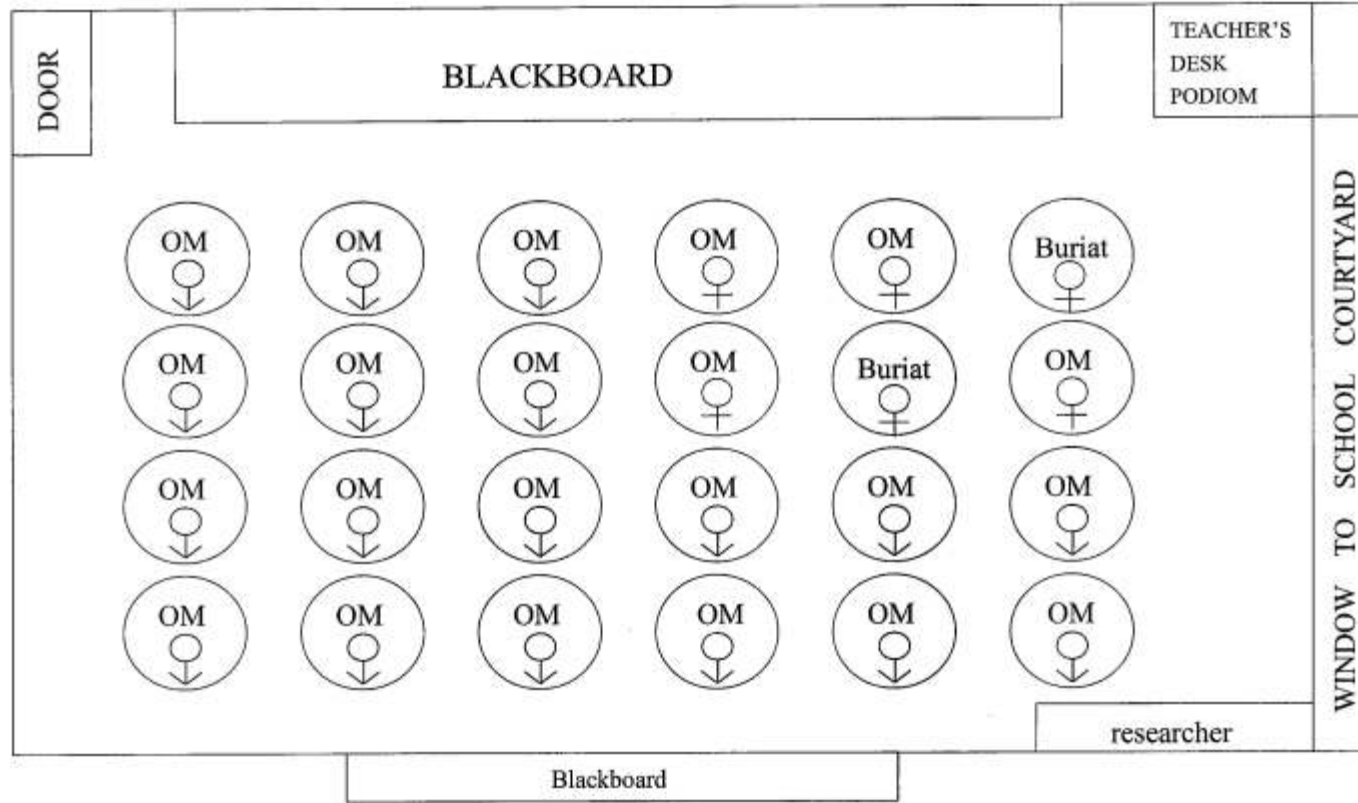
Usually Mergen went to his classroom early. He sat quietly and copied Chinese characters, or stared at nothing and thought. He was not an athletic child, being somewhat frail looking; I never observed him running the track or playing a serious game of basketball in the underground gym. In China, his main exercise was walking and riding his bicycle. He was a studious child rather than a sportsman like Bata-Nimah, and he seemed shy not just around me, but around the world at large. At school, his best friend was Bata-Nimah; they conversed together entirely in Russian. Although Mergen was slightly older than Bata-Nimah, he allowed his friend to take the lead in choosing activities, perhaps because Bata-Nimah was stronger and had a better command of Mongolian. I speculate that Mergen's Chinese skills, however, were better than his friend's, but he chose not to take the lead with his friend.

Mergen's Chinese language sheltered classes. The school research site is labeled as a bilingual Mandarin/Mongolian school, but there were different types of educational processes taking place that involved various focal children. For example, one focal girl (Katya, aged 12) attended classes in the Mongolian track, in which all nine classes were taught exclusively in Mongolian, with Chinese as a second language. The Chinese sheltered track (See Figures 26 & 27), with three focal students, one girl and two boys, (Surana, aged 12, Bata-Nimah, aged 14 and Mergen, aged 15), catered to the needs of the international students, which consisted of mainly Outer Mongolians. Here Chinese language was taught for six hours a day, with optional mathematics, science, physical education, art, computer, and music. In the Chinese track, the teacher spoke in Mandarin Chinese, but frequently code-switched, using Temut Mongolian (a standard Mongolian variety in Inner Mongolia, especially Hohhot). Outer Mongolians could understand this variety easily, but the Buriat students struggled to understand.

Teaching and materials in Mergen's classes were also meant to cater to international students. All these children received textbooks, published by Beijing University Press, which served to present the Chinese language to foreign students. These textbooks offered translations, however, not in Mongolian or Russian, but rather in English, making it even more difficult for those students who spoke languages other than English. Mergen, like Bata-Nimah and Surana, were constantly scrambling to look up words in their Chinese-Russian dictionaries whenever I observed them in classes. These three children, unlike Katya, had no smart phones or iPads to use as electronic language resources. They employed well-thumbed paper dictionaries, and they also kept word lists (Chinese-Russian and vice versa) in their

notebooks, which were meant to practice literacy by writing a Chinese character 25-100 times.

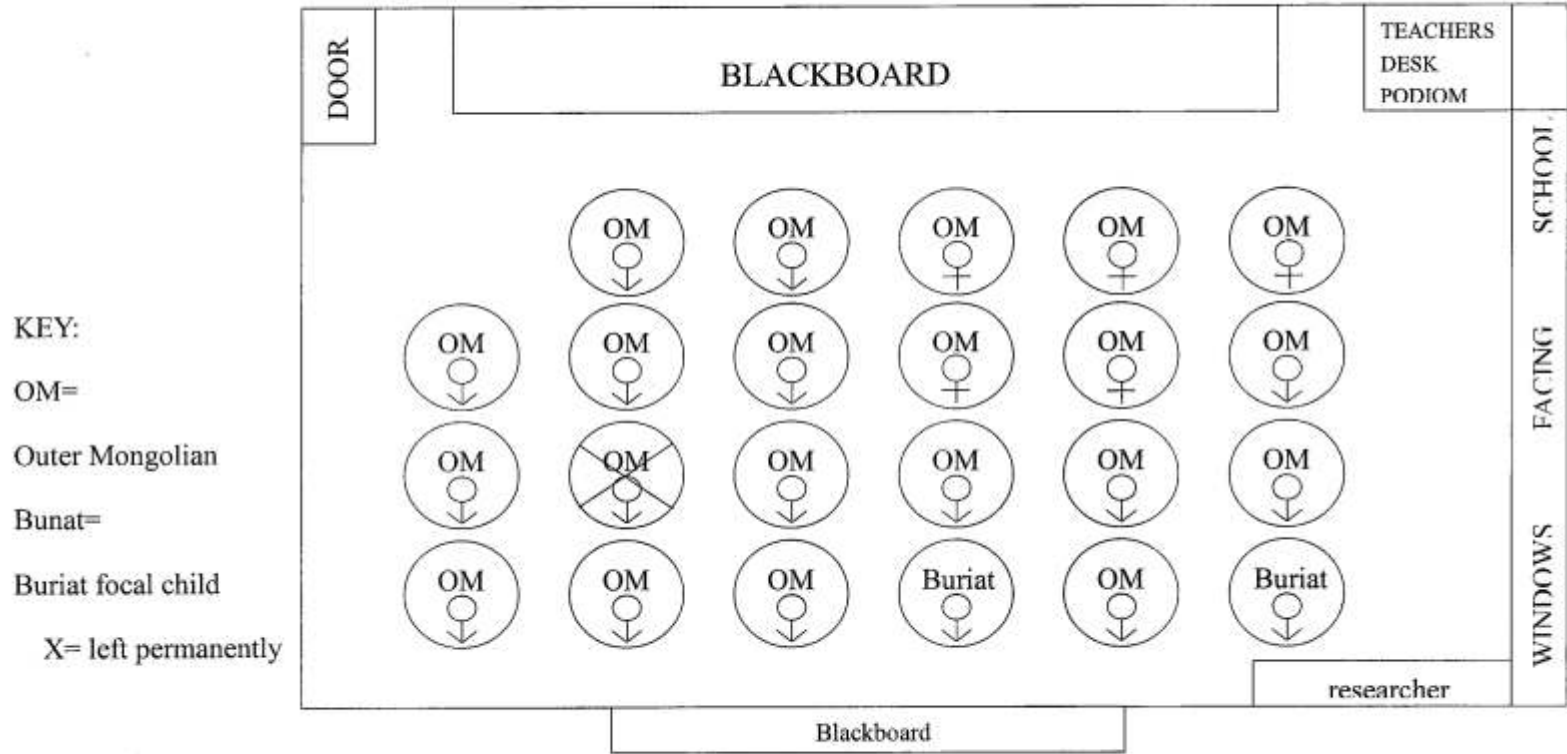
FOCAL CHILDRENS BEGINNING CHINESE CLASS (24STUDENTS)



Note: No real teacher walkway

Figure 26. Seating Plan for Mergen’s Beginning Chinese Class.

Note: No real teacher walkway



INTERMEDIATE CLASS (CHINESE) WITH 2 BURIAT BOYS (22STUDENTS) ONLY

Figure 27. Seating Plan for Mergen’s Intermediate Chinese Class.

Mergen had four books from the Beijing University Press (See appendix for sample pages). Two books were reading primers (first and second semester); one was a grammar book; and one was for conversational skills. In addition, sometimes the teachers would also hand out Xeroxed copies of word lists (in Chinese only) that were meant to help students cram for the HSK exams. Each level of the HSK required students to recognize and/or write (students must write sentences in Chinese after level 4, with levels being 1-6) specific characters.

Dorm life. One special day. I now introduce one day at school for Mergen, from my perspective, as I generally entered the school with Bata-Nimah, Mergen's friend. I had met Bata-Nimah outside his apartment at 7:30 am and we walked together to the school; Katya was ignoring both of us and walked ahead. It was November 2012; the weather was unusually frigid, with the Siberian north wind gusting in our faces. I had covered my face with a Mongolian woolen scarf, but Bata-Nimah walked forward, head uncovered, nonplussed. Bata-Nimah then started chatting about motorcycles, looking off into the street as if he were totally unconcerned. Then he mentioned abruptly that he did not think it would be interesting for me to visit his classes today. I remained silent, fighting the wind, which was now causing tears to come to my eyes. Bata-Nimah then remarked that he thought his teacher would not give permission.

Turning my back to the wind, I tried to smile at him and said to him, "Your teachers gave me permission already; it's not a problem for them at all." "Твои учителя уже разрешили мне находиться на уроках, это не проблема для них." What I needed, if he wanted to give it, was his permission, again. He had previously told me it was okay to observe him, and signed the ethical protocol agreement. I asked him, "May I come today? I

actually am watching Mergen as well as you, and he gave his consent. Tell me: Should I go home now? We're almost at the school." "Могу я прийти сегодня? Я также наблюдаю за Мэргэном, равно как и за тобой, и он дал на это свое согласие." Скажи, мне идти домой? Мы почти прошли в школу."

"Okay, well yeah," (ну ладно) he said. I was not sure if he really meant it, or if he felt sorry for me, seeing me red faced and blurry eyed from the cold. For him, it was normal weather, not even winter yet.

"Are you sure?" I asked him. "It's really your decision." Ты уверен? I asked him. "Это же твое решение."

He nodded, and said, "Sure," да нует so I decided it was okay to proceed. As an educational researcher, the worst thing I could possibly do was force a child to agree to participate. Mergen had always shrugged and agreed to allow me to sit in the classroom; he had shown me his dorm room, the cafeteria, and the garage for bicycles. He seemed indifferent to his surroundings, and indifferent to my presence, but Mergen was not indifferent to Bata-Nimah. In hindsight, I think Mergen needed a friend, especially a friend from his homeland, and his choices were limited: Bata-Nimah was a very important person in his life.

When Bata-Nimah and I arrived at the school, he then said there would not be a chair for me. I was freezing, and knew the walk back would be worse than the walk to school. I replied, considering the wind chill, "Let's ask." спросим же. The boy shrugged, so I followed him into the hallway, and into the classroom where Mergen was already sitting.

When I entered the classroom I found a very different situation than what Bata-Nimah had predicted. Several empty desks and chairs were available in the back, and my

favorite chair in the back sat empty, as usual. The two boys' Chinese track class had only 24 students, all of them young Mongolians from Outer Mongolia, excepting for Bata-Nimah and Mergen, the two Buriats. (The Mongolian track classes that Katya attended had 50-60 students, with her as the only foreign student).

Mergen on this Monday morning was sitting in the classroom. On that morning a female student, designated by the teacher, was sweeping up the garbage, tidying the desks, and making sure that the chalk board was clean, and supplied with chalk. This cleaning duty rotates among the students in all the classes in the school. Mergen was sitting quietly, writing his characters, when one young Outer Mongolian boy with a rucksack walked into the room. Mergen glanced up at him, nodded, and then looked wary as other students walked into the room. Mergen also looked at me quickly and responded in Russian to my greeting, saying: "Good morning," доброе утро but quickly moved his eyes downward. I wondered if he were feeling ill.

I took my place in the back of the room. Crammed in the little kid-sized seat, I tried to understand why Bata-Nimah was trying halfheartedly to keep me out of class today. As a teenage boy, I knew he thought it was "weird, pretty weird, for an old auntie to be observing kids at school," "странно, очень странно, что престарелая женщина следит за детьми в школе," but he had seemed so agreeable about it last week. And Mergen was not acting himself; he was more reserved and quiet than usual. "Was he having mood swings like me? Did that happen to teenage Mongol boys, too? "Maybe Mergen is not happy with me being here?" I saw him squirm in his seat and glance worriedly at me again. He looked nervous. I tried to ease his mind by observing the class at large. I was sitting very quietly, making no noise and not speaking; hopefully, as usual, they would soon forget about me.

The teacher was late; it was already 8:17am. Why were the students staring at me, then looking away and muttering? Where was the teacher? When she finally entered, the students quickly became absorbed in their own business, and it was not learning Chinese. These two Outer Mongolian boys who were not focal children, flashed a broad smile at me. Another gave me a "V" for victory sign. Suddenly, Bata-Nimah hissed, "Whatever happens, don't tell, okay?" "Что бы ни случилось, не рассказывай, хорошо?" I nodded, and watched as a backpack was passed from one boy in the back corner to another, as the teacher wrote characters facing the blackboard. The sack arrived to Mergen. He zipped it open and crammed something into his desk. As it squealed the boys in the back scraped their chairs loudly; a few burped, one boy in front coughed.

"Silence!" 安静！commanded Ms Liu, the diminutive Chinese woman who was their Chinese teacher, looking sternly around. She turned back to the board to write more characters, the vocabulary list for today, on the board. She always filled the entire board with characters, and the boys and girls were meant to memorize them all (20 characters plus auxiliary signs and phrases) within 24 hours. It usually took her 15 to 20 minutes to write the information, and then she reviewed each character until the bell rang. Students copied what she had written, listened to the explanation, and rarely made comments. The vocabulary instructor's teaching style, like the other Chinese teachers, was lecture format.

Another squeaky sound.

"I said silence," 我说了安静！the teacher repeated loudly, still not turning around. This happened two more times, and each time the teacher became angrier and angrier. "I can't believe you young people have not learned manners in your home country!" 我不相信你们这些年轻人在自己的国家没学礼貌！she said in Chinese, her eyes blazing.

The boys looked down at their shoes. Then one Mongol with shining eyes grinned at me, as if to say, "Look how clever we are!"

For what Mergen had crammed into his desk was a small puppy that he and his roommates had found wandering quite near the school grounds. The four boys, living together, had managed to hide the creature from their dorm mother over the weekend, by passing the puppy in the backpack from room to room, and making loud noises to cover the dog's yelps. This Monday, too, they were able to conceal the puppy from all their teachers. Later that morning, one Outer Mongolian boy took the puppy to the gym, and hid him there, where the echos of bouncing balls and running boys smothered the puppy's cries. When morning classes ended, Bata-Nimah loaded the puppy into his backpack, and gave the creature to Natasha's apartment gate guard to tie up; then he brought it back during the afternoon classes. Bata-Nimah had also purchased food and a towel, which was used to clean up the dog's messes. But the puppy became tired of being contained. The boys later told me that, on Tuesday, the puppy let out a terrible yipping when concealed under Mergen's bedcovers. The dorm mothers took it away and the boys never mentioned the creature to me again.

Aside from the excitement with the puppy, Monday's morning class schedule was as follows: Chinese vocabulary, Chinese grammar, Math, and Chinese Reading. After the break Mergen had English language class (I was not allowed to observe), Chinese grammar again, and lastly, Chinese history. He finished his classes at 5:05pm, returned to his room, ate dinner from six pm to seven pm with the other boarding students, and then did homework until the lights went out at 11pm for those over 12 years of age (10pm for those under 12 years of age).

Class schedules at ordinary school versus bilingual school – Chinese track.

Table 4. Focal Children Class Schedule

(1st year Chinese) – 2012

START TIME	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	END TIME
8:10	Chinese	Home Room	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese	8:50
9:00	Chinese	Art	PE	Chinese	Home Room	9:40
10:15	Computer	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese	PE	10:55
11:05	Chinese	Chinese	Math	Optional (Art)	Chinese	11:45
LUNCH BREAK – REST TIME						
14:40	Home Room	Chinese	History	Chinese	Math	15:20
15:25	Chinese History	PE	Chinese History	English	Chinese History	16:15
16:25	Chinese	English	Chinese	Math	English	17:05

Chinese Track Saturday Schedule

9:00	Chinese	9:40
10:05	Chinese	10:55
11:05	Chinese	11:45

Table 5. Mergen and Bata-Nimah's Class Schedule in Hohhot

(2nd year Chinese) – 2012

START TIME	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	END TIME
8:10	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese	Home Room	8:50
9:00	Chinese	Chinese	Math	Chinese	Math	9:40
10:15	Math	PE	Computer	Chinese	Chinese	10:55
11:05	Chinese	Chinese	Math	Optional (Art)	Chinese	11:45
LUNCH BREAK – REST TIME						
14:40	English	Chinese	Home Room	English	Chinese	15:20
15:25	Chinese	Math	PE	Chinese History	English	16:15
16:25	Chinese History	Chinese	Chinese History	Chinese	Math	17:05

Chinese Track Saturday Schedule

9:00	Chinese	9:40
10:05	Chinese	10:55
11:05	Chinese	11:45

In the classroom Mergen generally was very still. He watched his teachers, and constantly referred to his Russian-Chinese dictionary. During the class breaks, he would stand in the hallway with Bata-Nimah, and talk quietly. They conversed mostly about their bike trips, about food (both missed Russian pancakes and jam). Sometimes an Outer Mongolian peer would approach them, give a friendly punch on the shoulder and invite the two Buriats to go outside; I suspect it was to sneak a smoke. Technically, boys in school are

not supposed to smoke, but many of the Outer Mongolians did, perhaps to convey their masculinity. Neither Buriat boy smoked, but if invited, they would walk outside, towards the far end of the track and stand, watching the Mongol boys smoke. I did not approach them during these times.

At school, I never saw Mergen being reprimanded by a teacher. Ms Liu, the Chinese teacher who taught vocabulary, told me that she liked him, for being quiet and shy and hardworking. The dorm monitors/mothers also told me that Mergen made no trouble for them. Yet in his room lived one of the most active and vocal of the Outer Mongolian boys, a young fellow called Dulgan, who often heckled the teachers, and who had written “don’t touch my seat” in English on the back of his chair. He was also the boy in charge of the puppy. This young fellow frequently would turn around in his seat to make sure I was watching, and then throw spitballs, fall out of his chair, or make strange noises in class. Mergen and Dulgan were friendly to each other but not close; for example, sometimes Dulgan would pass his notebook to Mergen, so he could check his homework before turning it in.

Discussion. Significantly, I observed that Mergen lacked fluency in either Temut or Khalk Mongolian. He expressed little desire to learn these languages, other than commenting to me once that he must pick up Classical Old Mongolian in order to read medical textbooks in the future. But using Mongolian as a means to express himself and communicate with others did not appear a high priority. This seemed strange to me, for he lived with three Outer Mongolian boys; when they talked, as mentioned, Mergen tried to speak Chinese with them, as it was a mutual language both were learning. In contrast, Bata-Nimah spoke more Mongolian, and seemed more comfortable with speaking it as well. The explanation could lie

in the fact that Bata-Nimah's home was located very close to the Outer Mongolian border, where Russian, Buriat, and Khalk, as well as Mandarin were used for trading purposes. Moreover, Bata-Nimah's father was a trader who frequently traveled to Outer Mongolia, and he took an Outer Mongolian woman as his third wife as Bata-Nimah's mother died.

Mergen, however, although born in a rural area in Buriatia, was raised using Russian after the age of three. After I interviewed his aunt while having lunch together in an elegant cafe in downtown Irkutsk, I had the definite impression that Mergen's parents both suffered greatly from alcoholism. Galina, as Mergen's guardian, fiercely told me that she thought her nephew was "safe in China, because the Chinese are not, like the Buriats, the Mongols and the Russians, heavy drinkers." "в безопасности, находясь в Китае, потому что китайцы не такие пьяницы, как буряты, монголы, или русские." She also admitted that it came as a real shock to her to discover that Mergen had participated in a criminal incident with three other Buriat boys. "I thought I was protecting him by sending him to China," "Я думала, что, отправив его в Китай, я избавлю его от всех этих проблем," she said with a sigh. Galina also implied that Buriats had serious problems with drugs and alcohol, and that "things were not as rosy as what some other Buriats may tell you." "дела обстоят не настолько прекрасно, как Вам могут рассказывать другие буряты. Galina advised me to work in Irkutsk, rather than Ulan Ude, as this city had more amenities and better food. She went on to state that many Buriat women were married to husbands who drank, ran around with other women, and lived off their wives, but that these women would not get divorces, because men were scarce to begin with in Russia. "This is one reason I am not married," "По этой причине я и не замужем," she said, and added, when I asked her, that it would be fine for her or for Mergen to marry a Russian (as long as that person was not a drinker) or even to

marry a European. I asked Galina if Russia had any alcoholics anonymous groups, but she did not know what this term meant.

Mergen's aunt's attitude may have been reflected in his own relationships toward his Mongolian peers. Moreover, Mergen was a quiet boy by nature; the Mongols were loud and rowdy; they smoked and heckled their teachers, thinking it all good fun. Perhaps they also smuggled in the ubiquitous and quite cheap Chinese alcohol? (Chinese *baijiu* - spirits - can be purchased by anyone, and a half pint bottle may cost about one US dollar). Another reason for his lack of close bonding with Outer Mongolian roommates could be due to the fact that Mergen's identity was more strongly connected to being a *Russian* Buriat, as opposed to being a Buriat *Mongol*. (In the results section I justify the use of Russian among the Buriats as a way to separate themselves from other Mongolians). For whatever reason, Mergen appeared to me to be a lonely boy. He had lost both of his parents, and he was living among strangers in a strange land, and he was trying to learn a foreign language, Mandarin Chinese, through the school's submersion methods. It must have been emotionally and intellectually very challenging for this young boy. Around him were only a few other Buriats who spoke Russian, but as a boarding student, he could not, in his free time, simply take off and visit them. Everything he did was monitored and regulated by adults, Inner Mongolians, who perceived him as an outsider to their culture. Is it really so surprisingly that Mergen would resist, or that he would agree to participate in a bullying incident that involved his Buriat friend? Perhaps he was dared by the other Buriat boys to participate.

I was not able to meet with Mergen after he had resettled in Russia, and had started school in a lyceum in Irkutsk. In late January 2014, however, Galina, his aunt, was kind enough to give me a lunch date. I am not sure why she returned my call and agreed to meet

me, I immediately scrambled to get a train ticket from Ulan Ude to Irkutsk and arrive in time to meet her for the lunch date. Perhaps she wanted to help me with closure regarding Mergen's life, or perhaps she wanted to justify and explain to me why this shy, quiet boy could have participated in a criminal activity in China. At lunch we talked about her work, and about Mergen. She did not blame him, she told me; she blamed herself. She told me that since her nephew was home in Russia, with her nearby, in his home country and culture, that he would do well. Galina delicately wiped her lips with a linen napkin. "Lunch is on me, but I beg you not to say anything bad about my nephew. He's a good lad. С меня обед, и я прошу Вас, не говорите плохого о моем племяннике. Он хороший мальчик.

Chapter Three: Review of the Literature

Introduction

This literature review is divided into several sections.

Part One concerns positionality and discusses how non-mainstream populations have been designated by governments and scholars in China and the Russian Federation, how they refer to themselves, and how I will refer to them. This section first identifies my position as a researcher. Then it defines terms: race, ethnicity, and culture, from the Chinese and Russian ideological points of view. Finally, this section geographically positions the focal participants by discussing the land where the research takes place, emphasizing historical and cultural changes that have impacted the people living there over time, and which also impact the focal participants.

Part Two offers a discussion of language socialization research, past and present, and how it relates to this research. This section briefly discusses why I have chosen to link my work with that of Susan U. Philips (1972, 1983).

Part Three explores the concept of identity, and offers in conclusion the researcher's definition in relation to this project. This section offers a discussion of the Buriat and Buriat socialization processes.

Part Four addresses education, by first describing Chinese educational policies and practices, and bilingual education in Inner Mongolia. I then introduce the Buriat, who will be coming to Inner Mongolia from China to gain an education. Next, I discuss the educational practices in the Russian Federation. Later, the results section will compare the two nation's educational policies in order to analyze possible reasons for Buriat student resistance to their Chinese based education.

Part Five addresses heritage languages in relation to Indigenous youth and education. Part Six links with the previous section, in that this section explores Indigenous youth resistance, specifically in terms of education. It first offers a broad overview of non-mainstream youth resistance, and then addresses Indigenous youth¹¹⁵ behavior and resistance in school settings.

Positioning and Definitions

Using sociocultural approaches, I take the stance that race, like identity, is socially constructed (Figueroa, 1991). Thus, race artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics, such as physical appearance (particularly skin color), ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification, and the social, economic and political needs of a society at a given period of time (ibid). Similarly, ethnicity is also a social construct (Giles & Johnson, 1987). Ethnicity divides people into smaller social groups based on a shared sense of group membership, values, behavioral patterns, language, political and economic interests, history, and geography (Giles & Johnson, 1987; Phinney, 2003). Governments around the world have used various terms to designate non-mainstream peoples (via race and ethnicity) in order to control, manipulate, exploit, or even destroy them (Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1995; Skutnabb-Kangas et al., 1999; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000) For this reason, I now offer a discussion of various terms used by the Chinese and the Russians in reference to Inner Mongolian participants and Buriat focal participants.

Regarding this research, I designate the Buriat and other Mongolian groups living in Asia as either Indigenous or autochthonous, out of respect to the American tradition of scholarship regarding Native Peoples. The Buriats, however, do not normally call themselves

¹¹⁵ I do not address or review the issues and challenges of biracial youth (Buriat/Russian). This is a topic for future research.

Indigenous (discussed below). Likewise, when referring to the Inner Mongolians residing in China, I employ the word Indigenous, or the term coined by McCarty (2002), minoritized, which “more accurately conveys the power relations and processes by which certain groups are socially, economically, and politically marginalized within the larger society” (p. xv). I also employ the term “Han” to refer to the dominant Chinese majority group and the term “Slav” to refer to the White, dominant members from the Russian Federation.

The focal Buriat children are Indigenous people born in Buriatia, studying in China. Following the UN definition, they are Indigenous because 1) they are claiming Buriatia as their ancestral homeland, 2) they and their ancestors have lived around Lake Baikal since time began, 3) their people share a common language, spiritual outlook, and worldview, and 4) they hold a sacred view of their traditional homelands, especially Lake Baikal. Yet, because the focal participants in this study have migrated to China, these same Buriats are what the Chinese technically term as “foreign guests” (*wai ke ren*): people residing on temporary but renewable visas, in this case in Chinese Mongolia. Regarding the context of my research study, a Chinese bilingual school, however, the Buriat students are also what McCarty (2002, p. xv) calls minoritized, (previously defined). In China, as elsewhere, education is a major area where students’ language choices determine language status (Fishman, 1990; Paulston, 1994). In China, Mongolian has lower status than Mandarin (Bulag, 2003); in Buriatia, Buriat has a lower status than Russian (Graber, 2012).

Positioning the researcher. Why should an American outsider like myself conduct research concerning an Indigenous group of people such as the Buriat? Every researching eye, every focus of ethnographic observation, acts as an active perceptual system, dependent upon the specific ways of seeing and representing the world that the researcher has absorbed,

consciously and unconsciously. As an outsider, my point of view offers a unique perspective. There are no decontextualized dissertation projects; rather there are highly specific texts and images that arise from specific social, historical, economic, and physically material (age, gender, phenotype/physical appearance) contexts of both the observer and the observed. Certainly, this implies that different observers, from diverse contexts and social communities, construct different types of research and subsequent texts. Academic researchers need such texts, as such observations, data, analysis, and reactions to theoretical frameworks may all result in unique assertions about what is studied. Yet this does not mean that the world must be viewed as only socially constructed, or that every point of view is as good as any other.

Ethnographic work may present a variety of narratives; this study attempts to present Buriat narratives, while understanding that the researcher's narrative as an outsider is also a component. This means that I, as a white, middle aged American, can only imperfectly present Buriat narratives. As a long term friend of this small community, I also feel that my presentation, albeit flawed, has merit and that it attempts to the best of my ability to transmit faithfully and accurately information from and about the Buriat involved in this study.

My concern is personal. I claim the status, as Teresa McCarty (2002) labels it, of "an invested outsider;" I care deeply about a small group of non-Chinese Buriat families who reside in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia, China. My interest is accidental and serendipitous. In 2004, I flew to China to work as an ESL teacher, and then from 2005-2007, I taught English at university in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia, China. In Hohhot, I met many Mongolian and Buriat people. They befriended me and I have maintained cordial relationships with them to the present day. Since 2006, my academic interest in Chinese educational policies became

more pronounced, as I started observing the educational experiences of my friends' Mongolian and Buriat children.

My linguistic profile is as follows: I am a native speaker of English, with near native proficiency in Russian, intermediate proficiency in Mandarin. I have as of yet no knowledge of Mongolian. My Buriat friends speak to me in Russian, our common language. I understand that, during this study, I must be linguistically alert regarding my focal participants and other participants: I must not speak in Russian to my Buriat informants unless they first choose to speak to me in that language, in order to allow participants to speak freely in whatever language they choose to use to communicate at any given moment. I also understand, as an adult female, that I must be careful in communicating with the children, to allow them respect, agency and voice.

As an invested outsider, I seek to research non-mainstream multilingual youth in a thoughtful way, because I do not hold for one 'true' account while investigating. While rejecting radical relativism, I feel that, by spending extended time in the field in China and Russia (18 months), by having prior access and cordial relationships with the focal community in China and in Buriatia (2005-present), by making useful and cordial contacts with Han, Mongolian and Buriat locals at the the school and city research site, and by undergoing the process of learning Mandarin myself, that I have established legitimate objectivity to the best of my ability.

My previous academic training before entering the field was rigorous and worthwhile. Thus, through engaged, accountable, and self-reflective positioning, I feel that I can offer a thoughtful, educated, and sincere ethnographic account of the way non-mainstream Buriat children are socialized through and by language in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia, China.

Clearly, one researcher alone in the field cannot create an omnipotent and accurate account. The metaphor of the nine blind men describing the elephant immediately comes to mind. In fact, qualitative research has often been condemned by many scholars in the hard sciences, who perceive it as a fashionable trend upholding post-modern relativism. Some deem qualitative findings as biased. Detractors insist that qualitative researchers proclaim infinite uniqueness in humans with everyone in constant change and any analysis of phenomena acceptable as documentation of this vast differentiation. I support a more thoughtful mentality. Having been trained to work within an established disciplinary framework - ethnography - my research possibilities are limited but also clearly defined by a qualitative methodology that I assert holds equal merit to any quantitative framework. Moreover, I examine my findings from several perspectives, to try to widen the framework of the assumptions that I may generate, and to challenge, if necessary, any established boundaries regarding how this fieldwork should be interpreted; likewise the results come from various types of data, triangulated together after thoughtful reflection.

The results this work and other ethnographic studies present could lead to different ways of viewing language socialization practices, in interpreting the postmodern philosophical stance in educational research as not only one that addresses oppression and social injustice, but also as a route to celebrate how young non-mainstream youth fluidly, casually, and with great aplomb use language, technology, and social interactions to adapt to a rapidly changing, global world. This is a world that I, as a middle aged, White female researcher from the US, find more challenging than the Buriat youth who I study.

Positioning the children. This research is concerned with multilingual children who are exposed to more than one language and culture, and the impact that these languages and

cultures have on the children's sense of self. Many scholarly debates exist on the nature of culture. Some scholars (Dyson, 1997) explore questions such as: How do children create culture? Scholars (Quintana et al., 2006) also ask how various cultures position their children to answer the question: What is a child? How do adults pass on cultural norms to their children? Coles (1986) argues that a nation's politics invades a child's everyday thoughts. This research expands upon the idea of language socialization from a cultural perspective, and asks: How does the modern, globalized Chinese world (as well as international politics and economics) impact a specific school's communicative practices in regard to non-mainstream focal Buriat children in this study? Clearly, young people everywhere are not exempt from global forces. Hence, several questions arise: How do Buriat youth experience, understand, and possibly resist and reshape the myriad global political processes that help inform their communicative acts and daily lives? Who and what are trying to create visions and notions of culture for these young people? How do the children perceive themselves; do they have multiple definitions of their identity, in terms of a regional, national, global, ethnic, or Indigenous identity, and if so, how are these identities reflected via their communicative acts, specifically in the school setting? These questions of positionality are addressed in depth by presenting the voices of the children via narratives in the data section.

Before examining the Buriat children's narratives, it is also imperative to first discuss Buriat childhood as a social and historical construct, as well as culture as a politically contested term. Most of my readers come from a western culture, with western notions of what it means to be a child, have a childhood, raise a child, etc. Yet profound differences in

the realities of children's lives, experiences, and consciousnesses exist in the world.¹¹⁶

Moreover, in Asia, ideas concerning children and childhood vary greatly from Western models (Liu, Ross & Kelly, 2000), while simultaneously being impacted by global forces and modernity (Stephens, 1995).

Global and political forces can impact the way people, communities, and cultures view children. The philosopher Habermas (1987) explored how changing political and economic demands restructure the way people, mainstream and non-mainstream, live and behave in their everyday lives. Children, too, are impacted by these forces. Buriat youth, in China and in Buriatia, are exposed to and bombarded with global capitalist values of the marketplace as well as post-Soviet ideas about Buriat ethnicity. In China, they also encounter the discursive politics of Chinese communist culture toward Mongolians as minority peoples, and schools demand that they show respect for Chinese authority. Additionally, post-Open Door ideas in China concerning economic progress and how wealth and prosperity is viewed, all socialize the Buriat youth. As my data shows, young people in China, Buriat or otherwise, who are guilty of not conforming to established socialization models of correct conduct (academic or otherwise) are promptly and sternly punished. In addition, young people who are inattentive in school but considered harmless to the Chinese State are simply ignored and left by the educational wayside.

In the western world, much press attention is devoted to the subject of children. For example, Americans advocate fighting for children's rights and protecting children from predators. In contrast, in the Chinese world, the point of view, both official and discreet, is

¹¹⁶ And in fact, notions of 'being a child' are relatively new in the western world. It is common knowledge that, during the Middle Ages, for example, children were treated as miniature adults. Children worked beside adults before they reached age ten; they married as early as eleven, and could be betrothed from birth.

that children can be seen as threats. All my Chinese friends lament that the Chinese world is too crowded; there are too many children, hence, the One Child Policy.¹¹⁷ This research describes how Chinese schools are overcrowded, with teachers employing highly structured practices in order to control large classes. Overcrowded classrooms have implications for how children are socialized in school. For example, both obeying authority and competing with others is encouraged. My Chinese friends in Hohhot who are parents assert that pushing kids to work and compete for a 'successful life' begins in kindergarden. Those Chinese students who challenge or defy authority, such as those involved in Tian An Men Square, are represented unruly, disrespectful youth - youth who deserve to be eliminated. They are considered a disgrace to their families, and failures as Chinese citizens (Epstein, 2000). In sum, Chinese children must be disciplined, controlled, and taught to respect authorities, especially the government (Liu, Ross, & Kelly, 2000). For the Buriat children, as my research will show, being positioned to accept this degree of authoritarian socialization can be frustrating. Those who rebel are duly punished and the consequences which impact a single Buriat student also impacts the entire Buriat community in Hohhot.

Whether in China or Russia or the West, adults in the family unit want children to be protected and loved. In many places around the modern world, children have more time to be children in the sense that they do not have to be economically productive. In China, children and youth are kept out of the economic marketplace by attending school, as this helps adults find jobs. Yet schools everywhere are designed to socialize children to successfully enter the

¹¹⁷ Implemented in Jan 1979, this policy is currently undergoing revisions as of 2014. (Author's note)

This policy formerly restricted Han Chinese to having only one child per family. Han friends have told me that many families preferred to give birth to more than one child, and would get around the ruling through using connections and/or paying a stiff fine. In China, however, until recently, minority people can have two children if they live in the city and in rural areas, up to four children. If minority people exceed the limit, they are also subject to fines (Wang, 2013:42).

workforce (Durkheim, 1973). Moreover, the job of studying under massive competition is very stressful for children, domestic or international, in China. This research illustrates how the Chinese educational burden – and socialization practices – differ from schools inside Buriatia and elsewhere in the Russian Federation.

Additionally, the relationship between Buriat children in this study and global modernity is complex, because their pre-determined educational choice and future profession - becoming a healer/doctor (as opposed to a western doctor), is rooted in traditional, non-mainstream values associated with Buddhist philosophy that seeks to help, not harm others. In post-Soviet Russia, being an alternative doctor is again touted as an exotic and ancient lifestyle by Russians and Buriats alike (Humphrey, 1998), with potential for comfortable material gains. As one young Buriat alternative doctor explained to me in English:

“Not all the Buriats have not returned full circle to ancient medical wisdom, not all Buriat go to shamans, but I was trained in ancient medical arts and I am Buddhist. Ancestors tell us (Buriats) that healing is a gift; to do it we must have desire, and education. It is an honorable profession for us. Western doctor’s stuff is not enough; it is good, and expensive, but it doesn’t heal the whole person, inside, inside the soul, the real sickness is spiritual, not just body illness. I studied many years, how to say – apprentice – at monastery and in China at institute, my training is little like shaman, to heal people, you know, ...and little like a western doctor, just no fancy medical paper.”

This young Buriat doctor went on to explain that alternative doctors are connected with a realm of knowledge that is both profane and sacred. Balzar (20122) states that although the sacred lost value during the Soviet period, since the breakup of the USSR in the

early 1990s, alternative medicine, shamans, and other form of spiritual healing are now popular again in Russian Siberia.¹¹⁸

Buriats, like other Indigenous people, are negotiating their way with contradictory globalizing trends. The western, the eastern, and the Indigenous world views compete with each other in this area of the world. Sometimes it creates what Balzar (2012:77) terms “awkward cognitive dissonance, some syncretic creativity, and increased choice.” In the category of choices, Buriats must decide how to define and cure their illnesses; many of them want their treatment to have a balance of spiritual and physical properties. The Buriat doctor said:

Words have spirit, they carry power. They can curse or bless, or direct the way we will behave with ourselves and others. The knowledge that I tap into is like ocean, big range, it goes as far as India, and even perhaps to Amerika. The spirit world does not stop just in China or Buriatia. Like shaman, I am medium. I must live upright life to be good doctor. Some Siberian shamans are famous for performances, or costumes; this is not reality. Real shamans make contact with spirits while real doctors understand and feel to help people. It is service to people’s spirit, like shaman. People want to know me, to see me, see my life; they must trust me and my medicine.

To become doctors, the young Buriats in this study must gain entrance to the medical institute in Hohhot. First, however, these young people have to successfully endure the language socialization processes they encounter in the Mandarin-Mongolian bilingual school. They study specifically to pass a standardized test in Mandarin Chinese. As my data will

¹¹⁸ For an excellent analysis of this please see: Galina Lindquist’s article in: (2006): Healers, leaders and entrepreneurs: shamanic revival in southern Siberia. *Culture and Religion*, 6(2):263-285.

show, not all the Buriats were successful. This led me to ask: Why did one child conform and another child rebel? What kinds of cultural influences, what socialization practices, led each child to behave as he or she chose? The ideas of Kulick & Schieffelin (2004) will be presented as part of my discussion in this area.

Still other questions arise: How much of the Russian colonial ideas and the western capitalist values concerning childhood, socialization, and education have the Buriat parents received and passed onto their children? How were Buriat parents socialized by the Soviets regarding their idea of culture, and how have they attempted to refashion their children into becoming not just Buriats, but Russian, post-Soviet Buriats? What are the beliefs of these children, and how do they act? How are these young Buriats reacting to yet another social redesigning by the Chinese State? These are difficult questions, for the process of socialization and identity formation is both ongoing and at times intangible. Much more research needs to be carried out in this area, as it is too vast an area for this study to explore.

These Buriat children, wherever they are living, are experiencing life as children much differently than that of their parents. In the last half century, the world itself has experienced immense changes, from the fall of empires to the rise of Internet technologies. The implications of these changes are presented in this analysis section. In brief, although these Buriat children are neither indigent nor refugees, the conditions for their future economic well-being, for promoting their Indigenous Buriat language and culture, appeared tenuous and uncertain. Increasing global pressures to conform to the needs of a capitalistic world order did not accommodate Indigenous languages and world views (Castells, 2000).

Positioning cultural concepts in this research.

Defining culture. Anthropologists still speak of culture, although many scholars today are referring to an individual's agency, and his or her choices regarding membership in a culture, or group, or community of practice. These terms signal the postmodern fluidity for such concepts concerning identity and personhood - and also imply that cultures are always in flux, with people always in transition regarding their sense of self and how they position themselves in the world. In addition to myself as researcher, and those I study, I feel that the concept of culture must also be discussed in terms of positionality. In conceptualizing cultural differences between Buriats living in China, and in being an outsider to both Buriat and Chinese cultures, understanding how culture is understood by the researcher and the researched must be made clear.

Culture is a catch-all term, even in academics. Anthropologists have argued and debated this concept over several decades. Before coming to China, I had accepted Geertz's definition of culture; he was renowned in the field and clever in his wording. Geertz (1973) stated that man is "an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, with culture being that web" (p. 5). Geertz also stated that language is one of man's symbols which illuminate culture. Others have defined culture as a community of practices, not necessarily rational (Watanabe, 1998). Some see making and producing culture as problematic, informed through history, intent and actions. White, western discourses on culture still occupy the prime seats in academia (Lindstrom & White, 1995). Indigenous peoples, in reaction, are attempting to set up their own cultural identities, rewrite their histories, and create places to preserve and protect cultural artifacts (Stilltoe, 1998). Finally, the idea of a "politics of culture" – how dominant cultures and languages may impose their

values and beliefs upon non-mainstream members in society, and how the complex and potentially contradictory aspects of non-mainstream culture encountering dominant cultural discourses – may cause serious issues around identity for Indigenous youth (Stephens, 1995).

I have two comments to make regarding culture in terms of this research. First, I am concerned not only with defining culture, but also with zooming in on a perspective that examines culture from the Buriat child's point of view. Despite being socialized, young Buriats were social actors in their own right. They were actively engaged in appropriating, renegotiating, and refashioning their culture, as they navigated through daily life. The focal Buriat children in this study were (and still are) creative, mixing languages and social domains. These young people were constantly negotiating and transforming their social worlds, making their lives very different from yours or mine, and from their parents and elders. As I watched them, I often wondered: Can these young people create an identity that transcends the idea of being Buriat?¹¹⁹ During fieldwork, I met many young multilingual youth who claimed that they were no longer Chinese, or Danish, or French. "I might have a Danish passport, but I am a global citizen, not a Dane," said one 18 year female, the daughter of a good friend living in Hohhot. Likewise, a young Buriat girl in Hohhot said to me in English: "Sure I'm Buriat, but so what? I'm more international, I speak English, I live in China...I'm not *only* Buriat anymore."

In defining culture, Watanabe (1998) argues that scholars from western industrial nations should not be allowed to take charge over the academic discourse concerning culture. Regarding culture as translated into European languages, Watanabe (1998, 134-135) offers

¹¹⁹ See: Paul Gubbins & Mike Holt (2005). *Beyond Boundaries: Language and Identity in Contemporary Europe*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

three acknowledged categories to define culture. First, culture serves as an abstract noun that describes spiritual, aesthetic, and intellectual development dating from the 18th century; second, as an independent noun which describes a way of life, a world view, of a people, a community, or humans in general; third, as a way to describe intellectual, particularly artistic activity.

Another, earlier, definition of culture was introduced by Edward Tyler (1870). Although dated, it remains within the core of anthropological thought. For non-academics defining contemporary culture, however, the meaning has shifted in modern times to the first and third definitions: culture often being defined and depicted via music, theater and film. In fact, culture is not simply material artifacts, such as a piece of art work, or something dug up at an archeology site. From my perspective, culture (like identity) is an ongoing narrative, which must be viewed in context of its creation.¹²⁰ In terms of the young Buriats involved in this research, note that culture, as experienced by Buriat parents and elders, has been analyzed, by keeping in mind the reality of Soviet assimilatory forces - the Soviet context of culture. This influence impacted the young Buriats through their families. Also, in the obvious sense that they spoke Russian, not Buriat amongst each other; they dressed like Russian youth; they ate Russian foods with pleasure, etc. Yet in China these Buriat youth also experienced additional assimilatory forces from the Chinese State and from globalization via media, technology and contact with westerners in China. Finally, the way that the word “culture” was employed by Russian Buriat speakers requires explanation. The

¹²⁰ For the Buriats in this study, the Internet, and especially music they gleaned from the Internet, appeared to impact their language use, as well as their sense of self and their wishes to be members of certain types of groups. More research needs to be done that addresses Indigenous youth and their Internet use, as well as their music choices.

word in Russian sounds the same, *kultura*, but each of the three meanings outlined above is now clarified according to speaker and context.

Soviet and Russian definitions and attitudes. Official Soviet cultural policy was concerned with socialist enlightenment (Forsyth, 1992). At the time of the Russian Revolution (1917), the Russians imposed so-called cultural construction (*kul'turnoe stroite'stvo*) on Indigenous Peoples in Siberia. Regarding the Buriats, this was done via literacy practices, such as teaching Russian using the Cyrillic script, as opposed to Old Mongolian Script. The Soviets also proudly built 'cultural institutions,' ranging from indoor bathrooms and reading rooms, Red Corners (*krasniye ugolki* - clubs) and libraries for the Buriats and other Siberian peoples (Grant, 1995). In this way, Soviet citizens (Buriats and ethnic Russians, for example) perceived culture as something that could be constructed, something countable, and something progressive. Officials promoting Soviet ideology literally counted the number of theaters, libraries, Red Corners, schools, kindergartens, etc., as building blocks toward culture, i.e., progress of the socialist way of life.

During the Soviet period (1917-1990), the collective system of farming (*kolkhoz*) was also a type of cultural institution forcibly imposed upon the Buriats (Montgomery, 2005). Inside this workspace, libraries, laundries, meeting rooms, schools, bathhouses, etc., were provided. Soviet officials proclaimed that, by sedentarizing and centralizing the once nomadic and semi-nomadic Buriats, they were generating not only profitable work out of Indigenous laborers, but also transforming backward rural districts into areas of progressive culture (Watanabe, 1998: 137).

Note that this Soviet concept of culture as something tangible, material, and countable implies not only physical culture, but also public, social and modern infrastructures. In this

way, the Soviet vision proposed national integration that went beyond ethnic groupings, via industrialization, urbanization, and collectivization: in effect, centralizing socio-economic life. Ideally, this forced homogenization made everyone equal, economically as well as culturally. Humphrey (1998) argues that consciousness about the former Soviet system has become a part of the Buriat sense of reality. Through conversations with Buriat adults, I observed that remnants of this Soviet propaganda advocating that all are equal and life was fair for all remained in Buriat consciousness. Moreover, many post-Soviet Buriats over the age of 50 that were interviewed said that they continued to admire and yearn for the Soviet belief system.¹²¹ Other Buriats, mostly younger, are seeking to break away completely in order to emphasize and revitalize their own Indigenous world view, particularly spiritual practices; this is discussed in my results.

Some aspects of Buriat culture did philosophically oppose Soviet culture. For example, Humphrey (1998:166) states that Buriat culture, sees itself as “defined genealogically, within groups that are at one political and kinship oriented,” which means that, in many ways, the traditional Buriat communal society was “analogous to, and sometimes even directly mapped onto, the positioning of oneself in (Soviet) collectives on the basis of notional shares of collective hierarchies”(ibid). Unlike the Russian/Soviet system, however, the Buriat world view has never viewed the earth and its resources as something to exploit, with people having power to conquer nature. In fact, (as discussed in the cultural overview in Chapter One), Buriats feel the power and control of resources and

¹²¹ The “good old days”...perhaps because so many elements of the infrastructure today in Buriatia are either broken/in need of repair (hospitals, schools, buses, sanitariums) or considered expensive (private health care/private transportation/grocery stores).

life itself comes from living sacred spirits, who must be invoked and at times appeased (Reid, 1994).

Yet not all Buriats think or believe the same ways. A division in beliefs concerning cultural practices among the Buriat can be historically traced to the colonization practices of the Russian Empire (17th to 19th centuries). For example, the Buriats in this study had diverse ways to employ the term culture (*kul'turnyi*). First, children and adults employed culture in the Soviet way as described:

The Chinese have really expanded their culture; look at the modern facilities offered here at the school! Китайцы сильно развили (за последнее время), чего стоит современное оборудование, которое представлено в школе!

They also used cultural to refer to something civilized or modern:

Those toilets are not cultural at all, ug! Туалеты не соответствуют (общепринятым) нормам, фу!

The Buriats used the word culture to talk about personal manners:

That kid has no culture; she is ill-bred. У ребенка нет никакой культуры поведения; она не воспитана.

Moreover, Buriat adults used culture to show differences in groups:

Those UB (Ulan Bataar) Mongols are backward; we have more culture than most Khalks. Те (улан-баторские монголы), они отстающие в культурном плане; у нас гораздо больше культуры, чем у всех халха-монголов

Finally, Buriats, young and old, used culture to refer to what they described as their

Indigenous culture:

We have certain ways of greeting the New Year that must be followed to be respectful of our culture. У нас есть конкретные обычаи встречи Нового года, которые нужно уважать.

These comments on culture are also positioned in terms of historical time. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Buriats, like other citizens in the former USSR, experienced a period of economic turmoil that resulted in both destruction and modernity.

In Soviet times we had the Soviet culture and lifestyle. It is gone. Now we are trying to build our own culture to fit with the times, but we are still part of Russia. В советское время у нас был советская культура и образ жизни. Это ушло. Теперь мы пытаемся построить нашу собственную культуру и шагать в ногу со временем, но мы по-прежнему часть России.

This above comment illustrates the complex hegemonic relationship between Russian and Buriat culture for the Buriat parents; it was uttered by a focal child's grandmother, aged 77. The Buriat youth, however, have little or no memories of Soviet culture, although they still define the term *kul'turnyi* "in association with a nexus of ideas which Soviet ideology ties together: scientific, productive, correct, true and communist" (Humphrey, 1998:364). This could imply that they perceive their Buriat identity and culture as secondary, because the Buriat culture and language was scorned and ignored in the Soviet era (Humphrey, 1998). Russian, not Buriat, has been and continues to be the language of business, politics, science, or Soviet education (Graber, 2012).

In this study, Buriat youth experienced the Chinese definition of culture, which also is embedded with hegemonic overtones. For the Chinese, culture (*wen hua*) also represents a communist ideology, which traces its roots to ancient Chinese civilization (Hansen, 1999;

Harrell, 1993). Briefly, in this definition, culture is something the Chinese have, and something that is superior to other groups' ideas. For the Chinese, their culture represents the highest forms of literacy and behavioral norms of all civilizations. How the Buriat children reacted to this precept, and other aspects of Chinese culture, is explored in the results.

Ethnicity, race and nationality.

Introduction. In speaking about the Buriat focal children, as well as other participants – Inner Mongolian, Outer Mongolian, and Buriat adults, I use the American term 'ethnicity' to describe these people in relation to each other, and to the dominant Han Chinese and dominant Russian (Slav) peoples. The term ethnicity requires careful clarification for two reasons. First, the term has long been debated in academic circles, and second, the Russians and the Chinese have their own terminology, based upon historical, political, and cultural contexts. In this section I discuss, define and justify my use of the term ethnicity, and in the following section I discuss, using sociocultural contexts, Russian and Mandarin categories which segue with the English term ethnicity.

Academia and ethnicity. In referring to the Mongolian speaking peoples, past researchers have used the term tribe, but ideologically this word now is considered as a colonial concept, as the Latin derivative, *tribus*, signifies barbarians at the empire's borders (Cohen, 1978). Such etymology, linking itself to imperialist expansionism, with the consequent categorization of people into civilized and uncivilized, is inappropriate. Following other educational ethnographers (Figuroa, 1991), race as an artificial construct can often be imposed upon non-mainstream peoples in order to exploit them. I try to avoid the word race, excepting when some participants self-ascribe themselves as "Asian" or "bi-racial." In Russian/Soviet and Chinese history, ethnicity has also been imposed on

Indigenous groups of people, but in this work, it is also the most common way that participants refer to themselves and to members of their group, hence my choice to apply it.

The term ethnicity has undergone many revisions, as the world has headed toward some degree of tolerance in multicultural and other nations. Max Weber (1961), for example, long ago defined ethnicity as a way to sense common descent that went beyond kinship, political solidarity vis-a-vis other groups, and culture: common customs, language, religion, morality, and etiquette. Later, the anthropologist Frederick Barth (1969) expanded on ethnicity by outlining four characteristics: 1. a biologically self-perpetuating population; 2. a sharing of culture values and forms; 3. a field of communication and interaction; 4. a grouping that identifies itself and is identified by others as constituting a category different from other categories of the same type.

To further the definition, Barth (1969) emphasized that self-ascription was a key component to ethnicity. Clearly, ethnic groups are broad, subjectively used methods of identification, used in social interactions among and between groups. Kunstadter (1978) differentiated ethnicity into three varieties: ethnic group, ethnic identity, and ethnic category. He stated that an ethnic group broadly equates with set of individuals with mutual interests based on shared understandings and common values, while ethnic identity is the process by which individuals are assigned to a given ethnic group and implies boundary creation, maintenance, and change. Finally, ethnic categories are classes of people based on real or presumed cultural features, with members displaying standardized behavior patterns to each other and to outsiders. Kunstadter also notes that these three categories may or may not correspond to each other perfectly.

Vincent (1974) described ethnicity as narrowing or broadening in boundary terms in relation to the specific needs of political mobilization. In fact, groups of people may receive or be denied rewards (for example, work, status, affirmation), based on their ethnicity.

Unsurprisingly, the Buriats and other ethnic groups in Siberia, have reasserted their ethnicity after the fall of the USSR in order to struggle for legal, social, and linguistic rights (Graber, 2012). In contrast, some Inner Mongolians I have met in China have abandoned their Mongol ethnicity, as they try to assimilate and become members of the privileged Han group.¹²²

Thus, as an ideology, ethnicity has evolved to offer individuals and group rights; ethnicity has been political in the sense that it signifies both identity and a means to claim rights and benefits within a political community that recognizes ethnicity. Ethnicity reflects ideological positioning and it has been used by both ethnic groups and governments to attempt to legitimize power relations between groups.

There are several important components to ethnicity. First, an ethnic group displays some degree of cultural and social commonality that members recognize internally, and that may be recognized by outsiders. Misunderstandings, however, may occur between insiders and outsiders, regarding membership criteria. The maintenance of the ethnic boundary for insiders and outsiders may also shift over time. This is because ethnicity is constructed and can change, evolve, or even disappear (as in the case of a hegemonic state refusing to affirm an ethnic group).

Second, ethnicity has no existence apart from interethnic relations. Ethnicity is situational and must be examined in context. Cohen (1978) considers ethnicity as a series of

¹²² Interestingly, some Han adults adopt non-Han ethnicity in order to have more than one child, or to give their children special educational handicap points – in China, minority peoples may enter university with lower scores than Han students.

nesting dichotomizations of inclusiveness and exclusiveness between groups of people. The context largely determines how people perceive their ethnicity and how others label them. Additionally, ethnic boundaries are not stable. They may include multiple and include overlapping sets of ascriptive loyalties¹²³ that make for multiple identities; this seems to be the case among the Buriat focal children, who identified themselves at times as Mongolians, Buriats, and Buriat Mongolians.

Third, the homeland and how people adapt to it can influence sociocultural differentiation among similar ethnic groups. It can also cause great differences when disparate groups come together and interact in a certain space. These differences, when resources are at stake, create tension; i.e., between the Han farmers and the Mongolian nomads (Bulag, 2003), and in the distant past, between the incoming the Russian settlers and the Buriat nomads (Forsyth, 1992). Unequal power relations between ethnic groups cause many negative outcomes, especially when unequal access to resources comes into play. The more powerful may label the other as inferior, to justify access; the less powerful may fight back.

Fourth, ethnic group formation is ongoing and often an innovative cultural process. The modern Outer Mongolian state, for example, seeks cultural rationalizations to legitimize those groups who are currently in power, and to build support and loyalty among all the other groups occupying the land (Sneath, 2010). Ethnicity is a politically powerful tool that can be used by the state or by the members of the group, with positive and negative consequences. This implies that ethnicity can be used as a tool to create cultural and linguistic revitalization movements (as being carried out in Buriatia) to aid those who have lost their sense of

¹²³ For example, the Buriats in this study refer to themselves as Buriats, and also as Mongolians.

personal identity, for example, via political turmoil, migration, disasters, intermarriage, etc. This sense of peoplehood and membership hopefully can counteract structured and artificial isolation while living in hegemonic and/or complex societies.

This leads me to the final and fifth component: Ethnic group members¹²⁴ may recognize historical ties to one another and to similar groups that preceded or exist outside the nation in which they now live (Cohen, 1978). Similarities in language make interaction easier for both groups and can build a sense of solidarity.¹²⁵ If family life and social organization are similar as well, close intra-ethnic relations may form. In effect, an ethnic group may find itself nested within a larger context, a multi-ethnic context. Historically, this is why Stalin separated the Buriat Mongols from the Outer Mongols; he did not want a sense of pan-Mongol ethnicity to challenge the Soviet power base (Montgomery, 2005). This is also why the Han Chinese, despite offering legal language rights and scattered bilingual school support, are not truly interested in promoting Mongolian language and culture in Inner Mongolia (Bulag, 2003). The Chinese fear more than superficial support of the pan-Mongol friendship would result in Inner Mongolia attempting to secede¹²⁶ and unite with Outer Mongolia (Han, 2011).

How the Han Chinese define Mongolians.

How the Han Chinese position the Mongolians. Because this research took place primarily upon Chinese soil, I now address how the Han Chinese view Mongolian people. In China, questions concerning how to position and identify non-Han people, in this case, the

¹²⁴ Such as the Mongolian peoples

¹²⁵ And this can be a threat to the dominant nations such as China. Where ethnic people currently live is significant, especially, (as in the case of the Mongols), if there are vast natural resources at stake and the people and resources are located on or near borderlands (Postiglione, 2000).

¹²⁶ These fears caused the Chinese to torture and execute countless Inner Mongolians during the Cultural Revolution (Sneath, 1994).

Mongolians, remain convoluted. Officially, in English translation, Chinese leaders frequently offer the official statement that "Our country is a unified, multinational country" (Atwood, 1994: 37), but this scholar also cautions that this phrase must be examined carefully to understand its true implications. In the Chinese language, words translate differently than in English; nationality/ethnicity translates as "*minzu*" while the word for country translates as "*goujia*." Thus, a massive disassociation exists between the concept of nationality from country, and in this section I explain why these terms and translations are significant to my research.

First, as Atwood (1994:37) mentions, Maoist thought echoes this disparity in meaning; "countries (*guojia*) want independence, nations (or nationalities (*minzu*) - read: ethnic groups) and the people (*renmin*) want liberation - this has become an irresistible historical trend." In effect, ethnic minorities living in China should not want to be separate from their Chinese overlords: Any claims to the right to secede, or any attempts to secede are illegal. This idea is not in agreement with the historical and cultural outlook of the Mongolian people, who were, for centuries, never associated with the Chinese, and furthermore, forcibly ruled over the Han Chinese for centuries as well (Bulag, 2004; Sneath, 2010).

An obvious disconnect lies in the current independence of Outer Mongolia, which exists as a large territory inhabited by the Mongols, one of China's so-called five large nationalities (Muslims, Mongols, Manchus, Tibetans, Han). By breaking away from Chinese rule in the early 20th century, Outer Mongols established a country, which was formally recognized by China in 1946. Yet their independence contrasts starkly with that of the Inner Mongols, who, since 1947, have been simply a Chinese minority under Chinese rule.

The second disconnect is the fact that the Han, as one of the 56 nationalities¹²⁷ (*minzu*), obviously dominates the other nationality groups, rather than being an equal, unified member of the unified country (*guojia*). Yet according to Mao, one nationality, one *minzu*, is not supposed to economically, politically, culturally and socially monopolize the others.

Ambiguity in Chinese ideology (and linguistic expression) is nothing new. The term *minzu* in reality has dual uses, because it is used to define nationality, which in effect translates into English as ethnicity – a people, who, while preserving their heritage are not part of a political body called a state (Atwood, 1994: 39). *Minzu* also translates as a nation – which is a unified body of people who do occupy a territory that has a single civic tradition and a right to independence (*ibid*). This ambiguity between ethnicity and nation/nationality allows the Han minority members to reconcile their loyalty to their group (Mongolians to Mongols) while also affirming their loyalty to the Chinese state (Inner Mongols as loyal members of the Chinese State).

Another confusion regarding terminology comes with the distinction between the terms Han and China/Chinese. It is not just foreigners who confuse China with just the people they perceive as Han people, ignoring all 55 official (and hundreds of smaller, unrecognized (Harrell, 1994)) minority peoples who are also officially "Chinese." A clear example: Consider, for example, the way Chinese language is defined linguistically: one may say *han yu* (Han/Chinese language) or *zhongyu* (Chinese language) interchangeably; this is

¹²⁷ It should be remembered too, that the Han, like the Soviet Russians, arbitrarily decided which "people" could qualify to be their minority people. Sometimes these authorities simply grouped smaller Indigenous Peoples together and gave them one name; other times, they simply ignored their status as Indigenous People. (See Stevan Harrell (1993) for more on Chinese nationality building; see Francine Hirsch (1997) for additional information on Soviet nationalities.

meant to underscore the myth that all citizens of the PRC share a common descent with Han.¹²⁸

The Mongolian perspective on language, history, and culture differs from the Han viewpoint. The Mongols, both in Inner and Outer Mongolia, have separate linguistic concepts for nationality/ethnicity (*undussuten*) from the concept of country/nation (*ulus*). They also linguistically separate the Han nationality from China (Atwood, 2010). But why is this distinction important in this research? The answer lies in the way people position themselves and in the way they are positioned by others, particularly, dominant groups and institutions.

Significantly, Outer Mongolians today see no distinction between Han people as a nationality and China as a country. In fact, in Outer Mongolia, to be a full member of the Mongolian nation, one must be a member of the Mongolian nationality (ethnicity). Mongolians do, as do other Indigenous peoples, have sub-ethnic groups (clans or tribal connections differentiated by language varieties and place; *yasutan*). In contrast to this, the Inner Mongolians in China hold conceptions of nested loyalty to nationality(ethnicity) and nation(country), which are also moderated by small sub-ethnic differences (the regional dialects and clans of the Inner Mongols).

Historically and politically, many Mongolians view nationality and nation in a way that contradicts today's dominant Han ideology purported by the Chinese state. It is important to offer their point of view, given that constructions of ethnicity and race are often defined and imposed upon non-mainstream peoples, and because many readers may not have access

¹²⁸ Naran Bilik, an Inner Mongolian and scholar, writes about Chinese government promoting the myth that Genghis Khan is buried in Erdos, Inner Mongolia.

to these alternative points of view. Understanding such differences not only supports the knowledge and reality of non-mainstream peoples, but also helps in understanding the sources and causes of tension among these various peoples with dominant groups.

Just as medieval kingdoms in Western Europe were perceived as secular communities, in terms of governance, common descent and common customs, so too were Mongol “banners” (regions) considered as independently functioning 'kingdoms' ruled by aristocratic Mongol lords who offered their services to the Chinese after the fall of the Yuan Dynasty in 1368.¹²⁹ Atwood (1994: 43) specifies, in fact, that the Mongols perceived no breakdown of the idea of Mongolia as a nation or country when they began working for the Han. Descendants of the Genghis Khan nobility continued to rule the areas we know as Inner and Outer Mongolia, without switching to a country consciousness of being part or subordinate to the Chinese (nation). Instead, Mongolians saw themselves all as a part of a single realm: Mongolia, just as they also saw China, Tibet,¹³⁰ and Korea as other viable realms (countries), each with its own viable customs, languages, and ruling traditions. During the Qing Dynasty, Mongolians indeed pledged allegiance to the Chinese, while viewing themselves as a separate realm - much as medieval kingdoms pledged allegiance to a king but operated independently.

Particularly for the now Inner Mongolians, who served as mercenary soldiers for the Qing, territorial separation between Mongol and Han peoples was enforced in order to maintain these realms. Certainly, some traders and artisans entered Mongol lands, but were

¹²⁹ The Buriats were subservient to the Khalk Mongolians in structures similar to the Manchu inspired banner system in ancient China, for centuries (Forsyth, 1992). An excellent overview of the banner structure is offered by Martha Avery in her (2003) book *The Tea Route*.

¹³⁰ This is very problematic with the Chinese Communists, who claim that Tibet has ‘belonged to China for centuries for this same reason (Laird, 2006).

treated as temporary guests. It was only after the fall of the Qing Dynasty in 1911 that the government run by Sun Yat-Sen proposed the undifferentiated concept of nation and country, nation and nationality. Sun asserted that China was one, undivided country held in common by the five nationalities (Muslim, Mongol, Tibetan, Han, and Manchu). His ideas were adopted by the communists, who expanded Sun's five nationalities into 56 lineages "zu" (the dominant elder brother being the Han, plus the 55 'younger brothers') (Atwood, 1994).

The Inner Mongolians, after 1947, had little choice but to give into this Han ideology. Later, as the Chinese communists adopted political vocabulary from the Soviets, the Inner Mongolians experienced a dramatic delegitimization of their Indigenous heritage, as they went from being a nationality to a minority group (Bulag, 1998). This redefinition of a people, into "zu" altered their perception from historically formed and independently operating civic communities into ethnically malleable groups that could be ruled by a centrally determined political structure: the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). This injustice and confusion persists to the present day, with some Inner Mongolians (as well as Tibetans and Muslim Uighurs) advocating for national self-determination and/or independence from the PRC.

When the Chinese Communist Party took power in 1949, communist leaders denied any class distinctions. Instead, they granted legal equality to all “peripheral peoples” and classified them as “ethnic minorities,” *shaoshu minzu*, following the communist ideology developed by Stalin¹³¹ in the USSR (Kwong & Xiao, 1989). The concept of non-Han peoples has been translated differently over the years: ethnic minorities (*shaoshu minzu*) are now

¹³¹ Mao's initially close relationship with Stalin has caused many aspects of Chinese communism and Chinese education to resemble, to this day, those of the Soviet system. Please refer to: Westad, O. A. (Ed.). (1998). *Brothers in arms: the rise and fall of the Sino-Soviet alliance, 1945-1963*. Stanford University Press.

called ethnic groups (*minzu*). This new reasoning is based on territory: ethnic groups do not translate in Chinese as needing homelands or territories, in contrast to nationalities, which do, according to Stalinist guidelines (Harrell, 1995).

In defining an ethnic minority, Stalin's four criteria for nationality were adopted: common language, common territory, economic ties, and a typical cast of mind manifested in a common culture (Heberer, 1989:30). The Chinese communists were also interested in applying Marxist ideology to each minority group, so these groups were put into a certain stage according to the Morgan and Marxist model of five-stage social development (primitive, slave, feudal, capitalist, and socialist modes of production). Chinese communists identified most minorities as still stagnating in the feudal or the slave stages (Heberer, 1989). In contrast, the dominant Han were classified as feudal and semi-feudal stage, making them more advanced socially and economically (Harrell, 1993). In this way the Han "big brother" was set up to assist the little brothers, the backward minorities, in the hope of bringing the "little brothers" into the socialist stage, and ultimately into communist utopia (Bulag, 2004; Harrell, 1993).

When the Chinese state imposed arbitrary definitions about ethnicity on minority peoples, this impacted their identity. Although ethnic identities, as well as social identities, can be defined as fluid processes (Nagel, 1994; Norton 2000), the Chinese state has consistently attempted to constrain this process in order to sustain control over minority peoples (Harrell, 1993; Tsung, 2009). In effect, researching language socialization in a bilingual education context for non-mainstream peoples in China, as elsewhere around the world, equates to studying power relations between the state and these groups (Hansen, 1999).

This research indicates the same is also true for Buriats who have migrated to China for their education. The Inner Mongolians are considered an ethnic group in China. Yet my study's focal participants, the Buriats, came to China under a Russian passport, so officially they are considered to be Russian citizens residing in China: they are not a Chinese minority; in fact they have their own autonomous republic inside the Russian Federation. However, because of their physical appearance, most Chinese people treat Buriats, regardless of origin, as members of the Inner Mongolian ethnic group, rather than as foreign Russian guests.¹³² In my results, I argue that this treatment is significant for the Buriat focal children's behavior and language choices while living in China.

Russian discussion of ethnicity. As mentioned, the Chinese have followed, the Russians in terms of classifying people from a Marxist-Leninist perspective, which is still used in both countries. Yet for the Russians and Soviets, as with other imperialistic nations, how to talk about and to define the "Other" has always been a tricky business. In the former USSR and the current Russian Federation, it must be pointed out that government officials, ethnographers, and ordinary people usually do not talk about race: the term used is *natsional'nost'*, which translates as nationality, but in Russian it has the *same* definition as ethnicity (my italics). This section discusses the definition in detail, to both inform the reader and to situate the Buriat as a nationality/ethnicity in the Russian Federation, and later, in China.

For the former USSR, officially, Stalin's definition of a nation (cited later as his definition of a nationality) was the official party line: a nationality is "historically developed stable community with a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological

¹³² Personal communication from a Buriat friend; September 2013.

makeup manifested in a community of culture" (Hirsch, 1997, p. 257). Earlier, the Russian imperial regime had also tried to define and control, by categorizing its subjects on the basis of religion and native language. After the last tsar fell in 1917, the newly created Soviet government came to power. Soviet leaders had aspirations to define, rule over, and ultimately transform the identities of its citizens, including the many Indigenous peoples and their ancient homelands. The impact of Soviet imperialism remains and influences the identity of modern Buriat people, who are now affiliated with the Russian Federation.

Hirsch (1997), like Anderson (1991) asserts that nationality in the USSR is an artificial construct. The Soviet empire generated territorial nations, composed of unnatural national subunits (Suny, 1993). Soviet ethnographers (to be efficient) simply added and combined Indigenous peoples, if they felt that their populations were not suitably large enough to count (Hirsch, 1997). Despite the cultural and linguistic revitalization movements among the Buriat and other Indigenous peoples, after the breakup of the USSR, Buriat youth in this study accepted the Soviet definition of nationality, and were not aware of any threat to their culture, language, or personal identity. Buriats repeatedly told me that, despite intermarriage, despite infrequent use of Buriat, and despite having moved to China, far from family, religious temples, and their ancestral homeland, that they would still remain Buriat, and that their children and grandchildren would be Buriat. Such conversations recalled Fishman's stages of language loss, described in detail later.¹³³

In the past, Soviet debates ranged whether nationality, and hence, identity, was a biological or a cultural construct. The USSR used nationality as a standard category of

¹³³ Fishman, J. (1996). What do you lose when you lose your language? *Stabilizing indigenous languages*, 80-91.

identity in official documents.¹³⁴ In the 1920s, the Bolshevik promise of national self-determination was key to their rise in power. During the civil war between the Reds (Bolsheviks) and the Whites, approximately 140 million people lived on Soviet soil; with some 65 million being non-Slavic Russians. These people did not trust the Moscow-based regime, and so to woo them, the Bolsheviks promised equality to all Soviet citizens (Anderson, 1991). If they registered their nationality, these non-Russian peoples (*narod*) were to be given the right to "establish its life in its own way" (*ustraiivat' svoiu zhizn' po svoemu*). Unfortunately, for many Indigenous peoples, they were also losing their right to define themselves, and to claim their homeland and its resources as their own (Hirsch, 1997).

The Russians had long been classifying non-mainstream people in order to control them. Until 1924, Soviet ethnographers had used a diverse list of characteristics to differentiate between peoples; language, religion, race, culture, *byt* (everyday life), and occupation. Criteria were selective and subjective. Hirsch (1997: 258) offers up an early Soviet ethnographer's conundrum: What was the nationality of a woman who has always lived in the part of Russia populated by the Finnish peoples, whose parents were English and German, but who herself was educated in Russian schools and speaks English and German? In other words: Can a woman without a drop of Russian blood be Russian?

Many early Soviet ethnographers,¹³⁵ such as Nicolas Popov, the renowned specialist on Altaic and Mongolian languages, argued that language was the primary determinant of

¹³⁴ This is no longer the case in the Russian Federation; the passports do not designate ethnicity.

¹³⁵ The USSR had a vast array of geologists, ethnographers, explorers and scientists, all working under KIPS: *Komissia po izucheniuiu plemennogo sostav naseleniia Rossiia sopredel'nykh stran* - an institute founded in 1917. Many of its workers studied the ethnic composition of the European and Asiatic borderlands in Russia. It was responsible for all ethnographic studies of all people on Soviet territory. (Hirsch, 1997:258). Other prominent linguist/ethnographers include: Schmidt - the first Mongolian researcher; Schiefner - Tibetologist; Roerich - Tibetologist; Novogorodov - Yakut; Maack - Indigenous Peoples of Siberia.

nationality and that religion and culture were important secondary factors. Yet peasants in European Russia often equated their "nationality" with where they were born or lived, while Central Asians saw religion as the most important component of their identity. Before the Soviet government standardized its definition of nationality, census takers reported that a person's native language, conversational language, religion, and kinship group all could influence his choice of nationality (Forsyth, 1992).

Soviet terminology also caused confusion, as ethnographers could not initially agree which term to use: *natsional'nost'* or *narodnost*. By 1937, *natsional'nost'* was chosen to designate Soviet identity, as all administrative documents required this term on government documents. Soviet residents all had internal passports marking their '*natsional'nost*.' Families of "mixed nationality," could choose one to register their child. Nationality could mean benefits: in the USSR, all administrative units from universities to the Soviet Army, filled nationality quotas as part of the affirmative action programs. Yet it could also mean destruction, especially during Stalin's years of terror (Montgomery, 2005).

By 1937, the definition of nationality had become even clearer: nationality was connected to territory, and to be a nationality meant being a member of a large group of people making a living in a specific land. It also meant, to fulfill Stalin's definition, having a unique culture and literacy in a language. To achieve adequate population numbers, the term *natsional'nost* now included the subgroups of nations, (*narodnosti*), and national groups. Nations became "those peoples making up the main population of union and autonomous republics." *Narodnosti* became "peoples making up the main population of autonomous oblasts and national regions," and "peoples of a significant number, living compactly in defined regions and having literacy in their own language." (Hirsch, 1997: 272)

National groups included "those peoples, which in their main mass live outside the USSR," and which "inside the USSR make up national minorities." By 1937, nationalities had been combined and shortened into 106 "*natsional'nosti* of the USSR.

One could not be a good Soviet citizen without having a nationality. By 1939, the USSR had transformed itself into a nation containing many territorial nationalities, all united under socialism. Moreover, in Marxist terms, *natsional'nost'* now included only those peoples that had completed the more "primitive" stages of development. This is important to note, because the Chinese later also adopted the Russian terminology, which, by definition, designates any group that is non-dominant as inferior (Anderson, 1991). In the USSR (and in China), most official '*natsional'nost'* had their own territory, language, culture, and economy. Those peoples deemed "too backward" by the rulers were consolidated with their neighbors. On the eve of World War II, the Soviet state again finalized a list of nationalities, which consolidated diverse ethnic elements and now created over 100 diverse ethnic groups (Slav dominant majority plus many minorities) as major nationalities. The Chinese, later, also followed this categorization, omitting Indigenous groups with small populations (Harrell, 1993).

In sum, in the USSR (and in China), those peoples without territories or large populations were not considered nationalities. Luckily, the Buriats, being a sizable group, the largest Indigenous population in Siberia (Forsyth, 1992), received their own autonomous republic, and two oblasts (regions), which were later taken away from them (Graber, 2012). Their republic's land mass was also reduced, along with the omission of the word "Mongol," to prevent any feelings of solidarity toward the Mongolian peoples in Outer Mongolia (Montgomery 2005).

During my research, in China and in Buriatia, when I asked young Buriats to define themselves, they all said they were “Buriat by ‘*natsional'nost'* (nationality/ethnicity).” When I asked for further clarification, two factors came to the forefront: having been born on Buriat soil, and being Buddhist or following shamanic practices. However, ethnic Russians born in Buriatia did not specify religion, although many were either Jewish or Old Believers.¹³⁶ In interviews, Buriats older than 50 years also stated that being Buriat meant speaking the Buriat language, and hopefully reading it as well. For younger people, specifically the focal children in this study, being Buriat meant having one or two parents who were Buriat Mongols, and/or being born in Buriatia. Third, being Buddhist or following shamanic practices was marked by young people. Speaking Buriat and knowing something about the culture, appeared to be secondary to their identifications.

It should also be noted that the Buriats themselves do not like to identify themselves as Siberian Indigenous peoples, especially if compared to other Indigenous groups in Siberia, such as the Evenki¹³⁷ and other groups (Graber, 2012). The reason for this is because Buriats themselves seem have absorbed the Marxist-Leninist formula that Indigenous peoples were “less developed.” Early Soviet scholars talked about Native groups by using Lenin’s principle of national self- determination, with the preliminary identification of Indigenous minorities classifying them as peoples (*narody*), nationalities (*natsional'nosti*), or nations (*natsii*) and formulating policy to help them ‘develop’ was an explicit attempt to incorporate outlying native populations into the Soviet telos (Martin 2001; Slezkine 1996; Suny 1993,

¹³⁶ Buriatia is famous as the place where the Decembrists (Dostoevsky and others) were exiled; it is also home to a large but dying out population of Old Believers who left European Russia for Siberia in search of religious freedom. Lev Tolstoy also sponsored the emigration of Old Believers to Canada in 1905.

¹³⁷ Evenki are indigenous people living in Russia, Mongolia, and China. Their language is part of one of the ten Manchu-Tungusic languages (the other languages in this group being Even, Negidal, Solon, Nanai, Uil'ta, Ulcha, Orochi, Udeghe and Manchu).

1998). Such distinctions remain vital to the Buriat consciousness, with modern Buriat scholars discussing culture in terms of prescriptive ‘stages,’ from the more ‘primitive’ to the more ‘civilized’ (Hirsch, 1997). Buriats I interviewed felt that they, Buriat Mongols were “more developed” than “those Evenki from the forest.” Finally, Buriats were also classified by Soviet officials as more developed on the cultural evolutionary timescale and closer to being full-fledged nations; hence they were granted an Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic and two *oblasts* (territories; taken away in 2008 (Graber, 2012)). Those Indigenous Peoples with lower population densities were believed to be less developed, especially those residing in rural areas and the far north; the Soviet leaders granted them only autonomous “*okrugs*,” or (small) regions (Graber, 2012).

In sum, although historically China has borrowed many Marxist and political terms from the former USSR, the concept of ethnicity is somewhat differently structured in Russia and China. The Chinese frame ethnicity as a relationship between majority and minorities. Their governmental policies have been worded and structured to try to reconcile the principles of empire (multiplicity) with that of nation state (unity and oneness) (Humphrey, 2002:30). In the former USSR and in modern Russia today as well, the government has recognized Indigenous peoples as legitimate and equal citizens, yet these peoples have been classified in a hierarchical fashion, in the hopes that all cultural and linguistic differences would gradually fade away, resulting in entry “to the higher common plateau of the Soviet people” (Humphrey, 2000:30).

What is a pure Mongol, anyway? Throughout this dissertation, various groups have commented in asides that the Outer Mongolians, represented by the majority group of Khalk Mongols were “pure” Mongols. This designation, as well as the fact that Buriats and Inner

Mongolians distinguished themselves as separate from the Outer Mongolians, requires further explanation. I have chosen to allow the various groups to speak for themselves regarding this subject. First, I present the opinions of an educated Han Chinese woman, a professor of English at Inner Mongolia University, concerning the subject of Mongolians and “pure” Mongols. Second, I present, in translation, the comments of an Inner Mongolian mother, whose child attended the research school site. Third, I present in translation the views of a Buriat male, a self-professed historian and nationalist of Buriat culture. Next, I present in translation a point of view of a Buriat mother, who allowed me to observe her child. Finally, I present the comments of two young Outer Mongolians in English, whom I interviewed in Jan 2014, as we sat together in a Mongolian cafeteria eating a typical Mongolian lunch of mutton dumplings and mutton stew. At the end of these narratives, I offer a synopsis concerning pure Mongolians and how Inner Mongolians, Outer Mongolians, and Buriats are different from each other.

1. A Han Chinese View on Mongols and “Pure” Mongols (English conversation)

VS: What are the biggest differences between the Han and the Mongolian peoples today?

LL: I think, for Inner Mongolians, there are no big differences; (laughs); Just...uh...we have cultural differences, we have different customs, different traditions, I don't think we are too different, now...just tradition.

VS: Give me an example. Do you think Mongolians follow Confucius?

LL: Maybe not...but nowadays Inner Mongolians are greatly influenced by Han culture, are greatly influenced by us (Han Chinese), so there's no sharp differences between us.

VS: What about the Outer Mongolians?

LL: Outer Mongolians, quite different.

VS: How?

- LL: They are traditional, they are pure Mongolians.
- VS: Everybody says this: pure Mongolians...what do you mean by that, by pure Mongolians?
- LL: (laughs) Pure Mongolian: I mean they are less influenced by Han people; I think that's pure Mongolian.
- VS: When you walk around the campus can you tell who is an Outer Mongolian and who is Inner Mongolian?
- LL: Yes, sometimes, yes, because the Outer Mongols are influenced by Russia, by their makeup, by the way they dress, they look Russian.
- VS: They look Russian to you?
- LL: Yeah. Ummm, you know, Inner Mongolian students are like Chinese. They dress more conservative, while Outer Mongolians, well, they, uhh, they can wear very low jeans, their earrings, their long hair, and when they speak their words are different, their appearance is different.
- VS: So why are they pure?
- LL: Because they have their own land, you know, it's Outer Mongolia, it's a country. But they are not hard-working like Inner Mongolians; they are a little lazy...
- VS: Why?
- LL: Maybe it is determined by their culture, you know they kept their culture to be pure and they live, their life is very easy...
- VS: Easy?
- LL: Yes, I think they have no pressure. Life is not so stressful for them...so they are late to everything, they never come to class on time; they never come on time for anything. They live at a very slow pace - they are more comfortable in their life, no pressure.
- VS: Anything else?
- LL: Yes. They are more physical, more wild, you know, well, (Outer Mongolian) boys and girls are together in the night.
- VS: Can Inner Mongolians do this too?

LL: Not really; it was only in the last year or two that Chinese students can get married...before, we had a law - students could not marry...college students can get married now.

2. Inner Mongolian Mother's Views on Mongols and "Pure" Mongols

VS: So what exactly is a pure Mongolian? Are Inner Mongolians pure Mongolians? 哪样的人才是纯粹的蒙古人？内蒙人是纯粹的蒙古人吗？

D: Well, we are all Mongols....but Horchin Mongols, like my family, we are, we are Chinese citizens, and we speak Chinese as well as the Mongolian language 我们都是蒙古人，但我们全家都是科尔沁蒙古人，同时也是中国人，我们既说汉语也说蒙语。

VS: Are Horchins pure Mongolians? 科尔沁人是纯粹蒙古人吗？

D: Maybe long ago... 或许很久以前是.....

VS: Why? 为什么？

D: Because then we served under Genghis Khan long, long ago, we, I guess we used to be pure (laughs).
因为很久以前我们受成吉思汗统治，我想我们曾经是纯粹的蒙古人（笑）。

VS: Are there any pure Mongols in China? 中国境内现在有纯粹的蒙古人吗？

D: I don't know....there are many different kinds of Mongolian people here, you know that? 我不知道.....中国有很多种蒙古人，你知道吗？

VS: Yes, I know there are different languages, the Erdos, the Horchin, the Temut, the Buriat...
是的，他们讲的蒙语各有不同，有鄂尔多斯人，科尔沁语，布里亚特人等.....

D: We are all Mongols, but we are now also Chinese -- I mean part of China....I mean we have Chinese passports.
我们都是蒙古人，同时我们也是中国人.....是中国人的一部分，持有中国护照。

VS: So are the Outer Mongolians pure? 那么外蒙人是纯粹的蒙古人吗？

D: Yes. Yes. 是的，是的。

VS: Why? 为什么？

D: Because they are free. They are always Mongolian.
因为他们自由的。他们一直是蒙古人。

3. Buriat Nationalist/Historian View on Mongols and “Pure” Mongols

VS: What is a pure Mongol?

BE: Of course, a pure Mongolian is a Mongol who remained in Mongolia, in my opinion those who stayed, they are pure Mongolians.

VS: And how do Buriats fit in the picture?

BE: Buriats, well, Buriats, they, in the time of Genghis Khan, in the era after, they left for the north, the words “*buuru garad*” ... how to say, uhh, from the meaning of “*buuru garad*,” “*buuru garson Mongol*,” those that left improperly, in the end, “*buuru*” they said were Buriat...

VS: You mean Buriats are those that left improperly?

BE: Yes. Those that left, in the long past.

VS: So who are the Kalmyks?

BE: They are from *Khalkmyk*, that is, mixed Mongols...they went west, we went north...they are mixed with Tatars, Turks, Kazakhs, Uzbeks, others...

VS: And those Mongolians in China?

BE: Chinese Mongols, they are *Ur* Mongols,

VS: *Ur*? What does that mean?

BE: It means that they are a type of those who left long ago for the East..

VS: Are they pure Mongolians?

BE: No, no they are not pure. Also they, well, of course, time has passed, and they have mixed blood, so ..., how to say...they have kept some of their culture.

VS: But they are not pure?

BE: No, The ones who have really kept their culture are the Mongols (in Outer Mongolia).

VS: Why?

- BE: They, the Mongolians themselves kept the culture, but those who left, we the Buriats, the Kalmyk, the Ur Mongols...the Ur, they are closer than we are to the real Mongols, they are closer, but there is a border...they are on Chinese side, and we, there is a border too, we are located closer to the Russians, we are more Russian, this is a fact.
- VS: Where is the heart of Mongolian culture? The heart of the pure Mongolian culture?
- BE: Well, it is Ulan Baatar, or it is the former ancient capital, you know, Karkarum, the old capital, from long ago.
- VS: But the Inner Mongolians say the Outer Mongolians look and act a little like Russians, what do you think?
- BE: Well, yes, it is the times...
- VS: Then how can they be the "pure" Mongols? If they resemble the Russians. like you (Buriat)?
- BE: Time passes, civilizations pass and change...they have kept their culture, it is kept.
- VS: But they dress like you (Buriat), like Russians, like westerners...
- BE: But what do you want? That they run around in loincloths? (laughs)
- VS: (laughs)
- BE: Culture does not depend on dress; civilizations go forward..in Europe there has been change, too. The thing is that there are borders -- you need visas to go abroad to Europe if you are Buriat, because we are Russian, but the Outer Mongolians, they go freely wherever they want...they are free, they can go everywhere. Since Peter the Great we have been joined to Russia...
- A: Что значит быть "чистым" монголом?
- B: Конечно, те монголы, кто остались и живут в Монголии, по моему мнению, те и есть "чистые" монголы.
- A: А как буряты вписываются в эту картину?
- B: Буряты? Ну, буряты, он во времена Чингисхана, после этого периода, они ушли на север. Слова "бууру гарад"... как это сказать, от значения фразы "бууру гарад", "бууру гарсон монгол" – те, кто ушли неподобающим образом, в конце. "Бууру" они называли бурят.

- A: Вы имеете ввиду буряты – это те, кто ушли неподобающим образом?
- B: Да, те, что ушли в далеком прошлом.
- A: Тогда, кто такие калмыки?
- B: Они из Хальмг, это смешанная кровь с монголами... они ушли на запад, мы ушли на север... они перемешались с татарами, турками, казахами, узбеками и другими...
- A: А монголы в Китае?
- B: Монголы в Китае – это увур монгол.
- A: Увур? Что это значит?
- B: Это значит, что они ветвь монголов, которая ушла в далеком прошлом на восток.
- A: Они "чистые" монголы?
- B: Нет, они не "чистые" монголы. Ну, конечно, время уже много прошло, и они смешались уже с другими народами, поэтому..., как сказать, они придерживаются частей своей культуры.
- A: Но они не "чистые" монголы?
- B: Нет, только те, кто полностью придерживаются культуры – настоящие монголы (т.е. Внешняя Монголия)...
- A: Почему?
- B: Они, сами монголы, следуют собственной культуре, но те, кто их покинули, например: мы (буряты), калмыки, увур монголы... Увур монголы, они ближе к настоящим монголам, чем мы, они ближе, но между ними граница... они на китайской стороне. Что, касается нас, мы тоже за границей, мы больше русские – это факт.
- A: А где сердце монгольской культуры? Сердце настоящей культуры монгол?
- B: Ну, это Улан-Батор, или бывшая столица, вы знаете, Каракорум, древняя столица.
- A: Но внутренние монголы говорят, что внешние монголы выглядят и ведут себя, как русские, что Вы думаете по этому поводу?
- B: Ну, да, это все время...

- A: Тогда, как их можно называть "чистыми" монголами, если они схожи с русскими, как, например, буряты?
- B: Время проходит, цивилизации уходят, меняются... Они сохранили свою культуру.
- A: Но они одеваются как вы (буряты), как русские, на западный манер.
- B: Ну, а что Вы хотите? Что они будут бегать вокруг в набедренной повязке? (смеется) Культура не зависит от одежды; цивилизация развивается. В Европе тоже были изменения. Основной вопрос – это то, что есть границы, нужны визы для того, чтобы съездить в Европу, если ты бурят, потому что мы россияне. Что касается, Внешней Монголии, то ее жители могут ездить куда захотят... они свободны, они могут ехать куда захотят. Мы были объединены с Россией со времен Перта Первого...

4. Buriat Mother's View on Mongols and "Pure" Mongols

- VS: Can you tell me about pure Mongols?
- AG: You want to know about the history? A long time ago, we were all together, I am talking about Marxism, you know we started as, like animals, and then we got the feudal society, with some ruling others, and then, what happened, oh, socialism, then capitalism...Outer Mongolia was a simple society and then Marxism impacted them, for them, a whole epoch passed...how can I explain...we, we Buriat, passed through stages, those Marxist stages together with the Russians, while Outer Mongolians, they did not endure the same stages, they did not live for a hundred years or more as we did under Russians, and because of this, at first they had nothing, and, and they could do nothing...
- VS: Yes.
- AG: So socialism died, and we are neighbors with them...Russia (the former USSR) helped them (Outer Mongolians) very much, but they did not have the same thing as us, the Russians helped them a lot, their cars were Russian, those my age and older, they spoke Russian, the goods were all Russian, everything...
- VS: Yes.
- AG: But then they closed the border, the Russians did less and less, and the Outer Mongolians, they did everything themselves.
- VS: Why have they gotten more prosperous after the fall of the USSR?

AG: Because they have natural resources, and good livestock. They pulled themselves up, themselves, they saw that they could, without us Russians, pulled themselves up, improved. You know, I go there (Outer Mongolia) and the letters still are Russian letters, there are Russian words, I can read them...this is history. Today many investors from outside help them, too...before it was just Russia, no one cared about Mongolia. Russia was considered strong, rich, even if it were not really true...Russians got wool and meat, it was profitable...They (Outer Mongolians) never went through the stages of Marxism, and they are richer than in the past...they stand on their own...

VS: With all this Russian influence, why did you tell me before that they are pure Mongolians?

AG: In any case, they are better Mongols than we (Buriats).

VS: Why?

AG: Because we have lived a long time with Russians, even under the Russians in the past, we live now and do like Russians. We sit and eat the same Russian foods as Russians, you understand, we speak Russian, but they, they have their own national language, Mongolian. We have our state government in our republic, but everyone speaks there in Russian, but Mongols they always speak everywhere in Mongolian, at home, in government offices, everywhere...

VS: So language, Mongolian language being prominent, means that they are pure?

AG: Yes, and their culture, it's very important.

VS: But those that live in UB, they live like you do. They even speak English...

AG: Despite that, that is society, urban life, but they keep their culture...they speak Mongolian in the city and in the countryside...they have not taken on Chinese or Russian culture, not to any great measure...they keep the Mongolian traditions. That's how I think.

A: Расскажите мне, пожалуйста, о "чистых" монголах.

B: Вы хотите узнать о истории? Давным-давно, мы все были вместе, я говорю сейчас о Марксизме, ну, Вы знаете, сначала мы были как животные, потом появилось феодальное общество с теми, кто управлял другими людьми, а затем, что там случилось? Ах, да, социализм, а после капитализм... Внешняя Монголия была простым обществом, после чего, на них повлиял Марксизм, и целая эпоха исчезла... Как объяснить понятнее?... Мы, буряты, прошли через ступени, те ступени Марксизма, вместе с русскими, в то время, как Внешние Монголы не переживали

этого. Они не жили сотни лет, как мы, вместе с русскими, и поэтому на первых парах у них ничего не было...

A: Да.

B: Произошел крах социализма. И теперь мы соседи. Россия (точнее, бывший СССР) помогал Внешней Монголии во многом, но у них не было того, что было у нас. Русские помогали им во всем: машины были русскими, люди моего возраста и старше, они говорили по-русски, вещи были русскими, все...

A: Да.

B: Но затем они закрыли границы, русские помогали все меньше и меньше, и Внешняя Монголия начала заботиться о себе сама.

A: Почему они стали процветать после распада СССР?

B: Потому что у них есть природные ресурсы и хороший домашний скот. Они сами поднимались, они увидели, что они могут обходиться и без нас, русских. Они развивались. Знаете, я езжу туда (во Внешнюю Монголию), и буквы, которые используются, по-прежнему – русские, русские слова, я могу их прочесть... это история. Сегодня много инвестиций поступают из зарубежья... до этого была лишь Россия, всем было все равно на Монголию. Россия воспринималась сильной, богатой страной, даже, если это была не правда... У русских была шерсть, мясо, это было прибыльно... Они (внешние монголы) никогда не проходили через ступени Марксизма, и они сейчас намного богаче, чем были в прошлом... Они сейчас самостоятельны...

A: Весте со всем этим воздействием с российской стороны, почему Вы сказали мне, вначале, что внешние монголы – это "чистые" монголы?

B: В любом случае, они "чище", чем мы (буряты).

A: Почему?

B: Потому что мы жили долгое время с русскими, даже под влиянием русских в прошлом, мы живем теперь как русские. Мы едим одну и ту же русскую пищу, как и русские, понимаете? Мы говорим по-русски, а у них есть их собственный государственный язык – монгольский. У нас есть собственное правительство в нашей республике, но все говорят там на русском, в то время, как монголы говорят везде на монгольском: дома, в правительстве, везде...

A: То есть, если у внешних монгол монгольский язык доминирует, значит они "чистые" монголы?

B: Да, и их культура, это очень важно.

A: Но те, кто живут в Улан-Баторе, они живут также, как и вы. Они даже говорят на английском...

B: Несмотря на это, это общество, это городской быт, они все-таки придерживаются собственной культуре... они говорят на монгольском в городе и в сельских районах... они не переняли китайскую или российскую культуру, ни в какой степени... Они хранят монгольские традиции. Вот как я думаю на этот счет.

5. Outer Mongolians Comments on being a “Pure” Mongol and other Mongols

VS: I'm really lucky you speak English. Can I ask you one question about Mongolians?

S: Sure

Sa: Sure, why not?

VS: What is a pure Mongol?

S: (laughs).

Sa: I am pure Mongol (laughs).

S: Me, too! (laughs).

VS: Why? What is a pure Mongolian?

S: I am, I speak Mongolian, I live here, it's simple...

Sa: Yes.

S: And our ancestors are from here... we cannot be anything BUT Mongolian...

VS: What about the Mongolians in Russia, in China?

S: No.

VS: Why not?

Sa: Those in China have become Chinese.

VS: Some still speak Mongolian.

S: It is important, sure, sure, but they are like Chinese, and the Russian Mongols, they are Russian.

VS: Why? I have friends, Buriat Russians; they still speak Buriat and Russian, too.

S: Your question is hard to answer.

VS: I guess I am asking about being pure, not just about being Mongolian?

Sa: Well....I think, maybe, can I say what I think? I think that we are the pure Mongols because we are not under anyone, you can speak Mongol, sure, even a foreigner can speak it, there are a few here in UB that speak some Mongolian, but to be pure, well, it means, it means to remember that you are a part of Genghis Khan, that this was his land, it is our land, and no one can take it, or take us...the others, well, they are not like us, understand?

VS: You mean because they live under another government?

Sa: Yes, yes.

VS: But you lived under the USSR until 1990...

S: My parents did, but the time was brief. It was short, and the Russians did not come here the way they did for the Buriat...no, and the Chinese Mongolians, they have lost so much, they are more like Chinese than Mongols...

Discussion. The narratives presented above suggest that everyone interviewed feels that the Outer Mongolians are indeed “pure” Mongols. Their reasons vary: Mongolians all identify themselves as members of a group that are related, either by blood or by fealty, to Genghis Khan, the great hero of the Mongolian peoples. As one participant suggested, after his death, as the Mongol empire evolved and eventually declined, the Buriats left for the northern lands; other Mongolians went south, and settled in the steppes and grasslands of what is now Inner Mongolia. They did not remain in the heart and homeland of the Mongolian people, so they are excluded from being considered “pure.” Hence, those that left the original homeland are not pure. A second reason that Outer Mongolians are considered “pure” has to do with politics: the Outer Mongolians, despite being governed briefly by the Soviets, did not assimilate and give up their language. Some people did learn Russian, but it was only one generation of Outer Mongolians; all the young Outer Mongolians I met in

China and Outer Mongolia spoke Mongolian, and some also spoke English or Chinese as well - as a foreign language. In contrast, the Buriats speak Russian; I have met many Buriats who only spoke Russian, as they had no fluency in Buriat at all.

Although the Buriat participants I interviewed never suggested that their people have entirely assimilated to Russian culture, yet many, depicted in these interviews and in other talks, suggested to me that they were indeed, a kind of mixed culture, with Russian culture dominating their daily, contemporary lives as Buriats. In fact, often when I asked a Buriat to tell me who he or she was, the answer would often be: I am a Russian Buriat, as opposed to a Buriat Mongolian or simply a Buriat.

A third reason, also political, that Outer Mongolians are considered pure has to do with borders. The Outer Mongolians now have an independent nation, with its own government and national language. Inner Mongolians have language laws and bilingual policies mandated to them by the Han Chinese government, but they are not a free people. The same can be said of the Buriats, who voluntarily realigned with the Russians.

In closing, a final notable point concerns the fact that the many Buriats I spoke with formally and informally all had mixed feelings about Buriat/Russian cultural mixture. Sometimes they told me that the Russians had brought them into a 'higher form of life,' in the sense that their living conditions, education, and opportunities had expanded; other times, however, they suggested that they had lost something essential to being Buriat. Their herds and shamans had diminished and their children no longer understood Buriat, or what sacred Buriat words meant. Some Buriat parents quietly told me that they did not want their children to marry outsiders, or to stay in foreign lands.

Yet all of the Buriats accepted the fact that the Russians had come into their land and changed their lives, and that they were different from the “pure” Mongolians living in Outer Mongolia. Some even insisted to me that I explain to my university that their situation was not the same as what they had heard about those peoples in the USA: that Buriats did not live on reservations, and hate the Russians for coming to live among them. Rather, several Buriats said to me that they thought of themselves as being good hosts to the Russians, and, as Buddhists, they accepted their fate, and tried to make the best of the situation.

Geographical positioning: The Inner Mongolian lands. Mongolians define themselves through cultural practices, which include language and ways of life. As a nomadic, herding people, the Mongols hold great respect for the land; for this reason, I now discuss the geography of place, and how land use and ownership has changed as Han Chinese entered the Mongol grasslands. (In another section I discuss the Russian invasion of Buriat homelands).

Chinese sedentary and nomadic peoples have been interacting for thousands of years (Tsui, 2012). This interaction has been both complementary and conflictive, and dependent upon past and present political, economic and social circumstances. For contemporary Inner Mongolians, their modes of livelihood, and culture, as well as the ecological conditions of their traditional environment supporting their subsistence base, have changed. Chinese population dynamics have changed, with Han outnumbering Inner Mongolians since the early 20th century (Bulag, 2003). Mongol nomadic culture has declined. Land resource ownership and usage have changed as well. Competition for resources and fear of losing their Mongolian culture and language has caused tensions, even violence, between the Inner Mongolians and the Han Chinese.

As the second largest grassland country in the world, Chinese grassland covers nearly 400 million hectares, ranging in 268 counties of 13 provinces and autonomous regions. In total, grassland makes up 41.7 per cent of Chinese territory (Du, 2012). Chinese grasslands are primarily located in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region (hereafter Inner Mongolia or IMAR), Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (Xinjiang), Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), Qinghai Province, Gansu Province, and Sichuan Province.¹³⁸

Today, as in the past, Mongolian livestock consists of sheep, goats, horses, cattle and camels. Sheep, goats and cattle are raised for profit and for food (e.g. dairy products, a staple for Inner Mongolians). Horses provide personal transport and serve as friends; in some areas, camels are still used mainly to haul yurts and other belongings. Like other Inner Asian nomadic peoples, Inner Mongolians consume horse and camel milk, regarding it as a great delicacy. Horse meat is rarely eaten (Weatherford, 2004).

Mongol herders have long used traditional nomadic wisdom with their skills to acquire resources for survival and to ‘make a home where water and grass are found’ (Cf. Sima Qian c. 91 BC). Their knowledge was and still is based recognizing the symbiotic relationship between humans, animals, and the grasslands. Consequently, until recently, Inner Mongolian nomads have lived in harmony with nature, as they simultaneously

¹³⁸ Grasslands play a strategic role environmentally, economically, and socially (Zhang 2009, Han et al. 2011). Most people, including the Chinese, view the country in terms of grain (rice/wheat) rather than grassland, and the Chinese government focuses on achieving grain (and energy fuel) needs, rather than pastoral needs. In fact, until recently, Chinese authorities have ignored grassland issues; consequently, ecological problems regarding the people and the land have escalated in recent decades. From 2000–2010, Chinese grassland areas have dramatically decreased and 90 per cent or more of all Chinese grasslands are degraded (Du, 2012). Consequently, Inner Mongolia and other parts of north China experience frequent, severe sandstorms, as symptomatic of this degradation (Williams, 2002).

In China, pastoral and nomadic lifestyles have long served as form of subsistence for various ethnic groups, including the Inner Mongolians. In the early communist era, from 1958 to 1984, known as the People’s Commune period, pasture lands were collectively owned and nomads were organized into so-called Production Brigades under a commune leader (Humphrey & Sneath, 1997). Family units took turns tending herds in exchange for daily necessities. The somewhat settled Inner Mongolians drove their herds from the winter camps to spring pastures for lambing. After lambing season was over, the Mongols moved on to summer pastures. These herders culled, then sold their animals in the fall. For ranchers and nomads, this cycle is timeless and ancient (Tsui, 2012).

consumed and conserved resources. Things have now changed for the worse (Bulag, 2003; Williams, 2002).

In Chinese Mongolia, serious grassland degradation was rare until the late 1970s. Now it is a huge environmental issue that the Chinese State struggles with on a daily basis (Du, 2012). To combat increasing environmental woes; desertification, sandstorms, soil erosion, the Chinese government has launched many types of ecological grassland reforms since the early 1980s (Tsui, 2012).¹³⁹

Moreover, the Chinese state has neglected to effectively monitor their own reforms. This neglect has led to unsustainable local development strategies (Williams, 2002). In a more positive light, government institutions may be one of the key elements that could determine whether the development of an area is sustainable or not (Tsui, 2007). To date, for Inner Mongolian herders, the way the Chinese government currently manages nomadic groups, as well their own subsequent changes in lifestyle, reflect a massive negative shift for Inner Mongolians in China (Humphrey & Sneath, 1999).¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ These initiatives were and are part of wider rural reforms throughout China, as the country continues to develop and expand to meet the global economy (ibid). In the early 1980s, the People's Communes were dismantled. In their place came a two-tiered administrative system of townships and administrative villages (Humphrey & Sneath, 1997). The old communist communal nomads now became modern 'family-based-Inner Mongolian herders'.

As a result of the reforms, Inner Mongolian households received 'grassland user rights' and the state sold livestock to households as 'private assets.' In effect, these herding families had user rights (but not ownership) over 'private' pastures and to livestock (Humphrey & Sneath, 1997). This was very different from the ancient Mongol ways of governing the people, the animals, and the land. Chinese historians explain that Mongol 'feudal lords' once served as managers over ancient peoples and their pastures. This traditional practice differed from 'private ownership,' as feudal lords (Mongol tribal chiefs) only exercised rights of administration, not possession (Weatherford, 2004).

Inner Mongolian nomads understood that the land reforms gave them only the 'grassland user rights' and not 'grassland ownership.' But when when pasture user rights were renewed in around 1994 under the Household-Contracted Responsibility System, Inner Mongolians signed governmental pasture use contracts for another thirty to fifty years. This effectively blurred the definition of 'pasture use rights' and 'pasture ownership.' It also created huge social problems: Mongol herders wanted to get rich by raising more livestock, so they overgrazed and over-compensated their herds (Humphrey & Sneath, 1997). Their ancient Mongolian practices, ecologically balanced controls for grazing and sharing pasture lands, have been gradually abandoned.

¹⁴⁰ Inner Mongolian demographic patterns have also changed. Inner Mongolians no longer live in ways that are 'water and grass centered.' They have become 'village centered,' and more individualistic (Humphrey & Sneath, 1999; Wang & Zhang, 2012). A community in the modern sense has emerged, along with a great disparity of wealth, and increasing poverty. For

“Grasslands are shrinking, the grass is growing shorter and lives are getting harder. Our traditional life may not last as long as my life,” said one elderly Buriat from the steppes of Hulunbeir, Inner Mongolia. Instead, crop farming has replaced herding in many areas of Inner Mongolia. “The steppes are also full of mining companies, desperate to dig up fossil fuels and rare earth. Inner Mongolian people's lifestyles have changed,” said one young Mongol man to me on the streets of Hohhot, Inner Mongolia.

Since 2000, Inner Mongolia has experienced frequent disasters, especially drought (Wang & Zhang, 2012). Inner Mongolia’s terrain is mostly semi-arid, arid or extremely arid; drought is characteristic but in the decade, it has been much higher than before (Gong & Wang 1994; Weather Society of Inner Mongolia 1985). Inner Mongolian rivers and reservoirs are low. In addition, climate change in recent decades, other socio-economic changes have also occurred in pastoral areas in Inner Mongolia.¹⁴¹

In sum, the Chinese state has not paid attention to natural laws until recently; the grassland environment has been disrupted in the form of overpopulation of people and

some Mongols, blood ties still help alleviate extreme poverty; such ties are still important among the semi-nomadic households (Tsui, 2007).

Power structures have changed in Inner Mongolian pasture lands (Humphrey & Sneath, 1997; Williams, 2002). In the past, tribal chiefs acquired, distributed, and conserved natural resources in for their groups (Weatherford, 2004). Since the late 1970s, this power has been transferred into the hands of the Chinese state or its representatives (the village, township and county governments). Chinese organization is more centralized, and has great power to interfere with the natural ecosystem of the grasslands (Humphrey & Sneath, 1999). Ecologically, this power shift has also generated a massive boom in natural resource exploitation; the development is taking place on deeper and more diverse level than ever before. Inner Mongolian grasslands now have less time to recover from the ways people are using it (Wang & Zhang, 2012). There is more strain on the grasslands ecology and more changes in biodiversity. Serious degradation has occurred throughout the Inner Mongolian grasslands (Wang & Zhang, 2012; Williams, 2002).

¹⁴¹ Today, the once highly nomadic Mongols are confronting many challenges in adapting to sedentary life. Traditionally, these nomads adapted themselves to the natural laws of ecology and to their environment; they understood recycling and regeneration of natural resources (Bulag, 2003). Mongol lifestyles represented a simple but effective way of ‘sustainable development,’ as they kept reasonable livestock numbers and humans were demographically in balance with the land. Via seasonal grazing, local natural and economic conditions all remained in balance (Williams, 2002).

In the early 1980s, Chinese government implemented the Livestock and Grassland Double-Contract Responsibility System (LGDCRS). Second, in 2000, the government also created many ecological protection projects, including fencing grassland, decreasing livestock numbers, ordering grazing bans, and protecting forests. The state wants to promote grassland protection and livestock husbandry development in Inner Mongolia, and feels that (semi) nomadic Mongols should settle

livestock. Land reclamation and cropping, mining (for oil, coal, and natural gas) has accelerated, and the tourist industry has also been promoted, further disrupting Mongols and their land. Grassland degeneration and desertification on the steppes of Inner Mongolia are linked to rapid population growth and inappropriate resource development, especially agriculture and in Inner Mongolia, mining. In addition to drought and climate changes, Inner Mongolian herders have also faced water and soil pollution from invading mining industries, which are given easements and mining rights by the Chinese government. Together with less rain, mining companies have utilized river and groundwaters, and caused poor pasture conditions (Wang & Zhang, 2012). Sustainability has become un-sustainability (Wang & Zhang, 2012; Williams, 2002); is it no wonder that the Inner Mongolians resent the Han Chinese? Into this environment come young, unsuspecting Buriat youth, to study at the Mongolian-Mandarin bilingual school.

Language Socialization

Types of language socialization studies. Much language socialization research consists of comparative longitudinal studies that center upon speech communities, as well as families (Heath 1983/1996; Schlieffin, 1990; Schlieffin & Ochs, 1986; Zentella, 1997, 2005). Language socialization research indicates that children become linguistically and culturally competent members of their community by interactions with caregivers and other more competent members of their community (Ochs & Schieffelin, 1984; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). Through these communicative interactions, children learn to behave in culturally appropriate fashions (Romero, 2003; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). Some studies are

and work as individual households (Wang & Zhang, 2012). In 2000, drought and frequent large-scale sandstorms took place in north China. The result: shrinking grasslands, decreasing migration and grassland overuse.

multidisciplinary (Duff & Hornberger, 2008). The first (now classic) studies examined young children and their primary caregivers; in these studies, the traits and values of a given cultural group are/were described via the social practices in which they engaged (Schiefflin & Ochs, 1986).

Another perspective in this type of research involves comparing one group with another, as Ochs (1988) did when she described differences between Samoan and white middle-class caregivers. Today, studies of older children/ adolescents are needed, especially regarding literacy and multimodal literacies (Heath and Street, 2008, p. 97). Although the earliest language socialization research first focused on young children and their caregivers (Ochs, 1988; Schieffelin, 1990; Schieffelin and Ochs, 1986), this work soon expanded to second language learners (L2) and their language acquisition processes (Bayley & Schecter, 2003; Zuengler & Cole, 2005). Research findings indicate that L2 learners gain a new language while also gaining sociocultural knowledge. Some second language acquisition work has examined ESL classrooms (Duff, 2002; Duff & Early, 1999), heritage language classes (He, 2000, 2003, 2004), study abroad programs (Du Fon & Churchill, 2006), and even the workplace (Duff et al., 2000).

Clearly, language socialization studies can extend into secondary settings: environments beyond the immediate family and home/community. Such studies have demonstrated how symbolic and tool-like features of language can generate and maintain social structures. For example, Willett (1995) demonstrated how L2 learners are socialized in primary schools; Baquedano-Lopez (1999) looked at a church setting socializing young children, as did Peele-Eady (2005). These studies identified a primary identity being socialized, the student (usually young) or member of a collective. Socialization research

illustrates how language forms correspond with the values, beliefs, and practices of a specific group, and how novices learn or refuse to adopt them in interaction (Cole & Zuenger, 2003; Jacobs Huey, 2003).

Definition and assumptions. Language socialization research in education looks at socialization practices that occur in communities, homes, and other areas, in addition to schools and classrooms. “Socialization, broadly defined, is the process through which a child or other novice acquires the knowledge, orientations, and practices that enable him or her to participate effectively and appropriately in the social life of a particular community” (Garrett & Baquedano-López, 2002, p. 339).

In order to understand communicative competence¹⁴² and identity among the Buriat focal children in my research, I used a language socialization framework in conjunction with ethnography of communication (EOC) methodology. The principles of language socialization research rely on the situated use of language, the function of language in context, and the active role of participants (Budwig, 2003). Language socialization research can be defined as illustrating how children/youth are socialized to become competent members of their own speech community and the society at large (Perregaard, 2010). By analyzing the social practices and the socialization processes of Buriat focal participants, this work described and interpreted how Buriat focal children managed being sons, daughters, and siblings at home, while being peers and students at school, as they negotiated their way through several languages and cultures on a daily basis.

¹⁴² The term Communicative competence will be defined as per Hymes in Chapter Three. Later scholars, such as Canale & Swain (1980, 1983), had four characteristics to define communicative competence: Grammatical competence (knowledge of the code); sociolinguistic competence (ability to produce /understand utterance appropriately); discourse competence (combine grammatical forms in long stretches); and strategic competence (mastery of communication strategies). Norton (2000) also argues one more: To explore whose interests these rules serve (political) – understanding the ways rules of use are socially and historically constructed to support the interests of the dominant group.

A language socialization perspective embeds language and its use amid the children's social activities in various contexts. Thus, language socialization offers important insights that link local moments of interaction with the 'broader' cultural events in which this language use is situated (Cole & Zuenger, 2003, p. 98). My research used the language socialization perspective because of the emphasis on relations formed in interaction by new members of the community with more experienced members - providing a way to look at how 'talk' (communicative activities - verbal and non-verbal) serves as both methods and means to communicate, transmit, negotiate, resist, or even deny the activities, beliefs, and values of a given group. Ochs (1998) put it succinctly: "A basic underlying tenet of language socialization is that language must be studied not only as a symbolic system that encodes local, social, and cultural structures, but also as a tool for establishing (i.e. maintaining, creating) social and psychological realities. Both the symbolic and tool-like qualities are exploited in the process of language socialization" (p. 210).

Language socialization at home. The Buriat focal children in my study were bilingual (Russian/Buriat) and learning a third language (Chinese); they were acquiring Temut, the local Inner Mongolian variety. Buriat parents (and kin and community) were also bilingual; they served as an important source of Buriat socialization and language socialization. Research has investigated how parents' language input relates to their children's language development (Budwig, 2003). Bilingual parents have various strategies to socialize children to use two languages. These Buriat strategies differed significantly from those that the Buriat children encountered at the Mandarin-Mongolian school. Particularly in bilingual and multilingual contexts, parents may model pragmatic language use and metalinguistic strategies, highlighting language differences to socialize their children

via language. In this study, I observed how Buriat parents pragmatically modeled language in certain situations,¹⁴³ or explicitly told their children when to use a certain language. I spent many hours both in Buriat homes in Ulan Ude, Buriatia, and in Buriat homes in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia, China. This was important because, for example, research indicates that dinner table conversations at home can demonstrate how social and cultural conceptions are constructed and negotiated (Blum-Kulka, 1997; Ochs & Taylor, 1992). I observed other narrative activities that defined how a speech community establishes and maintains human relationships (mothers and children doing homework, parents and children watching a movie), as well as builds a sense of authenticity and coherence in one's way of life (Ochs & Capps, 2001).

I investigated how the Buriat parents used metalinguistic skills, which encompassed the ability, knowledge, and awareness needed to allow the speaker to link the abstract nature of language to actual language use (Bialystok, 2001). Such skills included comments on people's language use and requests for translations, which expanded and developed as the children learned to use language in different ways (Malakoff & Hakuta, 1991). Such analyses of conversation directed me toward understanding how language socialization processes among Buriat parents influenced their children's internalization of social structures, which in turn impacted the young people's sense of reality (Perregaard, 2010).

In addition to analyzing conversation in context, I compared Buriat, Inner Mongolian and Mandarin participant structures (Philips, 1972), looking for differences in the way knowledge is relayed from adults to children. I observed participants both in Ulan Ude and

¹⁴³ For example, Buriat parents rarely used Buriat in China; they almost exclusively employed the Russian language.

around Buriatia. By observed speaking order and the appropriateness of who speaks to whom, for how long, and addressing what topic(s) in homes, schools, and among youth groups, I saw that Buriat youth wait for the elders to address them before speaking. Also, both young and older Buriats spend more time conversing informally with members of the same sex.

Language socialization in schools. Language socialization research assumes that it is through language that social structures and roles are made visible and available for novices as well as others. The school as a site held great interest for me, because I felt that Buriat students had the agency, in varying degrees, to accept, transform, resist, or deny socialization in classroom(s) or other sites within the school community. Moreover, because identity is a social construct, schools are also important places for identity construction. Ochs (1993) said that language socialization in such places “allows us to examine the building of multiple but perfectly compatible identities - identities that are subtle and perhaps have no label, blended identities, even blurred identities” (p. 298).

Every kind of social action and interaction, including language socialization, has the potential to create clashes of ideas, goals, expectations, interpretations, and norms of interactions between the novices and the more experienced (He, 2003). Thus, schools may be sites of conflicts, including linguistic and cultural conflicts; this was the case for some Buriat participants. The language socialization perspective allowed me to observe how identity was negotiated linguistically within the bilingual school community - from one classroom to many, as each class can be considered a miniature community in itself (Duff, 1996; Duff & Early, 1999), each with specific practices (Toohey, 2000).

Moreover, language socialization literacy based studies in the classroom have shown that language learners understand more complex language than they produce. Research also proposes that meaningful roles in supportive emotional environments are needed to acquire languages and academic registers (Heath & Street, 2008). A major focus of language socialization research addresses how varying patterns of primary language(s) socialization affect the later academic achievement of children from different social groups (Heath, 1982). High levels of continuity between early home and school language and communicative practice use are closely related to academic achievement (Philips, 1983; Gee, 1996).

Why use language socialization? Today, settings and context for language socialization studies are various: beauty schools (Jacobs-Huey, 2003), Sunday schools (Peele-Eady, 2005), or, like this research, non-US state schools with linguistically diverse children (Codo & Patino Santos, 2013; Duff, 2002). Language socialization research delves into how “communicative practices of experts and novices are organized by and organize cultural knowledges, understandings, beliefs, and feelings” (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1996:225). Such work offers insights into Indigenous learning styles (Romero-Little, 2010). Through these kinds of studies, educators may become aware of the culturally diverse ways of teaching, and learning language (Heath, 1983; Ochs, 1998). This in turn can lead to innovations in teaching strategies and educational policies that are designed to provide equal educational opportunities to all youth (Nieto & Bode, 2008).

When children start school, in China or elsewhere, they rely on the ways they have learned to learn from their own culture and home community (Romero, 2003). But children from one culture may have language behaviors and communicative practices that are expected at home, which differ from those they encounter from school culture (Lopez-Gopar,

2009). This disconnect has implications for educational practices (Crago & Annahatak, 1993; Heath, 1983; Phillips, 1983). Despite sharing a common language, teachers who are unfamiliar with a child's community of practices may encounter difficulties and misunderstandings in the classroom (Heath, 1983; McCarty et al, 2009). If such children's communicative practices are ignored or treated negatively at school, and if children and their parents (Valdés, 2001) are not explicitly informed concerning practices of the school's culture, then they may have great difficulty in succeeding as students (Cook-Gumperz & Gumperz, 1982; Fordham, 1996; Schluessel, 2007; Wang, 2013).

The relationship between the wider ethnolinguistic dynamics of school, community, region, and nation must be correlated with what goes on in class (Collins, 2007), as schools are key spaces for the production, reproduction and legitimation of the social order. As state institutions, they require attendance and they serve as places where young people learn appropriate linguistic and behavioral norms, as well as cultural and official rules, as well as knowledge. Schools thus act as powerful participants in the socialization of children into state-licensed ideologies (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). In this Chinese bilingual school, Russian-born Buriat students encountered ideological policies that demanded their compliance to the dominant Han ideology and language. Because the Buriats were considered as Russian Mongolians, they were, by ideological definition, considered as lesser than the dominant Han population when they lived in China. Moreover, Buriats in the school

research site were submerged, as opposed to transitional, immersion, or maintenance.¹⁴⁴

None of their teachers spoke to them in Russian or Buriat.¹⁴⁵

School agents (whether students, teachers, school staff or parents) used language to construct their daily practices. Teachers communicated that they had absolute power over students, that they were the authorities for test preparation. Students were expected to behave as compliant, group learners. Such practices were meant to prepare all students to become industrious and docile workers for the Chinese State. My research explored the macro aspects of this Han-Chinese ideology in relation to these educational practices by examining assessment, workload, and teacher centered classrooms. In the results I examine how Chinese style participant structures conflicted with the Buriat children's previous experiences at school in Russia. My research also detailed micro issues by observing a small cohort of Buriat students closely. I noted the complexities and tensions that these specific Buriat focal students encountered at school (Heller & Martin Jones, 2001). In describing tensions, I have tried to use the focal children's narratives as much as possible, to illustrate and compare Han-Chinese "participant structures" in relation to the Buriats' previous schooling and cultural orientations.

Philips' research. While observing Indigenous¹⁴⁶ children in mainstream elementary classrooms on the Warm Springs Indian Reservation in Oregon, Philips (1972) developed the term 'participant structures.' Her now classic research described how groups of young Indigenous students reacted to their Anglo teachers' pedagogical style. Philips' analysis

¹⁴⁴ Submersion or 'sink and swim' bilingual methods in the US have an English only perspective; transitional programs have the native language plus English in various degrees and percentages; maintenance /developmental programs are designed to promote both languages throughout school. See S. Romaine (1995) for details.

¹⁴⁵ Also - No special needs educators or classes were offered.

¹⁴⁶ Philips uses the term "Indian" in her writing, so I use this term, as well as "Native American" and "Indigenous."

centered on the comparison of communicative behaviors and teaching strategies between children and adults on the reservation with the White world in a school context. Philips found that different cultural norms regarding interaction impacted Indigenous student success in the mainstream Anglo classroom.

My research offers parallels between Susan U. Philips' (1983) study of the Warm Springs Indians. I employ her framework in describing disconnects found when Buriat focal children studied in a Chinese school. Philips (1972, 1983) illustrated how Indigenous US children, despite the fact that they spoke English while attending a mainstream Anglo-American school, struggled to achieve academic success, because their Indigenous way of behaving, communicating, and interacting - their participant structures - differed significantly from those of their mainstream Anglo-school teachers. This study, with Indigenous Buriat Mongolians from Buriatia, Russian Federation, also found conflicting participant structures at school. Ironically, although this school was designed as a 'showcase'¹⁴⁷ Mongolian minority serving institution, the Inner Mongolian teachers internalized Han ideological practices. Although Inner Mongolians have struggled for centuries against Han hegemony, outsiders, such as Outer Mongolians and Buriat participants in this study, consider them to have assimilated. Indeed, hegemony cannot be sustained without the consent of the governed, and it may, at times, be spread through persuasion as well as by through force and coercion (Gramsci 1971; Philips 1998).¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ This was the term the director used.

¹⁴⁸ Later, I present some startling perspectives about Buriat parents: From interviews, it appeared that Buriat adults did not notice or regret the neglect of their home languages (Buriat/Russian) in school; moreover, parents did not realize their children's linguistic difficulties; none had discussed these challenges with teachers

Importance of language socialization research. Understanding how children are socialized at home is increasingly important for bilingual educators, as culturally and linguistically diverse children attend school speaking a language other than the mainstream school language, and they also have acquired ways of using language that may be significantly different from mainstream school culture (Heath, 1983; Zentella, 1997). Mainstream teachers, even bilingual teachers, may misinterpret communicative differences, causing them to incorrectly assess their students academically and personally. Thus, much language socialization research seeks to help teachers become aware not only of their content and teaching practices, but also of the cultural capital¹⁴⁹ (knowledge and skills that children bring from their linguistic and cultural backgrounds) of linguistically and culturally diverse students (Fillmore & Snow, 2002; Genesee, 1994).

Notably, native language (L1) learners are expected to become competent members of their speech communities, but non-native or second language (L2) learners presumably have a choice as to how much they want to become or act like members of the target language community. Implicit language socialization processes are inherently powerful, especially in regard to young people (Ochs, 1990). When participating in long term, routine activities in the target language, young L2 learners make conscious choices about accepting or rejecting the social identity conferred upon them and indexed¹⁵⁰ through the target

¹⁴⁹ Specifically, Bourdieu (1986) defined cultural capital as a form of historically accumulated social advantage, reflected and or embodied in various social ways; accent, educational ability, educational qualifications, skill in taking competitive standardized exams; knowledge of high art and culture (mainstream). Moreover, cultural capital has value from being scarce, and those who have it favor its reproduction and transmission among their own elite group(s). Bourdieu noted that cultural capital is largely reproduced and accumulated through its implicit but early initiated transmission across generations.

¹⁵⁰ Indexing is another way of stating that one function of language is deictic: indexing as a function can specify identity or spatial or temporal location from the perspective of one or more of the participants in an act of speech or writing, in the context of either an external situation or the surrounding discourse. Levinson (1983) has three class examples of deixis: person, place and time. Yet the indexical function of language is not necessarily limited to the above three categories, as the meaning of a linguistic form is relative to its social context.

language in context.¹⁵¹ Language can be indexed, as linguistic forms can take on a variety of meanings, depending upon the context. Using an indexical perspective, researchers view language as a tool to construct social situations (Ochs, 1988). Thus, language allows us to express who we are, how we feel, what we know, what activity we are engaged in - we all use language to accomplish the goals at hand. This (indexical) perspective highlights the agency of the language user (Duranti, 2006) and it refers to how people are situated when they are in the process of creating meaning within a specific frame of time and space.¹⁵²

For example, He (2000, 2003, 2004) found that daily participation offered L2 learners sociocultural knowledge that was implicitly encoded in linguistic structures and interactional mechanisms. This implicit language socialization did not allow the L2 learners to deviate significantly from the sociocultural norms of the target language.

Language socialization and identity. Many classroom ethnographic studies have examined language socialization processes by exploring the complex relationship between language and identity (Eisenhart, 2001). The idea of language being part of one's cultural identity is not new; anthropologists have long tied language and culture together (Mandelbaum, 1985; Sampson, 1980). For example, some scholars assert that learning to

¹⁵¹ For more information, please see: "Si Hablas Español Eres Mojado: Spanish as an Identity Marker in the Lives of Mexican Children" by R. Martinez in the journal *Social Justice*, Vol. 24, No. 2, Summer 1997, pp 26-44.

¹⁵² Multiple meanings may result when the interlocutors are not members of the same speech community or culture. Gumperz (1982) defines cross talk as taking place when speakers from different social groups misunderstand the social meaning due to different interpretation norms. Myers Scotton (1993) argued that knowing speech norms and conventions is part of communicative competence; he developed his theory of markedness to account for this knowledge.

Briefly, linguistic choices are marked or unmarked. Marked choices index the expected interpersonal relationship (Scotton, 1993, p. 75). Members of a social group or speech community share on some level knowledge of the preferred or expected associations between a particular linguistic structure and a particular social meaning in a given social context (Hanks, 1996). Members of the social group use language to create identities; their knowledge of marked and unmarked choices helps them to create social identities. Scotton (1993) found that speakers choose unmarked forms more frequently than is expected or conventional. This led Ochs (1996) to assert that language socialization becomes the process of learning the unmarked and marked associations between linguistic structure and social meaning in a given social situation.

Linguistic indexes can help create, maintain, and negotiate social acts, activities, and identities. Affect indexes may be used to create or elicit emotions such as fear, devotion, or solidarity. Epistemic indexes may be used to support the idea that a certain idea is true or false.

write in certain genres specific to the culture is one way that young people are socialized to express their identities, and in learning a second language L2 students often renegotiate their identities (Messekher, 2011). Ramsdell (2004) demonstrated this point by specifically arguing that acquiring language is like acquiring a new self: “language is identity” (p. 166). Likewise, Ortmeier-Hooper (2008) investigated how ELLs negotiated their identities as L2 writers in mainstream composition classrooms, while being socialized to write in a certain academic register. Some researchers (Morgan, 2004) problematized how the L2 teacher plays a pivotal role in socializing L2 student identities by propounding normative, dominant discourses that inhibit student agency. The Buriat students in this study used language in many ways to express their identities, but my results show that the languages that they chose to mark their identities did not include Mandarin Chinese.

On a more theoretical level, Block’s (2007) article about the rise of identity in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research offers a literature review of previous research, while problematizing the relationship between L2 learning and identity, in conjunction with agency and cultural capital. More pragmatically, Norton’s (2000) book is central to SLA identity work, as she takes up the issue of adult identity and language-learning in relation to investment rather than motivation. In her case study of four women, I mention two of them, Eva and Mai. These women demonstrate how they, as L2 learners, constructed their identities at work and at home while navigating distinct contexts with distinct demands. Eva resisted her home’s patriarchal social structure in her home and recreated herself at work; Mai also resisted her brother’s patriarchal authority. Norton’s work is important because it examines how investment, identity, and language-learning are related, while asserting that investment “helps identity to fuel learning, which in turn reshapes identity” (Messekher, 2011, p. 23). It

could be argued that English not only offered these women a way to communicate but also that the English class socialized these women to empower themselves. In this study I also examine investment strategies, arguing Buriat language choices were meant to empower the children, as well as to distinguish them from other Mongolian groups.

Classroom ethnography and language socialization. Classroom ethnographic research in North America has brought to light many politically charged concepts that impact bilingual classroom learning among minoritized students. Some concepts include: historical race relations, attitudes toward immigrants and immigration policies, and the relationship between socioeconomic status and test scores/tracking (Nieto & Bode, 2008). Young students' social identities (racial, ethnic, linguistic, gender, and economic) play out significantly in schools. Heath (1983), for example, in her longitudinal study, illustrated the import of race and class as cultural and cross-cultural processes in the classroom (Bloome, 2012, p. 15). Some language socialization research uses a critical lens when conducting ethnographic research. American researchers Foley (2010) and Heath (1982) conducted critical ethnographies and generated what Geertz (1973) called "thick descriptions"¹⁵³. They carefully described and interpreted what they perceived was going on in classrooms and communities, using critical eyes and a sociocultural lens. Their investigations reflect the classroom as more than a place to teach and learn; rather, such ethnographic research portrays language socialization in schools and other instructional settings as fluid, dynamic and consisting of shifting power relationships. This type of research brings to light the

¹⁵³ In Geertz's (1973) understanding, ethnography is by definition "thick description"—"an elaborate venture *in*." Using the action of "winking," Geertz examines how - in order to distinguish the winking from a social gesture, a twitch, etc.)—we must move beyond the action to both the particular social understanding of the "winking" as a gesture, the *mens rea* (or state of mind) of the winker, his/her audience, and how they construe the meaning of the winking action itself. "Thin description" is the winking. "Thick" is the meaning behind it and its symbolic import in society or between communicators

unequal educational relationships between mainstream and non-mainstream groups. My research also asks: What kinds of socially ordered relationships do Buriat children experience in bilingual classrooms in China?

Some language socialization research focuses on communication issues that do not work to benefit non-mainstream students. The work of Heath (1983), Philips (1972), and Valdés (1996) demonstrated how dominant White, middle class society socializes minoritized people publicly, culturally, and linguistically - via English. These three scholars, among others (Foley, 2010; Zentella, 1997) have provided insights into American based cross-cultural issues and miscommunication issues that take place in mainstream classrooms using English. They have promoted the now contested cultural differences argument.¹⁵⁴

Since the 1950s, the theory of cultural differences has deeply affected the way education is perceived in the US (Eisenhart, 2001, p. 210). In brief, minoritized culture at home or in the community does not align with that of the mainstream school, making it difficult for minoritized children to achieve academic success (Deyhle, 1992). In recent decades, cultural and educational anthropologists have sought ways to create instructional and curricular changes that would accommodate culturally and linguistically diverse populations in the US (Genesee, 1994; Hinton & Hale, 2001; McCarty, 2002; Nieto & Bode, 2008).

For ethnographers, language is considered an important conduit to socialize people, as we all use it to communicate and transfer cultural knowledge. Language socialization is not a cut and dry process; language can be negotiated, questioned, reproduced and transformed (Eisenhart, 2001). Moreover, language socialization research stresses that

¹⁵⁴ I will bring up this argument again when discussing resistance and Indigenous students.

communicative acts, both verbal and non-verbal, are co-constructed and contingent upon the context of recurrent and mundane socializing routines. Garrett and Baquedano-López state: “These communicative acts are finely guided by preferences, orientations and dispositions that are social in origin and culturally specific in nature, while at the same time they are interest laden and creatively and strategically deployed by individuals... a dual perspective on the routine as socially structured and hence enduring, but also as situated, contextually grounded, and emergent in character” (2002, p. 343-344).

My research addressed how language socialization practices impact youth, but my focus was on a specific school in China. Ethnographic educational research in China is not as extensive as in the western world, but it is growing (Liu, Ross, & Kelly, 2000). Thus, one source I draw upon is Gao and Ting Toomey (1998), who have extensively documented language socialization practices among the Han Chinese.¹⁵⁵ They describe how the collectivist value orientations and communication norms based in Chinese culture and history have three primary functions: to maintain existing relationships among individuals, to reinforce role and status differences, and to maintain harmony. The second of these functions, reinforcing role and status functions may operate as a significant socialization factor between Han teachers and minoritized students, such as the Buriat, in Chinese bilingual schools, as role and status are inculcated in all Chinese citizens from an early age (Tsung, 2009).

Bilingual schools and language ideology. In China and Russia, as elsewhere, the ways in which a so-called minority people acquire and become fluent in their language(s) depends upon a variety of educational, political, social, cultural, and economic factors. The

¹⁵⁵ They write for global businessmen.

dominant ruling group of the state controls language policy and the rights to education on minority languages (Kiss, 2011). Laws, however, do not generate reality. If a government implements bilingual education to advocate linguistic rights for all its citizens, this does not necessarily imply that effective implementation will be carried out. There are many factors to consider when creating a bilingual school plan: for example, a suitable site for educating; a plan for the number of hours taught in the minority versus majority language; adequate and culturally sensitive instruments (educational school curricula, textbooks, language assessment tests and other resource materials); consideration for the fluency and availability of capable teachers; and, of course, adequate and ongoing funding (Baker, 2011; Kiss, 2011). But in addition to these items, and assuming that the ruling party has best intentions in mind, there remains the problem of language ideology. Language ideologies appear in societies characterized by different types of relations of domination; they can be cultural, gender, and even age related (Fairclough, 1992: 91). Specifically, language ideologies can be unconscious beliefs about language and they are intimately linked with a person's cultural identity and understanding, as well as his or her group and national politics (Irvine & Gal, 2000). The immediate language environment and the language ideologies connected to the state language can function as a resource or as a challenge in learning.

Inside bilingual schools there is often a complex interrelationship regarding children's language choices and the language ideology of the school. Such language ideologies may be covert and unconscious to teachers as well as students. As a result, adults and children both engage in an ongoing process of negotiation regarding which language to use in which context (Benjamin, 1993; Heller & Martin-Jones, 2001; Pomerantz, 2002; Rampton, 1995; Relaño Pastor, 2008). In many types of (Spanish-English) bilingual/bicultural programs in

California, for example, (research indicates that English-only dominant ideologies mediated children's home and school language socialization. This interference created significant difficulties for young students achieve the expected leveling of both English and Spanish at school. To counteract this, mothers volunteered at the school to socialize the children in Spanish language and Mexican culture (Relaño Pastor, 2005).

Despite federal educational policies that promoted multiculturalism and multilingualism, bilingual school initiatives in the USA were often implemented to help non-native speakers to transition into the dominant language, English (Crawford, 2004; Petrovic, 2010). Over time, many educators have struggled to transform bilingual education as a way to affirm non mainstream identities, such as Chicano/Latino cultural and linguistic identities (Blanton, 2005). Yet the US government still perceives bilingual education as a way to solve the "problem" of children's language differences (Grinberg & Saavedra, 2000; Macedo, Dendrinos, & Gounari, 2003). This has resulted in many types of transitional programs regarding bilingual education, and it has also positioned English as the legitimate language in this hegemonic system, with Spanish and other minority languages are subordinate (Macedo & Bartolomé, 1999; Moraes, 1996).

In China, the language policies for bilingual education reflect the same hegemonic practices. At the research school site, however, I initially felt, like the staff, that Mongolian was being taught as a heritage language in order to both preserve Mongolian language and culture and to bring its status up to equal that of Mandarin. Yet over time, I observed that the Mandarin/Mongolian language policies in this school appeared to be both overt and covert. This was nothing unusual, as Schiffman (2006) analyzed language policy as entailing not only official, explicit, overt, de jure, written, and 'top-down' decision-making about

language, but also the unofficial, implicit, unwritten, covert, de facto, grass-roots ideas and assumptions (p. 112). Such covert rationales influence policy making and are connected to the linguistic ideology of those who are in power (Palmer, 2011). I came to conclude that funding a showcase bilingual school in Hohhot had more to do with building fealty toward the state than with promoting the Mongolian language. Chinese authorities want, as discussed earlier, to keep borderland peoples such as the Mongolians, loyal to the government.

Bilingual initiatives are ways to show affirmative action toward Mongolians, in order to build loyal citizenry. This was the covert policy that Shohamy (2006:46) calls “hidden agendas.”

On the other hand, the Inner Mongolian teachers all expressed to me their desire to support and nurture “their Mongolian children” (which included the focal Buriat children) in order to preserve and maintain Mongolian language and culture. If these teachers and administrators had any doubts about the efficacy of their work, or of any hidden agenda, they did not voice it to me. Their beliefs about teaching and language were connected to the cultural worlds they negotiated (Chinese and Mongolian) and could not be separated from their lives and practices (Varghese, 2008). Perhaps, in being conscious of the dominance of Mandarin and Han culture, they were aware that any criticism might endanger themselves and their school. Teachers did not comment upon the ways in which Mandarin was used for official announcements, or was used for important printed notices. I realized, in hindsight, that this school’s Mongolian cadre, if they noticed (and resented) these things, would ignore them, in order to focus positively upon promoting Mongolian to all the students in the school. They understood, living under Han Chinese rule, and being outnumbered by the Han, that this school was a precious kind of enclave, where they were legally sanctioned to speak and teach in Mongolian. If some unwanted interference came through in Mandarin, the teachers

and staff simply accepted this and continued, as best they could, to teach the children Mongolian language and culture. In this they should all be commended.

Buriats and language loss. When Russia entered Buriat lands in the 17th century, the Buriats as an Indigenous people experienced differing levels of invasive language socialization over time. This continued as the Russian Imperial regime shifted after 1917 to the Soviet regime. Ongoing invasion and colonization generated language shifts among the Buriat, as Russian became the dominant language of commerce, education, politics, and the arts (Montgomery, 2005). Over time, some varieties of Buriat became endangered, as some Buriats shifted to a Russian-only way of life (Khilkhanova & Khilkhanov, 2004). Like some 3,000 of the world's 6,000 endangered languages (Krauss, 1992, 1998), some varieties of the Buriat language are spoken by adults and are not being effectively passed on to children (UNESCO Red Book of Endangered Languages).¹⁵⁶

The causes for language shift are various. Fishman (1991, 2001) asserted that such shifts take place gradually, beginning within the community of language speakers. These native speakers alter in their language loyalties. In the case of the Buriats, violent Soviet policies initiated by Stalin in the 1930s¹⁵⁷ against the promotion of Indigenous languages and cultures initially forced this shift (Forsyth, 1992; Humphrey, 1996); language socialization processes were also forced by assimilation mandates that required Buriats to use Russian in their everyday lives; Soviet schools, for example, switched to Russian-only policies (Montgomery, 2005).

¹⁵⁶ My observations suggest that among the more urban and those with higher socioeconomic status, the less Buriat is spoken.

¹⁵⁷ Stalin's policies were not only against Indigenous Peoples; his reign of terror resulted in death and destruction throughout the USSR.

During the Soviet era, the Buriats, like many other Indigenous peoples, started to neglect or even abandon their native language for Russian, the higher prestige, higher status dominant language. This was because Russian appeared, and still appears, to have more economic and social benefits than Buriat (Khilkhanova & Khilkhanov, 2004). Given this impression, eventually, Indigenous speakers may come to believe (consciously or unconsciously) that their native language is inferior to the dominant language (Romero, 2003).

Other factors also come into play to promote language shift. Consumerism, individualism, mass media, technology, education in the dominant language, intermarriage/out marriage, changes in housing, and economic development that requires non-Indigenous language use, all can contribute toward language shift. Romero (2003) also cited television as a main contributor toward language loss among the Indigenous Cochiti People in New Mexico; the television spread English language programs, which in turn led to the decline of traditional storytelling in their language, Keres, among the community. My observations indicate that the same is true for the Buriat in this study. Romero cited the destruction of traditional ways of life (farming) and the US Federal Housing and Urban Development Program (HUD) housing as factors that led to a decline in the need and desire for Cochiti people to use their language easily and daily among extended family members. Her examples could be applied to the Buriat as well, as Soviet style apartment housing have disrupted interactions among Buriat extended family members. Moreover, with the advent of preschools that socialized Cochiti children in English, and the presence of non-Cochiti children living nearby, Cochiti children had less opportunity and desire to speak in their native language. The Buriats in Buriatia appear to be undergoing similar woes: they have

been outnumbered in their own homelands since the 1930s (Montgomery, 2005). Their educational systems, despite bilingual mandates during the Soviet and post-Soviet era, encourage the use of Russian over Buriat (Khilkhanova & Khilkhanov, 2004). Russian language media far outnumber Buriat language media (Graber, 2012). Finally, when conducting observations in Buriatia, I had many Buriat and ethnic Russians asking me for English lessons: if English is coveted as a global language, and Russian is used as the everyday language for multiple domains, where does that leave the heritage/Indigenous language, Buriat?

Clearly, when a dominant language (or languages) comes into the forefront of an Indigenous community of speakers, choices, either conscious or unconscious, must be made. The people can either become bi/multilingual, or they can replace the Indigenous language with the dominant language(s). If the latter occurs, intergenerational language transmission weakens (Fishman, 1991). This also weakens the Indigenous mother tongue, and with each passing generation the Indigenous language weakens among the entire community of speakers. A language can weaken and die out within three generations (Fishman, 1990). The Buriats in this study had varying degrees of Buriat language fluency. One child reported that Buriat was “kind of useless, you know?” (вы знаете, это бесполезный) Such internalized attitudes may foster language loss.

Language loss is a problem because it is generally accompanied by a loss of cultural knowledge and world views, which are invaluable human treasures (Nettle & Romaine, 2000; Romaine, 1995). Another problem parallels language loss: as children acquire a new language, they also acquire the worldview that comes with it (Romero, 2003). Their beliefs, values, and attitudes—their culture and social reality—that are transmitted via their native

language may disappear. As language shifts among young Indigenous youth,¹⁵⁸ sociocultural structures and practices may also shift (Crawford, 1996; Hinton, 1994). Sometimes this shift may cause ruptures among the family, with grandchildren no longer able to communicate with their grandparents (Wong Fillmore, 1991). Grandparents are acknowledged as important transmitters of Indigenous culture and values (Romero, 2003); with this loss of communication comes the subsequent loss of values, culture, and possibly, a child's secure sense of self (Romero, 2003). In the case of the Buriat, these children are also separated from their parents and extended families because they are boarding at the school in China. Some focal children in China caused their parents great grief, and these parents/guardians said that they no longer understood who their children were, as they did not behave as expected. Like other young people who had migrated to foreign countries (Moskal, 2014),¹⁵⁹ some Buriat children's identities no longer followed the norms and expectations of older family members. Instead, my results indicate that some focal participants have transformed themselves and employ multiple identities

Historically, since the late 1930s, the former USSR exerted great pressure upon the Buriat people and other Indigenous peoples to assimilate into mainstream Soviet/Russian society (Montgomery, 2005). This pressure created conscious and unconscious shifts in attitudes toward the Buriat language. Over time, generations of Buriats – some resisting,

¹⁵⁸ Recently, in the literature, Indigenous scholars such as Shelia Nichols and Tiffany Lee are maintaining that it is possible to retain cultural foundations without maintain fluency. Please see: Nicholas, S. E. (2009). "I live Hopi, I just don't speak it"—The critical intersection of language, culture, and identity in the lives of contemporary Hopi youth. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, 8(5), 321-334; . Lee, T. S. (2009). Language, identity, and power: Navajo and pueblo young adults' perspectives and experiences with competing language ideologies. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, 8(5), 307-320.

¹⁵⁹ Marta Moskal, using theories of social capital and cultural capital, documented how Polish youth in Scotland that the UK experienced conflicted identities.

some accepting – began to adopt the Russian language as a matter of survival.¹⁶⁰ Like many Indigenous peoples, the Buriat appear to have internalized the language shift (Kulick, 1997). As the Buriat people adopted Russian, their Buriat language use declined. This, in turn began a familiar cycle of devaluing their Indigenous language, culture, and world views (Romero, 2003). Because the Buriat were forcibly colonized by the Russians twice: first during the Russian Imperial Empire, and second, during the Soviet Empire, they could be demoralized as well as oppressed. The loss of Buriat as a heritage language may be linked to having acquired a sense of stigmatized ethnic identity (Kulick, 1997). Moreover, under oppressive conditions, the stigma of speaking Buriat and being Buriat can have a backlash effect upon subsequent generations (Duran & Duran, 1995). My research indicated that the Buriat focal children's parents were (and still are) as conflicted as their children regarding identity and language issues: this issue is further discussed in the findings.

More on language socialization and ethnography. Ethnographers analyze communicative practices. Some scholars used Hymes' concepts to study patterns of speaking. Keith Basso (1970), for example, investigated non-verbal communication (patterns of silence) among the Apache, among other things. Educational researchers have used Hymes' framework and ideas to describe why non-mainstream children often do not succeed at school. Two respected educational scholars who used critical ethnographic techniques to study the relationship between language and learning are: Shirley Brice Heath (1983), and

¹⁶⁰ According to Dr. Robert Rupen of Harvard (1956), the Buriat acceptance of Russian language since Russian Imperial times beginning in the 17th century and throughout the Soviet period, has had significant impact on the Buriats and other Mongolian peoples as well. Russian influence on Buriats generated the most noteworthy Mongolian intelligentsia among all of the Mongolian peoples and the highest literacy rates among Mongolian peoples; it gave rise to movements resisting Czarist and Soviet oppression; it allowed for many literary and academic works to be published by Buriats on their culture, history, and folklore; and it gave Buriats great power during certain political periods over the Outer Mongolians. But sadly, this high level of language and education, this Buriat intelligentsia, was completely destroyed in the Stalinist purges of 1937. (For additional details see Rupen's article in the *Far Eastern Quarterly*, 15(3): 383-398.). As of this writing, I have found no official statistics regarding Buriat literacy rates.

Guadalupe Valdés (1996).¹⁶¹ They employed ethnography of communication methodological frameworks in unique settings. Each came up with significant findings regarding language, culture, and learning. These scholars focused attention on the complexity of separate social units of analysis¹⁶² in order to describe and analyze the complex relationship between language use and school success.

Heath's (1983) work described language socialization practices among three communities. She studied the interactions between young children, their community members, and the school members. Her investigation compared three local communities in relation to each other. Heath's long-term longitudinal study demonstrated that school success is reflected in specific language and literacy practices found in each community. Simply stated, her results found that the speech community, which happened to be the mainstream community, with the highest economic base, and consisting of both White and African American middle class families, emulated the values of the school environment and norms, and this community's children achieved the most academic success.

Valdés (1996), while researching Mexican-American children in mainstream classrooms, focused on families. Mexican-origin families passed on traditional funds of knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005) to their children, in addition to encouraging their children to learn and succeed in mainstream schools. Valdés' analysis compared family values with school values. She found a cultural disconnect between Mexican-origin families

¹⁶¹ Valdés, like Moskal (2014) also emphasized family capital. Previous literature on migrant youth has illustrated the way youth may become alienated from their parents culture when they start school in another country; scholars argue whether these youth undergo an identity crisis or are they transforming themselves by creating a hybrid identity.

¹⁶² Unit of analysis: the major entity being analyzed in a given study. For example, for EOC researchers, it can be the interaction structures, speech acts, verbal or non-verbal types of communication, narratives, etc.

and mainstream schools.¹⁶³ Moreover, both the Mexican children and their parents encountered difficulties with the school system. Simply stated, the loyalty these Mexican-origin families had to their home culture and values, as well as the economic and linguistic challenges the adults experienced, kept them and their children from achieving the same kinds of acceptance and success from the school and school personnel.

In sum, educational ethnographers explore language socialization processes by interpreting culture as learned behavior and language habits as part of that shared learning. Scholars bring in their own unique sociocultural perspectives, by viewing language socialization from different angles: child, family, community. My research also adds to this body of knowledge, by documenting the resistance and challenges of young Russian born Buriat Mongolian children in a Chinese bilingual school.

Identity

Introduction. The word ‘identity’ has been used so much that its meaning has become almost trite. This section discusses how some scholars attempt to define identity. This research employs some of Bakhtin’s concepts in regard to identity, as I found that the focal children’s sense of self is connected to the past, as well as the present, dialogues that they and their ancestors have experienced. This definition also matches with the Buriat sense of self, as Buriats perceive themselves as being on a continuum of life, connected to their spirit ancestors as well as to their present life on earth (Humphrey, 1998).

Identity is multidimensional and contextual, and always in process. Gee (2000-2001) acknowledges the ambiguity of identity, stating that when scholars and laypersons refer to

¹⁶³ In contrast, Moskal (2014) found that youth from Polish lower socioeconomic migrant families did better than the same economic level among Scottish families in regions where the Poles settled; Moskal cited the family values and the educational values as a possible reason for this success.

‘core identity’ they are speaking about what generally means being “recognized as a certain kind of person” (p. 99). To clarify identity,¹⁶⁴ Gee divides the term into four perspectives: nature identity (N-identity); institution identity (I-identity); discourse identity (D-identity); and affinity identity (A-identity). Gee’s four quadrant model appears pat to postmodern scholars, who prefer to view identity is more dynamic and fluid, but his model serves as a way to create a foundation for thinking about the volatility of identity (Park, 2011).¹⁶⁵

Identity also can be related to power relationships. In describing these four ways of looking at identity Gee’s perspective focuses on power. N-identity, for example, refers to the natural state of a person, such as being a twin (like Gee); at the same time, the power of this state is nature: the person’s genetic makeup. Regarding educational settings, a person’s natural identity might affect the way educators perceive them as learners: children with physical, biological, or psychological issues may receive different treatment than children without these issues (Gee, 2001-2002). Race, as it can be a kind of positioning, may also fit into this category.

Gee explains the I-identity as positioning people inside institutions, such as schools. In this case the power rests in the institution, because it formally authorizes a role, which in turn can be accepted by the participant and the officials. For example, a child diagnosed with learning disabilities would become deeply socialized by the institution (Gee, 2001-2002, p. 103). The N-identity and the I-identity for a physically challenged child could, for example, mutually support each other and cause the child to accept her I-identity in a positive or negative perspective – what Gee calls a “calling” or an “imposition” (p. 103). From a

¹⁶⁴ And perhaps to over categorize identity – which does not, in reality, fall neatly into these categories.

¹⁶⁵ The best way I support the need for some structure in defining identity is by looking at Gee’s quadrants metaphorically: Gee’s quadrants offer a container structure, like a swimming pool; identity is the free flowing water flowing inside this pool, with different aspects merging and changing.

Bakhtian perspective, this process of historical labeling impacts the child's sense of self of her own N-identity over time.

The third perspective Gee discusses is the discursive¹⁶⁶ identity, or D-identity, which also has a Bakhtian perspective. The power in this identity marker traces to the way an individual conducts his or her Discourse (or dialogue with other people, which leads others to recognize this person in a certain way). Gee offers the example of a charismatic person: her friends talk and interact with her in ways that validate her charisma. In contrast to the I-identity, this sanction of the D-identity occurs without needing the official approval of an institution. However, like an I-identity, the D-identity “can be placed on a continuum in terms of how active or passive one is in ‘recruiting’ them, that is, in terms of how much such identities can be viewed as merely ascribed to a person versus an active achievement of accomplishment of that person” (Gee, 2001-2002, p. 104). Thus, a D-identity can also be positive or negative, depending upon context and circumstances. Finally, everyone has his own trajectory through what Gee terms “Discourse space” (Discourse being defined in the Bakhtian sense of interacting with the Other in time and space) – and this, along with the person's own self narrative, creates the core identity (Gee, 2001-2002, p. 111). Although everyone falls into a social and historical context of a Discourse, everyone's trajectory and narrative are unique, yet fluid.

Gee's (2001-2002) final perspective on identity is called affinity identity, or A-identity. People attach themselves to what Gee terms “affinity” groups (p. 105), but these people may range across space and time, with Bakhtian dialogues influencing how they

¹⁶⁶ Researchers often talk about discourse structurally, dividing it into three components. The linguistic structure is the structure of the sequence of utterances; the intentional structure is a structure of purposes; and the third addresses the dynamic state of focus of attention of the participants as the discourse unfolds; the attentional state. (Groz B.J. and Sidner, C.L. (1986), *Computational Linguistics*, 12(3), 175)

perceive themselves. The important thing about affinity groups is the special practices members participate in, rather than any common shared culture. Gee cites (Star) Trekkies as an example, highlighting that a person has the choice whether to join or not. In educational settings, these A-identity practices are meant to not only facilitate ways to share and learn, but also to create a distinct identity for the learners. The bulk of the power in this situation, however, remains within the institution (Gee, 2001-2002). Moreover, institutions often try to define all four of these identities, sometimes causing students to internalize negative features. People of all races and ethnicities can question, contest, and negotiate their identities in “terms of whether they will be seen primarily as N-, I-, D-, or A- identities” (Gee, 2001-2002, p. 109). Gee maintains that people use a combination of speaking and writing in a particular way, using their faces and bodies in a certain way, dressing in a certain way, behaving in a certain way, and using tools in a certain way to strive for recognition of their A-identities.

In contrast to Gee, Norton’s theory of social identity (1995), like Lemke (2002) and Jie (2011), views identity as more dynamic and less fixed, or categorical. These scholars view identity as existing in multiple forms, with identity being a site of struggle and change, not just for adults, but also for children. In effect, identity is constantly negotiated in a social setting involving others, which means that dialogue is influencing the way people define themselves and are being defined by others. Spotti (2007), like Gee (2001-2002) categorizes how identity is perceived in negotiation; he lists three dynamic concepts. Rather than being a possession, Spotti views identity first as something that a person constructs in social practice inside a space of socialization. Second, he finds identity multifaceted, consisting of a series of performative acts that take place according to the socialization space the person occupies.

Like Gee (2001-2002), Spotti implies that everyone has multiple identities, based upon semiotic and linguistic resources at one's disposal inside a certain socialization space. Third, Spotti asserted that people both inhabit and are ascribed to their identities. Inhabited identity refers to a person claiming allegiance to a group, such as an ethnic group, a peer group, or any type of social formation. In contrast to inhabited identities, ascribed identities are attributed to a person by others who evaluate the person. For example, a teacher could label a student bad, lazy, gifted, or special; this dynamic emphasizes the negotiation and struggle in identity.

Ethnic identity. Some scholars, particularly in political science and psychology, may view ethnic identity as a unique category. In this sense, ethnic identity is used to describe how people view themselves and how others view them in terms of belonging to a particular ethnic or cultural group (Trimble & Dickson, 2003).

People have various reasons for choosing to affiliate with a certain ethnic group. Such motives may be racial, natal, symbolic, and/or cultural (Cheung, 1993). Natal factors can refer to ancestral homelands; they can be claimed by racial and ethnic groups, or assigned by dominant institutions. Sometimes a person may define his ethnicity based upon his homeland or that of his kin and ancestors. Symbolic factors tied to ethnicity can include holidays, food, clothing, religion, and rituals. Sometimes, symbolic factors linked to ethnic identity offer a wider window of possible participants who may choose to position themselves into the group (Kivisto & Nefzger, 1993).

Moreover, in thinking about how people reference themselves in terms of identity and/or ethnic identity, positioning comes into play. Davies and Harré (1990) define positioning as: "the process by which selves are located in conversation as observably and

subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced story lines” (p. 48). They further divide the term into interactive positioning, one person positioning another, and reflective positioning, positioning oneself. Blackledge and Pavlenko (2001) expand the meaning of positioning to include more than conversation by adding, “...all discursive practices which may position individuals in particular ways, or allow individuals to position themselves” (p. 249). Although Norton, Jie, and others offer excellent perspectives on the concept of identity as fluid and dynamic, and Gee presents an interesting continuum regarding identity definition, I rely greatly on Bakhtin (1981), because his theories and ideas offer ways to examine identity and positioning using communicative activities in a social and historical contexts.

Bakhtin. This study employs two Bakhtinian¹⁶⁷ constructs: dialogism and ideological becoming. Metaphorically, they are the ‘heart and soul’ of all his work. Bakhtinian (1973, 1981, 1984) ideas and theories serve as part of the philosophical platform for my research on Buriat children because they firmly place individuals in a social context, while simultaneously connecting them in time and space to past and present (Clark & Holquist, 1984; Holquist, 1990; Morris et al., 1997). Bakhtin (1973, 1981, 1984) was interested in the nature of language, which he perceived as situated utterance: talk in context. Moreover, for Bakhtin (1981), individual consciousness arises out of our particular experiences with communicative activities, making our consciousness, like our speech and literacy acts, profoundly dialogical in nature. Dialogism and ideological becoming both affirm the social, dynamic nature of language acquisition and identity construction (Clark & Holquist, 1984).

¹⁶⁷ I agree with Holquist and Clark (1984) that all the constructs I employ were developed by Bakhtin, who frequently wrote under the names of his friends and colleagues; they discuss the political reasons he did this. One of his works cited frequently is listed under the name of Voloshinov, V.V. (*Bakhtin*) (1973). *Marxism and the philosophy of language*. NY: Seminar Press.

This study investigated how language and communicative practices impacted the development of language learning and identity for young Buriats inside the social context of the bilingual classroom. Their language choices were inherently political, as were the assessments and decisions their teachers conferred upon them. In fact, Indigenous youth make conscious and unconscious choices as to how to identify with school languages and school ways (Deyhle, 1998). Their teachers also decide how to respond to their students' diverse language patterns in their classrooms. By using Bakhtin's theories of dialogism and ideological becoming, I have described the evolving identity performances of four Buriat focal children.

Bakhtin wrote that instruments of textual relations (which can be interpreted as written or spoken) are part of the tools that form consciousness. In *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics*, Bakhtin (1984) studied how the consciousness of a writer entered the text. Bakhtin also addressed issues raised by Vygotsky regarding consciousness, by investigating the internalization of interpersonal words (Clark & Holquist, 1984).

Briefly, Vygotsky (1978) researched how language mediates consciousness, or how learning the culturally and historically pre-existing language spoken by those around us causes our consciousness to be formed. Both Vygotsky and Bakhtin perceived that our consciousness and our behaviors are socially mediated by the relationship of the utterances that surround us and our responses to them. Human thoughts and actions are inter-textual (i.e., connected to others), no matter how intimate and private they may seem at the time. As a psychologist, these ideas led Vygotsky (1978) to focus on infant and child learning. Vygotsky investigated how semiotic signs, including language, mediate action and direct attention among infants; he asserted that a child's "inner speech" developed from external

speech via a gradual process of internalization. This process, combined with the support of competent others, leads children to develop into mature social beings. In effect, Vygotsky was investigating how the outside (the interpersonal) got inside (the intra-personal) in order to impact and influence human thought and action.

Dialogism: The heart. Bakhtin, although also a socially oriented thinker, took the opposite tack. He looked outward rather than inward, seeking to understand how the self enters into society. In *The Dialogic Imagination*, Bakhtin (1981) postulated that inner speech coming from socially embedded utterances reached outward, intertwining individual consciousnesses within a dynamic and complex social environment. This is a key notion of Bakhtin's dialogism, which asserts that people twine with others, engaging in a social dialogue. Significantly, humans have an ongoing give and take of exchange with others on several dimensions (past and present), which can be on several levels (written or spoken). Grounded in the past speech and languages of others, people continue to give and receive; both sides are dependent upon each other's words for interactions to live, develop, and grow. For Bakhtin, even the language of intangible thought contains inner dialogism, as it is also filled with the intention of others. People are constantly responding to their inner and outer dialogic worlds, seeking to make meaning. As we do this, the unlimited possibilities in language can transform our thoughts and actions, and help us in striving toward Bakhtin's second idea, our 'ideological becoming' (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 275).

Bakhtin's theory of dialogue (or dialogism) encompasses more than the modern notion of conversation. Bakhtin (1981) envisioned dialogue as a fully contextualized, living process of exchange between the addressor and the addressee. It is a dynamic, multidimensional, and ongoing process that never finishes. Dialogue can encompass a

speaker and her interlocutor(s), an author and her text, or even a text and the society at large. From a sociocultural point of view, Bakhtin's idea of dialogism repeatedly emphasizes the concept that individuals are constructed by others (Holquist, 1990). We all need the presence of other(s) to define our own experiences, and to define our self and our reality. Thus, meaning, culture, and identity are social constructs. In addition, Bakhtin concentrated his focus on a natural setting: the everyday, humdrum human experience (Holquist, 1990). This point of view is also in accord with socioculturalist and bilingual researchers, who insist on the study of bilingual and multilingual children in a naturalistic environment.

Engaging in Bakhtian dialogism offers the dynamic opportunity to create new meaning. In dialogical, heteroglossic, polyphonic interactions "...several consciousnesses meet as equals and engage in a dialogue that is unfinalizable" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 238-9). Such speech is dynamic, shaping social groups. Bakhtin, in his essay *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, also recognized that some people and societies try to monopolize and monologize thought and dialogue (Clark & Holquist, 1984). Thus, although language is a powerful conveyor of dialogue, some social situations may have the opposite effect. During my fieldwork I asked myself: Do the adults at this school use any language characterized by monologic discourse forms and/or hegemonic participant structures that would deny the focal students freedom and voice? If so, does such denial parallel the denial of the focal children's Buriat identity?

Ideological becoming: The soul. Bakhtin's second construct, ideological becoming, is the 'soul' of his theory. I perceive ideological becoming as representing a constantly turning and evolving kind of dharma wheel. This dharma wheel conveys meanings that imprint upon our human consciousness all our choices of dialogic offerings that come to us

as we live out our lives. Via our dialogues and relationships with others, we learn to think about ideas and actions, to interpret language and utterances, and to understand the intentions and emotions of others. We interact with those more powerful and less powerful than ourselves; we negotiate and build perspectives – and this ultimately results in the creation of an ideology of self and world. We then use this stance to struggle, negotiate, or agree with the ideological positioning of others. Such interaction ultimately impacts everyone involved. Some is conscious; some is unconscious. Thus, ideological becoming serves as a complex way of talking about the way people perceive themselves; it is, in effect, an ongoing and multifaceted identity performance.

Moreover, Bakhtin could be said to emphasize multidimensional agency via ideological becoming. This is because he asserted that ideological becoming, a creative dynamic that invokes identity performance, goes beyond the individual. Ideological becoming can be thought of as a reciprocal exchange. It not only demonstrates how the social world influences the individual, but also how the individual influences the social (Clark & Holquist, 1984).

To aid the reader with Bakhtin's concept of ideological becoming, I now discuss what is meant by ideology. According to the American Heritage Dictionary (2000) ideology is "1) The body of ideas reflecting the social needs and aspirations of an individual, group, class, or culture; 2) A set of doctrines or beliefs that forms the basis of a political, economic, or other system." I view Bakhtin's "ideological becoming" as a kind of active and engaged understanding; it fits either above category, as the term refers to ways that we can view the world, ourselves in relations to others, and our system of ideas. Ideology is not invisible; it is

open to empirical study. In fact, using Bakhtin's construct, ideology can be perceived as a social process, understood via analysis of social and interactive events.

By tracing linguistic intercourse, the use of language across space and time, among various interlocutors, a researcher discovers the sources of influence that impact those who are constructing meaning through talk and text. These utterances and constructions may be permeable, fluid, and ongoing - a dialogic exchange that Bakhtin perceived as always unfinished, impacting the addressor and the addressee.

In this study, using Bakhtin's ideological becoming, I observed how language use and literacy skills offered multilingual Buriat students diverse opportunities to establish, negotiate, and support their social place, and I learned that it was not always easy for them. This construct also offered me a chance to watch how adults assessed the focal students. The hegemonic practices adults (Inner Mongolian and Buriats) had experienced were ingrained in their communicative activities; they unconsciously passed these practices onto young people. Adult to youth interactions - talk and participant structures organizing talk - often negative influenced learning activities and identity performance among young Buriat students.

In concluding it is vital to note that people, all people, position themselves and are positioned by others regarding their identity. Theoretically, this study employed Bakhtin's (1981) dialogic concepts to describe and interpret positioning because both past and present, in terms of the political, historical and social environment, have influenced the lives of the focal children in this study. Following Dyson (1997), I have also used Bakhtin to interpret language learning as a social and dialogic process: I found that the focal children learned via interaction with others - other Mongolians, and their teachers, their parents - in specific social contexts, while simultaneously learning to position themselves within the dominant

ideologies or truths concerning human relationships. My results indicate that the Buriat focal youth did not accept or appreciate how they were labeled at the Chinese school.

Researcher's definition regarding identity. By following Bakhtin and by accepting positioning, I accept the dialectical nature of identity construction. Identity is a social construct and language clearly plays a key role. Some languages, such as Russian and Mongolian, have linguistic structures that explicitly encode aspects of the speaker's identity (Cook, 2012).¹⁶⁸ Social identity is the "linguistic construction" of group membership within a particular context (Kroskrity, 2001, p. 106). Thus, from a language socialization perspective, a person's social identity is co-constructed in moment-to-moment social interactions via the use of a specific language or specific linguistic forms (Cook, 2012). People, of course, have identity/identities prior to a given interaction; they are simply not on display. For example, a cancer doctor does not state 24 hours a day that he is an oncologist. We all have multiple social identities, dependent upon context, time and space. The interaction determines which identity we choose to display. Identity is not static; it is fluid, and determined greatly by interactions. Moreover, identities can emerge or shift during any given interaction. Thus, fluidity and positioning are core concepts I utilize in examining identity among the Buriat children.

Other core concepts concern context in time and space in relation to the political status of languages chosen to reflect identity. Norton's (2000) broad definition of identity also has a Bakhtian flavor: "a term used to reference how a person understands his or her

¹⁶⁸ This is another aspect of indexing: For example, gender is explicit in many Indo-European languages via the noun ending; agglutinative languages often display status via complex hierarchies of honorifics. Most linguistic structures, however, do not directly index social identities. Ochs (1993, p. 289) states that social identity is mediated by the "interlocutor's understanding of conventions for doing particular social acts and stances." This means that a one-to-one relationship does not exist between linguistic forms to social acts and stances. Each linguistic form is mediated by the speaker and the interlocutor's understanding of conventions, and infers a certain social identity

relation to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and that person understands possibilities for the future” (p. 5). Norton states that through language a person negotiates a sense of self within and across different sites in time and space, mentioning that via language a person gains access to or is denied access to powerful social networks that give him/her the opportunity to speak. Thus, language is not just a social medium for communication but also understood with reference to its social meaning. Norton, however, studied adults; this research explored youth identity,¹⁶⁹ specifically Indigenous youth identity and resistance in mainstream schools. This is why I have added a subsection on Indigenous youth and resistance at the end of this chapter.

But young or old, mainstream or Indigenous, from a Bakhtian sociohistorical perspective, people develop around and through cultural forms by which they are identified, and identify themselves, in the context of their affiliation or disaffiliation with those associated with those forms and practices (Holland et al., 1998, 33). As humans, we communicate, and as humans, we are linked and influenced by other people, cultural forms, and social positions in particular historical worlds. Thus, as Bakhtin suggests, identity is socially and historically constructed, through interactions, and it can be both creative and in dynamic flux. Next I discuss the historical and social context of education in China, focusing on China’s so-called minority peoples.

Education for Minorities in China

Historical introduction. Chinese people have revered and implemented educational practices for thousands of years. Ancient Han Chinese literacy practices using Chinese

¹⁶⁹ Which can be particularly volatile; Sizer, T. R. (2004). *Horace's compromise: The dilemma of the American high school*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

characters date back several millennia. Chinese authorities promoted education as a tool to enlighten people of the higher classes. Yet education also operates everywhere in the world as a medium for those in power to exert ideological control over citizens (Cummings & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988; Norton, 2000). Like other nations, past and present, Chinese leaders and policy makers have made use of institutionalized education as a method to integrate, control, assimilate, and ‘civilize’ minority peoples living within the nation’s borders (Hansen, 1995). Chinese bilingual educational policies serve to promote state ideology rather than serve the needs of minority peoples (Harrell, 1995; Feng, 2005, 2007).

With the advent of Deng Xiao Ping’s Open Door Policies in the early 1980s, Chinese leaders began revising educational policies, many of which were directed at minorities (Lin, 1997). These policies built upon previous mandates established by Chairman Mao, who focused on universal education for Han and non-Han peoples (Harrell, 1993). The early communists advocated rights for minority cultures and languages, in the hopes of co-opting these groups, and raising their literacy levels and living standards (Kwong & Xiao, 1989). During China’s Great Leap Forward through the Cultural Revolution (1958-1977), however, education for minority speakers suffered. A movement called ‘linguistic fusionism’ suppressed minority languages and cultures, and imposed Mandarin Chinese on everyone (Feng, 2005). Moreover, the Great Leap Forward resulted in a disastrous famine throughout China (Dikötter, 2010) and the Cultural Revolution caused many minority schools and universities to close. Those that remained open, or opened after some period of closure, were ordered to teach only in Mandarin Chinese; at this time communist authorities “denounced minority cultural customs as backwards” (Lin, 1997, p. 194).

After the Cultural Revolution, minority languages revived and the government stopped actively persecuting minority peoples (Lin, 1992; Zhou, 2001). In 1982, the freedom to develop minority languages and cultures became officially popular (Feng, 2005, p. 531). Little has been written in official journals about the impact of the persecution over the years on certain groups, but Bulag (2000, 2003, 2004) has served as an advocate for Inner Mongolians regarding their linguistic, cultural, economic, and social rights. Hansen (1995) has also written extensively about Mongolian minority education inside the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region, China.

Communist ideology states that all ethnic groups are equal because communist society is officially classless (Lam, 2007). From 1949 to the present, the Chinese Communist Party has supported literacy for all Chinese citizens. Yet minority peoples in China have lower school enrollment levels and lower levels of educational success than the Han people¹⁷⁰ (Zhou, 2001). Furthermore, many minority peoples in China choose not to send their children to bilingual schools because they feel that Mandarin is much more powerful and necessary, as well as English (Feng, 2007). In recent decades, Chinese authorities have asserted that more efforts must be made toward improving the education of all citizens, including China's minority peoples (Zhou, 2001). This concern with education is based on the idea that successful modernization and economics is linked to high-quality education for all citizens. Yet modern education in China, like past education, continues to base itself on "Great Han Chauvinism" - the concept that the Han people are superior in all ways to minority peoples living on Chinese soil (Kwong & Xiao, 1989).

¹⁷⁰ The Koreans are the single exception (Hansen, 1995).

According to the Chinese government, minority nationalities make up nine per cent of the total population, with the largest group having more than 15,000 members and the smallest group comprising approximately two thousand members. Moreover, as a multinational, unitary state, China currently has 148 autonomous areas, which include five large autonomous regions, 30 autonomous prefectures, and 113 autonomous counties (Postiglione, 2000:51). China's policy has shifted since regarding ethnic minorities and their education. Chairman Mao gradually altered his initial policy of cultural pluralism toward cultural assimilation (Dreyer, 1976). Later, in the late 1970s, when Deng Xiaoping took power, China's policy once more became more accommodating toward minority peoples. In China, recent educational policy attempts to integrate minorities into a national discourse: minorities are encouraged to remain distinct yet to support national unity (Dreyer, 1997). As discussed earlier, ethnic integration is confusing, as the Chinese word *minzu* may refer to an ethnic group, ethnicity, or nation (Ma, 2007). According to China's National Constitution, in the interest of maintaining national unity and socialist ideology, the Chinese state has granted official ethnic minority groups special considerations and autonomy.

Gerald Postiglione (2000) also notes that the Chinese government has a vested interest in providing adequate education and other services to its minority populations. The reason these one hundred million people occupy so critical a place in Chinese governmental policies is threefold:

- 1) These people inhabit over one-half of China's land; 2) 90 per cent of the interior border region of China is occupied by minorities; and 3) the areas minority peoples occupy is often rich in mineral deposits, forest reserves, and home to most of the animals that supply milk, meat, and wool to the country (p. 51).

China educational experts (Liu, Ross & Kelly, 2000) also point out that, due to the vast regional, cultural, and developmental differences between and/or among China's ethnic minorities, it is not possible to study one entity effectively or objectively. This also means that Chinese national minority policy must be implemented flexibly to account for the unique context of each so-called minority, as well as schools that are located in rural versus urban regions.

The Chinese government differentiates ethnic minorities using specific criteria¹⁷¹: “These include population size; the nature of the group identification held by the minority; the size, location and terrain of the region they occupy; the proportion of members of the minority group that inhabit an autonomous province, region, or county; their proximity to and relations with other nationalities, including the Han; whether the neighboring Han were migrants or Indigenous residents; whether the nationalities are rural or urban groups, agricultural or pastoral groups, border or inland groups, or concentrated or dispersed groups; whether or not they have a strong religious tradition; whether they have a written or spoken language or both; whether members of the nationality also live across the Chinese border in other countries, either as national minorities or as the majority nationality; and finally, whether they have had a separate tradition of foreign relations with peoples of another region of the world” (Postiglione, 2000:52).

Long ago, Durkheim (1973) postulated that education is a means for the state to instill societal values in young people to perpetuate that society. Through this function of education, the structures of state and society remain stable. In this way, it can be said that China's education for ethnic minorities functions as an agent for national integration (Harrell,

¹⁷¹ Which are copied from criteria used in the former USSR (Harrel, 1995).

1995). Educational policies after 1980, when the era of the planned economy in China ended, stipulated that the role of education for all “Han and ethnic minorities” was to offer “education in patriotism, collectivism, and socialism among recipients of education in ideals, morals, discipline, rule of law, national defense and national solidarity” (Article 6 of the Education Law of the PRC).

Minorities and their families have been offered preferential treatment since the mid-1980s in relation to education. In China, minorities have lower admission criteria, as well as special funds in primary and secondary schools, specifically bilingual education. These policies are meant to address the gap in socio-economic development between the dominant Han and the minorities, created by the historical domination and oppression of the minority peoples (Sautmann, 1998). Thus, the Chinese state has historically treated minorities in a paternal fashion, treating them as childlike but potentially educable (Harrell, 1993). The Chinese government also has periodically mandated legal rulings concerning equal rights for all minority groups in China.

The first important law was issued after 1949, and is part of the Constitution of the PRC, revised in 1982:

All ethnic groups in the People’s Republic of China are equal. The state protects the lawful rights and interests of the minority nationalities and upholds and develop the relationship of equality, unity and mutual assistance among all of China’s nationalities. Discrimination against and oppression of any nationality is prohibited; any acts that undermine the unity of the nationalities or instigate their secession are prohibited (Wang, 2013:41).

This wording clearly indicates that the Chinese government, in promoting equality is simultaneously promoting the Chinese State's right to keep all minority and nationality groups within China. This is because some groups, such as the Mongolians, are transnational: they live in China, in Outer Mongolia, and in the Russian Federation. Any attempts for Inner Mongolians¹⁷² to opt to secede, are therefore illegal.

Economic reforms instigated by Deng Xiaoping in the 1980s also led to a resurgence of ethnicity among minorities. As the USSR collapsed and human rights increased in the Western world, the Chinese state offered minorities, especially those living on the borderlands (Uighurs, Mongols, and Tibetans) preferential educational policies in the interests of national security and economic development (Dreyer, 1997). Although the Mongolians are not as great in number as the Uighurs and Tibetans, and although their religious affiliations are not as strong, Mongolians do have a history of separatist movements, with the territory we today know as Outer Mongolia having been a part of China until the Qing Dynasty collapsed in 1911. Moreover, some Inner Mongolians created their own separatist groups during the Chinese Civil War; many of them were accused of separatist thinking and purged by Mao during the late 1930s and again during the Cultural Revolution in the late 1960s (Bulag, 2003).

Wang (2013) explains that the Chinese government has implemented a strategic policy of regional autonomy for the ethnic minority groups living in China. She cites the *National Minorities Policy and its Practice in China* (2000) as stating:

¹⁷² This is why American comments toward the autonomy of Tibet, for example, are unwelcome. The same laws apply to Tibet, another borderland, which China claims as part of her territory. See Han, E. (2011). The dog that hasn't barked: assimilation and resistance in Inner Mongolia, China. *Asian Ethnicity*, 12(1), 55-75.

Regional autonomy for ethnic minorities means that under the unified leadership of the state, regional autonomy is practiced in areas where people of ethnic minorities live in concentrated communities; in these areas, organs of self-government are established for the exercise of autonomy and for people of ethnic minorities to become masters of their own areas and manage the internal affairs of their own regions (p.41).

The Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region is one of the five regions under this ruling; the IMAR also known as the first of the so-called five Autonomous Regions to have joined with Chairman Mao's campaigns during his struggle against the Japanese and the opposition Chinese party (Hansen, 1995). Today, Inner Mongolia has one of the best funded bilingual education programs in China (Tsung, 2009). One reason for this is political: Inner Mongolians were the first to support Chairman Mao. Another reason is because the Chinese government wants to promote a sense of nationalism among the Mongolians, as the Chinese authorities fear that the Inner Mongolians may try to secede from China and join with Outer Mongolia (Tsung, 2009).

Inner Mongolia and bilingual education. Since 1953 the Chinese government has allowed Mongolian to be used for teaching at Inner Mongolian schools. Before that time, the few Mongolian students that went to school attended 'regular' schools, where the language of instruction was Mandarin Chinese. Mongolians numbered under 30%. Many did not speak or understand Mandarin Chinese, but Han teachers employed Mandarin for the majority of their lessons (Borchigud, 1995).¹⁷³

¹⁷³ Because research is lacking, I rely heavily on this scholar.

From 1953 until 1966, official state guidelines for ethnic education dictated educational policy in Inner Mongolia. The Education Bureau of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region had policies that were both specific and general. For example, one guideline stated that ‘education with socialist content’ be taught. Another mandate stated that ethnic education would overcome problems that minority peoples experienced with economic and cultural backwardness; this mandate stated that such problems were caused by oppression. Still another guideline asserted that socialist industrialization would overcome all cultural inequalities between ethnic groups, and that education was the key to creating this change (Borchigud, 1995).

In Inner Mongolia, as elsewhere in China, classroom education conveyed ideological content (Hansen, 1999). Teachers, the majority of whom were Han, criticized ethnic chauvinism and praised efforts directed at national unity via patriotic stories and socialist texts (Tsung, 2009). Educators used Chinese as the primary language in the classroom because it linked all minority peoples to each other, and because it was one of the most ‘important’ (Borchigud, 1995, p. 282) languages in the world. Through Chinese, Mongolian pupils, beginning in the fifth grade, learned that they could enrich their own culture by learning from their Han brothers, that all peoples in China were brothers, and that the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region was inseparable from China.

Educating Mongolians from 1953 to 1966 was not an easy task, for several reasons. At that time most Mongolians were rural dwellers, surviving in a semiagricultural/semipastoral environment. Other Mongolians lived a purely pastoral lifestyle and some (the Temut) lived a purely agricultural lifestyle (Bulag, 2003). A small percentage of Mongolians were urban dwellers. Each of these groups had different linguistic

backgrounds. Pastoral Mongols were not fluent in Chinese. Agricultural Mongols spoke the local Chinese dialect (not Mandarin). Semiagricultural/semipastoral Mongols were bilingual to differing degrees between the local Mongolian language¹⁷⁴, the local Chinese dialect, and the official Mandarin language of the government. Urban Mongols understood Mandarin. In addition, at this time, younger Mongolians were better at Mandarin Chinese than older Mongolians. Because of the variances in linguistic fluency, setting up one standardized ethnic educational system in Inner Mongolia was not practical. Instead, Borchigud, (1995) described how Inner Mongolian government opted to create four types of educational programs:

- a. Often pastoral and some semiagricultural/semipastoral students attended separate Mongolian schools in Mongolian language for both elementary and junior-secondary levels.
- b. In urban areas, there were Mongolian schools for students who could not speak their heritage language; these schools also served a few rural (scholarship) students at the elementary and junior-secondary levels.
- c. There were also Mongolian-Han schools for Mongolians fluent in Mongolian and Mandarin; these schools served Mongols at the elementary and junior-secondary levels. Some Mongolian-Han schools served Mongol students who were either Mongolian dominant or Chinese dominant; the schools taught primarily in the students' dominant language. Types three and four included many urban students, but included some semiagricultural/semipastoral students.

¹⁷⁴ There are dozens of local varieties of Mongolian in Inner Mongolia. Please refer to linguistic map in the appendix.

Ironically, this system was designed to create a socialist brotherhood but ultimately created boundaries between the Han and the Mongols. It also created barriers between Mongols of different social classes. Because of the differences caused by state imposed schooling, issues of ethnic identity amongst Mongolians began to appear to distinguish between Mongol and Han. For rural Mongolians (and this includes all the various variety of Mongolian speakers, including Buriats who fled Russia in the 1920s and settled in China), the concept of ethnicity had never really come up; they lived, as they had always lived, herding animals on the grasslands. Some attended nearby schools to become literate in Mongolian because this seemed practical.

In 1958, the Chinese government changed its language policy: the state ordered Mongolian-Chinese bilingual training (*Meng-Han jiantong*) for all Mongolians. Quickly, more Mongolian-Han joint schools appeared. These schools gave greater emphasis on Chinese as the language of instruction and as the language of study. Unsurprisingly, the rural and pastoral Mongolian dropout rate soared (Zhao, 2010).

In 1963, however, the government reversed its policy once again, to try to reverse the dropout rates. Pastoral Mongolian students now began attending remote boarding schools in cities. These rural Mongolians quickly grew disenchanted. They felt alienated from their urban socialist brothers – Mongolian, Han, Hui and Manchu. Many felt insecure and stigmatized by their Mongolian accents and behavior (Borchigud, 1995). In contrast, urban Mongolians, often richer and more comfortable, experienced less stigmatization. Some perceived their Han colleagues as socialist brothers. They also admired the fact that their Mongolian countrymen had such perfect command over the mother tongue. Many urban Mongolian students, however, felt superior to the rural Mongols, who they perceived as

backward. The Han students accepted the urban Mongolians to some degree, but they had little in common with the pastoral Mongolian students. Ultimately, however, identifying themselves as Han (and sometimes changing their ethnic classification from Mongol to Han), such urban Mongolian students considered themselves ethnically superior over all Mongolians (Borchigud, 1995).

In 1965, the Chinese authorities built an elite Mongolian secondary boarding school in Inner Mongolia.¹⁷⁵ This school appeared in response to the restoration of the Mongolian Language Learning Movement, re-implemented in 1963. Children of high ranking party bosses, members of intellectual families, and some ordinary proletariat children from the city and the suburbs, all attended this school (Borchigud, 1995). Most of the children were dominant in Chinese; some could speak no Mongolian at all. All students were required to study the Mongolian language as an optional or heritage language; classes and coursework were conducted in Mandarin Chinese. Authorities perceived this bilingual training as a way to assimilate and integrate the young people into the government (Tsung, 2009). The students, however, did not bond well: the higher class Mongolians (who spoke the majority dialect – Temut) and the small percentage of Han students looked down on the rural (non-Temut speakers) Inner Mongolians.

In the 1950s and during the Chinese Cultural Revolution, the government altered its minority language policy. Mandarin Chinese became the sole and official language for school instruction throughout China. Assimilation became the stated goal of minority education (Zhou, 2000). It was dangerous at this time to advocate for bilingual education, as

¹⁷⁵ It is not clear if the research site school evolved from this school, as Mongols I interviewed were very cautious whenever discussing anything dealing with the Cultural Revolution.

such requests were considered to be counter to ideological correctness (Nelson, 2005). During this period of time, Inner Mongolian residents of Hohhot told me that they stopped speaking Mongolian anywhere but within the safety and privacy of their homes. Older Inner Mongolians also told me that that they raised their children in Mandarin speaking only schools, in the hopes of “protecting” them from encountering any conflicts with the Chinese government.

In 1966, with the advent of the Cultural Revolution in China, the institution of the school was accused of being “a revisionist black nursery for modern Mongol anticommunist elites” (Borchigud, 1995, p. 292). Many Temut Mongols, however, gained prestige and power because of their past loyalty and affiliations to high ranking Communist Party leaders (Borchigud, 1995). Nevertheless, along with educational reversals regarding minority peoples, horrific purges took place throughout China, and throughout Inner Mongolia, affecting almost every Mongol family (Dikötter, 2010; Khan, 1995). The class struggle changed into an ethnic struggle between Mongol and Han as the 1968 political purge of the so-called Inner Mongolia People’s Revolutionary Party took place.¹⁷⁶ Many people were tortured and killed.¹⁷⁷ The initial ethnic division implemented in education influenced the identity awareness of Mongol students before the Cultural Revolution. This awareness became politically charged, and brutal, during the Cultural Revolution. School based ethnicity often conflicted with home based identity (Borchigud, 1995).

¹⁷⁶ Purges during China’s Cultural Evolution often made no rational sense; some were conducted to eliminate any perceived or potential threat of Inner Mongolians uniting to attempt to secede from the newly formed PRC (Dikötter, 2010).

¹⁷⁷ David Sneath wrote a chilling article describing how, during the Cultural Revolution, Inner Mongolians were marched up to the fourth floor of the Inner Mongolia teacher’s college and asked/told to jump off and kill themselves. The article was all the more horrific as I often walked through the halls of the building where this took place. Sneath, D. (1994). The impact of the Cultural Revolution in China on the Mongolians of Inner Mongolia. *Modern Asian Studies*, 28(2), 409-430.

After the Cultural Revolution, in the late 1970s, the Chinese government again mandated laws and policies that were based upon protecting minority rights, some of them concerning language and education in the school. Wang (2013) cites part of the PRC Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law, established in 1984, which concerns language use in schools inhabited by minority students:

Article 37: In schools which mainly recruit students of minority nationalities, textbooks in languages of minority nationalities should be used where conditions exist. Languages for instruction should also be the languages of the minority nationalities concerned. Primary school students of higher grades and secondary school students should learn the Chinese language. Putonghua¹⁷⁸ (Mandarin Chinese) which is commonly used throughout the country should be popularized among them (p.44).

Although officials officially promoted ethnic languages like Mongolian in the hopes of creating ethnic integration, Chinese clearly remains the dominant language of education (Zhou, 2010); Mongolian is rarely needed outside the home (Bulag, 2003). Moreover, as with other minority groups receiving state education, transitional bilingual education programs (often poorly funded) are the norm (Tsung, 2009). In Chinese schools, Han and Marxist ideologies displace anything Mongolian children might hear at home. Han values and Mandarin speech have political correctness. This, along with the lack of economic incentives to use Mongolian, has caused some urban Mongolians to feel reluctant to learn Mongolian

¹⁷⁸ For non-Chinese readers, it should be noted that China has a vast array of “Chinese” languages; each region has a Chinese variety, often unintelligible to outsiders. Shanghai, for example has Shanghaiese; the research city, Hohhot, has its own distinct dialect, which locals tell me is based on the Shaanxi language variety, as many Han residents migrated from this area to Inner Mongolia. Chairman Mao, in the 1950s, ordered a board of Beijing based linguists to come up with the simplified script we now now as Mainland Chinese, or simple characters; these Beijing based linguists standardized the Beijing dialect (with its distinct “r” end sounds) as the national standard, or Putonghua.

(Bulag, 2004). In contrast, many rural Mongolians, want to go to bilingual schools to become literate in Mongolian because they still perceive the Mongolian language as an extension of their way of life. Today, many Mongolians, both urban and rural, view the Mongolian language as a symbol of their ethnic identity¹⁷⁹ (Bulag, 2003).

Conclusion: Conducting educational research in China. Doing research on national minority education in China is a complex and delicate process, for many reasons. First, great economic and cultural diversity exists between and among the various minority groups in China, with the northwestern areas of China being poorer¹⁸⁰ and less developed than southeastern China. Southwestern China is also noted for its high concentration of various and diverse minority peoples (Harrell, 1995). It is not possible to make generalizations about social and educational institutions. For Chinese and foreign researchers, another problem exists: language. In addition to understanding the majority language (Mandarin) the researcher should, in principle, understand the minority (Indigenous) language as well. For some areas of research, foreigners, even Chinese speaking foreigners, are usually at a disadvantage to any Han Chinese researchers. Significantly, in the case of educational research on minorities, the foreigner may be “viewed by members of some minority groups as less of an outsider than a Han or an ‘overseas’ Chinese researcher

¹⁷⁹ It is also significant that some Inner Mongolians, in the last decade, have become wealthier than ever before. This wealth comes from natural resources found in the ground: rare earth, natural gas, and carbon products. Consequently, those with money are purchasing two kinds of symbols to display their wealth: western goods, such as big SUV cars, western products, such as foreign foods and dress and luxury items. They are also investing in a second symbol that advertises their ethnicity as Mongolians. For example, the once bleak Mongolian tailor street is now spiffed up and has jewelry shops, boot shops, as well as pricy and luxurious tailor shops with all kinds of national dresses, coats, and hybrid fashions for wealthy Inner Mongolians to order as tailor made. Secondly, many wealthy Inner Mongolians have told me that they now want their children to “read and write and understand Mongolian as an important language” - so they send their children for a few years to a Mongolian only kindergarten, or to one of the Mandarin-Mongolian bilingual schools around Hohhot. These parents, however, were careful to tell me that they did not want their children to be educated solely in Mongolian, as it disadvantaged the children, for “Mandarin is needed to survive in China.”

¹⁸⁰ This is due not only to geographical resources but also to the prior policies of Chairman Mao; the current government is trying to change this disparity by developing the north (Dikötter, 2010).

because he or she is also not ethnically a Han” (Postiglione, 2000:66). This minority bias toward the Han among minorities, including the Mongolians, must also be kept in view when the foreign researcher uses Han colleagues as critical friends or assistants. For this reason, I always tried to visit my research site only with Buriats or Mongolians, and I tried, over time, to learn as much Mongolian as I could, if only to speak set phrases that greeted or thanked the people I studied.

Moreover, most Han Chinese educational research is thought to be one-sided, favoring the majority government and most educational research written about minorities in Chinese is written by Han researchers (Postiglione, 2000:55). Because both Han Chinese and the foreign researcher are outsiders to the community, what they are told and what they see, and consequently, what they report may be carefully crafted by the authorities to keep the school, administrators, and the researchers, from viewing any problems or targeting any issues that might cause conflict for the school in the future. Presenting a positive and benevolent “face” remains a very important aspect of Chinese culture, and in China, there is resistance to any research problem “being defined as a social problem” (Postiglione, 2000:59). Conducting research on the so-called “troublesome minorities,” such as the Uighurs or the Tibetans, remains officially off limits to foreigners (Liu, Ross, & Kelly, 2000).¹⁸¹

Yet, in recent decades, Han Chinese scholars have started conducting research on minority education. They are interested in literacy issues, basic education, school attendance rates, teacher qualifications, and bilingual education. Published work from Han scholars is

¹⁸¹ It also remains difficult, periodically, for foreigners to travel to Tibet as tourists. As of this writing, I was told by the China Travel Service “sorry, no tickets” for the umpteenth time.

mostly descriptive and describes the Chinese development of education from an economic and/or historical perspective (Postiglione, 2000). Because the scholars write under the authoritarian eye of the government, my research does not cite much of their work. The Inner Mongolian scholars that are cited regarding Inner Mongolian education are all now currently living outside of China, and have established themselves in European or North American universities. This does not mean I am condemning Chinese scholarship; I am aligning myself to research traditions that accord with my own, and I am, sadly, only able to read this type of literature in English, as opposed to Mandarin or Mongolian.

Postiglione (2000:67) also recognizes difficulty in conducting education research in minority regions of China, because the schools and administrators view the research process differently. They want to know not only what the researcher might want, but also they are interested in knowing what kind of benefits might come forth from this research. Reliability is an issue in many areas of Chinese educational research, because school leaders and authorities are notorious “for giving answers to questions that either follow the Party’s line, or correspond to what they think the researcher would like to hear” (ibid). In my case, having met the school principal years before the research was conducted, and having established an informal relationship via a Buriat friend, allowed me to smoothly enter the research site. I did not ask any politically sensitive questions, and I did take into account that the taped interviews from the teachers (the principal refused to be taped) were going to reflect the official government line. Finally, I also realized, over time, that as Ross (2000) described, one of the reasons my research went smoothly was due to the fact that the school, as well the focal participants (including the children) and other participants (parents, school employees), all thought of me benignly. My neutrality opened doors.

In closing, Postiglione (2000), as well as Liu, Ross and Kelly (2000) state that published ethnographic studies on Chinese education, especially minority education policies and practices, are still lacking, either in Mandarin, English, or other languages. There are several reasons for this deficit. First, educational ethnographic studies are a new field, globally; in China, such studies are still misunderstood and considered rare by Han scholars. Second, research often focuses on Han majority schooling and Chinese researchers often have the misguided idea that results are easily generalizable. Moreover, tackling the vast diversity of ethnic minorities in China is daunting, as results are not easy to generalize within China, much less within the international community. Third, statistically, there are only a small number of foreign researchers studying Chinese education in China; this number is even smaller, regarding Chinese minority education. Fourth, many of these researchers, (like myself), started out as teachers of English in China; they might be more interested in English and Mandarin rather than educational research concerning a minority language, or bilingual education. Furthermore, minority regions are often remote, poor, and hard to access; even researchers seek comfortable large cities, where there are less chances to set up research projects on Chinese minority education. Finally, the Chinese government, until recently, has been wary of anyone studying minority education (Postiglione, 2000:56).

Education on Russian Territory

Pre Soviet education: Mongols and Buddhism. Although the Russians first made contact with the Indigenous peoples of Siberia in the late 16th century, with mercenary aims, the Russian invaders were not the first to exact tribute from the Buriats. Certainly Russians, often Cossack adventurers, did demand tribute, called *yasak*, in the form of furs. The Buriats, however, had already for centuries been engaged in offering tribute to Khalk Mongolians,

and in exacting tribute from other Indigenous peoples (Forsyth, 1992). At that time, throughout Europe and Russia, fur, especially sable and marten, were often used in place of money (Forsyth, 1992).

Later, after the initial wave of traders and Cossacks, a second wave of Russian invaders came to Siberia to convert and to educate the Buriats and other Indigenous peoples. Starting in the 18th century, the Russian Orthodox Church established a few missionary schools throughout Siberia. These schools were dependent upon wealthy benefactors. They often closed within a year or two. Many native peoples, including the Buriats, paid scant attention to the church and its schools; Buriats continued with their literacy traditions (Forsyth, 1992).

The Buriats were different from other Indigenous peoples in Siberia. Living in the south, and to the east and west of Lake Baikal, Buriats had long had their own system of literacy and native education, which was totally unrelated to Russian language and culture. Their literacy practices were related to frequent interactions with their Mongol brethren centuries before the Russians invaded. As vassals, they paid tribute to the Khalk Mongols and records were needed for these transactions. Additionally, other Mongolian tribes (Selengela, Sartuul, Songol) lived and traveled through their traditional homelands, bringing news, ideas, and information. A Mongol writing system (Old Classical Mongolian) had been in place for centuries. Sometime in the 1600s, Mongols also had brought Tibetan Buddhism to the Buriats; this brought religion and more literacy practices (Montgomery, 1996). Other Mongolians had previously converted to Tibetan Yellow Hat (Gelug) Buddhism when the great Mongol overlord, Altan Khan, converted in 1577 (Laird, 2006). The Tibetan

Buddhists brought texts, which were translated and came to be revered by the Buriat Mongols.

Buddhism spread slowly but comprehensively among the Buriats, who merged their shamanistic beliefs with Buddhist beliefs (Forsyth, 1992; Reid, 1994). Tibetan Buddhism brought with it ancient wisdom and a sophisticated literate tradition. Significantly, through trade and by adopting Buddhism, the Buriats became literate in non-Roman and non-Cyrillic scripts. Many Buriat monks learned to read and write in Tibetan as well as in Old Classical Mongolian. Mongolian monks created advanced centers of higher education in the forms of monasteries, which in turn served as places for higher learning based upon spiritual, philosophical, ethical, and medical practices and philosophies. At first these monasteries were portable yurts, (*dugan*), but soon many permanent wooden structures were built (*datsan*). By the mid-1700s, over 30 temples (*datsans*) stood in Buriatia, with over 5000 religious leaders (*lamas*) and 125,000 Buriat believers (Montgomery, 1996:5).

Buddhism offered both religion and education. Buriat families began offering up at least one son to the monasteries (Montgomery, 1996). The child learned Tibetan as a liturgical language (Reid, 1994). His first ten years were spent in memorizing texts and learning rituals. After this, the novice would study philosophy and theology. Briefly, five areas were covered: *tsama* (logic, the nature of knowledge); *parchen* (spiritual enlightenment); *uma* (dialectics and the nature of existence); *zot* (teachings of the Buddha); and *dulba* (code of ethics for a lama). Further studies for monks could include medicine and/or symbolism (drawing and painting sacred pictures) (Laird, 2006; Montgomery, 1996).

Another outcome of Buddhism among the Buriats was the spread of literacy in Classical Mongolian (Old Classical Mongolian) script. The literary tongue was close enough

to the Buriat dialects for it to be used as a literary language, and this also linked the Buriats with their Mongolian brethren. In the mid-20th century, Stalin later forced the Buriats to give up this script, in favor of Roman script, and later, Cyrillic script. The Soviet leadership feared that this connection would lead to a Pan-Mongol movement (Montgomery, 2005). Yet in previous centuries, books were printed by Buriat monks, “lessening the effects of social and linguistic provincialism” (Montgomery, 1996: 12).

Before the Soviets came to power, Tsarist Russia had also been hostile to Buddhism. In the 17th and 18th centuries, the Russian authorities attempted to limit the number of lamas and monasteries allowed in Buriatia (Sweet & Chakers, 2010). One reason for this was religious: the Russians wanted to convert the Buriats to the Russian Orthodox faith. Another reason was economic: lamas and monasteries were exempt from paying the yasak tribute. The Church forcibly converted Buriats in the 19th century, and also offered bribes for conversion (temporary exemption from yasak; food). The church also tried to ‘educate’ the Buriats, but church schools were of poor quality. Many Buriats resented the forced Russification (Forysth, 1992).

Soviet education. Around the globe, education is used as a tool to socialize people how to think and how to view their world (Durkheim, 1973; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). In Buriatia, as elsewhere throughout the Russian Federation, education and other social policies have changed over time. Recently, new laws have been enacted that promote the preservation of heritage languages, yet funding for heritage language teachers, as well as education in general, is severely lacking in Buriatia (personal communication, Jan 2014). The Russian Federation and Buriatia continue to evolve together, but Buriat participants explained to me that they realigned with the Russian power in 1993, only in the hopes of staving off further

economic crisis. In 2013 and 2014, during my trips to Buriatia, both ethnic Russians and Indigenous Buriats told me that the times were still very hard, and that the economic situation: wages, jobs, and pensions – had not improved. Moreover, the Buriats, along with other Russian citizens, appear to be heading for another highly centralized government under Putin (Graber, 2012). They may enjoy only a brief window of experience with western democracy and education. It will not be the first time that such a cycle has taken place.¹⁸² During the 70 year Soviet regime, fear and oppression governed the Russians, including the Buriat people. This ambiance has not fully disappeared. Older Russian citizens have been socialized to not have opinions on important and relevant issues (Popov, 1995) and are still being socialized, either consciously or unconsciously, to believe that the ruling elite is entitled to absolute power. Many Buriats feel the inevitability or even necessity of the ‘ruler’s’ total control over all aspects of life. Russian people feel dependency on the state and confidence that the state will solve all economic and social problems. (Popov, 1995, p. 9).

Buriat adults and focal parents in this study have reiterated these two ideas to me, and shown a sense of resignation toward the growing power of Vladimir Putin, Russia’s current leader. Some feel that he will make the country stronger and the educational systems better by centralizing his power; others lament the fact that socialist social systems are “broken” and “cost too much money to use.” One parent stated: “I don’t have enough money to send her (daughter) to America, but I have enough to send her to Hohhot; that’s better than here.”

During the Soviet era, Buriat education was divided into definite stages: nursery (0-3 years old), kindergarten (3-7 years old), primary school (7-10 years old), basic school (10-15 years old), secondary (high) school (15-18 years old), universities- in the Soviet Union

¹⁸² Hale, H. E. (2005). *Regime Cycles*. World Politics, 58(1).

termed, by "institutes" (17-18 years and older), and professional schools, (15-20 years old). Educational content and teaching methodology was strictly controlled, with the Minister of Education approving education standards, curricula and textbooks at all levels (Kholostova, 2009). After the fall of the USSR, these standards and controls were lost, along with rules, rituals and traditions, especially those that supported patriotic and moral standards. Today, any school may design its own curriculum and select any textbook; this will be discussed shortly.

Griswold (2007) classifies education in the Soviet Union prior to perestroika into three phases: early post-revolutionary, Stalinist, and post-Stalinist. She noted that all Soviet education served as a way to control the citizenry, and this system promoted mass industrialization simultaneously with positive Soviet ideology (Jones, 1994). Thus, Buriats, like other Soviet citizens, were trained to think that it was their duty to serve the state (Jones, 1994).¹⁸³

Early Soviet era. Early on during the Soviet regime, (1917-34) basic principles concerning education were established. They included ownership by the people, schooling free of charge, and access for both sexes (Griswold, 2007). In addition, "the whole system from kindergarten to university was to provide one unbroken ladder of basic, free, compulsory, secular and undifferentiated education" (Sutherland, 1999, p. 7). Ironically, John Dewey had great influence over the revolutionary Soviets. "In the 1920s, Dewey was the recognized idol of the Narkompros¹⁸⁴ or Soviet educators. During the early regime, Soviet

¹⁸³ Although the Soviet system of education has been largely standardized, centralized and traditional since the Stalinist era (Gerber, 2000), differences in the approaches and philosophies guiding the educational system did exist during the Soviet era.

¹⁸⁴ The People's Commissariat of Enlightenment, which controlled primary, secondary, and higher education beginning in 1917.

schools were meant to work ‘according to Dewey’” (Sutherland, 1999, p. 10). In the USSR, education, like the arts, tried out many innovative and creative ideas. Funds, however, were lacking, so little widespread implementation of these daring reforms actually took place. Soviet educators viewed education as a way to prepare people for revolutionary activities, and for a brief period, advocated learning by doing, not rote memorization (Sutherland, 1999). These principles applied throughout the USSR, including Siberia and Buriatia. In fact, three Buriat participants proudly told me of their membership as young people in the Komsolmol: the young communist league.

The Stalin years. During the Stalinist period (1930s-50s), the Soviet educational system lost all flexibility (Gerber, 2000). Dewey fell out of favor; rote teaching returned. Education became rigid, with little attention toward individual learner’s needs (Griswold, 2007). Soviet ideology entered into the curriculum and general education faded away. Instead, a system of stratified education designed to produce a certain type of worker was mandated (industrial training versus higher education). This division revived the pre-revolutionary educational model (Sutherland, 1999). Education during this time employed the social-pedagogical model of personality-oriented instruction; society predetermines the appropriate qualities of the individual and the task of the school was to develop these qualities in individuals (Iakimanskaia, 1995). This model required: “subordination of individual interests to social interests, conformism, obedience, collectivism, and so forth” (Iakimanskaia, 1995, p. 7).

This era had great impact upon the Buriats, as bilingual education initiatives were curtailed, and a Russian only policy, advocating assimilation began in earnest. Consequently, many Buriats lost their mother tongue, and did not pass these languages on to their children.

After Stalin's death, some schools reopened with dual language opportunities, but the Buriats (like other Indigenous groups) cancelled their bilingual education policies in the 1970s when their initiatives were challenged as politically incorrect (Sweet & Chakers, 2010).¹⁸⁵

Teachers interviewed in Buriatia for this research reported that Buriat is now taught as a second, or heritage language.¹⁸⁶

After Stalin and before the Russian Federation. From the 1950s to the 1980s, not much changed in the USSR regarding education (Griswold, 2007). One notable shift was the development of *spetz* schools: institutions that trained students to be specialists in physics, mathematics, sports, and foreign languages. Overall, however, education remained rigid and standardized, with a heavy focus on Soviet ideology.¹⁸⁷

What is Russian education today? The Russian Federation, a country in transition, has been transforming into something different from its imperial history and its Soviet legacy. Under Soviet rule, people lived in fear and oppression. Today's post-Soviet citizens still feel wary about expressing political opinions. As the Soviet rulers held absolute control over the citizens, teachers in the Soviet educational system had absolute power in the

¹⁸⁵ According to Sweet & Chakers (2010): To succeed in Soviet society—to attend higher educational institutions and gain professional occupations—one had to have total fluency in the Russian language, which often meant a loss of the Buriat language. In the 1970s, Buriat politicians and educators cancelled Buriat-language education, citing the advantages that a better knowledge of Russian could bring. By the fall of the Soviet Union, many Buriats had lost the ability to use their language. Few schools offered Buriat language courses, Buriat-language media had decreased substantially from earlier levels, and many Buriats simply preferred using Russian because of the social and economic benefits. Studies from the early 2000s have concluded that Buriat is not widely spoken by the younger generation, the highly educated, government employees, and urbanized Buriats. Literary Buriat fares even worse. Fewer than 3 percent of Buriats regularly consume any media—literature, newspapers, television, or radio—in Buriat (Dorzheva 2004).

¹⁸⁶ Sometimes young Slavic children (non-Buriat), raised in rural areas, have better command and greater interest over the language than ethnically Buriat children. A Buriat explained: “This is because the (Russian) family is rural and have lived here for generations; rural people, Buriat or Russian, speak better than city Buriats. It’s just the way things are here.” Это потому, что русские семьи - деревенские, они жили здесь поколениями; деревенские люди, буряты или русские, разговаривают НА БУРЯТСОМ лучше, чем буряты, живущие в городе. Просто здесь вот так

¹⁸⁷ Khrushchev attempted some reforms in the late 1950s, aimed at emphasizing the individual learner, as opposed to the collective (Sutherland, 1999, p. 17). This meant, in theory, that “Knowledge was organized on the basis of degrees of its objective difficulty, novelty, level of integration, rational techniques of assimilation, ‘dosages’ of material, complexity of processing, and so forth” (Iakimanskai, 1995, p. 8).

classrooms. Yet currently, the post-Soviet era has seen a gradual shifting from a teacher-centered model to a learner-centered model, which can significantly alter classroom practice and philosophy (Hudgins, 2003). The teacher centered classroom uses a banking system of education, with teachers dispensing knowledge and depositing it into their students' brains (Freire, 1970). In contrast, the student centered classroom shares power between teacher and students in the classroom, giving students more responsibility for their own learning.

Currently, the Russian Federation is attempting to change itself from a totalitarian regime into a democratic society. Educators are also attempting to create more communicative, learner centered classrooms. The outcome for both remains unclear, as Russia's progress toward democracy is also uncertain and the economy in post-Soviet Russia is not thriving (Humphrey, 2002). Finally, the economic situation in the Russian Federation does not seem oriented toward a democratic, open-market system; in fact, many Buriat participants informed me that the Russian economy is based upon and run by a mafia, filled with gangsters. Humphrey (1996) confirms these assertions.

During the Soviet era, despite regime changes, some general characteristics can be said to describe Soviet education. Education instilled patriotism. For example, teachers and students felt that education was a venue for Soviet children to prepare themselves to serve the Motherland. Education was considered as a gift from the state. The state "exercised rigid control over the creation of the conditions that enabled children to have the opportunity to do their duty to society" (Lebedev, Maiorov, and Zolotukhina, 2002, p. 7).

Education was designed for moral as well as academic purposes. Today, the concept of *vospitaniye* (moral and intellectual upbringing) was and remains a powerful tool in the educational system (Sutherland, 1999; Iakimanskaia, 1995). "Traditionally, the educational

process was described as the teaching-upbringing process...All efforts were directed toward the organization of the latter, because it was believed that the child could develop only under the direction of specially organized pedagogical influences” (Iakimanskaia, 1995, p. 7). In Soviet times, schools focused much effort on transmitting ideology through *vospitaniye*. As such, a significant amount of time was spent on this topic, with much time devoted to cultivating loyalty to the state. Teachers also studied ideology more than methodology (Griswold, 2007). In fact, teachers were expected to bring the Communist faith to their students (Webber & Webber, 1994, p. 237). During the Soviet era creative, innovative thinking was discouraged among both teachers and students.

Post-Soviet educational changes. Gorbachev’s policies (1985-1991) of perestroika and glasnost’ as strategies to facilitate change in the Soviet Union are well known in the West. His plan had five legs: 1) glasnost’ (openness), 2) decentralization in state economic management, 3) economic privatization, 4) economic marketization, and 5) democratization (Eklof, 1989). Although the Soviet Union had been attempting gradual reforms for decades, Gorbachev’s reforms were wide ranging and public, and immediately impacted Soviet society (Eklof, 1989).¹⁸⁸ Gorbachev wanted societal change without complete government reform (Desai, 2005). After Gorbachev resigned, Boris Yel’tsin took the helm in 1992. The Russian Federation adopted a new constitution in 1993. Under Yel’tsin, privatization bloomed, but so did the inflation rate. Russians everywhere sought to survive during this economic hardship and social turmoil.

¹⁸⁸ News media was uncensored, new political parties appeared, the public had a vote in political leaders. Ordinary citizens had the freedom to travel and change residences, while property and businesses became privatized (Eklof, 1989). There were negative effects as well: the country went into a severe economic crisis and crime increased significantly. Some families fell apart because the economic situation caused conflict and divorces among Russians, and among Indigenous peoples (Sutherland, 1999).

Hints of educational reform first came in 1984, when the *Guidelines for the Soviet School Reform* were published. These reforms were associated with Gorbachev's perestroika movement. Gorbachev had been interested in education, as he led the Politburo Commission on Educational Reform in 1984 before taking power in 1985 (Sutherland, 1999). Significant changes in the Russian educational system can be credited to Gorbachev's reforms, begun during in 1988-91.

Many reforms were implemented under the VNIK¹⁸⁹ and the Russian Ministry of Education under Eduard Dneprov, who hoped to transform state schools into places with greater student and parent participation (Holmes et al, 1995). These reforms resulted in creating a more democratic, flexible, self-governing system for general education in Russia. These changes, however, also opened the door to privatization of education. The result was elitist, specialized and selectively differentiated schools and institutes. Consequently, since the breakup of the USSR in 1991, a huge financial gap exists between those who may attend these elite schools and those who may attend state sponsored schools. My observations in Buriatia reflected these changes. For example, in several rural village schools, I saw no computers or even electric heaters (the stoves were built into the walls, with the design from the Russian Imperial Era). In some schools in Ulan Ude, the capital, however, computers, high speed Internet and plush classrooms were available – if one could afford to pay.

When Gorbachev began educational reforms during the perestroika period in the 1980s, a major part of the educational debate centered on curriculum. As Holmes et al (1995) note, the nationalities issue was linked to educational decentralization. Pedagogues argued about how to address Indigenous languages, as well as Indigenous culture, history and

¹⁸⁹ *Vremennyi nauchnoissledivatel'skii kollektiv shkola*, or the Temporary Scientific Research Group for Schools

geography in schools. Under the Soviet Constitution, republics held various rights to govern themselves, but during the Soviet years, few republics had dared to voice these rights for fear of reprisals.¹⁹⁰ Much later, Gorbachev wanted to mend these injustices and follow in the footsteps of Vladimir Lenin, who had set up the ideals for self-determination for republics in the hopes that Indigenous and non-mainstream citizens would not wish to secede from the USSR. As Gorbachev struggled with the issues of affirming national dignity, language and culture, and political independence for all citizens, while promoting economic growth, he understood that the power of centralized government agencies had to be limited. Whether he realized that his efforts would result in the breakup of the USSR is yet another question (Holmes et al, 1995).

Gorbachev and educational thought. Gorbachev's movement focused on ideological education and improvements in production and sought to support better reasoning skills in students. Significantly, these reforms supported the development of individual personalities (Sutherland, 1999). During perestroika, the public was free to critique the educational system. Many disgruntled pedagogues voiced their concerns openly (Sutherland, 1999). Innovative teachers advocating radical changes debated against the conservatives in the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences (Sutherland, 1999). Some experimental schools were created to facilitate the development of "independent-thinking, initiative-taking workers and professionals needed to carry out the economic and social changes of perestroika" (Hudson & Hoffman, 1993, p. 258).

¹⁹⁰ During the 1930s, Stalin had ruthlessly and violently quelled any efforts toward self-determination in Siberian republics like Buriatia, and elsewhere in the USSR (Sweet & Chakers, 2010).

Gorbachev advocated a more democratic system of education. He encouraged more active student involvement regarding learning. Reformers wanted more class choices for students and more power to teachers in devising curriculum. Finally, these reforms encouraged greater parental involvement regarding school functions (Jones, 1994). Significantly, the focus was on the student as an individual learner with unique needs and aspirations (Jones, 1994; Sutherland, 1999).

Educational reform, especially in Siberia, has not been completely successful because the economic situation throughout the Far East and other parts of the Russian Federation is still not stable (Jones, 1994; Sutherland, 1999; Gerber, 2000). Teachers receive low pay; the more remote and rural, the lower both the educational standards and pay rates (Griswold, 2007). “Inflation continues to rise with pay increases,” Инфляция продолжает расти с повышением зарплаты. said one Buriat professional living in Ulan Ude; “Our schools are in bad shape and need renovations.” Наши школы в плохом состоянии и требуют ремонта.

Perestrioka and Putin. In 2000, seeking change again, Russians elected Vladimir Putin, a former KGB employee, as their new president. Since his election, withdrawal, and re-instatement to power, Putin has steadily consolidated and centralized state power and authority. He has been able to do this because Russian citizens, suffering economically and socially, want order and stability (Desai, 2005). Although he voices support for a free market economy, Putin has implemented a return to a system of centralized power. The Russian Constitution, unlike the US constitution, has limited checks and balances, and a weak legislature/ court system (Desai, 2005). Putin has the power to destroy the Duma (parliament) and make executive decrees without legislative approval (Carnaghan, 2001). In Buriatia and elsewhere, Putin has used his power to limit voting rights (Buriat and other regional

governors were appointed by Putin). He also controls party based organizations, regional and national. Finally, Putin has exerted his power over the media, particularly television (Desai, 2005).

Putin came to power facing many challenges. After the disintegration of the USSR in 1991, resulting economic problems have caused education problems. Money was lacking to pay teachers and administrators and to remodel classrooms. Drug use among students rose; “In Buriatia, we have a serious problem with both drugs and alcohol among our young,” В Бурятии у нас серьезные проблемы с наркотиками и алкоголем среди молодежи said one elderly Buriat pedagogue.¹⁹¹ Teacher morale has lowered everywhere (Gerber, 2000); Siberia and Buriatia are no exceptions (Hudgins, 2003). Today, there are some funds for educational reforms and the situation has improved somewhat (Griswold, 2007). A Buriat mother told me that schools are financed differently around Ulan Ude, and that urban areas have better schools than the rural regions. (Школы Улан-Удэ финансируются по-разному, и, конечно, школы в городе (УКОМПЛЕКТОВАНЫ) лучше, чем школы в сельских районах). In Russia, a school’s financial solvency is tied to the economic strength of their local economies (Gur’ianova, 2006).

Current attitudes toward education in Russia. Currently, eighty-three regions¹⁹² (also translated as territories) make up the Russian Federation (Lenskaya, 2013). Each has its own unique geographic, social, economic, territorial settlement, demographic, social, ecological, historical, cultural, and national/ethnic characteristics. These factors impact the way education, (especially rural schooling), is conducted in each region, and account for the

¹⁹¹ These rising social and educational problems are confirmed and described in detail by Caroline Humphrey in her 2002 book, *The unmaking of Soviet Life: Everyday economies after socialism*.

¹⁹² There were 89, but in the last decade Putin has started to merge and consolidate territories, including Buriat territories.

increased diversity of educational content and technology, as well as teaching methodologies. Seventy percent of Russian Federation territories lie in the North and the Far North: over half of Russia's population live under severe climatic conditions, and these conditions impact cultural norms and survival methods. Moreover, this diversity in land, in farming and resource development, ranging from the Arctic to the Black Sea, has generated vast differences in how regions have been developed. There are vast, sparsely populated, and road-less zones of tundra and taiga in Siberia. In Central Asian Russia there are arid steppes and semi-deserts; throughout Eastern and Western Russia one encounters mountainous districts, forested steppes, and mixed forests. Geography has also impacted Russian settlement and demographic patterns, which in turn have influenced education (Gur'ianova, 2006).

Throughout Russia, after 1991, as the economy crashed, education everywhere was devalued, as ordinary people struggled to survive (Gerber, 2000). In Buriatia and elsewhere, life is still difficult but not as economically arduous as it was a decade ago (Griswold, 2007; Hudgins, 2003). Both parents and youth perceive higher education as a way to better themselves, education is viewed as a form of capital (Griswold, 2007).

Vospitaniye (moral and intellectual upbringing) remains important and part of a student's education. Instead of communist ideology that demands loyalty to the state and work unit, however, students are now encouraged to develop ways to achieve self-realization (Griswold, 2007). *Vospitaniye* has become multicultural, with diverse points of view, depending upon one's regional, social, cultural, ethnic affiliations. Parents and teachers socialize the young, but unlike their generation, these young people are guided toward finding their way in life as individuals, with unique world views, rather than being defined as

a productive and loyal citizen of the Soviet state. “Students and teachers have closer interactions today,” У учеников и преподавателей сейчас ближе взаимоотношения said one Buriat teacher in her 50s. “I give my students advice, to help them make up their own minds, rather than feeding formulas into their brains.” Я даю моим ученикам советы, помогая им разобраться с собственными мыслями, а не просто "запихиваю" в их голову формулы".

Curriculum. Today, in the Russian Federation, specifically in Siberia, there are a wide variety of schools (Hudgins, 2003). They include *spetz* schools, technical schools, gymnasiums and lyceums (Sutherland, 1999). All of these are found in larger urban areas. Schools in rural areas are less sophisticated but efforts have been made to take local context into account when devising curriculum (Gur’ianova, 2006). As mentioned, the individual experience has become the norm. Youth go to school, not to serve the state but to create better opportunities for themselves (Zborovskii & Shuklina, 2005). Current pedagogical practice fosters this “reorientation, focusing on the idea that education should primarily enable one to be successful and be in demand in the labor market” (Maksakovskii, 2006). In effect, an ideological shift from duty to individual rights has occurred (Lebedev, Maiorov, & Zolotukhina, 2002).

Curriculum has also changed; it is more diverse. Local control is possible; but financial and infrastructure issues make utilizing this control difficult (Kerr, 1995). In Buriatia, for example, many Indigenous language schools have closed down, for lack of funds. Although Soviet ideology is no longer a part of the curriculum, learning Indigenous languages are not seen as ways to create a successful lifestyle (Khilkhanova & Khilkhanov,

2004). Instead, other types of optional courses, in Russian that teach cognitive and value-oriented problem solving are popular (Lebedev, Maiorov, and Zolotukhina, 2002).

The greater choice in curriculum has generated a variety of textbooks. “The ‘orgy of democracy’ is also reflected in the transition to a diversity of textbooks” (Maksakovskii, 2006). But schools still lack information and materials. One survey showed that “the need for library services is quite high: this was indicated by 89.2 percent of respondents. In addition, 60 percent of the respondents said that there are clearly not enough books in their school library” (Lebedev, Maiorov, and Zolotukhina, 2002).

Buriats have told me that, with the exception of exclusive private schools, teachers are badly paid. Teaching is not a coveted job; teachers understand that the effort they put in the classroom does not correlate with the financial rewards they receive (Holmes et al, 1995). Yet some teachers have tried to go beyond the traditional banking methods of teaching with commands and orders to a more communicative, student driven classroom (Griswold, 2007). One Buriat master teacher told me: “I have been a teacher here (in Ulan Ude) for almost 30 years; I teach because it is my profession, not simply to get money.” Я работаю учителем в Улан-Удэ уже 30 лет; я преподаю, потому что это моя профессия, в то же время с которой трудно зарабатываются деньги.

Assessment in Russia. In 2001, Russia first began introducing standardized testing from Europe, the Unified State Examination (USE). This assessment consists of a single exam that combined high school graduation with university entrance exams. USE is perceived as part of the modernization of the Russian educational system, which has struggled to diversify in order to meet global and internal changes, as well as accommodate increased numbers of students, and declining quality in education (Gounko & Smale 2007)

Tuition fees and state funding have undergone radical restructuring for all levels of education in Russia. In 2003, Russia also accepted the Bologna Process,¹⁹³ which ostensibly will help its students with educational and work entry into the European community (Gounko & Smale 2007).¹⁹⁴

These new policy guidelines are meant to modernize Russian education by internationalizing the curriculum and by introducing competence-based school curriculum (Telegena & Swengel, 2012). This change emphasized outcome based school standards and core skills over rote memorization. The USSR, unlike the USA, which mandated state based standards, previously had the same standards for all of its regions, and each region could generate 20% of their prescribed content. These input based curriculums primarily focused on fact based knowledge plus a regional component. Teachers did not pay much attention to developing critical thinking skills in their students, because nothing was specified concerning what students should know or be able to do upon graduation.¹⁹⁵

In 2009, more standardized university exams were introduced in Russia. Each disciplinary exam has a special section that assesses whether students can apply their knowledge across a curriculum area and prepare them for entrance into the global workforce.

¹⁹³ The Bologna Process is a series of ministerial meetings and agreements between European countries designed to ensure comparability in the standards and quality of higher education qualifications. The Russian higher education framework was basically incompatible with the Process: the generic "lowest" degree in all universities since Soviet era is the Specialist which can be obtained after completing 5–6 years of studies. Since the mid-90s, many universities have introduced limited educational programs allowing students to graduate with a BA (4 years) and then earn a master's degree (another 1–2 years) while preserving the old 5–6 year scheme. In October 2007 Russia enacted a move to two-tier education in line with Bologna Process model.

¹⁹⁴ Significantly, no links to global assessment of this kind has been forged by the Chinese government.

¹⁹⁵ The new standards, however, have set goals for critical thinking developing a tolerant, multicultural school environment. High school students now had choices: they could choose some electives and decide how much mastery they wanted in a variety of school disciplines. Teachers had standards for expected outcomes, making them more accountable for student success (Lenskaya, 2013). USE does more than combine high school graduation and university entrance examinations; it is meant to provide a more standardized, objective and fairer assessment. USE is also meant to present a way to destroy the gap between the levels of knowledge provided at school and demanded from university entrants, thus equal access to higher education to everyone, regardless of social status.

Some Indigenous Russians, such as the Buriats, feel that these new standards are a backward step, because they take up more study time, thus reducing the potential to add regional culture and content to an Indigenous republic's curriculum (Lenskaya, 2013). These assessments have direct consequences for Buriats. Parents fear that their children, whose school conditions are often lower than those in large areas of western Russia (Moscow, St Petersburg) will not be able to compete academically. They also fear that their low salaries hold back their children. "We pay our 'free' lyceum a fee every month, you know...to clean, to repair, to do this or that...it must be paid,"Мы оплачиваем в нашем "бесплатном" лицее затраты на уборку, на ремонт, на то, на это ежемесячно... Это должно быть оплачено, said the mother of one Buriat focal child.

New costs. During Soviet times, the state paid tuition fees and gave students living stipends when they attended university, but the post-Soviet reforms introduced tuition programs for both public and private VUZy (universities) (Eklof 2005, p. 13). Consequently, many students prefer now to study at higher institutions close to home, in order to lower educational expenses. As a result, pricy large cities, such as Moscow and St Petersburg have experienced lower enrollments (Eklof 2005, p. 13).

By accepting the Bologna Process, Russian educators seek to ensure compatibility and standardization in higher education qualifications across Europe. This, in turn, will allow Russian students more global opportunities for both work and study. Due to economic disparity, not all Russian students have the same chances. Pupils attending elite grammar schools in large urban areas do better with USE testing than those attending an ordinary, state comprehensive school. Parents try to compensate by hiring tutors or signing their children into extra preparatory courses. This difference in marks correlates to substantial social

inequalities (Luk'yanova, 2012). Buriat parents in Russia told me that 'comprehensive' and 'mass' school translate as a low or inferior level of education, which will not allow entry into the best VUZy anywhere in Russia. The focal parents in this study indicated that they thought their children would gain more opportunities studying in China: the schools were more affordable, and learning Chinese was considered a linguistic advantage for future employment.

Summary. The Russian educational system is experiencing change and economic growing pains, as educational choices widen, with some schools becoming privatized. The Russian Federation is trying to accommodate its citizens and allow Russian students to participate in a more globally oriented educational process. Russian education today is the product of its sociocultural evolution. During the post-Soviet period, Russian life and Russian education has become more liberal, orienting itself more toward western and American values. Many people, including educators, feel that this change is not in keeping with the nature of the ethnic Russian people (Egorychev, 2011). Drastic changes have affected the education system in post-Soviet Russia and these changes have exacerbated socio-economic and regional inequalities in higher education. Many Russians (including Buriats interviewed in this study) felt that the post-Soviet reforms were not successful in regard to economics and education. Regionally, there is a growing economic inequality in educational quality, from kindergarten to university education. The materials, teachers, and status of ordinary state sponsored schooling have declined, while some elite, private and specialized schools have appeared to cater to those with wealth and connections (Luk'yanova, 2012).

On a more positive note, throughout Russia today, many new types of schools have appeared, along with new forms of international collaboration, such as joint research activities through networks and associations, distance education, collaborations with foreign universities. Russian teachers, in adapting to globalization, are creating new curricula and textbooks that concentrate upon successfully integrating students to the modern world. Russian educators state that their biggest challenge today is to create a system in which all the elements of the Western model of education will work successfully and all the best Russian academic traditions will not be lost. They seek a combination of modern, western style education, a new ideological paradigm but this paradigm has values resting on renewed traditions of Russian culture and lifelong learning (Kholostova, 2009). Others now may also choose to study outside of Russia, as visas to travel abroad are no longer as difficult to obtain as they were during the Soviet era. The Buriat children in this research have easily crossed borders to experience education outside their homeland; the question is: Can they successfully adapt to the language and norms of Chinese culture, in order to succeed at school? I now address the psychological aspects of identity, to explore the relationships between identity, education and socialization in regard to the Buriat focal children.

Cultural Psychology & Narrative, Identity & Resistance

The first part of this section explores how cultural psychology has developed, in order to view psychological points of view in relationship to the Buriat focal youth, their identity, and their acts of resistance while living in China. I link Bakhtin and narrative to cultural psychology. Because I am educational researcher and not a psychologist comments regarding the focal children and their actions are speculative. The second part of this section focuses on the non-western point of view regarding psychology. It also looks at resistance in schools

among non-mainstream children. I briefly discuss Ogbu's now contested concept of caste-like minorities, and then I present research examples concerning Indigenous youth identity in relation to heritage languages in North America, to compare their points of view with that of the Buriat focal youth.

Part one. Throughout this research, I have employed Bakhtinian dialogical concepts that connect narratives to the Buriat focal children because this dialogic process offers a path for linking what Hammack (2011) calls master narratives - historical events and the collective experiences of a people - with the personal narratives of young focal Buriats. As a cultural psychologist, Hammack (2011) employed narrative to present effective ways to discuss and describe youth identity and resistance in Palestine. He has found, like myself, that sometimes when introduced to such master narratives, Indigenous youth resist and struggle against the polarizing effects of integrating and aligning their personal identity with an oppressive and collective ideology of the master narrative. The Buriat children have encountered directly and indirectly the master narratives derived from two dominant communist nations: Russia and China.

The question of how the process of social reproduction and struggle unfolds for Indigenous people living under a dominant government parallels the process of how young Indigenous Buriats negotiated their identities at a school that was serving the dominant Han ideology in China. Narrative serves as an effective means to expose this process; the Buriat children had much to say on this subject. In recent decades, psychological interpretations have begun to use narrative in exploring and understanding identity issues. For example, Cohler's (1982) essay on personal narrative and the life course was followed by Sarbin's (1986) article on narrative psychology. Also, Polkinghorne (1988) asserted that narrative was

a way to fully understand the human experience. At present, psychologists and other scholars feel that looking at narrative from an individual perspective can be limiting, just as exploring identity from an individual point of view can be imprecise. In sum, cultural psychologists feel that narrative, like identity, is complex and both require an integrative framework. My observations confirmed this complexity, as the focal children often seemed conflicted when expressing their sense of self.

Narrative and identity can be linked through the use of language. As a psychologist, Vygotsky (1978) asserted that language was the leading activity of thought. Moreover, thought, like language, must be linked with the experience of contact. In the same sense, identity has the capacity to be generated through one's internal processes and through one's sense of contact with how the "other" perceives the self. Vygotsky's (1978) claim that we are all social beings and that our thoughts are socially mediated implies that our thoughts, our narratives, and indeed, our very selves, are all impacted by the way we make contact with others. Certainly the Buriat children behaved differently, according to who they interacted with, and they also displayed varying degrees of identification as a Mongolian, dependent upon where and with whom they interacted.

Going further, if psychologists consider the way we interact as one of the basic aspects of culture building, then it also follows that culture, like identity and thought, is also something fluid and dynamic. Cultural psychologists Markus & Kitayama (1991) described the relationship between culture and the self, focusing on the contrast between how the self is perceived and constructed among Americans and among Japanese. This groundbreaking article has allowed psychologists to reject the idea of homogeneity in any given group, and to take a historical perspective regarding culture: to see culture as a live, evolving concept, in

the same way that identity is fluid and dynamic. Hammack (2011) noted that many cultural psychologists now prefer to view culture as a linguistic production, as a way to mediate one's experiences, i.e., as a narrative. Hammack also asserted that culture is created by the stories about a group, their relationships to other groups, and group members' hopes and aspirations. Thus, what we think of as a custom or belief translates simply as the story of what we, as members of a group, ought to do in any given situation. Among the Buriat focal children, there appeared to be differing ideas about being Buriat – this discrepancy could be from the ways in which the children's parents and guardians socialized them in regard to Buriat culture and Buriat identity, as these adults directed and guide the ways in which children participate in their culture.

Regarding youth, and Indigenous youth in particular, such as the young Buriats, as members of a group, are psychologically affected by their participation in a particular activity or set of activities that its members call a custom or ritual. By participating in this activity, however, the person is actively engaging in the practice as a group member – as a young Buriat, for example, who went with his family to the temple to pay respects to the “Saint Etigelov” or as part of a family grouping going to consult a shaman. This participation coordinates the young person's narrative and sense of identity with the perception of this is what Buriat people do to be Buriat. When the young Buriats were living in China, however, they confronted identity challenges from the Han culture; consequently, these focal youth had to decide what they were going to do to show the world that they were Buriats. For

them, culture, like identity, translated as something that people do,¹⁹⁶ regardless of location in time and space.

Cultural psychologists believe that culture and identity are woven together, with the weft and the warp being language and social practices. Narrative serves as the weave - the anchor - for them both. We tell ourselves and we tell others what we do in order to make meaning of our participation in a cultural activity. Narratives link individual psychology to society/group psychology. Moreover, narratives are based upon the sanctions of the past as well as the realities of the present. Over time, these stories are affirmed by the groups and communities to which they belong, and like culture and identity, these narratives are ongoing and evolving (Bakhtin, 1981). Likewise, I think of culture as a process, and identity as a process. My research indicated that young Buriats in this study navigated their way through multiple discourses, both master and personal narratives, which in turn influenced their personal and cultural identities. In effect, Buriat youth have participated in and reacted to multiple Bakhtian discourses. They also chose to participate in or to reject various cultural activities, which also influenced their own personal narratives and their sense of self.

Additionally, Buriat youth chose when they wanted to appropriate and to reject certain master narratives. Their interpretations of such ideological discourses positioned them into a collective sense of self – as Mongolians, as Russians, and as Buriats. This collective served as a foundation for constructing their own personal stories. Such mediated social activity brings us back to Vygotsky (1978), who, like Bakhtin (1981), argued that language is the driving force for human social development. Specifically, he said that the human mind

¹⁹⁶ And especially in relation to other family members, both nuclear and extended kin. This parallels the way Navajo youth construct their identity as well (personal communication from Tiffany Lee, April 21, 2014).

internalized social speech, creating what Vygotsky termed inner speech, which drives thought and action. This inner language “creates an internal narrative that represents the reproduction of culture” (Hammack, 2011:24). In my results, I argue that the young focal Buriats who have come into conflict with the dominant Han culture have further crafted their own personal narratives, in order to justify their position and actions. Personal and master narratives have motivated Buriat youth behavior, with them accepting some of the Russian master narrative, and rejecting most of the Chinese master narrative.

The Buriat children are just like us: As people, we all react to those around us. In fact, social interactionists (like Bakhtin and Vygotsky) postulate that a sense of consciousness arises only as it evolves into an object in relation to some “other” person (Mead, 2009). In conflict situations, the self and the other size each other up. They witness each other, from their fears and insecurities, to their strengths and weaponry. Everything is reflected back, which implies that a person may be both a subject and an object of fear. Hammack (2011) feels that, in this way, individuals serve as agents to reproduce their cultures where conflicts are manifested. Adherents of social interactionism assert that cultural reproduction can take place even in the smallest of social interactions – a look, a gesture, an utterance. Moreover, if mind and self are historical products of interactions, then individual consciousness is also social consciousness - or simply put, there is no identity apart from social identity (Mead, 2009).

If we accept Vygotsky (1978) and Hammack (2011), this means, ultimately, that people are the products of their culture just as much as they are producers of their culture. Culture becomes mediated activity that humans create in the material world, and this creation of culture endures through stories. Yet when a person, such as a young Buriat boy, comes

into conflict with an antagonist, this conflict can either interrupt or contribute to the cycle of cultural reproduction. In this research, there are several ways to look at conflict in relation to the Buriat focal children and the Chinese. First, one might suggest that the four Buriat boys whom I present in my findings as resisting with aggression are symbolically continuing a master narrative: the age old cycle of antagonism between the nomad and the farmer - the Mongol and the Han. Second, one might speculate that a Russian Buriat child might refuse the label of being classified by a Han ideological narrative as a (lesser than) Mongolian minority because he perceives himself as a citizen from another powerful, dominant nation: Russia, or as a member of the proud Buriat Mongolian people. Third, one could suggest that the boys, being adolescents, simply wanted to express a personal narrative - they displayed their identities as outsiders through a show of power.

The above interpretations are all speculative. The only given is that western psychology has defined identity as the guiding framework of human social organization and that identity concerns provoked the Buriat focal children to act in certain, politicized ways. Since the 18th century, the Enlightenment has offered western people a political concept of identity: i.e., I am a French citizen and this is my land. This concept is still espoused and encouraged in various nationalistic movements, although now, in the post-colonial and postmodern era, the idea of shared community and culture¹⁹⁷ is perceived as an imagined community (Anderson, 2012).

The idea of imagined community has generated other issues, such as the question of identity in relation to “purity,” of a proper place for national identity, and of the need and right of non-mainstream peoples to fight for identity recognition. Thus, even if psychologists

¹⁹⁷ As well as race and ethnicity.

and political scientists assert that identity is something we imagine, it is not ephemeral, because it is highly political. Indeed, identity is extremely powerful, providing people everywhere with meaning and purpose.

Identity is vital for human psychological well-being. In terms of this research, understanding some western psychological concepts about identity is key to analyzing and resolving disputes between the Buriat youth and other groups. The conflicts that the Buriat focal children have encountered in China indicate that they viewed their identities in multiple ways, and at times as more than an individualistic concept. Certainly these young Buriats have personal identities in the form of what we would call their autobiographies. But in China these children also increased their sense of political consciousness via their group identity – their social/ethnic identity. In analyzing their resistance and conflicts, my results examine how these young people's personal and the social identities separated and converged, dependant upon context and contact.

More about western psychology and youth identity. William James is generally acknowledged as the father of western psychology.¹⁹⁸ He offered the first definition of (western) identity by describing it as being the same person who wakes up every day, with the same sense of consciousness and continuity. This is what we term an individual identity. Erik Erikson (1968) went on to add to James' ideas, especially in regard to youth identity. Erikson is known for connecting identity development to meaning and continuity with some social group and within some social and ideological context. With Erikson, the politicization of identity was born, as it contextualized identity and placed it in a historical perspective. Identity now became defined as both personal and social; Erikson described young people as

¹⁹⁸ I do not discuss Freud due to time and research constraints.

on a quest to find their place within a group or groups. The context: history, culture, and society, all were perceived as key to this quest that resulted in youth development. The postmodern complaint with Erikson, however, was the notion that by the end of adolescence a young person's identity was achieved, and therefore fixed.

After Erikson, Marcia (1967) adapted Erikson's theories, by creating stages of development. He placed identity into four categories: identity achievement, moratorium, foreclosure, and diffusion, all of which described different kinds and periods of identity development. Postmodern thought rejects such clearly delineated categories as unfeasible for two reasons: First, humans, of whatever age and group membership, cannot be so neatly and easily compartmentalized. Second, all people, regardless of age or group membership, are unique and have potential agency.

Phinney (1990) and Phinney and Gosens (1996) took Marcia's concepts and redefined the categories in terms of minority youth and ethnic identity. Her fundamental insight was to state that everyone, young and old, regardless of ethnic identification, is a social actor. Phinney felt that we all develop a sense of place in the world, and, based upon that sense, people embrace certain beliefs and actions. Regarding the focal children in this study, their beliefs and their sense of place has been challenged in China, as the dominant Han ideological norms clashed with what the young Buriats experienced at home. My findings present how Buriat focal children rejected the label of the "other" and resisted, as best they could, while living in China.

In addition to Phinney's work, Tajfel & Turner (1986) also carried out experiments that confirmed how an individual always has a positive bias toward members of his/her own in-group. They affirmed the significance of social identity in the thoughts, feelings and

actions of group members. In effect, an individual approaches interactions not as an individual, but as a group member: a white male IBM executive; a Black lesbian feminist, etc. People and their identities are never free floating and decontextualized. Moreover, social identity inherently involves a concern with value; “those aspects of an individual self-image that derive from the social categories to which he perceives himself as belonging,” (Tajel & Turner, 1986:16) and some categories are more highly valued than others. This means that groups and their members are always striving for positive and/or optimal distinctiveness. In the case of the Buriat focal children, these categories shifted in value, and appeared to be dependent upon the people and the context in which the children were placed. For example, in the findings I discuss why the children thought being Mongolian was not as highly prized in China as it was in Buriatia or in Outer Mongolia.

Yet a strong sense of social identity and in-group identity can also lead to conflict, which has been defined as the competition between various entities with divergent identities for power and recognition (Hammack, 2011: 44). From a sociocultural perspective, how we view our identity says much about our own positionality. For example, if a person comes from a place of privilege, he or she may be suspicious of a collective identity, as it threatens current hegemonic practices in place. Likewise, if a person comes from a subordinate position, he or she may see their collective identity as a sacred source of security and defend it to the death.

For the Buriat focal children involved in this study, their collective sense of identity seemed to shift, according to geographical and political context. In China, the children wanted less to identify themselves collectively as Mongolians, and more as Russian citizens. This could be due, in part, to the Chinese master narrative: Han Chinese people view all

Mongolians as a lesser group: a minority, and historically as people who were subservient to the Han. Currently, the Chinese are engaged in a confining and unresolved discourse of nationalism, and that they are also trying to participate in globalization processes. To do these things effectively, the government has empowered a master discourse that asserts the legitimacy of the Chinese state and the Han ideology, with the narrative that all Chinese citizens are loyal and subservient - and this discourse exhorts everyone in China to adhere to a strong national homogenous identity as a Chinese. Anyone, even Buriat children from another country, who contests this national identity, is perceived as a threat. In the findings, I discuss the punishments meted out to those Buriats who have resisted against the Chinese powers that be.

In closing, it should be noted that how we view conflict also depends upon positionality. Some outsiders may tend to view the resistance strategies that these Buriat youth engaged in as a failure to learn – a sign of the Buriat inability to be socialized within the dominant Han system. My response would be to look at these conflict situations from another perspective. Take, for example, the US position regarding recent events in Russia; the fact that in spring 2014 Putin ordered Russian troops to enter and seize the Crimea was perceived by many Americans as an invasion and a conflict. Yet, in contrast, many Americans perceive the white colonials who spread westward across North America a few centuries ago, as heroes. They are glorified by the dominant white culture - these colonizers were/are not recorded in history textbooks as invaders committing genocide and spreading terror among those who occupied the land long before the whites arrived.

Thus, should the fact that Katya, a young Buriat girl, who refused to behave and learn like her Inner Mongolian peers, or the fact that four Buriat boys who interacted negatively

with Han boys, translate as Buriat focal children who were unable to succeed as students and caused disruptions? From another perspective, one could interpret their actions as resistance to Chinese ideological norms that the children sensed and found demeaning. One might also suggest that their resistance, ultimately, will enhance their future identity development by making them stronger and more secure in knowing who they are, at home and abroad, and with whom they wish to affiliate themselves.

Cultural psychologists acknowledge that, in many ways, identity can be viewed as a kind of burden (Hammack, 2011). Scholars such as Fordham and Ogbu have written about the “burden” of minority youth in acting like mainstream youth.¹⁹⁹ Youth especially carry this burden of identity, for they must identify with their group(s) at all costs, for security and solidarity.²⁰⁰ Young people also suffer from the psychological consequences of conflict, as they begin to develop their identities, as they recognize the positions they inhabit within a given matrix of power and intergroup relations. Young people must negotiate with discourses of identity that accompany positions of power and hegemony in society. The young Buriat focal children, for example, have experienced the post-colonial configurations in their homeland, Buriatia, as well as the hegemonic practices of modern day China. They have suffered and struggled and entered into conflicts as they encounter master discourses that clash with their images of who they are and how they wish to be perceived.

Part two: Non-mainstream youth resistance in schools. In the above section I have presented the western cultural psychological viewpoint of identity as complex, fluid, and hybrid. I have illustrated how identity creation is a reflexive process. In this section I now

¹⁹⁹ Fordham, S., & Ogbu, J. U. (1986). Black students' school success: Coping with the “burden of ‘acting white’”. *The urban review*, 18(3), 176-206. And this burden exists not just between White/Black students; see reference 173.

²⁰⁰ Moskal (2014) writes about this in relation to Polish youth in the UK.

present some research concerning Indigenous psychology and identity, non-mainstream youth and their resistance strategies in schools. I also discuss Indigenous youth identity.

Indigenous psychology. Not much is written on Indigenous psychology by Indigenous scholars. Duran and Duran (1995) have presented the psychological devastation of Native American people, calling it an “acute and/or chronic reaction to colonialism” (p. 6). Their book discusses the need for understanding and respecting an Indigenous worldview when making any kind of psychological interpretation or analysis, because “to assume that phenomena from another worldview can be adequately explained from a totally foreign worldview is the essence of psychological and philosophical imperialism” (p. 25).

Duran and Duran emphasized that sociohistorical factors must be recognized, as they have impacted Indigenous people as individuals and as a family. From observations it was clear to me that the Buriat have experienced destruction of their traditional extended family units via Russian colonization and culture, which began over three hundred years ago. When the colonizer assaults an Indigenous group, breaking up social structures, repressing language, and changing the economic systems that have sustained the traditional way of life, there are psychological ramifications. I speculate that Buriat focal children and their parents, as other Indigenous groups attacked in this way, may have internalized the power of the oppressor. Among some Buriats I have interviewed, for example, participants stated that their self-worth and their sense of being Buriat had sunk. Other Buriats told me that the loss of their language and culture, despite the revitalizing efforts that began in the 1990s, can be evidenced by the high rate of alcohol and drug abuse among both young and old.²⁰¹ Finally, some Buriat participants hinted to me of domestic violence among the Buriat people.

²⁰¹ There seems to be no statistics on this in Russian or in English.

As Russian citizens, Buriats continue to experience a form of ongoing trauma, because they are constantly being pressured, consciously and unconsciously, to assimilate to the lifestyle of Russian culture. Moreover, the economy in Russian has not recovered and people are still struggling to live and provide for their families (Humphrey, 1996; Graber, 2012). This pressure to assimilate and to survive during hard times can lead to feelings of marginality as well as identity confusion (Williams & Berry, 1991:634). These negative emotions are not confined to a single generation. Duran and Duran (1995) maintained that if the oppression and dysfunction were internalized, members of the family may start to view it as normal. In the case of the Buriat focal children in this study, their parents and grandparents lived under the oppressive Soviet system, during periods of time when to speak Buriat was condemned. In addition, the Soviet State exhorted and coerced Buriats and other Indigenous peoples to russify and to accept the Soviet way of life (Forsyth, 1992).

Because of the historical colonization, Buriat focal children, their parents, and other participants, experienced identity confusion and the sense of being culturally conflicted. They must be Buriats – yet they live like Russians. The use of drugs and alcohol, according to Duran and Duran (1995), can become an integral way of life to keep complete disassociation from occurring. Significantly, during fieldwork in Buriatia, I noticed that Buriat traditional ceremonies have incorporated alcohol, as an addition to the sacred liquid - milk- in greeting the ancestors. An elderly Buriat woman commented to me in Feb 2014 that she, too, thought it strange to use alcohol for these ceremonies, as alcoholism had destroyed so many of her (Buriat) friends' lives.

The identity confusion and conflict I assert in my findings may be part of the Buriat focal children's secondary posttraumatic stress symptoms (PTSD), or a consequence of

reactive behaviors these children have internalized from their parents and elders, who were directly traumatized by the experience of Soviet colonization. It should be noted as well, that as Indigenous youth, the Buriat focal children too, needed some structure, some guidance and ceremony, to launch them into becoming Buriat adults. Yet because they were living in China, these focal children had little or no access to Buriat elders, or to any traditional ceremonies or initiations.²⁰²

This lack of nurturing when abroad, as well as the double bind of having to be both Buriat and Russian, can create conflict internally and externally. In hindsight, it was not surprising to me that four young Buriat boys got into trouble in China, or that some Buriats resisted learning in school. Whatever the young Buriat boys learned about becoming men in China was acquired, apparently, via the Internet and television, which portrayed violent behavior on a daily basis. They also may have carried ideas about masculinity and manhood from their school experiences in Russia as well and these experiences, unfortunately, glorified gang mentality. One Russian youth of twenty here from Buriatia told me (in English): “You know, boys are always shaking each other up on the playgrounds at home...it’s because of Putin...he’s nothing other than a bully and a gangster, and like, he’s our president. He’s rich. All his friends are like him, too.” Perhaps this negative modeling in the homeland was part of the reason the Buriat boys engaged in a public bullying. The literature confirms the gangster mentality among youth in Siberia and elsewhere in the Russian Federation (Humphrey, 2002; Pilkington, 1994).

²⁰² Unlike Buriat *datsans* (temples), Chinese Buddhist temples that I visited were designed as tourist attraction rather than spiritual sites. The children observed no shamanistic rituals in China as well.

When their children got into trouble, some Buriat parents turned, like other Indigenous peoples (Duran and Duran, 1995), to dreams. This is because dreams bring omens; dreams can heal; and one's life can be affected by a single dream. Just as with Jungian psychology, Buriat participants were kind enough to interpret my dreams for me, and they told me interpretations of their own dreams as well. Frequently, however, a Buriat will recount a dream to a shaman or to a Buddhist lama, in order to seek guidance. This is what one Buriat mother did when her son encountered trouble in China.

In this way, a Buriat shaman (or at times a lama) takes on the role of a therapist. He or she serves as a guide, as well as the one who is charged with healing the spiritual (or physical) illness. Buriat shamans 'journey' through time and space and meet with the client's ancestors, to consult and resolve the problem (Krader, 1978; personal communication, Jan. 2014). Unlike western psychology, the patient remains passive. The Buriat shaman may go into a trance, sing, drum, and become another animate being. After he or she has returned, Buriat shamans will counsel their clients, and at times advise certain rituals and actions to be taken in order to safeguard the cure. For example, a Buriat guardian was told to bring her nephew to a certain spot in Buriatia after he returned from China, and to have a ceremony held for the boy there, to ensure his continued well-being (personal communication, Jan. 2014). Both western therapists and Indigenous shamans use suggestion as part of the therapeutic encounter (Duran & Duran, 1995: 59).

Another psychological healing issue has to do with the way Buriat people feel about their traditional homeland. Buriat participants explained to me that they felt their children would, despite the drug and alcohol problems in Siberia and Russia, be "safer" in their homeland than living abroad. Their concern was not referring to physical safety, but rather

spiritual safety. As shamanic believers, Buriat participants explained that their ancestors and other spirits could be called upon, and be asked for support, if approached in the proper way and at the proper places. This could best be done in Buriatia. As both Buddhists and shamanistic people, Buriats believe that illnesses and unfortunate behaviors are rooted in spiritual causes. By addressing the ancestors in the homeland, by conducting rituals, and employing a good shaman, finding the problem, healing it and restoring the soul to good health, is possible. For these reasons, although several focal children did not complete their studies in China, their parents were relieved to have them home – because their children would be safe and sound, as well as near and dear to them. Now I will address the literature around Indigenous children's resistance in school.

Non-mainstream youth and resistance. How children relate to each other at school impacts their emotional development (Moon & Rao, 2010). Research indicates that the school environment and teacher behavior influences children's mental health and academic achievement (Lynn et al. 2003; Needham et al. 2004; Wentzel, 1998). For non-mainstream and Indigenous children attending schools controlled and populated by adults from the dominant culture, the educational experience can be challenging. Little research has thus far been conducted in Siberian communities concerning on how young Indigenous people assess their education and how they negotiate their sense of self (Habek & Vensel, 2009); nothing has addressed Buriat youth in Russia or elsewhere. Hence, this research holds merit, but as a qualitative study, I again emphasize that my results are interpretive. This literature review also presents inferences about Indigenous youth in relation to the Buriat focal children. Goals and motives are offered in describing their actions, and in explaining the grounds of the

children's motives. Such analysis is speculative, but resistance and struggles are common among non-mainstream and Indigenous youth everywhere in the world (D'Amato, 1988).

Some research has addressed Indigenous youth resistance in schools. For example, D'Amato (1988) stated that resistance is very common among Indigenous Hawaiian children. He found that they resisted their teachers both as individuals and as a group. D'Amato asserted that their "acting" - mischievous and challenging behavior - both entertained and tested teacher authority. Acting also allowed the young people to compete with their peers and to assert their identities. D'Amato presented the cultural differences argument, which postulates that minority children are socialized to different norms at home than those at the mainstream school and these differences may lead to conflict and other problems (Boggs, 1985; Erickson & Mohatt, 1982; Philips, 1972). But D'Amato then refuted this argument, citing Ogbu (1982) and Gibson (1985), who found that some immigrant minority children, who despite the fact that they are socialized differently, do comply to mainstream school norms and, in fact, adapt successfully to mainstream classroom social structures (Gibson, 1985).

Gibson (1985) found that cultural discontinuities directly affected students' performances at school in St. Croix, but such discontinuities alone could not explain why certain subgroups of students encountered problems at school. She advised scholars to explore the community context over time, as well as other sociocultural, political, and economic processes at work within it. Likewise, Ogbu (1982, 1987) sought to refine the cultural differences hypothesis, by outlining universal discontinuities, primary cultural discontinuities and secondary cultural discontinuities. Universal discontinuities acknowledge the uniqueness of every family and its patterns of child socialization; while primary cultural

discontinuities are those that non-mainstream students encounter when they come into contact with western/white middle class American norms and values.

Secondary cultural discontinuities, however, develop after a non-mainstream student begins participating at a mainstream school – especially schools that have stratified domination (p. 299). This discontinuity impacts what Ogbu (2004) termed “caste-like minorities” – who are distinguished from immigrants and other minorities because they have been incorporated involuntarily and permanently into a society, they face a job and status ceiling, and finally, because they construct their economic and social problems in terms of ongoing, collective and institutional discrimination (p. 299). Native Americans and African Americans are examples of caste-like minorities in the USA; any non-mainstream group oppressed by colonial or post-colonial rule is another example.

Significantly, because caste-like minority culture is defined in opposition to the dominant culture, resistance and struggle in schools may generate behavior that is in direct opposition to the dominant norm; African American students, for example, may do poorly at school because they develop identities in opposition to mainstream white culture, and they sense that their economic opportunities will not be equal to that of mainstream students (Ogbu, 2004). In contrast, voluntary minorities, such as Asian-American immigrants, may do better in school, because their frame of reference toward the mainstream culture is less resistant and oppositional. Voluntary minorities may seek to assimilate, while involuntary minorities may develop and use attitudes, behaviors and speech that are stigmatized by the dominant group.

Postmodern academics have criticized Ogbu for his minority categories; again, because this type of classification system overlooks agency, as well as the uniqueness of each

person's experience in the world. If we apply Ogbu's ideas, for example, to the Buriat children in this study, it is clear that they do not fit neatly into Ogbu's categories. The Buriat focal children qualify as *both* voluntary and involuntary minorities. The children were temporary immigrants, in effect, exchange students, having come from the Russian Federation to China, for educational purposes. Yet, upon arrival in Inner Mongolia, these children were grouped and treated as Inner Mongolian children – as involuntary minorities – because they closely resembled each other physically. During fieldwork, the children, in differing degrees, seemed to be classified by the dominant culture as both as voluntary and as involuntary minorities.

In viewing the Buriat focal children as a voluntary minority, due to their Buddhist and other Buriat cultural traditions, it can be argued that the children were motivated by a sense of filial obligation. They wanted to live up to the wishes of their parents, who held high expectations. For example, Buriat parents socialize children expect them to avoid conflict, respect authority, and to excel at school. During my observations in the classroom and hallways, most Buriat children were quiet and accommodating; they did not act out, make problems, or create any ruckus. As a voluntary minority group, as exchange students and guests in China, these Buriats would be expected to take an instrumental attitude toward education, rather than an oppositional one. For example, Stanford (1997) stated that immigrant Asian groups in the US were likely to act as voluntary minorities; also, Gibson (1988) perceived Punjabi Sikhs as voluntary minorities in California, as they maintained ethnic separateness while adopting practices they deemed necessary for advancement. The Buriat children, for the most part,²⁰³ completed their homework assignments, listened to the

²⁰³ Katya, the biracial child, was the exception. I do not enter the subject of biracial children at all in this dissertation.

teacher, and learned what they were supposed to learn, but some of them also got into trouble with the Chinese authorities.

Some the Buriat children in this study did resist Han Chinese culture. This means that they acted like involuntary minorities. For example, all the children refused to conform to the school dress code. Buriat children mocked the twenty minute outside exercises and patriotic activity held daily by the school authorities. All the Buriat children refused to participate in school talent shows, although some would come to watch. One Buriat girl seemed to enjoy annoying her peers and in causing ruckus. Finally, four Buriat boys, three of whom were attending the bilingual school (and one who had just graduated), cooperated in class but ended up participating in a mugging, a criminal activity, outside school grounds.

Ogbu and Gibson are noteworthy because they challenged cultural determinism by pointing out that Asian immigrant groups adapt their cultures to facilitate survival in the host country. Ogbu came up with his categories to explain this discrepancy. Resistance has also been noted among groups in the USA that are not caste-like according to Ogbu's definition but that, nonetheless, have experienced barriers to social mobility. Omatsu (1994) further argued that Asian Americans may respond being left out by forming a collective oppositional identity somewhat like that of the African Americans described by Fordham and Ogbu (1986). Asian students may reject the dominant cultural norms in schools (Lee 1994) and chastise those who act "white" (Sue & Sue 1973). Yet the Buriat children never attempted to act "Chinese." The above researchers are significant for this study, because they clarify the complexity of contextual factors surrounding Buriat resistance and identity, without offering an established framework to explain the way the Buriat children behaved. Although Buriats self-classify themselves as Asiatic, they are uniquely Mongolian and not Asiatic in the sense

of the Han Chinese or other Asians. Ogbu's schemata does not work; neither does Styanford's (1997). Further analysis is presented in the findings.

Indigenous identity. Native American youth identity has some parallels with the Buriat focal children and their heritage language use. Native youth in North America are cognizant of the relationship between their culture, their language and their identity as Indigenous people (Lee, 2007; McCarty, Romero & Zepeda, 2006), and they recognize that school has great impact on how they view these concepts (Lee, 2014). Scholars, such as Nicholas (2009; 2014), have introduced the concept of "affective enculturation" – which she deems as the development of emotional commitments to Indigenous ideals – which are nurtured and strengthened by the daily practices, ceremonies, and rituals conducted by members of the culture. Nicholas (2009) asserted that Hopi youth can learn to feel think and be Hopi without having strong fluency in the Hopi language; she acknowledges, however, that the youth she interviewed felt that they needed more language fluency to participate more fully in Hopi culture. Lee (2007, 2014) also describes the yearning of Navajo youth for more fluency in their language.

During my fieldwork I interviewed the Buriat focal children about their identity in relationship to the Buriat language. One focal girl, Surana, told me that she yearned to speak Buriat the way her parents and relatives did, but that she also felt that, by adhering to the advice and teachings from her parents, that she was 100% Buriat, with or without a strong language ability. In contrast, other focal children, specifically the boys, actually downplayed their language fluency in Buriat, perhaps because they saw their Buriat identity more in how they behaved than in what language they spoke. Certainly, as Lee (2014) documented, Buriat youth, like Native American youth, encounter many concerns, challenges and dilemmas

regarding the preservation and use of their heritage languages. And, like Navajo and other Native American youth, Buriat youth all expressed to me how important it was to live a correct life, like a good Buriat should. Dr Lee conveyed in conversation to me that Navajo youth identified themselves in living “a moral, correct Navajo life” (personal communication, April 21, 2014).

Clearly, transitions to becoming an adult for both Buriat and Native American youth are complex and full of transitions and great linguistic flux (Wyman, McCarty, & Nicholas, 2014: xix). Walkie Charles (2014) noted that intergenerational language disruption causes problems for today’s Indigenous youth seeking to learn their heritage language. Indigenous parents and grandparents may have encountered trauma from negative experiences imposed upon them, as well as lost or forgotten parts of their linguistic heritage. Charles described the confusion of Alaskan Yup’ik adults and teachers, as they sought to revitalize the heritage language for their young people. I observed this same sense of uncertainty and of conflicted feelings toward the Buriat language during my fieldwork in both China and Buriatia. Whether the Buriat youth will create and transform their language via linguistic innovations as Garcia (2014) described could be the subject of a future research project. I did note, however, that some older Buriat youth (18-28 years of age) had been creating rap songs together in Buriat Mongolian and Khalk Mongolian to entertain themselves and their friends.

Habek and Vensel, (2009) have found that Indigenous Siberian youth, like other young people, desired symbols of a globalized pop culture. Yet Indigenous Siberian youth, like Indigenous youth elsewhere, feel strong bonds towards their family members and their elders (Wyman, McCarty & Nicholas, 2014). Unlike the older generation, however, Indigenous youth in Siberia seem ambivalent regarding their language and traditions. The

Buriat youth participants, for example, did not feel a rift between traditional and popular culture; they liked both. In general, Habek & Vensel (2009), as well as Pilkington (1994) and Habeck (2005) assert that young Siberians, both Indigenous and Russian, enjoyed and wanted to participate in the global flow of symbols and ideas results in what they call the "glocal" Siberian variations of western fashions, ideas, and pop culture. I feel that the Buriat youth in this study want this as well. Hopefully, as the Buriat young people continue to access these western notions, they will also cultivate their "critical Indigenous consciousness" (Lee, 2014) and use their innovative thoughts and art forms to sustain their heritage languages for future generations.

Conclusion

This literature review has discussed positionality, definitions regarding people, language socialization, identity, and educational policies regarding the Chinese State and in the Russian Federation. Over history, dominant peoples, such as the Han Chinese and the Slavic Russians, have used ideological power to negatively classify Mongolian peoples. Dominant nations such as China and Russia have used school as a place to socialize their youth to become malleable, loyal workers for the state. I will discuss, in a more personal vein, in the next section why the focal Buriats in this study came to China to put their children in school in Inner Mongolia, and why they see the research site school and future education in China as more alluring than that in Buriatia or other parts of the Russian Federation. At home and abroad, I show how these children and their parents have encountered denigration of their Buriat culture and language; the Russian State has promoted assimilative practices upon the Buriat, and how the Chinese State demands linguistic and

cultural conformance. Nevertheless, many Buriat remain fluent in their Indigenous language, and proud of their culture, arts, and religious practices.

I have also presented information concerning the psychological aspects of identity and resistance, from a western and from an Indigenous perspective. I have looked at non-mainstream youth resistance in schools. The cultural psychological viewpoint concerning identity and healing has been presented, in an effort to speculate upon the ways in which Buriat focal children have behaved while living in China and attending school there. A correlation between Buriat youth and Native American youth has been established.

The Buriat focal children who are studying in a Mandarin-Mongolian bilingual school undoubtedly encountered historical, political, and geographical forces that have negatively impacted Chinese Mongolian residents and students. These focal children have been socialized culturally and linguistically to speak and view the world as Buriats, and as Russian citizens. In the findings, I discuss how their school socialization experiences differ Russia and in China. , How these focal Buriats responded to the Chinese and Inner Mongolian environment will now be presented and discussed.

Chapter Four: Methodology

Introduction

This chapter discusses my choice of methodological and conceptual framework: ethnography in conjunction with the sociocultural framework that encompasses language socialization research. Lutz (1981) defined ethnography as involving

...many techniques or methods, including, but not limited to, participant observation, interview, mapping and charting, interaction analysis, study of historical records and current public documents, use of demographic data, etc. Ethnography centers on the participant observation of a society or culture through a complete cycle of events that regularly occur as that society interacts with its environment. The principle data document is the researcher participant's diary. Ethnography is a holistic, thick description of the interactive processes involving the discovery of important and recurring variables as they relate to one another, under specified conditions, and as they affect or produce certain results and outcomes in their society (p. 52).

Ethnography is the conceptual framework that I used to situate, locate, and interpret findings concerning language socialization among non-mainstream Buriat youth inside a Chinese bilingual school.

Sociocultural theory and ethnography asserts that language cannot be separated from culture (Geertz, 1973; Gumpertz, 1972; Fishman 1974, 2001; Hymes, 1972; Saville-Troike, 1982). In accepting a sociocultural perspective, this research examined language in context and was conducted within the cultural milieu. Language socialization research, together with sociocultural theory has in recent decades demonstrated how language conveys relationships of power (Bourdieu, 1990; Blommaert, 2005; Freire, 1970; Freire & Macedo, 1987) and how

language also transmits identity (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001; Garrett & Baquedano-López, 2002; Gee, 2001-2; Norton, 1995, 2000). Ethnography describes and interprets the ways a person chooses to speak, in a given language, thus illustrating how participants perceive their sense of self. In my work, I have recorded how others respond to participants' language and communicative behavior (and vice versa), demonstrating the fluid, dynamic and evolving ways in which human relationships illustrate various aspects of identity construction and acceptance (Gee, 2001-2002; Spotti, 2007).

The second framework vital to this work concerns language socialization, which Duff (1995) refers to as a lifelong process, whereby “individuals-typically novices-are inducted into specific domains of knowledge, beliefs, affect, roles, identities, and social representations, which they access and construct through language practices and social interaction” (p. 508). Socialization takes place when competent members of the group or culture interact with novices, but bi-directionality is also possible. This means that children can teach their teachers or other adults, and it also acknowledges agency in young people (Ochs, 1988, 1990, 1991). In this study youth agency is meaningful in regard to youth identity, and peer socialization, like adult/novice socialization, holds significance.

The interplay between language and cultural identity among Russian-born Buriat focal youth in a Chinese bilingual school served as the analytical focus of this ethnographic framework. Via ethnography, I explored young Buriats' communicative actions (Saville-Troike 1989), “as it constitutes one of the systems of culture, as it functions within the holistic context of culture, and as it relates to patterns in other component systems” (p. 1). I wanted to understand school socialization practices and how they differed among the Russian born Buriat and the Han Chinese. To do this, I observed what was required to participate

successfully as a student in a Chinese bilingual school and found that the Chinese school system attempted to socialize Buriat focal children but they resisted. The Buriat children's language and behavior choices expressed their struggles against socialization inside a Chinese school. The result of this struggle transformed their sense of self: they not only gained varying degrees of new oral and written fluency in Mandarin and Mongolian but also a new sense of political and ethnic consciousness.

To understand identity concepts, I examined socialization processes through which the focal children acquired knowledge as Buriats in their homeland and with Buriat adults in China. I speculated while making passive observations how they were perceived by others when they became foreign students inside the Chinese bilingual school site, and how they identified themselves in relation to other groups: Mongolian and Han-Chinese. In order to grasp the relationship between language and socialization practices among Buriat children, I primarily focused upon the children's language use in the Chinese school, but I also observed these children in other domains; such as homes and public places.

In addition to the focal children, I interviewed adults, Buriat, Mongolian, and Han, to analyze the cultural, political and ideological meanings and expectations adult members attached to certain ways of speaking and interacting (Hymes 1972; Saville-Troike, 2003). Social, historical, and political perspectives of all participants were considered in order to create a holistic analysis (Erickson, 1977). My interviews with adult participants helped make sense of how the focal children responded to adult communicative interactions. As an ethnographer, my data have come from two primary sources: interviews, both formal and informal, as well as observations, both passive and participant.

Postmodernism and Ethnography

In recent decades, ethnography has taken a post-modern turn. In addition to adopting the idea that ethnographers approach their fieldwork as a kind of art form (Wolcott, 2005), this work addresses three vital, intertwined post-modern concerns. First is the issue of multivocality – many voices with many interests and many realities. Moreover, multivocality is related to the concepts of signature, authority, and advocacy, which means that as a researcher, I honored and conveyed as accurately as possible the voices of my participants, allowed them to speak, and then offered my own voice.

A second post-modern turn addresses ethics. My fieldwork and conduct in the field adhered to ethical standards, and my research participants were aware of my work and its goals. Additionally, I strove to offer maximum agency to each participant and I was aware of working with children, a vulnerable population (Christensen & Prout, 2002). Many participants' thoughts or speech were incorporated into this research, which is why I use the term narrative in describing this ethnography.

Third, I hold high regard for the context and praxis of my writing, so I struggled to faithfully render to my readers a clear depiction of contexts involved in my work (Robbin & Sluka, 2007). As an outsider and as the researcher/writer, my voice is apparent in this work, but I relied upon narratives to convey maximum agency to the participants. The voice of the “others”- the participants and the focal children - has been increased, by including extensive direct quotations, with original language text side-by-side (Tedlock, 1991). Finally, I have tried to remain objective as a researcher, stating and clarifying my position in the various contexts in which I worked.

Ethnography and Language Socialization

In the 1960s, Dell Hymes began writing about the need to investigate language in social and culturally specific contexts. By creating what we now know as the ethnography of communication,²⁰⁴ Hymes led the way for others to conduct qualitative research that explores the diversity of human communications and social interactions. It is only in the last several decades, however, that educators and ethnographers have moved from looking at language socialization in secondary sites, such as the classroom (Duff, 1996; Duff & Early, 1999; Heath, 1983; Valdés, 1996, 2001), to investigating and questioning the way language is taught in schools to English language learners (Fillmore & Snow, 2002; Genesee, 1994; He, 2000, 2003, 2004), particularly regarding Indigenous youth (Deyhle, 1992; McCarty, 2002, 2005; Nichols, 2005; Philips, 1972). Researchers have also examined why some Indigenous populations, who claim English as dominant, are not succeeding in the classroom (Philips, 1972; McCarty, Romero-Little, Warhal & Zepeda, 2009). Some educators in China are also exploring how Chinese as a dominant language may impact the use and preservation of Indigenous languages spoken in China (Harrell, 2003) and in classrooms in China (Wang, 2013). Research in non-Western classrooms that contain multilingual participants, however, is still rare (Moore, 2008).

Ethnographic research – both general ethnography and ethnography of communication - in classrooms in North America has brought to light many politically

²⁰⁴ As Hymes introduced EOC in 1964, “Such an approach cannot take linguistic form, a given code, or speech itself, as frame of reference. It must take as context a community, investigating its communicative habits as a whole, so that any given use of channel and code takes its place as but part of the resources upon which the members of the community draw” [p. 3]

charged concepts that impact bilingual classroom learning among minoritized²⁰⁵ students. Some concepts include: historical race relations, attitudes toward immigrants and immigration policies, and the relationship between socioeconomic status and test scores and tracking (Nieto & Bode, 2008). Young students' social identities (racial, ethnic, linguistic, gender, and economic) play out significantly in schools. For example, in her longitudinal study Heath (1983) illustrated the import of race and class as cultural and cross-cultural processes in the classroom (Bloome, 2012, p. 15). Some language socialization research uses a critical lens when conducting ethnographic research. American researchers Foley (2010) and Heath (1982) conducted critical ethnographies and generated what Geertz (1973) called thick descriptions.²⁰⁶ They carefully described and interpreted what they perceived was going on in classrooms and communities, via their critical and sociocultural lens. Their investigations reflected the classroom as more than a place to teach and learn; rather, such ethnographic research portrays language socialization in schools and other instructional settings as fluid, dynamic and consisting of shifting power relationships. This type of ethnographic research brings to light the unequal educational relationships between mainstream and non-mainstream groups. My research also explores the kinds of socially ordered relationships Buriat children experience in their classrooms in China.

²⁰⁵ According to Arun Mukherjee, Alok Mukherjee and Barbara Godard, in their article, Translating Minoritized Cultures: Issues of Caste, Class and Gender. *Postcolonial Text* 2(3):1 “*Minoritized*, unlike minority, emphasizes the process of *minoritizing* and insists that the relative prestige of languages and cultures and the conditions of their contact are constituted in social relations of ruling in both national and international arenas.” In this work, I use the term non-mainstream in conjunction with minoritized. In Chapter One I also used the term minoritized, as per Teresa McCarty’s (2002) definition: which “more accurately conveys the power relations and processes by which certain groups are socially, economically, and politically marginalized within the larger society” (p. xv).

²⁰⁶ In Geertz’s (1973) understanding, ethnography is by definition “thick description”—“an elaborate venture in.” Using the action of “winking,” Geertz examines how - in order to distinguish the winking from a social gesture, a twitch, etc.)—we must move beyond the action to both the particular social understanding of the “winking” as a gesture, the mens rea (or state of mind) of the winker, his/her audience, and how they construe the meaning of the winking action itself. “Thin description” is the winking. “Thick” is the meaning behind it and its symbolic import in society or between communicators.

Language socialization.

Peele-Eady (2011) has defined language socialization succinctly:

Where competence refers to knowledge and ability, language socialization refers to the processes through which children acquire the knowledge and skills they need to participate and communicate competently in a community setting. Embedded within language routines are messages about how to participate in ways that reflect that community's principal values and behaviors. (p. 58)

Language socialization researchers assert that children learn indirectly and often unconsciously about the assumed and required ways in which they must behave in a given culture, society or group (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). This kind of unspoken socialization structures social activity everywhere (Garrett & Baquedano-López, 2002). There are hidden ideological undertones to socialization practices (Heller, 2011; Martinez, 2000) and children, as well as other age groups, are socialized through language as well as to language (Schieffelin & Ochs 1986; Ochs & Schieffelin 2008). In accepting this perspective on language socialization, my research has sought to understand and document how the Buriat children learned to behave as students in a Chinese bilingual school, and how they struggled and manifested their sense of self. As the observations extended over time, I also sought to understand why they resisted the school's socialization messages and expectations, and how the Buriats' identity performances changed according to context.

Like educators, ethnographers consider language as an important conduit to socialize people everywhere, and not just in schools and classrooms. We all use language to communicate and transfer cultural knowledge. Furthermore, language socialization is not a cut and dry process. Language can be negotiated, questioned, reproduced and transformed

(Eisenhart, 2001). Language socialization research such as mine stresses that communicative acts, both verbal and non-verbal, are co-constructed and contingent upon the context of recurrent and mundane socializing routines. Garrett and Baquedano-López (2002) state:

These communicative acts are finely guided by preferences, orientations and dispositions that are social in origin and culturally specific in nature, while at the same time they are interest laden and creatively and strategically deployed by individuals... a dual perspective on the routine as socially structured and hence enduring, but also as situated, contextually grounded, and emergent in character. (p. 343-344)

My research also addressed how language socialization practices impacted a specific group of youth in North China. One source I drew upon is Gao & Ting Toomey (1998), who have extensively documented language socialization practices among the Han Chinese in terms of business transactions.²⁰⁷ Throughout their book, they described how the collectivist value orientations and communication norms based in Chinese culture and history have held three primary functions: to maintain existing relationships among individuals, to reinforce role and status differences, and to maintain harmony. The second of these functions, reinforcing role and status functions, may operate as a significant socialization factor between Han teachers and non-Han students, such as the Buriat, in Chinese bilingual schools, as role and status are inculcated in all Chinese citizens from an early age (Tsung, 2009). Additionally, educational scholars who are experts in Chinese education - Gerald Postiglione, Heidi Ross, and Judith Liu, all state that ethnographic studies in Chinese classrooms are few

²⁰⁷ They are writing for global businessmen. Other excellent sources also include: Hwang, K. K. (1987). Face and favor: The Chinese power game. *American journal of Sociology*, 944-974, and Bond, M. H. (1993). *Beyond the Chinese face: Insights from psychology*. Oxford University Press.

in number and needed.²⁰⁸ Thus, this ethnographic research on Buriat youth in a Chinese bilingual school adds to a lacking body of knowledge addressing Chinese education, particularly in regard to multilingual non-mainstream students. It also ties in with other research that highlights how ideological factors may undermine non-mainstream efforts to nurture and promote a minoritized language and culture (Guardado, 2008). Finally, this work addresses the need for socialization research in non-Western multilingual populations (Moore, 2008).

People belonging to different cultures and world views have distinctive ways in which they socialize their children (Duff, 2002; Ochs, 1988). Such socialization processes can be lifelong. They can take place in homes, communities, and instructional settings (Zuenger & Cole, 2005). Socialization aligns children to the group's cultural realities (Ochs, 1988; Bayley & Schecter, 2003) and it teaches them to follow the assumptions and beliefs of their communities (Romero, 2003). Through daily social interactions, language serves as the fundamental conduit in molding a child's social and cognitive world (Romero, 2003). Yet, when children, such as the Buriat focal children in this study, who were socialized at home in their Indigenous culture (Buriatia, Russia), and then they were asked to relocate to another country (Inner Mongolia, China) for educational reasons, encountered many challenges. This research addressed and analyzed their struggles by combining a review of prior literature with a postmodern sociocultural perspective.

Language socialization and non-mainstream students. Some language socialization research focuses on communication issues that do not work to benefit non-

²⁰⁸ In the Chapter Three (Literature Review) I discuss why these studies are rare, and why few scholars engage in them, even after the Open Door Policy has liberalized scholarship (Foreign and domestic) somewhat in China.

mainstream students. The work of Heath (1983), Philips (1972), and Valdés (1996) demonstrates how dominant White, middle class society socializes minoritized people; African-Americans, Native Americans, and Hispanic Americans, publicly, culturally, and linguistically – by imposing standard English as the norm, because it serves as the dominant language of American mainstream culture. These three scholars, among others (Foley, 2010; Fordham, 1996; Zentella, 1997) have provided insights into American based cross-cultural issues and miscommunication issues that take place in mainstream classrooms using English. Some of these scholars have promoted the cultural differences argument, which specifically suggests that different cultures have different moral values and norms. This implies that there is no one universal truth regarding moral behavior, because right and wrong differ from culture to culture.

Since the 1950s, the theory of cultural differences has deeply affected the way education is perceived in the US (Eisenhart, 2001, p. 210). This theory implies that people from non-mainstream cultures may hold values and norms, communicative patterns, and languages in their homes and communities which do not align with that of the mainstream school, making it difficult for such children to achieve academic success (Deyhle, 1992). In recent decades, however, cultural and educational anthropologists have sought ways to create instructional and curricular changes that would accommodate culturally and linguistically diverse populations in the US (Genesee, 1994; Hinton & Hale, 2001; McCarty, 2002; Nieto & Bode, 2008).

During my fieldwork, I explored, described and interpreted various patterns of communicative behaviors²⁰⁹ related to the communication patterns among Buriat children in a Chinese bilingual school setting; I also observed some of these focal children in Buriatia. My intention was to implicitly represent and critically interpret Buriat children's communicative practices in this school in order to contextualize their behaviors locally, and possibly internationally. I examined the ways Buriat children communicated not only inside the Mandarin/Mongolian bilingual school, but also how they interacted in China – with each other, with Inner Mongolians, and with the Han Chinese population.

Situating Ethnography

This ethnography explored how language choices are used by young Indigenous youth to convey their sense of self. The Buriat focal youth used their linguistic and communicative resources uniquely, thus transforming themselves into a specific speech community. As multilinguals, many languages were part of their growing repertoires: Russian, Buriat, Mongolian (Khalk) and Mandarin. They were also exposed to Temut Mongolian and some English. The research site contexts were specific, with the main site being the bilingual school in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia, China. Additionally, to contrast socialization practices between China and post-Soviet Russia, I observed schools in Buriatia. Many other sites were also observed, such as homes, public places, and spiritual domains (temples and sacred natural spots).

Following ethnographic tradition, I define a speech community as the shared understanding of the way language is used among members (insiders) and participants

²⁰⁹ When people communicate, when they speak, they organize their verbal and non-verbal speech and patterns of behavior in ways that go beyond grammatical rules. People make choices in how they choose to communicate in a particular context or social situation: whether to speak or be silent, utter loudly or softly, their choice of words and presentation of words – all of these things are learned, and may vary from culture to culture, or vary by gender, or age, or context.

(outsiders who join). The focal Buriat children in this speech community were all born in Buriatia and were attending the same bilingual school in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia. Hymes (1972) said that speech communities "share rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech, and rules for interpretation of at least one linguistic variety" (p. 54). Inside this Chinese-Mongolian bilingual school and outside of the school as well, I analyzed how speech was used in context among four Buriat youth from the Russian Federation. In interpreting their speech and communicative behaviors, I have also examined how adults and others at the school socialized these Buriat children, especially regarding language. My findings explore the attitudes and responses these Buriat youth displayed toward the school's and their peer's socialization efforts.

One aspect of my research involved observing three focal children's academic processes of learning Mandarin Chinese, both speaking and writing, as well as informal learning of Temut Mongolian, the local variety in Hohhot. The fourth focal child was primarily learning academic Temut Mongolian, but she also had classes in Mandarin. Some of the focal children attended private tutorials in order to become literate and fluent in Old Classical Mongolian. In addition, by traveling to Buriatia, I observed two focal children's bilingual proficiency regarding their use of Buriat and Russian in their homeland, Buriatia. My goal was to understand how language affected these children's sense of their ethnic identities, as Buriats, as Mongolians, and as Russian citizens, while they were living either in Chinese Inner Mongolia or in Buriatia. By listening to speech and talk in China and Buriatia, I began to understand how language choices reflected Buriat youth identity and how their lives in China had impacted their linguistic choices and their sense of self.

Field Oriented Activity

Fieldwork lasted a total of 18 months. It involved watching focal children for one to six hours a day several times a week in school, from late August 2012 through May 2013, with a winter break of five weeks in January/February due to the Chinese Spring Holidays. It involved participating actively with Buriat families- I ate with them, traveled with them, stayed in their homes, went to the doctor with mothers, went shopping with children and adults, and even bathed together with Buriat females. During the Winter Holidays, I visited and celebrated in both the Russian and the Buriat tradition with Buriat families.²¹⁰ For a brief period in February 2013, I also flew home to the USA to consult with my committee.

During the school year, approximately 6 hours a week were spent in homes and other domains. When visiting, I watched the children study, read, chat, or play alone, or with someone. Whenever possible, I engaged with the children and/or their parents and guardians as a conversationalist or friend, watching movies or Internet clips, leafing through fashion magazines, or sitting and talking at a kitchen table. Consequently, I ate with families and drank endless cups of tea.²¹¹ During school functions I also attended as a supportive audience and as an onlooker for school celebrations, official meetings, and talent shows. All of these activities helped me to cross check the data (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). While in China, I regularly visited some of the focal children's homes.

²¹⁰ Many Buriats celebrate Christmas the Russian way, with Father Frost coming at the end of December, and a party on New Year's Eve; they also celebrate the "White Month" which coincides approximately with the Chinese New Year (lunar calendar) in which families and extended kin get together frequently to eat, drink, and talk, and they also go to *datsans* and sacred spots..

²¹¹ Russian tea is served two ways: with milk and no sugar; or with lemon and sugar. It usually is offered with a sweet or small snack, but it can also be followed by a full meal. Buriats also offered me at times Mongolian tea: this is milk tea with salt, and is served with pieces of fried dough, much like the American version of donut holes. Both teas are tasty and refreshing.

From February 2013 until May 2013, I continued to observe children at school. I also interviewed other Buriat participants living in Hohhot over the summer months, and traveled as a tourist to places in northwestern Inner Mongolia where Buriats had migrated during the diaspora of the mid-1920s. In late summer (August 2013), I spent a month in Buriatia, primarily in Kyatka, where the extended family of one focal child lives. While in Buriatia, I lived among Buriat focal families, talking extensively to Buriat participants; parents, relatives, and friends of the focal children.

From September 2013 until January 20, 2014, I lived again in Hohhot, continuing interviews but no observations, and then in late January 2014 I went to Buriatia, where I again traveled to Kyatka, as well as to Ulan Ude, Irkutsk, and two rural villages east of Ulan Ude along the shores of Lake Baikal. (See Figure 28).



Figure 28. Lake Baikal in Winter 2014.

Additionally, in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia, part of my participant duties included becoming a Chinese language student at Nei Da, a local university. The first year, my attendance was very sporadic because I spent most of my time at the bilingual research school site. During my second year in Hohhot I attended intensive Chinese classes and became close to several Chinese language teachers. Taking lessons was based upon three reasons: First, I went to classes because I needed a student visa with multiple entry status. I obtained two year-long student visas which also gave me the right to reside continuously in Hohhot for two years. Second, I attended high intermediate Chinese classes in order to understand the grammatical complexities that Russian speaker, such as the Buriat children, would encounter when studying Mandarin Chinese. Third, I needed to make more Han-Chinese contacts in order to understand the relationships between Han Chinese and Inner Mongolians and/or Outer Mongolians.

During my stay in China and in Russia, as a researcher I acted both as participant observer and passive observer. As a participant observer, I sat in kitchens and helped adults make food, or sat and watched TV with the Buriat families and children. I went shopping with children and their families. I rode bicycles, taxis and buses with the children and their families. I strolled in parks with the children and their families. Sometimes I gave English lessons, as my dissertation chair recommended to help strengthen rapport; these lessons are described later in this section. As a passive observer, I sat discreetly in the Buriat focal children's classes and watched them. I also sat quietly in their homes, or stood innocuously on the street/playground/ track/ gym, or other public areas (shopping streets, groceries, small convenience stores) and watched them interact with each other and with the Inner and Outer Mongolian population.

As a researcher, I collected first-hand information about participant communicative behaviors, by observing and questioning participants (Spradley, 1980). I asked many open ended questions to a variety of people, adults as well as children, Mongols to Buriats to Han, and students to teachers. I gathered artifacts: papers, magazines, newspapers, clippings from refrigerators, pictures, drawings, text messages, and other Internet information, such as Youtube clips and music. To the best of my ability, I tried to participate and listen to the Buriat children and their family members (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Moreover, by becoming a Mandarin Chinese language student myself, I came to better understand the struggles and socialization processes one receives from a China based language education.²¹²

Regarding my position as researcher, I understood that my already close relationships with many Buriat families had to be carefully negotiated so that I did not “lead” my participants into giving me responses and information which they might have thought I wanted from them (Peele-Eady, 2011). When with Buriat participants, I tried not to initiate conversations, so I could watch the interactions between Buriats without them feeling that they had to speak Russian to include me.

Cultural Interpretations

I searched for repeated, identifiable communicative thoughts and behaviors in various situations and with various participants. I analyzed the specific context with the meaning participants attribute to it, as well my ethnographic understanding of the scene and speech act or speech event (Spradley, 1980; Wolcott, 1999). In gathering data for analysis, I focused on

²¹² Granted, as a native English speaker and as an American adult, my socialization experiences differed from those of other young people (Kalmyk, Kirgiz, African, Outer Mongolian) in my classroom, and from those of the Buriat children. Although I too studied Chinese my age, place of study, and experience were different from that of the focal children. My goal in studying Chinese was to understand the grammatical challenges (as well as to survive in China as a forerigner) and I understand that my interpretations must be made cautiously.

how language was used by the Inner Mongolian teachers in school and observed how, if any, that language was used by the Buriat adults at home. I found that Philips' (1983) participant structures were highly implicated, as discussed in Chapter Five. Also, I studied the differences in communicative practices between Inner Mongolians, Outer Mongolians, and Buriats, and looked at other cultural differences amongst them as well – also discussed in the results section. My socialization findings regarding how the Chinese school teachers are teacher centered and group centered came via school observation in China and Russia, as well as via a thorough review of the literature.

Timing, Macro and Micro Levels

This research included a macro and micro study that explored, like others (Heath, 1982; Philips, 1972; Schecter & Bayley, 1997; Spradley, 1980; Valdés, 1996) multiple and sometimes contested values and practices of non-mainstream individuals. On site, at the macro level I explored the socio-political (language policies) and socio-educational contexts (curriculum), which may be complex and fraught with many historical and political issues. The work of the Inner Mongolian scholar Uradyn Bulag was most useful in understanding hegemonic practices of Han Chinese against the Inner Mongolian peoples and the historical ethnic tensions between Chinese and Mongol. Robert Montgomery's (2005) work helped in understanding the historical and political tensions between the Buriat and the Russians. This macro-level perspective helped me understand what it meant to be a member of Buriat versus other Mongolian cultures, as well as the differences between Han Chinese and Mongolian culture.

Additionally, because I lived in Hohhot for extended periods, I was able to interview people, Han and Mongol, who were locals, and some who were language teachers. Also, I

interviewed numerous people: parents, educators, scholars and locals, in Buriatia during my trips there. For example, in China, among the Chinese Mongols, I asked older people (older and elders I deem over age 60) about the Cultural Revolution and impact of the post- Open Door Policy; In Buriatia, among the Buriats and Outer Mongols, I asked elders about pre-Soviet times and the period of perestroika, up to independence. I also asked the Buriat focal children some simple questions about these periods of time, to analyze their comments. I hoped that these interviews would offer insight into the ongoing tensions concerning dominant ideologies and non-mainstream groups. It also emphasized to me how Russian schools had started to change, yet how they, in post-Soviet times, still resembled Chinese schools to some degree.²¹³

Next, I analyzed the Buriat children in their school setting in Hohhot at the micro level, in order to illuminate and describe tensions and discrepancies between the focal children's communicative and behavioral acts and that of the mainstream. This meant that I watched the power relationships between students and teachers, and the relationships between different groups of children. I also watched the children in terms of gender, to see if this was significant in terms of language choice or other communicative behavior. While making these specific observations, I read pertinent literature to learn about the complexity of power relationships in schools and other public places; authors included Gramsci (1971), Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) and Giroux (2004).

This study also qualifies as a micro-level qualitative study, as it primarily examined one institution, the Mandarin/Mongolian bilingual school, in order to observe and interpret

²¹³ Chinese educational systems, as well as other political institutions, were historically based upon the Soviet model, as the USSR gave much aid in terms of funding and foreign experts, to the PRC, until relations deteriorated in the late 1950s. For explicit information please see: Lieberthal, K., & Oksenberg, M. (1988). *Policy making in China: Leaders, structures, and processes*. Princeton University Press.

the focal children's particular communicative behaviors in a particular setting. As a qualitative researcher, I did not attempt to depict an entire cultural system. My main and extended observations took place in the school, among a small group of focal children, who sat in the same room/same classes for the entire academic year. Using 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973), I integrated macro and micro information in order draw a comprehensive picture of the interactions taking place in this unique social setting.

Common Characteristics of Ethnography

This ethnography was a qualitative framework for analysis that allowed me to conduct interpretative research in a variety of settings (Duff, 2002; Schifrin, 1994). As a researcher, I brought together etic (outsider) and emic (insider) analyses of communication, as well as macro (global) and micro (local) analyses of discourse as well (Duff, 2002). From my outsider's point of view, I gained insights into the communicative acts of the Buriat focal children, by observing may be considered ordinary life at home and at school with a critical lens. The phenomenon that appeared in my world and in my mind had two properties: one was the physical tangibility of what I observed; the second was the vision that reached my cerebral cortex and allowed me to process these images into ideas – noting that these ideas were based upon my own experiences and background. As explained throughout this manuscript, I was aware of my position as researcher and my race and gender and ethnicity while conducting fieldwork, and while analyzing the data. At the same time, to clarify that vision, enhance upon it, and even dilute or transform it, I relied upon input from my critical friends, as well as the keen observances from participants I interviewed.

Critical friends²¹⁴ helped me in many ways. Some of them introduced me to other Mongolians (Inner, Outer and Buriat Mongolians) who helped me understand perspectives on life, politics, language choices; they also spent much time with me, which slowly allowed me to understand some of the differences between my White American cultural upbringing and ways of doing and seeing things, as opposed to the Mongolian, Han, and Buriat perspectives.

In addition to Buriat and Mongolian critical friends, I had some Han Chinese friends. One Han woman, Linda Liu, became a personal friend. She taught me much about the Chinese school system, and the pressure it puts upon students and their parents; she also taught me about food differences in regard to Han and Mongol. Mrs. Liu openly talked about some tensions and prejudices that exist between Han and Mongolian peoples. Another Han critical friend, a male, explained patiently to me that he, as a Han, had just as much right living in Inner Mongolia as a Mongolian. His stance as a pro-Han Hohhot resident and his conflicted attitudes toward his Inner Mongolian students (at times he perceived them as harmless but “not equal to” to the Han) taught me about the complexity of ethnic relations in Hohhot and Inner Mongolia. As an outside researcher, I spent many hours listening to people talk about their lives, their work, and their beliefs.

This research fused the dialogue between the outside and the inside in order to learn more about the diversity of the human spirit. It has added to the body of existing knowledge about language socialization in schools, by investigating cultural patterns, including communicative patterns and patterns of child socialization in a Chinese bilingual school, a place that few Western researchers, to date, have been allowed to enter and observe. In the

²¹⁴ Dr. Beverly Singer, an anthropologist at the University of New Mexico, has suggested another term: research allies. (personal communication, June 30, 2014).

next section I discuss specific features of ethnography in regard to this work: naturalism, contextualization, negotiating entry, my role as researcher, ethical concerns, critical friends, multiple modes of data collection, presenting multiple perspectives, and small sample sizes (Spradley, 1980; Wolcott, 1999).

Naturalism. In the field, I became an apprentice; learning by participating and observing the mundane actions and behaviors of my participants in the setting they are enacted (Boyle, 1994). At the bilingual school site, located in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia, China, I observed children three to four times a week, for one to six hours a day. I also interviewed teachers and administrators there. Additionally, I visited Buriat homes in China, and in Buriatia. (Chapter Two offers a focused section on the school and participants, as well as a historical and sociocultural overview of the place and people involved in this research).

Contextualization. For ethnographers, contextualization regarding communicative acts and behavior is vital; it cannot be studied in isolation or independently of the environment (Basso, 1970; Hymes, 1972). Contextualizing data places the information in a larger perspective and captures a holistic portrait (Boyle, 1994). My research was conducted in context. Children's narratives, as well as adult interviewees comments, are presented with a description of where, when, and why the communication took place. Over 18 months, I had face-to-face contact with participants in schools, homes, weddings, temples, saunas, parties in restaurants, and bicycle rides, to name a few, for prolonged periods, during which time I was respectful and mindful of cultural practices other than my own (MacPhail, 2004).

Negotiating entry. This work would have been impossible for a newcomer to China. Years ago, as described in Chapter One, I had become friendly with the Buriat community in Hohhot. With their help, in 2011, I negotiated entry to my research school site. Through my

pre-established cordial relations with Chinese, Buriat, and Mongolian participants, I gained formal permission to start observations inside this school, beginning in September 2012. I also gained consent to interview school administrators and teachers during the 2012 school year.

My role as researcher. I was the prime instrument of data collection (Wolcott, 1999). I employed multiple techniques to gather data, notably participant observations, observations, interviews (formal and informal), and artifact collection, audio recordings, and chat/texting via Internet and cell phone. My data were generated via fieldwork, which incorporated participant observations, observations, informal conversations, interviews, and participation in school/family activities. In addition, I collected artifacts, such as documentary evidence regarding the policies, politics, and philosophies of bilingual education, particularly that of Inner Mongolia and regarding foreign students in China; I noted the artifacts in the classroom (school announcements schedules, artwork, graffiti, notices) and homes (Buddhist texts, books, magazines, cards, etc.) and photographed some of them for personal use only. By intertwining the data, I generated an information matrix, which helped me uncover themes, some of which helped me to understand the way in which historical and political context impacted the environment in which the focal children lived and struggled. Other themes gave me insights to the children's communicative acts and linguistic choices. By generating and integrating multiple data sources, my data analysis has greater depth and validity, creating a richer, more comprehensive interpretation.

During my research, my role varied; I was not merely a passive observer but also at times a moderate-active, reactive and interactive participant. "Moderate-active," derives from Spradley's (1980) types of participation (complete, active, moderate, passive and non-

participant), depicting different degrees of researcher involvement, both with people and in activities observed. As a native speaker of American English, I have near native proficiency in Russian, intermediate proficiency in Mandarin; I do not yet speak Buriat. As an adult female researcher of 55, I am perceived as an auntie and at times as a grandmother figure, and also as a friendly foreign English teacher to the Buriat focal children. In my roles, I have listened carefully and respectfully to the children, allowing them agency and voice. I have been trained in ethical standards to conduct research; in September 2013, I also completed Child Safety and Protection workshops established by the British Council (UK).

Per Spradley (1980), with the parents, I often became an active participant, seeking to do what other people were doing. I could not be a child again, so I created the term moderate-active, to illustrate myself between moderate - as maintaining a 'balance between being an insider and an outsider, between participation and observation (p. 60). With the children, I was more than moderate, as their teacher and grandmother figure; hence 'moderate-active.' This, however, neglected to show my 'active' participation and 'active' observation role, so I have combined the term active with moderate.

I also include the terms 'reactive' and 'interactive' because I interacted with the child while conducting informal interviews, an extremely important method of data collection within ethnography that seeks to capture insider perspective (Malinoswki, 1922).

Before starting any data collection, I obtained approval for this research from the Human Research Board at my home university; when the approval expired, I renewed it for a second year with the help of my dissertation chair.²¹⁵ A Buriat research ally initially approached parents and guardians and other adults (teachers, administrators, and experts) for

²¹⁵ I also renewed my IRB status in early 2014, as per the ethical research board's request.

consent for their own interviews and for permission for me to approach their child about participating. For this research, I employed four key ethical criteria regarding informed consent: 1) All relevant aspects of the research must be explained clearly, including what will happen and what might happen; 2) the participant must understand the explanation; 3) the participant must be competent to make a decision; and 4) the participant must agree of his or her own free will (Homan, 1991). To determine whether the child was interested, the study was explained to each child individually in the parent's presence, and I emphasized that it was voluntary and okay NOT to participate. I encouraged questions from children and parents. Additionally, I asked that both parent and child think about this research and discuss it without me, and that I would ask again for their feedback in 10-14 days. Those children who agreed signed an informed consent document their parent had first signed.²¹⁶

During interviews, children chatted about their subjective views and experiences (Kortesluoma, Hentinen & Nikkonen, 2003). Often, they spoke spontaneously and without any structure, which at first startled me. At school, other children also often interrupted us, or led my focal child away in the middle of a chat.

I found that the interview context can profoundly impact a child's ability to communicate (Hill & Borland, 1996; Ireland & Holloway, 1996; Kortesluoma et al., 2003; Steward, Bussey, Goodman, & Saywitz, 1993). Therefore, I used open ended questions (Darlington & Scott, 2002; Docherty & Sandelowski, 1999; McCrum & Bernal, 1994), as children at times perceived my adult questions as tests, and appeared to answer to please me rather than express their own personal thoughts (Hill et al., 1996; Mahon et al., 1996; McCrum & Bernal, 1994). Following Docherty & Sandelowski (1999), I interacted with and

²¹⁶ These original forms with signatures blacked out are on file at the UNM IRB office, as per the renewal standards.

was reactive to the setting and child participants; I asked "what happens when" type questions and then proceeded to ask for clarification. As I relaxed and as the children got used to me, focal children and other young participants spoke more freely. They often told me little stories about their daily lives; the girls told me some of their secrets.²¹⁷ As a childless woman, I made mistakes, sometimes talking too much or being stiff around the children. I also made grammatical errors when speaking Russian...but I think this might have endeared some of the children to me, as they saw me as vulnerable (e.g., as an imperfect learner). One male focal child, Bata-Nimah, even offered to help me with the subjunctive in spoken Russian, as I "always messed up, but it was okay" вы неправильно сказали но ПОНЯТНО.

I entered the field with uncertainty. Going a foreign culture and place, to study Indigenous young people, with the idea of determining complex issues concerning identity, was overwhelming at times; I could not simply ask "Who are you and why are you this person?" Instead, the internal question became: "What can I say?" And this thought led me to wonder, "Who am I anyway? If my sense of self is so complex, how can I analyze another person's sense of self? And how can I communicate with these people respectfully and coherently?"

Such insights gave me as an ethnographer the awareness that everything I write about the Buriat is in fact interpretive, and my information is inherently subjective, coming from all the inner resources and experiences that I alone possess. In conducting fieldwork, I learned a great deal about myself while struggling to understand others. Yet, in studying others, I was not simply reflecting upon my own self and positionality – I was using all my inner resources

²¹⁷ I realized it was extremely important NOT to reveal these 'secrets' to the parents.

- my intellect, my heart, my intuition - to study the Buriat. In the end it became clear to me that, people – all people – are complex beings, so simplifying and generalizing about human identity is inappropriate. Slowly, I also began to understand that discursive constructions of race and ethnicity are linked to economic exploitation and to the way ideologies are transmitted through state institutions such as schools. As an educator/researcher, I discerned that identity became positionality for these young Buriat students, what Hall (1997) called “the point of suture between the social and the psychic” (p. 33). It became impossible for me to accept any linguistic definition of identity defining positionality via language usage but avoided acknowledging positionality in terms of power: the state, social structures, and economic privilege. Making generalities about Buriat culture was also simplistic. Thus, when presenting the Indigenous youth in this study, I acknowledge that their sense of personal identity may not approximate the notion of selfhood that I employ as a white, middle aged, American who has grown up Eurocentrically.

Ethical considerations. Ethical issues arose in the field. Two issues revolved around building relationships with participants and building trust with participants (Oliver, 2010). Another issue concerned defining boundaries; it was impossible to control who exited and entered the observation zone (Moore & Savage, 2002). I tried to focus only upon participants inside the site, and not to disrupt anyone, students or teachers. Before my fieldwork began in the school, the school director informed everyone at the site as to what I was doing, and I represented my study to him honestly and clearly. I asked Chinese and Mongolian people to explain to me any cultural processes I must be aware of to be respectful. For example, this meant giving out gifts of foreign chocolate to female teachers after interviews. Being aware

of the danger of ‘over-rapport’ caused me to rotate my class observations frequently, and not to spend every day with the focal children.

Because many of my participants were children (Christenson, 2004), I was aware of two key questions: “Are the practices employed in the research process in line with and reflective of children’s experiences, interests, values and everyday routines?” and “What are the ways in which children routinely express and represent these in their everyday life?” (p.166). In addition, Christenson (2004) warns researchers to be aware of the differences in perceptions of relationships between adults and children, as well as the power differential that exists between adults and children.

Multiple perspectives. In the past, traditional ethnographic methods sought to draw upon the native’s point of view and his vision of the world (Malinowski, 1922). But this emic perspective neglects the researcher’s presence - the etic perspective. Geertz (1973) postulated that what researchers call their data are in truth biased constructions of others’ constructions. Certainly, reality consists of multiple perspectives; research is produced by the interactions between researcher (etic) and participants (emic).

Via multi-modal methods, I captured both etic and emic perspectives. I wrote reflexive notes to acknowledge my presence alongside my participants and kept a field notes journal (Glesne, 2010; Maxwell, 2005; Miles & Huberman, 1994²¹⁸). In my journal I recorded how the children played and worked during school, with different interlocutors. Significantly, this journal also recorded my thoughts, feelings, and ideas to help me track self-awareness. In this way, etic and emic view points helped me in comprehending why

²¹⁸ There is a newer edition out currently: Huberman, M., & Miles, M. B. (Eds.). (2002). *The qualitative researcher's companion*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

participants did what they did, and to clarify and develop my interpretations (Boyle, 1994). If something was odd, I wrote it down as a researcher memo. My goal was to be faithful to the raw data, while also sifting through it and recreating it to understand the communicative behaviors under investigation (Sandelowski, 1995).

Critical friends. The ability to establish rapport and the ability to develop meaningful relationships in the field correlates significantly with the success of any ethnographic project (Slukas, 2007). Ethnography is more than a type of anthropological technique: it is a practice of learning to be detached yet compassionate, and this involves becoming aware of one's emotions, subjective attitudes, and hidden motivations (Huberman & Miles, 2002).

Fieldwork cannot be done alone. To gather data, and to gain the emic perspective, I cultivated and maintained several critical friends. They all assisted me in making contacts, interpreting information, and analyzing data. Five people were close critical friends; all of them had insider experiences and expertise. My first critical friend was a local Han Chinese university professor, born in 1958, who teaches English. YJH gave his insight on the Han perspective of living and working in Inner Mongolia. He also helped me gather and translate any relevant documents necessary to my educational research.

My second critical friend, U, was an Inner Mongolian born in the early 1950s; he is fluent in Russian and currently a retired biologist from an Inner Mongolian university. He helped me gain perspective regarding the sociopolitical and sociohistorical changes that have occurred during his lifetime; he also helped with Inner Mongolian (Temut) translations, when we visited the school.

My next critical friend was a leading Inner Mongolian scholar at the local university: born in 1957. W also served as an academic resource, but she lost interest in my project during the first six months of my fieldwork; her children were emigrating to the UK and she was very busy with assisting them.

My third longstanding critical friend was EZ, a Buriat woman, born in 1958, and a personal friend of many years. She guided me among Buriat families and helped me understand Buriat culture, including the differences between Buriat people and the Inner Mongolian people.

During the course of my fieldwork I was fortunate enough to gain another, Han Chinese critical friend, Liu; she was a mother and university teacher, born in the early 1960s. She helped me understand the Chinese educational system. Finally, an elder Buriat woman (aged 78), Daska, was my fifth critical friend. She led me to many interesting sites in Buriatia, and helped me to understand more about Buriats in reference to Buddhist/shamanistic practices.

I spent much time with my critical friends. With the women, I often ate lunch and/or dinner with them, in their homes or in small restaurants. I shopped with the ladies, bathed with them, and, at times, travelled trans-nationally with them and their families. With EZ I traveled from China through Mongolia to Siberia. With Liu, I traveled to Beijing via train, to enjoy a weekend together. With the male critical friends, however, (YGH and U), I met with them in public places and talked; we often ate a meal together, as this was a way to thank them for spending time with me. YGH and U introduced me to many people at universities around Hohhot; I paid for their transportation costs when we traveled, and I bought them lunch if we spent more than two or three hours together. With the female critical friends, we

often shared expenses, because they felt that I was a personal friend, not simply a researcher trying to gain information from them.

Small sample size. Following ethnographic tradition, I sampled in terms of environment and context, as opposed to people and numbers, gaining a small sample to achieve depth rather than breadth (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Mackenzie, 1994). This study had four primary focal child participants and their parents and/or guardians. The total number of participants interviewed was approximately 35. The criteria for choosing primary focal participants rested on these factors: 1) Because of the small numbers of Buriats attending this school, I chose children who spoke Russian and Buriat and were enrolled in the Mandarin/Mongolian bilingual school in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia; 2) They were aged between 12-16 years old; their grade level depended upon their age and placement by the Chinese authorities. By defining the age range flexibly, I enhanced consistency and dependability, while still allowing for some diversity; 3) I wanted to choose children in the Mongolian-Only track, and children who were in the Chinese-Only sections. This was very difficult to balance, as only one child was studying in the Mongolian only track in 2012; for that reason, I also extensively interviewed another focal child (Zhargal, 15) who had recently gone through that education and was now just starting his education at the medical institute; 4) I wanted a balance of boys and girls; 5) I wanted to understand the dormitory situation, so I wanted at least one child who was boarding at the school. (I also interviewed Buriat graduates of the school who had boarded there); 6) I wanted a balance of children who linguistically self-identified as either Russian dominant; Buriat dominant, or bilingual. In this way, my sampling methods were purposive and criterion referenced. According to Merriam (1998), "Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to

discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (p. 61).

I provided a detailed description of each of the four focal Buriat children in Chapter Two. The fact that these children attended the Mandarin/Mongolian bilingual school had nothing to do with me or my work. The Buriat parents had chosen to bring or send their children to the bilingual Mandarin/Mongolian primary school. They told me that they had hopes of helping their children in two ways: 1) They believed that by becoming fluent in Mandarin Chinese, the potential for work of any kind in China, Mongolia, or Russia, was enhanced for their children; 2) They all initially, as devout Buddhists, had the idea that their children would gain fluency in Mandarin Chinese at the school, and also learn literacy in Mongolian (Old Classical Mongolian script) via tutors or in the Mongolian track, and this fluency would allow their children at an early age (15/16 years old) to qualify to enter the select medical institute located in Hohhot.

Of the four focal children featured in this study, three have left the school early, without fulfilling these hopes. Other previous Buriat students whom I interviewed, however, were able to gain fluency in Chinese and literacy in Mongolian, and they are currently attending the medical institute. In addition, two additional Buriat participants decided to enter regular university studies in Hohhot.

The community of Buriats in 2012 was small but cooperative toward me and my work; they helped me tremendously. I employed snowball recruitment methods using one critical (Buriat) friend to gain access to potential focal children. Other participants included Buriat adults, Outer Mongolian and Inner Mongolian children, the Buriat children’s teachers, peers, and other adults, including parents (Mongol and Han), who interacted with them.

To further my knowledge, in addition to the focal youth, I sampled adults, past and present, associated with the school; I interviewed many people, administrators and teachers, who hold both academic knowledge concerning education as well as specific knowledge about the school. I also talked with the focal youths' parents (parental availability and interview depended upon where they were located, in Hohhot or Ulan Ude) to gain additional knowledge about their children's experiences. Some of the children's parents and kin met me in Buriatia, when I spent time doing fieldwork in the children's homeland.

In addition, I also interviewed and talked to many Buriat youth at the university where I was studying Chinese as a foreign language; two young Buriats were in my class the first year. I also interviewed Inner Mongolian professors, with the aid of translators, if needed, to ask them about Mongolian-Han relations, and about the relationship China has had with Russia, past and present. One professor would often recommend that I speak to another. I also maintained cordial relations with the Dean of International Studies, where I studied Mandarin Chinese. This Dean, Bayar, helped me by talking about the political trials of the Horchin Mongolians during the Cultural Revolution. (See Figures 29, 30).

Schedule of Parental and Focal Child Interviews

Name		KATYA	BATA-NIMAH
Gender		female	male
Age		12 (2012)	13
Ethnicity		self-identifies as Buryat and/ or Mongolian	Buryat
Birth place		Ulan-Ude	Kyakhta
Time in China		Entered in 2009; this is her 3rd year in China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entered China for the first time in 2011(first year in dorms; second year at Katya's home). This is his second year in China.
Dominant speaking language		Russian	Not sure if he is balanced bilingual Russian-Buryat; spoke only Russian to me and to his guardian while in China, claims he speaks Buryat.
Interview & Observation Schedule		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1st interview taped September 21, 2012. 2nd interview Oct 13, 2012. Informal talking from September 2012 through May 2013; spoke of her life in China, impressions of China, of Hohhot school, language use; Buryat culture, spoke of problems of looking like a westerner when she claimed to be Mongolian. Visited this child's two step sisters in Beijing twice in December 2012, with mother and child present. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taped interview: October 2, 2012. Informal talking from September 2012 through March 2013, August 2013; spoke of the reasons he came to China, impressions of China, of Hohhot school; language use; Buryat culture; what a Buryat man is. Interview with focal child's father October 2, 2012. Also chatted with this man's relatives in Buryatia in August 2013. Lived next door to extended kin in August 2013 for 6 nights and 7 days.
Parental data	General	Single mother family	Single father family
	Mother	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Migrated to China because of family quarrels. Mother is a transcriber for Russian news. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No legal mother; mother died in car accident in 2009. Katya's mother fosters this child.
	Ethnicity	Buryat	Buryat – deceased
	Father	No legal father	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Father recently remarried (in Nov 2012) to Outer Mongolian woman. Father is a businessman/ trader.
	Ethnicity	Slavic Russian	Buryat
Other relatives data		Two older step daughters in Beijing (one working/one studying at university)	Father living mostly in Outer Mongolia; makes trips to Buryatia to see his first wife, to China to see his son.
English dyad lessons with the child		YES	YES
Researcher contact in China/in Buryatia		China only	China and Buryatia
Return to Russia		NO – has not been to Russia since her mother left the country in 2009; mother has no plans to return	YES (Feb 2013)

Figure 29. Schedule of Parental and Focal Child Interviews.

Name	MERGEN	SURINA	
Gender	male	female	
Age	15	12	
Ethnicity	Buryat	Buryat	
Birth place	Selenginsk (raised in Ulan-Ude)	Ulan-Ude	
Time in China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entered China first time in 2011. Second year at school (in dorms). 	Entered China in 2012, had visited Hohhot in 2010 with parents as tourists.	
Dominant speaking language	Russian	Russian, but states she wants to become "really fluent in Buryat"	
Interview & Observation Schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Untaped interview Dec 2012, Feb 2013. This child did not enjoy speaking much with me; he was generally quiet around everyone. Informal conversations from September 2012 to February 2013. School observations in tandem with Bata-Nimah. Brief conversation with his aunt, when she came to Hohhot in September 2012. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informal conversations in September 2012, reasons she studied Chinese, impressions of China, of Hohhot school; language use; Buryat culture; why she went home; what is a Buryat? Enjoyed hospitality in this child's home in summer 2013 (approximately 1 week) and conducted many talks in August 2013 with child and parents. Met child's master teacher in summer 2013. Focal child's mother: untaped interview in August 2013. Focal child's father: untaped interview in August 2013. 	
Parental data	General	No father, no mother: aunt is his guardian	Intact family
	Mother	No mother	Mother is a western doctor
	Ethnicity	(Aunt is Buryat)	Buryat
	Father	No father	Father is a driver-mechanic
	Ethnicity	∅	Buryat
Other relatives data	Aunt is a banker in Ulan-Ude.	Older sister	
English dyad lessons with the child	NO	YES	
Researcher contact in China/in Buryatia	China only	China and Buryatia	
Return to Russia	YES – Aunt took him to Russia after criminal incident, no further contact with researcher	YES – (Nov 2012) This child left the school before the year was up, has not returned as student	

Figure 29 Continued.

Schedule of Parental and Focal Child Interviews (Additional)

Name	LERA	VALYA	
Gender	female	female	
Age	17 (2012)	19 (2012)	
Ethnicity	Buryat	Buryat	
Birth place	Born in Khorinskii region	Born in Ulan-Ude	
Time in China	First time to China (2012)	Entered China in 2008	
Dominant speaking language	Khori Buryat	Russian dominant "I don't speak Buryat"	
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No higher education, raised in rural area, rural school. Entered China in 2012, now in second year of Chinese studies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graduated from Ulan-Ude lyceum Attended Hohhot school for two years. University student – opted NOT to attend medical institute. 	
Interview & Observation Schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No taped interviews: refused, but constant chats. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taped interview Many informal chats - she lives on the same floor as I do in student dorms. Impressions of China; what is a Buryat; research site school; why Buryats come to China; Buryat culture; language use. 	
Parental data	General	Intact family	Intact family
	Mother	Mother is Buryat, lives in rural region.	Mother is a housewife
	Ethnicity	Khori Buryat	Buryat
	Father	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> father Father = Bata Nimah's Father is a businessman. 	Father is a highly successful businessman in Ulan-Ude.
	Ethnicity	Buryat	Buryat
Other relatives data	Older brother is an alternative doctor	Three sisters: one younger, two older	
English dyad lessons with the child	YES	NO	
Return to Russia	NO	Visited her parents in August 2012, came back to China.	

Figure 30. Schedule of Parental and Focal Child Interviews (Additional).

Schedule of Parental and Focal Child Interviews (Additional)

Name		NAMDAK	SVETA	BATAAR
Gender		male	female	male
Age		18 (2012)	21 (2012)	21 (2012)
Ethnicity		Buryat	Buryat	Buryat
Birth place		Born in Ulan-Ude	Born in Chita	Born in Ulan-Ude
Time in China		Entered China in 2007	Entered China in 2006	Entered China in 2011
Dominant speaking language		Claims he is balanced bilingual Buryat-Russian.	Buryat dominant but good Russian speaker.	Russian
Education		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attended Hohhot school from 2007-2010. now student at medical institute. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attended Hohhot school 2006-2009. Recently graduated from medical institute with preliminary training certificate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student at university, studying Chinese with plans to study economics.
Interview & Observation Schedule		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taped interview October 2012. One chat with him at medical institute in March 2013. Reasons he studied medicine, impressions of China, of the research site school; language use; Buryat culture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taped interview in Buriat home in November 2012; reasons to study alternative medicine. One chat one street in December 2012 - congratulating her on her success and asking where she would work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two informal chats about Buryat culture and reasons Buryats come to China.
Parental data	General	Father and mother's status unknown	Father and mother's status unknown	Father and mother's status unknown
	Mother	YES	YES	YES
	Ethnicity	Buryat	Buryat	BURYAT
	Father	Yes	YES	YES
	Ethnicity	Buryat	BURYAT	BURYAT
Other relatives data		Rural	Rural and URBAN	Rural and Urban
English dyad lessons with the child		NO	NO	NO
Return to Russia		NO	YES	YES

Figure 30 Continued.

Schedule of Parental and Focal Child Interviews (Additional)

Name		ZHARGAL	MASHA
Gender		male	female
Age		15	19
Ethnicity		Buryat	Buryat
Birth place		Born in St. Petersburg, Russia (raised in Ulan-Ude from age 3-7)	Born in Dzhidinskii region
Time in China		At age seven family entered China	Second time to China; came as tourist in 2011.
Dominant speaking language		Was dominant in Russian but now fluent in Khalk/ Temut.	Claims bilingual in Russian and Buryat.
Education		Left Hohhot school and began attending medical institute in September 2012.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended one year of university in Ulan-Ude. • University in China: not medical institute.
Interview & Observation Schedule		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taped interview September 25, 2012. • Informal conversations from September 2012 to researcher's departure: reasons he studied medicine, impressions of China, of the research site school; language use; Buryat culture. • Focal child's mother: taped interview September 6, 2012. Informal taping and conversation from September 2012 to researcher's departure (this woman is a critical friend). • Focal child's father: taped interview Dec 23, 2012. Conversations with this man in Buryatia, as well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taped interview; October 2012. • Many informal conversations (she was a Chinese language classmate); spoke much about culture, specifically shamans.
Parental data	General	Intact family	Intact family
	Mother	Mother is a housewife	Mother is a housewife
	Ethnicity	Buryat	Buryat
	Father	Father is a nomadic businessman	Father is a urban businessman
	Ethnicity	Buryat	Buryat
Other relatives data		Older brother is an alternative doctor	Three sisters: one younger, two older
English dyad lessons with the child		YES	YES
Return to Russia		NO – has not returned to Russia as Chinese government has confiscated his passport	YES – returns frequently to Russia, but is enrolled as full time university student

Figure 30 Continued.

Data Analysis

Using the analysis techniques of Peele-Eady (2011), I analyzed data by focusing upon communicative contexts and the activities that occurred within them. For this research, the communicative context was where and when activities took place, such as: lessons at school, walking to school and back, school activities; basketball games in the school gym, the daily morning ceremony at 10AM, and talent shows. My observations included communicative contexts outside of the school, such as their homes, shopping centers, parks, grocery stores, train and buses, and small eateries. I observed multiple contexts to understand in a holistic way the Buriat focal children's communicative actions as well as to observe how they performed their sense of self in different places.

Many contexts had socialization practices embedded within them, which took me some time to become aware of and to understand. For example, I walked with two focal children to school several times a week; I ate at their homes, and chatted with their parent or guardian. I also spent countless hours sitting in the focal children's classrooms, watching them learn Mandarin and/or Mongolian; I sat in on their tests as well. Every day while I was at the school, I followed the children to the daily morning ceremony and participated in the morning exercises. Often I chatted with their teachers at this time and place as well. When appropriate, I met with teachers and administrators to hold formal and informal interviews, to further understand the school's practices and the school's embedded socialization practices.

In terms of the focal children's activities, my data refer to any organized and bound unit of action, such as class recitations, choral responses and exercises during the morning meeting, language lessons other than Chinese or Mongolian – the private language tutoring in Buriat homes for Russian, and the tutoring in English I performed. I carefully observed and

marked each activity from beginning to end; I took note of the Buriat children's roles and watched the way in which they related to each other, to their Inner and Mongolian peers, and to adults in school and at home. I noted the focal children's participation and non-participation in roles across the various contexts.

In addition, I observed when the Buriat focal children changed the ways in which they communicated or behaved as their activities shifted. For example, one focal child's behavior differed dramatically when he left China and returned to Buriatia. In the Chinese context as well, I noted that the Buriat focal children acted and spoke differently when they were in as opposed to out of class. These findings with an analysis are discussed in the results section. Certainly, in the classroom, the Inner Mongolian teachers seemed to expect all the students, including the Buriats, to behave in certain ways as members of the student population – yet at the same time, these teachers allowed the Buriat children to behave contrary to the rules and norms established for the Inner Mongolian student population. I discuss this disconnect in Chapter Five. Finally, I was interested in observing any context, in school or in the home, in China or in Buriatia, in which the Buriat children demonstrated their Buriat identity.

By emphasizing data triangulation, this research affirmed the verity of the participants' perspectives and opinions concerning their own communicative and cultural practices (Duff, 2002, p. 292). Context is crucial to such research. During my fieldwork, I was aware that language use must be viewed in context, amid the children's social activities, in school, at home, and in other public places (Cole & Zuenger, 2003). I collected first-hand information about human communicative behaviors, by observing and questioning participants (Spradley, 1980). As a participant observer, I became involved in Buriat and

Chinese daily life, observing, listening, asking questions, and gathering artifacts

(Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

To collect data, I recorded talk and taped interviews²¹⁹ as much as possible; many Buriats, children and adults, however, did not want to be taped. In those cases I tried to reconstruct from my notes what they had said to me as accurately as possible. In addition, I collected artifacts: school memos, notes on fridges, Buddhist texts; children's SMS and email texts to me. These artifacts helped me understand script choices and language choices, regarding Buriat participants and also in regard to the school research site. More direct data sources included long term observations, participant observations, as well as detailed field notes about observations and interviews of locals and insiders (Saville-Troike, 1982). Data in the form of notes from my literature review included extensive information about China, Mongolians, Russians, and Buriats, including their separate and interconnected histories, politics and cultures, linguistic relationships, and educational practices.²²⁰ The primary source of data was recorded talk.

To analyze data, I transcribed and translated the focal (and other) participants' speech, noting context and language choice; as speakers' choices and competence was co-constructed via interactions with others (Bakhtin, 1981; Kasper & Rose, 2002). I identified patterns, seeking themes. To do this, I started by integrating other notes (reflexive notes; artifact data), looking for ways to connect this information to the transcriptions and my interview notes. In my analysis, I focused on oral communication and social interactions (Gass, 1997); describing and interpreting speech events, activities, or tasks in school, the

²¹⁹ Many administrators at the school did not want to be taped; some parents and children also did not want to be taped.

²²⁰ For personal use only, I took photos of things that stimulated me to think about my work.

language lesson classroom, at home, and other sites (Garrett & Baquedano-López, 2002). For example, I looked at the artifacts and noted which language was used for which type of communication. I examined the language choices of the children in context, to understand why certain languages were employed for certain reasons. I watched the way the Buriat children and their parents and guardians interacted with each other and with others: other Mongolian peoples, the Han Chinese, and with me as an American.

During interviews, I speculated that some answers were given out of caution or political correctness. I observed teachers with the focal children, and read the literature on Chinese teachers' interactions with foreign students and foreign visitors – in China, any non-Chinese citizen is considered a foreigner. I read extensively on Mongolian social and linguistic norms to understand how and why different Mongolians – Buriat, Outer Mongolian, and Inner Mongolian – might communicate and interact with each other, and I then I observed these people in interactions to confirm or contest what I had read. In addition, I read extensively on the political, social, and historical events in Hohhot, in North China, and among the Mongols. I asked discreet questions to participants, both Chinese and Mongol, to get a sense of any sorts of post-colonial trauma and consequences that might impact the Buriats in Hohhot, as well as other Mongolians in Hohhot and around North China. In the same way, I read about Russian and Soviet imperialism upon the Indigenous Peoples of Siberia and specifically Buriatia, discreetly questioned Buriats and ethnic Russians in Buriatia, and then observed these Russian citizens in Buriatia in order to understand post-colonial trauma.

Under the supervision of two committee members, I coded my transcript notes (children's chats, interviews with their parents and other adults), and I read other

ethnographies concerned with non-mainstream youth, as well as categories of language socialization in order to identify patterns and themes. The result was that I generated several codes, which showed patterns. These came to me after I had triangulated and analyzed the data over much time and reflection (Saville-Troike, 1982). For example, I had noted that many significant artifacts in both China and Russia were written in the dominant languages (Chinese & Russian) and that they were not addressing Indigenous ideals or values. I also noted that school authorities, despite promoting Mongolian language and culture, used the dominant language (Mandarin Chinese) for high status communicative events, both oral and written. Thus, one significant theme was post-colonial trauma in both Russia and China, regarding the Buriat children and their parents, as well as the Mongolian populations in general.

How I analyzed the data. I found data analysis to be an interactive process, because I systematically searched and analyzed my data many times, over time in order to provide an illuminating description of the phenomena.²²¹ Note that due to the massive amounts of data, I transcribed and analyzed the parts that I thought were relevant to my research. If participants chatted about mundane or non-relevant topics, I did not transcribe this. Per qualitative methods, my analysis was based upon core principles that included:

- Creating a codebook by transcribing the interviews and researcher notes
- Creating a codebook as I read the transcripts
- Immersing myself within the data to gain detailed insights
- Developing a data coding system based on data driven and structurally driven criteria.

²²¹ These results are by no means comprehensive; there was simply too much to say and discuss, leaving me much future work to complete. I do answer my research questions.

- Linking codes or units of data to form overarching themes/patterns.²²²

Codes are “tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study” (Miles & Huberman 1994: 56) and developing them is the first step toward analyzing data. I assigned codes to chunks of data, usually words, or short phrases, and sometimes to sentences or entire paragraphs, which were connected to a specific context (Miles & Huberman 1994).

Ryan and Bernard (2003) assert that codes can be developed a priori from existing theory or concepts (theory-driven) or they can emerge from the raw data (data-driven) or they can be structural, emerging from the statement of the problem, research questions, and interview questions. Indeed, some of my global codes were easily identifiable because they were structural, having surfaced from the project’s interview questions:

Identity/Socialization/Education in Russia & Education in China. Thus, my codes were not theory driven; they were a combination of data-driven and structural codes. By repeatedly examining the raw data, I found them. My structural codes appeared first: they stood out because I asked specific questions about language socialization in schools, identity and language choice. I did not know, however, until I had done the open coding and the broad coding that the structural codes would be my global codes. The data driven codes appeared by counting word frequencies and by seeking words that were similar in meaning first; others came from looking at their significance in a block of text or speech. As I looked at data driven codes, I sought the interrelationships between them to generate axial (broader) codes and eventually, patterns²²³ and themes²²⁴.

²²² Which I found to also neatly segue with sociocultural theory; I did not code using theory, as explained.

²²³ You know you have found a theme when you can answer the question: What is this expression an example of?

Specifically, to analyze the data I generated a codebook with three inch right margins to make generous notes (Peele-Eady and Blum Martinez, personal communications, May 2014). My codebook, like my coding process, was iterative. I added more and more to this book over time (looking through my researcher journals as well as tapes) and I tried to rearrange the categories and to create new ways to sort and classify. Initially, I had my codebook in all the original languages (Russian, Chinese, and English). Each translation had been checked by a native speaker.

Upon returning to the USA, I reread the texts/transcripts. Ultimately, to make coding clearer in my own mind and in the minds of my readers, I separated the original language from the English, and created a codebook that was entirely an English language version. At first I organized the codebook by geographical location; then I organized it by topics discussed. In the end, I organized my codebook into four types of interlocutors- four sections – with the codes having two parts:

1. Parents & Adults
2. School & Teachers
3. Other Youth Participants
4. Buriat Focal Participants

Code Parts:

- code name
- example

²²⁴ Data reduction happens at two levels: first, coding and meaning-making, and second, pattern or relationship-finding in conjunction with theorizing. This process of abstracting to generate recurring patterns and generalizing means that some data in the transcripts gets ignored. Thus, in my process of searching for objective knowledge via coding, the data underwent a highly subjective process: This is one of the limitations of qualitative analysis.

My coding had levels: open coding and axial coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) and finally, global codes. Open coding meant that I cracked open the concepts in blocks of raw data; this was when I creatively marked what I thought was significant and started naming it. Axial coding meant that I started to analyze the relationships between the codes, looking for connections. Global codes were the umbrellas that encompassed the open and axial codes, and they redirected me to think about the data in terms of my research questions.

Regarding open coding for my data-driven codes, I used several of these steps to inductively create codes for my codebook:

1. Reduce raw information
2. Identify subsample themes
3. Compare themes across subsamples
4. Create codes
5. Determine reliability of codes.

My first step in developing data-driven codes was to determine how to reduce my raw information into smaller units – to broad codes that would ultimately lead me to create themes and patterns. Next, I re-read and re-listened to my data, I checked to see if the broad codes repeated across different speakers and contexts – thus, validating the subsequent themes and patterns. This consistency helped establish reliability. After I determined which codes and themes were more easily and consistently identifiable (e.g., *they (Chinese) are too many; English is important*), I then examined the more problematic and less consistent codes (e.g., *Incident*). For example, the code *Buriat Identity* was initially confusing to me because it seemed to overlap with *Mongolian Identity* (and it does, indeed, overlap in many ways). I had created *Buriat Identity* to try to capture a focal child's description of how he or she sees

himself/her not only culturally, but also in terms of the experiences the child had known while living in China and attending the bilingual school (and for some, while living in Russia). These realms generated a diversity of answers and sometimes they were vague or contradictory. When I found similar broad, at times structural, codes: *Mongolian Identity*, *Chinese Identity*, *Buriat Identity*, I grouped these under a global label “*Identity*.” Later, I also regrouped Buriat identity as hybrid,²²⁵ allowing Russian language and culture to be part of the sub coding, and incorporated this dynamic fluidity into my analysis of Buriat identity.

Additionally, in identifying recurring and significant axial codes by searching and sifting through the data, patterns materialized. I have used them to answer my research questions in conjunction with the phenomenon that I observed and recorded while in the field.

An extract of data taken from my research study, a chat with a focal child in her home in Ulan Ude, Russia, is now presented. My first stage of data analysis involved the process of initial coding, whereby each line of the data was considered in order to identify keywords or phrases; or in vivo codes (highlighted) as they retained participants’ words. The second stage created the axial (broad) codes: *What is Buriat Identity*; *Language Learning*; and *Language Prestige*. The third stage displays my global codes: *Identity* (as a structural, all-encompassing code) and *Buriat Identity = Hybrid*.

²²⁵ My speculation is that if I did more research and focused on Inner Mongolian children they would be hybrid identity as well; similar ideas have been found among Navajo youth (personal communication Tiffany Lee, March 2014).

Table 6.

SAMPLE: Data extract containing units of data and line-by-line coding

Data extract (Buriat focal child) units of data (in vivo codes highlighted)	Descriptive codes/line-by-line coding
<u>Researcher's Journal: Surana</u> , a focal child, a girl of 12, who was	
entertaining me in her home Feb 2014 while her mother was at work.	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. S: "I love my home, you wanna see my diplomas and prizes? (<i>home = place =connected to identity/Buriat identity</i>) 2. VS: "Sure." 3. S: "This one is for Buriat language, I like it the best. This one is for attendance, this one is for math..." (<i>likes B lang = language prestige/identity/Buriat identity</i>) 4. VS: "Why do you like the Buriat language prize best?" 5. S: "It's hard to learn." (<i>language learning= not easy</i>) 6. VS: "Oh." 7. S: "And my mom wants me to speak it like Russian..." (<i>speak B like R = language prestige/ identity / Buriat identity= bilingual</i>) 8. VS: "Can you speak well?" 9. S: "Uhhh...maybe...." (<i>unsure of language proficiency/language</i>) 10. VS: "Did you like learning Chinese?" (<i>language learning/Chinese language</i>) 11. S: "It was okay." (<i>doesn't like Chinese learning as much as Buriat learning/language prestige/language identity?</i>) 12. VS: "Was it hard?" 13. S: "Yes, very hard." (<i>language learning = difficult; Chinese = difficult</i>) 14. VS: "Why?" 15. S: "The teachers were strict. They wanted me to be like the other kids, but I couldn't..." (<i>School = strict; identity = not like other (Inner Mongolian) kids /Buriat identity/Mongolian identity</i>) 16. VS: "Why?" 17. S: "I couldn't understand everything." (<i>language = difficult; identity = cannot understand Chinese language/culture</i>) 18. VS: "That's very hard. I don't understand much Chinese even now." 19. S: "It wasn't just Chinese, it was their Mongolian, too...it is different from Buriat, and the kids were different." (<i>identity= Mongolian identity/Buriat identity/Chinese identity and language differences of all three groups</i>) 20. VS: "Why?" 21. S: "They said they were Mongolian, like me, but they really were Chinese." (<i>Inner Mongolians are Chinese; they aren't Mongols = identity/Mongolian identity</i>) 	

Data extract (Buriat focal child) units of data (in vivo codes highlighted)	Descriptive codes/line-by-line coding
22. VS: “Really? Why do you say that?”	
23. S: “ Buriats are shy and careful; Chinese are loud and pushy. ”(Buriat identity/Chinese identity)	
24. VS: “Are Buriats Mongolians?”	
25. S: “ Yes of course! We are northern (Mongols), my dad said our ancestors protected Genghis Khan. ” (Buriat identity; historical - GK marker & geographic marker)	
26. VS: “Really? How did they do that?”	
27. S: “ We Buriats were bodyguards. ” (Buriat identity; historical GK’s bodyguard marker)	
28. VS: “Oh.”	
29. S: “Are you hungry? I can make tea. ” (tea = Russian & Mongolian cultural marker = Buriat / Russian identity)	
30. VS: “What kind of tea?”	
31. S: “ Russian tea, of course! With biscuits and chocolates, Russian chocolates. ” (Identity = Russian foodstuffs / Buriat identity)	
32. VS: “Great, let’s have tea.”	

To identify themes I used several techniques (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). They are as follows:

- a. Cut and sort information: move data around to make it familiar & strange
- b. Generate specific word lists, key words in context & check translations again
- c. Look at words clustered together with certain groups (e.g., Buriats are shy, quiet, patient, enduring)
- d. Look for repetitions (e.g., “they (Chinese) are too many)
- e. Look for local terms that may sound unfamiliar or are used in unfamiliar ways (e.g.,)
- f. Look for metaphors and analogies (e.g., “*pure*” Mongol; *peasant* – Outer Mongols; *insects* - Chinese)
- g. Look at transitions (e.g., Mongolian teacher’s evasions in answering questions about her language’s linguistic vitality in China)

- h. Look for similarities & differences (e.g., how is Buriat culture different from Mongolian; how Russian education is similar/different from Chinese education)
- i. Look at causal relations (e.g., “they are peasants *because..*”; *instead of* Mongolian they speak Chinese)
- j. Look at what is missing (e.g., why Buriat parents do not speak Buriat, talk about teaching Buriat to their children; why Inner Mongolian teachers do not refer much to Chinese administration)

First, after I broke the transcripts into manageable episodes. I sorted and sifted them, using 3x5 cards. I searched for types, classes, sequences, processes, and patterns. Then I brought together similar categories to generate broader themes. The following table illustrates an example of developing codes and categories and how they linked together to form broad themes.

Table 7.

Development of initial themes from descriptive codes

Early descriptive codes/categories

Love my home = identity

Buriat language = likes best = identity/language prestige

Hard to learn = Buriat language

My mom wants = socialization – Buriat

Speak it (Buriat) like Russian = language prestige / hybrid linguistic identity

It's hard to learn Learning Buriat is hard

Very hard (learning Chinese) Learning Chinese is hard

I like it the best (Buriat)

It was okay (Chinese)

Broad initial theme

What is Buriat identity?

Language Learning

Language Prestige

The third stage was to take the themes and group them under the umbrella of what I called global patterns/concepts. Now I present a descriptive table, followed by charts illustrating patterns and themes.

Table 8.

Global patterns/concepts

Category development	Final themes	Overarching concepts
Buriats have Mongolian Identity		<i>IDENTITY</i>
Buriats have Russian Identity		
Buriats eat Russian foods	Buriat Buriat/Mongolian ID	<i>Buriat Identity=Hybrid</i>
Buriats should learn Buriat language		
Buriats should know Russian, too		
Buriats are shy and careful	Buriat Buriat/Russian ID	

This process helped ensure that my qualitative study was methodologically robust, as it illustrated how I created a way to analyze my findings from the raw data collected in the field. The three tables presented my progress from units of data to coding to pattern development to themes and global themes. By being transparent I have enhanced validity, which is important, as qualitative studies are often not easily replicable. Although other researchers may interpret the data differently, appreciating and understanding how the themes were developed is an essential part of demonstrating the potency of these findings. In sum, data collection, coding, and analysis were complex processes, partly due to the large amounts of data I collected. My analysis took much time and reflection.

Codes from Transcriptions and Researcher's Journal:

Global Codes (structural):

- ✚ LANGUAGE
- ✚ CULTURE
- ✚ SOCIALIZATION
- ✚ SCHOOL
- ✚ CONTEXT/PLACE
- ✚ PEOPLE/INTERACTION
- ✚ IDENTITY

Open & Axial Codes

- ✚ Language
 - Language Use
 - Buriat
 - Russian
 - Mongol (Khalk)
 - Mongol (Inner Mongolian varieties)
 - English
 - Language Prestige
 - Buriat
 - Russian
 - Mongol (Khalk)
 - Mongol (Inner Mongolian varieties)
 - English
 - Mongolian Language(s)
 - Russian Language
 - Buriat Language
 - English
 - Chinese
 - ✚ People
 - Mongolian Peoples
 - Pure Mongolians
 - Outer Mongolians
 - Inner Mongolians
 - Russian/Buriat Mongolians
 - Mongolian Culture
 - Pure Mongolians
 - Outer Mongolians
 - Inner Mongolians
 - Russian/Buriat Mongolians
 - ✚ Culture / Socialization
 - Chinese Culture
 - Chinese Socialization
 - Chinese School socialization
- Chinese family socialization
- Russian Culture
- Russian Socialization
 - Russian School socialization
 - Russian Family Socialization
- Buriat Culture
- Buriat Socialization
 - Buriat Family Socialization
 - ✚ Schools
- Chinese Schools
 - School life
 - Teachers and teaching
 - Assessment
 - POV – student
 - POV- teacher
 - Rules and regulations
- Russian Schools
 - School life
 - Teachers and teaching
 - Assessment
 - Point of View (POV)
 - POV– student
 - POV- teacher
 - Rules and regulations
- Bilingual School Site
 - School life
 - Teachers and teaching
 - Assessment
 - POV – student
 - POV- teacher
 - Rules and regulation
 - ✚ Identity
- What is Identity?
 - Mongol
 - Buriat
 - Russian
 - Multi-ethnic
 - Chinese
 - Hybrid Identity
 - Foreigner; Asian/non-Asian
 - ✚ Context/Place
- Comparing
 - Russia to China
 - Russian Culture to Chinese Culture

- Russian Schools to Chinese Schools
- Mongol Culture to Chinese Culture
- Mongol Culture to Russian Culture
- Mongol Culture to Buriat Culture
- Political/Historical
 - Russia
 - China
 - Mongolia
- Medicine
 - Mongolian/Tibetan medicine
 - Medical Institute HHT
 - ✚ People/Interaction
- Relationships
 - School
 - Family
 - Friends/Peers
- Goals & Expectations
 - Parents
 - Teachers
 - Students
 - Children
- Incident

Themes and patterns. From my coding, I discovered that I had several patterns which yielded three overarching themes. The organization hierarchy I have generated is as follows:

1. Colonizing Ideologies Impact Focal Children
 - a. Too many people
2. Evolving Identities
 - a. What is a “pure” Mongol
 - b. We are all Mongolians
3. Competing languages

These themes and patterns are discussed and analyzed in my results chapter.

Validity. To combat validity threats I acknowledged my researcher bias and asked critical friends for help in seeing the Han, Inner Mongolian, and/or Buriat point of view.²²⁶ To further support validity, I used diversity in sampling and in data analysis (Maxwell, 1996). To understand something about Buriat culture and the children’s community, I spent hundreds of hours in different settings (school, homes, public gatherings, shopping centers, movie theaters, saunas, campsites) with all participants.²²⁷

Reciprocity. My research would not have been possible in any form without the support of the Buriat community. This brings me to the concepts of reciprocity, collaboration, and partnership, which are also traits of post-modern ethnographers such as

²²⁶ I wrote reflective pieces to myself, and analyzed my own reactions and feelings to events and interactions in China. Participants also helped me understand context. To counteract any biases on the part of critical friends and myself, the data was transparent to all. By triangulating data, conducting member checks, writing reflections and journaling, and making use of my critical friends, I feel that validity is established.

²²⁷ While conducting the research, I kept in mind that the focal children were considered social agents who participate and create meaning to the processes they choose to be involved in, making analysis of their actions and communicative practices both valid and necessary (Grover, 2004; James, 2007).

myself. A small community of friends, all Buriats living in Hohhot, embraced me as someone they could trust, and as a researcher who would respect their culture and lifestyle, describe it accurately and positively, and contribute toward the education of their children.²²⁸

When in the field, I realized that the idea of serving the community and collecting ethnographic data hold equal import. I took this obligation very seriously then, and still do now – which is why I hope to return to Buriatia in the future and work in education. I also felt that I must reconfirm what I was writing, by asking and asking again to Buriat participants and critical friends, if I had understood correctly what I had experienced, seen, or heard. Not everything I experienced in the field was positive, but by listening and learning with care and sensitivity, and admitting my imperfect ability to understand and/or communicate, this work could aspire to produce a “good enough” ethnography with “adequate explanations” of the human behavior I observed (Becker, 1993).

Vulnerable Populations as Focal Participants in Qualitative Research

My educational research work in northern China highlighted the voices of four Buriat youth (aged 12-16) from Buriatia, Russian Federation, who were living and studying in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia, China.²²⁹ Some children resided with their families, some with guardians, and some lived with other foreign children, mostly Outer Mongolians, in dormitories at the Mandarin-Mongolian bilingual school, my research site. Their parents chose to bring their children to China. All of these young people had to adjust to their new circumstances. They encountered shifts and differences in the landscape, clothing, language, cultural products, as well as religious and spiritual beliefs and practices. They struggled with

²²⁸ This is why I continued to offer free English lessons to Buriat participants after my observation period had ended.

²²⁹ As previously noted, all names in this study are pseudonyms. One of the four focal children left China during my initial fieldwork, so I observed her for six weeks in Buriatia..

new linguistic and cultural interactions as they encountered all aspects of the dominant Han Chinese society. These focal children were and are young, talented, and vulnerable; I was and still am old, educated and aware of their vulnerability.

Conducting research with children presents unique ethical and methodological challenges. Recently, the trend has been to focus on ethics to the detriment of methods (Lambert, Glacken, & McCarron, 2013). Yet, in acknowledging children's vulnerability, immaturity and developmental stages, there are ways to maximize children's ability to express their views. To empower children and obtain child led data, it is possible to combine traditional adult methods with innovative child friendly methods (Balen, Holroyd, & Mountain, 2000/2001; Punch 2002a/b). This means thinking up data collection methods that children perceive as fun and interesting so they are motivated to participate in research. For this study, I had two original strategies: I offered the pairs of focal children a creative, communicative, game filled English language lesson. Second, for the girls, I allowed them to brush my hair when visiting their homes. Traditionally, Mongolian girls have worn their hair long; today, many young Buriat Mongolians, as well as Inner and Outer Mongolians, continue to have long hair. The two Buriat focal girls in this study were fascinated with my hair, and asked me repeatedly if they could brush my hair. I agreed and this helped me to build rapport with the girls.

Interviews and conversational style with children. In this research, I was concerned with allowing the voices of the Buriat children to be heard, so I paid close attention to my participants' interpretations of events, and how they made meanings from their stories. I also paid close attention to the social elements of situations (Clandinin &

Connelly, 1998; Sarbin, 1986). In sum, I conducted many open ended interviews and listened to many stories, long and short.

With the advice of a committee member, Dr. Peele-Eady, I tried to use an informal conversational style during my interviews. A rigid question/answer framework blocked natural discussion and the children's unique perspectives. In addition, the school setting did not lend itself to conducting formally structured interviews, as we chatted during class breaks (ten minutes), the morning exercise and patriotic exercise break (20 minutes) or walking backing and forth to school (15 minutes).

Consequently, my chat interviews took place whenever and wherever the context facilitated. This also helped me capture a holistic picture of what was going on in their lives and what they thought was important. I often began with a general open question asking a child to tell or explain something: how was this school different from that in Buriatia; did she or he miss friends back home; was the food in the cafeteria tasty, etc. The remainder of the conversation often wandered off topic; I simply listened. I tried to allow the children (and the adults) a degree of control over the conversational agenda while also hoping to cover topics relevant to the research.

As a woman with no children herself, part of my journey as a researcher taught me that the Buriat children (like all children everywhere) had and have distinct styles of communicating. Some spoke confidently, articulately and more freely than others; some peppered their Russian with English, to make us both smile. The boys generally spoke to me less than the girls; it was not cool to be around me too much, especially if I had just finished chatting with a girl. Some children seemed shy, and responded with short, vague answers. Others would not stop talking, but talked off topic. Interruptions happened. I was often

interrupted in my conversations with children by other children, or by parents. Sometimes these interruptions provided valuable contextual information and future topics for discussion. As semi-participant observer, I asked children to clarify what we had observed happening in school. Sometimes, especially with the girls, two or more children took part and interacted together in conversations. Conversations varied in time, from a few minutes to a half hour. Sometimes, parents were present.

Parental presence during data collection is good and bad: it offers valuable contextual information and future topics for discussion with the children. It also constrains the things a child will say, as I became just another adult, allied with the parent. One parent constantly took control of the conversation; she was also highly critical of the children under her care, but not of her own child. My relationship as a friend of this boy's guardian kept the focal child from trusting me he began taking English lessons privately with me, with the language partner of his choice.

Another boy appeared reluctant to talk; he answered me with "I don't know answers." He might not have understood me, or trusted me, or he might have simply not wanted to participate (McCrum & Bernal, 1994), so I eliminated him as a focal child. At times, if I were too eager, a child seemed to be exercising his power by not responding (Greene & Hill, 2005; Robinson & Kellert, 2004). I took this as my fault, as a budding researcher, who rushed forward without building rapport. Children must trust you and be familiar with you before questions are posed (Kortesluoma et al., 2003; McCrum & Bernal, 1994). The Buriat were in a foreign land; they were naturally cautious with strangers.

Rapport building methods. I used a variety of rapport building methods and ice-breakers to get to know the children. I talked about myself, if asked, and I listened to their

iPods, translating the English lyrics for them. My phone was an object of great worth, so I took pictures and videos and then let the children handle the phone while I asked them to comment on the media on display. At times, I let the girls dress my hair in their parents' homes; this caused much laughter all around. Walking back and forth to school, I played word games with the children; we took turns pointing at signs in Chinese and translating them. This also helped me determine their fluency, as Chinese is very metaphorical. My most successful method was teaching the children English in dyads, in my home. Everything was communicative and based on games; my chair suggested this method, and I am eternally grateful to her for this, because it enabled me to spend time playing and interacting with children, prior to and alongside data collection. It was an inherent part of fieldwork and very personal, but also beneficial to them. We got to know each other for one hour a week, for 15 weeks. I knew they liked the lessons, as they asked me for homework sheets, and brought them back to be checked.

Tutoring in dyads allowed me to give something back to the Buriat focal children and their parents.²³⁰ Tutoring also assisted with rapport building and also helped to enhance children's attention span and English fluency. It was a springboard for later discussions, allowing me to praise the child and recognize his or her linguistic talents. Finally, it diverted focus away from the adult researcher and helped me reduce the unequal balance of power between adult researcher/child participant relationship (Balen et al., 2000/2001; Mahon, Glendinning, & Clarke, 1996; Punch, 2002a, 2002b).

²³⁰ I also contributed financially to families that hosted me, by paying for food, and offering to treat children and parents to a movie, or to popular entertainment, such as going to a children's park, a museum, or art opening. This was particularly true in Buriatia, as I lived among the Buriat in their homes.

Conclusion

This chapter has introduced methodology by presenting my conceptual and theoretical framework as ethnography and language socialization. I have situated ethnography in the literature and justified its use for my research. I have described how ethnography differs from observational studies, as it has no prior hypotheses, and how I as an ethnographer have employed a variety of tools, such as participant/passive observation, formal/informal interviews, researcher's journals, mapping and charting, and critical friends. Additionally, I have explained my researcher positionality. This chapter has also focused on data collection and analysis, outlining my perceived codes and patterns. Additionally, I have reviewed ethical concerns, paying particular attention to this, as focal participants were children. In the next chapter I discuss my results, by examining the implications of the codes and patterns.

Chapter Five: Results

Throughout this manuscript, I have offered narratives from the focal children, their parents, and other participants involved in this research. This chapter presents findings by offering an analysis of the data. I have chosen excerpts from transcripts that connect to more than one pattern and/or them. I present and analyze data, integrating my analysis with the larger issues raised from the research questions.

This chapter describes my findings and results in relation to the four research questions. Findings are situated in two contexts. My primary research site was a bilingual Mandarin/Mongolian school located in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia, where I observed the focal children during the school year 2012/2013. At this time I also visited their homes and interacted with their family members. My secondary research site was located in various places inside Buriatia, Russia. For example, in the summer of 2013 I spent one month in a rural area (Kiran) which is near the town of Kyatka, where (Bata-Nimah) a focal child's extended family lived. (See Figure 31). In Jan/Feb 2014 I spent a total of six weeks in Ulan Ude, (where the focal girls Surana and Katya were born), a rural village outside of Ulan Ude (Gorianchinsk) and also I made a second, brief visit to Kyatka. Finally, I visited the city of Irkutsk, to interview Mergen's aunt.



Figure 31. Near Kyatka in Summer 2013.

After having generated my themes and patterns in the methodology, I reorganized them in my results section. In doing so, I discovered that I had three overarching themes. The organization hierarchy I now discuss regarding results is as follows:

1. Colonizing Ideologies Impact Focal Children
 - a. Too many people
2. Evolving Identities
 - a. What is a “pure” Mongol
 - b. We are all Mongolians
3. Competing languages

These themes are discussed in relation to the four research questions, which are as follows:

1. How are Buriat children socialized to multilingual identities?

2. What language socialization processes do Buriat youth undergo?
3. How does this language socialization (using Temut, (a variety of their Mongolian language), learning Chinese, speaking Buriat, and speaking Russian) impact their identity?
4. What sociocultural, economic and historical factors have contributed to the ways the Buriat focal children currently use language at the bilingual school, in their home, and in various other domains?

Findings and results are discussed using episodes from transcripts that have been translated into English. Episodes used in this chapter are presented in their original language (if other than English) in the appendix. This chapter is divided into two parts, in order to present results clearly and effectively.

Part One

Colonizing Ideologies Impact Focal Children

The Buriat focal children, (aged between 12-15 in 2012) were all born as the USSR was collapsing in 1991. Buriatia as a nation realigned with the newly formed Russian Federation in 1993. In order to understand how colonizing ideologies have impacted their lives and identities, I first discuss how the children were socialized by their Buriat parents and guardians. In this theme I address the following points regarding Buriat socialization practices: 1) family practices and behavioral norms; 2) spiritual beliefs – Buddhist and shamanistic; 3) homeland; 4) language socialization.

Next I address how concepts from Russian culture and ideology have impacted the Buriat focal children in terms of: 1) Russian language; 2) dress, food, Russian culture; 3) Russian education; 4) Russian economy (*blat* and mafia); Russian racism.

After I have discussed the impact of Russian socialization upon the Buriat children, I then turn to the socialization practices the children encountered in China, specifically inside the bilingual school. These practices are as follows: 1) obedience and loyalty to authority/teachers and to the state; 2) acting as a member of the group, not as an individual in the classroom.

The pattern, “Too Many People” fits under the heading of colonizing ideologies. This pattern first addresses the issues around demographics in Buriatia. Following that, I then discuss demographics in relation to China.

Buriat Socialization

As explored in the literature review, Buriat children are socialized to respect and obey their parents and elders. For example, children do not interrupt their parents. Often, they do not speak unless they are addressed by adults. Buriat children obey and respect their parents and see themselves as representing their family, not just themselves. In November 2012, in the school hallway, two focal children, Bata Nimah and Mergen explained:

1. BN:but (Buriat) children do not complain. We have some kids that take drugs
2. or run away from home...
3. M: Or cry for their mommies...
4. BN: But that is bad. Parents will be blamed.
5. M: Because we listen to parents, and if we do badly, that means we are raised
6. badly by them.
7. BN: You must behave properly (smiles). We are raised from an early age to
8. conduct ourselves properly, you know? And if you are raised properly, you
9. behave properly. If you do those things (drugs, run away) it means they (your

10. parents) did not raise you well.

Moreover, many Buriat parents, such as those in this study, have the authority to choose their children's future profession. For example, Bata-Nimah's father said: "In the future he will be a doctor, I decided this for him. He can go to any country to work as a doctor, with this job and these languages" (Interview, Hohhot, November 2012).

In terms of other family practices, Buriat children are expected to help their families. Surana, for example, babysat her older sister's baby. Bata-Nimah was expected to help with his uncle's herds of horses, goats and cattle. (See Figure 32). Katya did chores in her home and Mergen ran errands for his aunt. The children were perceived as responsible and capable; they were proud of being given duties by the adults.



Figure 32. Herd of horses in Kiran.

Parents also socialized their children regarding religious and spiritual beliefs. Most Buriats, including the participants in this study, hold a blended set of spiritual and religious beliefs that center upon Buddhism and shamanism. Parents start socializing their children to these spiritual practices when they are quite young. For example, a focal participant's cousin,

a three year old boy named Sanghushka, was taken to a sacred grove and given a Buddhist prayer flag to tie upon a tree. Buddhist and shamanistic practices were an ordinary part of the Buriat focal children's lives. (See Figure 33). Bata-Nimah, like other focal children, told me he had been to see a shaman several times. Mergen told me that his aunt followed the Buddhist calendar which gave auspicious dates for travel, cutting hair, etc. (See Figure 34). Bata Nimah also understood that his father had chosen his profession to be a Mongolian doctor because it was a positive profession that followed Buddhist ethics to stop suffering. One young adult Buriat, Amgalan, who had achieved this profession, explained the Buddhist connection in this way:

I see my profession as a way of life; we (doctors) help to heal not only the body but the soul. Indeed, the psychological state – is a very important factor for healing. Because my medicine came from Buddhism, from physicians educated in these Mongolian/Tibetan practices, we are always feeling, and always helping people. It's a lifestyle. Medicine is very closely associated with the culture of the Buryats, as Tibetan medicine came from Buddhism, which came to Buryatia in the 16th century. Before that Buryat people treated the body's illnesses using shamanistic and pagan traditions. At times, I apply the same to this day (Email Correspondence, March 2013).

This young Mongolian doctor (See Figure 35) has outlined the connection between Buriat identity and Buddhism by showing the close relationship this profession has with both Buddhist and shamanistic practices among the Buriats. It is for this reason that many Buriat families chose to send their children to the Chinese bilingual school: they saw the school as a stepping stone toward literacy in Classical Old Mongolian and in Mandarin Chinese. Both

languages were required for entry to the Hohhot Medical Institute, which is where this young doctor studied.



Figure 33. Sanghushka at sacred grove.



Figure 34. Mongolian (Buriat) Calendar.



Figure 35. Young Mongol doctor at work.

Mongolian medicine and identity. How does becoming a doctor of alternative medicine correlate to being a Buriat? I speculate that there are parallels among the Buriats (as well as among other Mongolian peoples) regarding the revival of Mongolian medical practices which are associated with a sense of being Buriat or being Mongolian with the global trends that surround other Indigenous peoples, specifically the Tibetans. Buriats and other citizens in the Russian Federation are turning to Mongolian and Indigenous healing practices, just as the Western world has become aware of Asian, and often specifically, Tibetan medical and spiritual practices. Westerners are engaged in learning more about the international holistic health movement. The concept of Tibetan medicine as a feature of a

‘threatened’ Tibetan culture, can be perceived as a kind of yearning for imagined things that are now being ‘lost’ to modernity (Foucault, 1978; Giddens, 1991; Appadurai, 1996; Lopez, 1998). In the same vein, Buriats, who again are holding fast to their Buddhist and shamanistic beliefs and principles. They are able and eager to turn toward Mongolian alternative medical practices as a way to establish a powerful sense of identity. They are not longing for exotic things that have passed into minimal practice, but rather striving to recreate their traditions and wisdom, which were repressed and denied under Russian and Soviet regimes.

Recently, the Outer Mongolian government has placed great emphasis on the revival of traditional medicine: Outer Mongolians, like Buriats, are also recreating their identities (Sneath, 2003; 2010). Since 1990, the Chinese have also tentatively supported some aspects of traditional Mongolian and Tibetan medical practices;²³¹ the Hohhot medical institute is an example of this. Buriats from Russia are interested in preserving and reviving their culture and traditional Mongolian medicine plays a significant role in reconstructing Buriat/Mongolian identity, as well as in reviving Indigenous knowledge systems since the breakup of the USSR (Gerke, 2010). This process does not reject modern biomedicine, introduced during the Communist regime, but instead, Mongolian doctors seek to strengthen Indigenous medical systems by combining biomedical and alternative health care. This profession also marks Buriats’ spiritual affiliation as Yellow Hat Buddhists, followers of the Dalai Lama.

The choice to practice Mongolian medicine, like Tibetan medicine, is symbolic: it not only links the practitioner and his patients to a now legal and popular Buddhist spirituality,

²³¹ Traditional Chinese medicine has long incorporated aspects of Tibetan and Mongolian healing.

but it is also more natural and ancient, linking it to Mongolian/Buriat cultural practices. Mongolian medicine is herbal-based, and has a variety of holistic therapeutic modalities, which make it an Indigenous mixture of the pragmatic and the symbolic. This profession, which entailed the migration of young Buriat youth to northern Chinese Mongolia, marked Buriat identity for focal youth and their families. Buriat families wished for their children a better life, and a spiritual life – by serving as a Mongolian doctor they would be able to earn a living and uphold Buddhist tenets that advocated the reduction of suffering in the world by serving others. These alternative Mongolian medical practices also represent a new trend for supporting an alternative healing system that is becoming increasingly popular in European Russia and the Western world. For the Buriat, a Mongolian doctor is a spiritual profession, because, like a shaman and a lama, his goal is to heal and to help others.

For the focal children, visiting a shaman or a Buddhist lama, attending ceremonies at temples or sacred spots related to these belief systems, was an integral part of their lives. Buddhist practices, as mentioned in the literature review, socialized Buriat youth to be patient, tolerant, and kind to others. Shamanistic practices taught the children to view and respect the earth as alive, with certain areas having special energies and forces that could benefit human life. Lopez (1998) argued that ideas about what has been lost are structured via a kind of social process. For Buriats, living in their homeland represents a site for creating one's self as a true Buriat. Likewise, by having one's child or children become doctors of alternative Mongolian medicine is highly symbolic. This profession perhaps serves as a way to re-imagine becoming a "true" or "pure" Buriat, by preserving ancient and threatened Indigenous knowledge that was designed for maintaining the physical and spiritual health of the community.

In addition to recognizing sacred spots, such as an *oboo* (usually a tree or a cairn that marks a spiritual power) (See Figure 36), all the focal children talked about Russia and Buriatia as their homeland. The following episode from chatting with Bata-Nimah and Mergen in the hallway of the school in Dec 2012 illustrates the importance of the land to the focal children. They state their loyalty to their homeland clearly:

1. M: Russia, homeland Russia (laughs).
2. BN: But better than here. I would live in Russia anytime.
3. M: I miss my family. I talk to my friends online, but the Internet sucks here.
4. VS: Russia?
5. BN: Siberia; it's cold there now.
6. M: It's still home.



Figure 36. Oboo.

Buriat identity and the land. I have documented how Buriat parents brought their children from China back to Buriatia. One set of parents made this decision early on, before their child, Surana, had had a chance to grasp Mandarin Chinese. Part of their decision appeared to be economic: Chinese education was not free, as opposed to Russian education. The parents told me that they had missed their daughter terribly; they also hinted that they feared Surana was going to change and become someone who was unlike a Buriat. Another Buriat guardian, an aunt, brought her nephew Mergen home to Buriatia after he was involved in the bullying incident. Mergen's aunt had believed initially that China, as a superpower that was historically connected to Mongolians and Buriat Mongolians, was a safe and advantageous environment for her nephew. But after he got into trouble in China, she reevaluated her thinking and decided that being home in Buriatia, (despite drug and alcohol issues among the Buriat population), was a safer, a more spiritually and physically accommodating place for Mergen. His aunt believed that her nephew, if he came home, would live in the right way because he was on Buriat soil. Another child, Bata-Nimah, also returned to Buriatia before completing his studies. He, too, had been involved in the bullying incident, and his father did not want him to remain in China.

During fieldwork in Buriatia, I noted how vibrant and content Bata-Nimah and Surana seemed to be, as compared to their lives in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia. They smiled more, they seemed relaxed, and they talked more to me and to others. Their body language was also relaxed: the children did not tense their shoulders or slump in chairs. Certainly the fact that they were home among family had something to do with their equanimity. Yet the Buriat children's emotional ease could also strongly reflect their sense of self (as Indigenous Buriats) being linked to a sense of place (in their Indigenous homeland). Why do I assert that

land is such an integral part of Indigenous sense of identity? First, I feel that the sense of place is complex and often underestimated by mainstream peoples alive today; many middle-class white Americans, for example, move constantly, seeking opportunities that range from economic to educational to personal. Sowell (1996) and Appadurai (1996) both have stated that in today's world, more than at any other time in history, peoples around the world have been displaced, either voluntarily or involuntarily, as emigrants and refugees.

A sense of place can be subtle, evoked by a smell or colors in the sky, reminding those who are not home that they are indeed, dislocated, even lost. The sense of place the Buriats have for their Indigenous homeland reaches deeply into cultural spheres and into personal identity. Feeling connected to the land, for Buriats as for other Indigenous peoples, links with Buriat notions of wisdom, history, spirituality, and language (Bayar, personal communication, January 2014). By attempting to understand the ways in which Buriats perceive their land, especially Lake Baikal, it becomes more possible to understand how Buriats imagine themselves as a people, both in the past and in the present. Although this dissertation addresses identity among four young Buriats, it also encompasses the identities and cultural practices of these children's parents, grandparents, and ancestors. To understand their sense of self, one must examine how these young Buriat participants and their families have responded to challenges in China in regard to their relationship with their homeland. When trouble was sensed, parents brought their children home: to the land, to their families, and to their shamans and *datsans*. Whether the children consciously understood their parents' reaction is unknown.

The generation gap that exists among many mainstream youth and their parents/grandparents can be translated by quoting L.P. Hartley (1956) wrote "...the past is a

foreign country – they do things differently there,” (p. 1) to explain the lack of understanding a reverence that often exists between these generations. One significant difference that I noted among the Buriat youth and their parents/elders, however, was the lack of such a wide gap. Buriat young people, like other Siberian youth (Habeck & Vensel, 2009) and like many Indigenous North American youth (Lee, 2014) remain closely connected to their families and kin. The focal children talked about their family and *kjin* to me frequently. In Siberia, some speculate that this bonding could be due to economic need, especially during the post-Soviet era, which has wreaked economic devastation among businesses, governmental structures and personal sources of income (Humphrey, 2002). Perhaps it also has to do with the way that Buriat children are socialized in regard to their homeland.

Every Buriat participant, young or old, invariably connected himself or herself to Buriat lands, and the participant always mentioned Lake Baikal. This lake is considered alive, sacred, and powerful. All the focal children honored Lake Baikal; all had visited the lake numerous times, and all had stories to tell me about the lake. This sense of place serves as a way of constructing a past, of telling about cultural and personal history, and it is also a way to construct social traditions, which in turn, generate personal and social (ethnic) identities. As Basso (1996) stated; “We are, in a sense, the place worlds we imagine” (p.7). Note, however, that the Buriat norms for interpreting the past, and for perception of their land, are not the same as those of the dominant Anglo-American culture. As a white American, I slowly understood that Buriat people have a different sense of time and place, and different ways to express their perceptions about land.

The most significant things that Buriat participants patiently taught me were twofold: First, that the land serves as a kind of marker for the people, past and present, and these

markers must be respected, honored, and visited. Second, I came to understand that Buriat lands are alive: with the great Lake Baikal being the living heart of all Buriats, while ancestors who have passed reside above the lands in the sky where they have lived and died. These spirits could be accessed via sacred places, either directly or through a shaman. Thus, places where events took place, where people lived, are as important, or more important, than when these things happened. Furthermore, by honoring the land, Buriats acknowledge the importance of community and kin. They also review their history as a people, and reflect upon the cultural norms they have internalized as Buriats. Similar to the responses of Native Americans, the land, for Buriats, holds a supernatural quality: it contains the bones and blood of ancestors who have struggled and suffered, as well as offering places where people have celebrated and survived. Such a sense of place is not unusual among other Indigenous peoples. Vine Deloria, Jr. (1975), has commented upon the way Native Americans have embraced a spatial conception of history. N. Scott Momaday (1974) has written eloquently about how the land has multiple forms of significance among Native Americans, making knowledge of place equate with knowledge of self (Basso, 1996: 34).

Certainly, among the Buriat, the people's sense of place is linked and woven to their sense of the past, their strength as a people, and their perception of self. Buriat identity persists through the link with the land; it appears to me to be more powerful today than the linguistic link. Certainly, the language and the land are both utilized by Buriat adults to encourage their young people to comply with appropriate standards of behavior, and to help these youth establish a strong sense of self as Buriats. Today, however, many young Buriats are losing desire and fluency for their heritage language (Khilkhanova & Khilkhanov, 2004).

My observations indicated, however, that Buriat youth are not losing their respect and love for their homeland.

One indication of this respect and love was the fact that all the Buriat focal youth, as well as other participants, talked to me about specific geographical locations that were important to them personally. They named places where *oboos* (sacred sites) were located, and they told me about visiting these places with family members to camp and to conduct ceremonies to their ancestors. Everyone invariably mentioned Lake Baikal. Buriat kinship sites and Lake Baikal serve as vital mnemonic markers for their cultural identities as individuals, as families, and as Buriat people. Bakhtin (1981) called such places chronotopes; "...points in the geography of a community where time and space intersect and fuse. ...chronotopes thus stand as monuments to the community itself, as symbols of it, as forces operating to shape its members images of itself" (p.7).

Bakhtin, like Basso (1996) asserted that place creates, influences, and impacts human identity. Bringing Mergen home was not simply a way for his aunt to keep an eye on the boy; she explained to me that it was also an acknowledgement of the sacred homeland's power to help Mergen straighten up and become a better Buriat boy. For Surana and Bata-Nimah, coming home was a way to recharge their sense of self as well; the moral dimensions of living upon Buriat lands – I observed as they heard stories about kin and ancestors doing things here or there; as they participated in Buddhist and shamanistic ceremonies in specific places with family members. In effect, Buriat parents assured me that they would recharge the children's cultural imaginations, and re-appropriate their sense of self into the Buriat consciousness. In China, the focal children told me that they saw themselves as strangers or guests in China. They felt displaced, unwelcome – they were frightened and threatened at

times by the alien Han culture that surrounded them. These focal youth understood that their job, as dutiful children, was to struggle to understand as they encountered alien ideas and languages. Their parents had set them a task and a goal. But when the young people returned home, either for vacation or for good, they could breathe freely again, and reestablish their relationship to the Buriat physical, spiritual and mental world, by standing upon Buriat lands. This sense of the moral dimension of the land may seem alien to mainstream readers, but it is not to Indigenous Peoples (Momaday, 1974).

I have illustrated briefly the way in which Buriat identity is tied to their homeland. I have connected the behavior of the focal children, and some of the focal parents, to the belief that Buriat homelands hold a moral and spiritual dimension. The land works to influence the ways in which Buriat people perceive themselves, and the ways in which these people, as a culture, behave, by being integrated to both family practices and to spiritual and religious practices. Along with an expanded linguistic competence regarding Buriat language in regard to space and time, additional research needs to be done upon the ways in which the Buriats, past and present, have viewed and honored their homelands. A young Buriat participant, who had just graduated from the Hohhot medical institute, told me that she was returning to Buriatia to seek work. She could not imagine going anywhere else;

Of course I will return home (to Buriatia). My family is there. It is my homeland.

Especially important for all the Buriat participants was Lake Baikal. This vast, deep, fresh water lake is considered a sacred entity among the Buriat. (See Figure 37). A young couple I interviewed in Ulan Ude in January 2014 told me that they had taken their newborn to be “greeted by Baikal” when the infant was three months old. All the Buriat participants referred to Lake Baikal as alive, as healing, and as something that must be honored today and

forever by all Buriats. Certainly some ethnic Russians living in Buriatia also revered and respected the lake, but these people “were taught by us, the Buriats, to honor Baikal,” said one elderly Buriat woman who I met in Gorianchinsk, a village on the shores of Baikal.



Figure 37. Lake Baikal Summer 2013.

Buriat language as a symbolic identity marker. Buriat parents taught their children many things about Buriat culture, ranging from myths about the origin of the Buriat people, to how best cook a special fish called *omul*, which only was found in Lake Baikal. (See Figure 38). Yet many Buriat parents did not seem focused upon teaching their children the Buriat language. When I observed the parents speaking with their children, they spoke quietly and primarily in Russian. On occasion, in order to chastise the child, a parent might speak quietly in Buriat, especially if I were present. Also, during holidays, when elders and

extended family visited, parents would urge their children to try to speak in Buriat, and even feed phrases to their children. Yet only one child, Bata-Nimah, who returned to his home village to live with his grandmother, seemed to speak Buriat fluently. His grandmother spoke limited Russian, and his great grandmother spoke nothing but Buriat. (See Figure 39).



Figure 38. Omul.



Figure 39. Bata-Nimah's Great Grandmother with Author.

When I asked why parents were not speaking Buriat with their children, sometimes I got no response. After turning to my Buriat critical friend with this question, she looked at me and said sternly; “You are embarrassing my friends. They have lost Buriat, it was Soviet times, people were supposed to speak only Russian.” Thus, many parents may have limited fluency in Buriat and more proficiency in Russian – so they speak Russian to their children and family members.

In post-Soviet Russia in Buriatia, laws were enacted to help revitalize the Buriat language by offering Buriat as an optional language in schools. On Buriat television, too, there was a daily 15-20 minute news segment that was featured exclusively in Buriat, to kindle interest in listening to and speaking Buriat. As one parent explained to me in Ulan Ude, parents hoped that the school would teach their children Buriat, despite the fact that teaching Buriat was not a prestigious job. Surana’s mother, for example, explained to me in February 2014:

In Russia, since perestroika, many types of schools have appeared. Some are better than others, and this school is considered very good. Our teachers have good reputations, but they get low pay (15,000 rubles per month; 30 rubles to the USD).

This is a problem - teachers leave all the time, looking for better pay. We just lost her Buriat language teacher, so there are no longer Buriat language lessons.

Russian Socialization

In addition to language as an identity marker, socialization practices also impacted Buriat identity. This section addresses Russian socialization practices among the Buriat, looking at the colonizing ideologies that impact these practices: 1) Russian language; 2)

Russian dress, food, and culture; 3) Russian education; 4) Russian economic (*blat* and mafia); Russian racism.

Having grown up and endured Russian socialization, Buriat parents and elders have been greatly impacted by Soviet and post-Soviet ideologies (Graber, 2012; Humphrey, 1996). One Buriat mother told me that her mother, now aged 79, had forced her as a small child to sit near a radio and repeat everything that was spoken in Russian in order “to have a standard Russian accent.” This concern about Russian accent and usage was reflected among all the Buriat participants. For example, Natasha, Katya’s mother, told me that she wanted her daughter to speak “proper” Russian, so she hired a tutor, who coached both Katya and Bata-Nimah. (See Figure 40).



Figure 40. Bata-Nimah receiving Russian tutoring.

Yet none of the parents ever told me they were concerned that their children would lose their fluency in the Buriat language. The adults seemed to equate Russian language and

culture as a way of being modern and educated. They did not express anger at assimilating into Russian cultural norms. For example, from my researcher's journal, February 2014:

In many conversations, parents called themselves and their children Russians, using the term to denote citizenship, as well as a sense of being highly educated and modern. Buriat parents also freely acknowledged how much they had assimilated their lives and linguistic choices to the dominant Russian culture.

Also from my researcher's journal in January 2014, a Buriat mother aged 51, explained to me the extent of her Russification among her people whilst we were sitting in her kitchen in Ulan Ude:

We Buriats have had contact with the Russians for over 300 years; it has changed the way we live. I cannot say I love the Russians, but I accept that they have brought us many kinds of advanced technologies. We eat like Russians and like Buriats. We use Russian machines. We speak Russian and Buriat. I was educated in Moscow; I could not speak Buriat to get my education, and this education has changed the way I think, my life...Sometimes I am both (Buriat and Russian).

Buriat parents sought ways to promote their children's well-being. At times, parents seemed unaware that they had internalized hegemonic thinking that served the dominant powers instead of their own Indigenous culture. As Rinchin, Bata-Nimah's father, commented to me in an interview in Hohhot in November 2012:

Of course, the most important language for my son is Russian, his native language. After that – English, and then Chinese.

Here Rinchin does not even mention his own native language as Buriat, nor mention its importance. As a trader conducting business in Buriatia and Outer Mongolia, Rinchin

must have employed Buriat and Khalk in his interactions. As the episode above illustrated, Buriat parents and their children consistently rated dominant languages, such as Russian, Chinese, and English, as more important than their Indigenous language, Buriat. Here again Rinchin talks about dominant languages, but never brings up any reason he would like his son to be fluent in his native language, Buriat;

With English and other powerful languages we say: many languages, many paths, and many friends.

Rinchin never mentioned that he and his son were fluent in Buriat; he never said that he valued Buriat as a language. Yet it was his first language and his son spoke it fluently as well.

In addition to preferring Russian as a language over Buriat, the focal children and their parents preferred Russian clothing, and expressed a liking for Russian food. One grandmother in Ulan Ude, a retired Buriat schoolteacher, did wear Buriat dress on occasion; she told me it was warm and comfortable. Few people, however, wore the Buriat national dress, even on holidays. Around Ulan Ude, Buddhist monks and holy people, however, wore robes and shaved their heads as per the traditional Buddhist style. In Buriatia, Buriat shamans I interviewed seemed impartial about wearing a traditional Buriat shaman's regalia; some did and some did not. Balzar (1999) noted that contemporary shamans throughout Siberia may or may not wear shamanic dress to conduct their sacred rituals.²³² (See Figure 41).

²³² Balzar, M. M. (1999). *The tenacity of ethnicity: a Siberian saga in global perspective*. Princeton University Press.

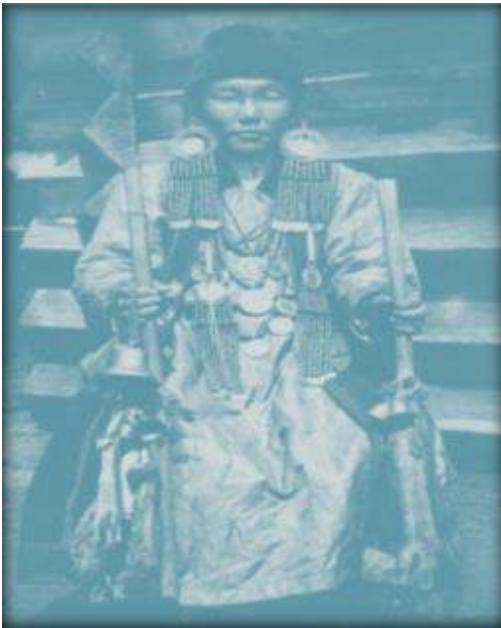


Figure 41. Buriat Shamaness.

In addition to a fusion of Buddhist and shamanistic religious beliefs, all the Buriat focal children told me that they enjoyed eating both Russian food and Buriat traditional foodstuffs. Their eating habits combined both cuisines. In China, the Buriat children also expressed a liking for western fast foods. Surana, a focal child who left the bilingual school before the year ended, seemed uncertain as to her Buriat and her Russian sense of self, as her life in Ulan Ude freely mixed both cultures. The following excerpt illustrates how her linguistic and culinary choices are blended with Buriat and Russian socialization. In line three she refers to the importance of the land as an identity marker and in line four she refers to the connection that Buriats have in relationship to Genghis Khan. Yet in line 11 she refers to Russian foodstuffs, and seems to appropriate them as part of her own lifestyle and cultural practice:

1. S: Of course I am Buriat, and, uhh, I speak Russian....

2. VS: Tell me about being Buriat...
3. S: “Well, you should live here, I mean be born here, and have Buriat parents,
4. ‘cause Russians are here but they are not Buriats...and we have our culture...
5. VS: Are Buriats Mongolians?
6. S: “Yes of course! We are northern (Mongols), my dad said our ancestors
7. protected Genghis Khan.
8. VS: Really? How did they do that?
9. S: We Buriats were bodyguards.
10. VS: Oh.
11. S: Are you hungry? I can make tea...
12. VS: What kind of tea?
13. S: Russian tea, of course! With biscuits and chocolates, Russian chocolates.



Figure 42. Celebrating 350 years together.

Over the course of three hundred plus years, Russian culture has merged with and transformed Buriat culture. (See Figure 42). One 56 year old Buriat man, Bata, was pragmatic regarding acceptance of other dominant ideologies. He felt, however, that some Mongolian peoples (Outer Mongols) had been more successful in adapting to the modern world and keeping their culture. But he also stated flatly that no Mongolian culture wanted to live without benefits of the contemporary world:

1. B: Time passes, civilizations pass and change...they (Outer Mongolians) have
2. kept their culture, it is kept.
3. VS: But they dress like you (Buriat), like Russians, like westerners...
4. B: But what do you want? That we Mongols...run around in loincloths? (laughs)

Education is a key factor in promoting colonizing ideologies among Indigenous people (McCarty, Romero, & Zepeda, 2006). Russian educational practices have spread dominant Russian ideology among Buriat youth. Most schools teach in Russian, offer Russian curricula, and hire ethnic Russian teachers. Among the Buriats, throughout Buriatia, the majority of schools are populated by ethnic Russians. Except in small, rural village schools, all classes were conducted in Russian. However, I visited two rural schools in tiny villages that taught in Buriat.²³³ In Buriatia, my observations indicated that the majority of the teachers were ethnic Russians, primarily females. This was not surprising, given that the ethnic Russian population outnumbers that of the Buriat in Buriatia. If available, students could opt to study Buriat language and culture a few hours a week, but Buriat language teachers were rare, and poorly paid, as evidenced by a previous quote. Surana had a Buriat

²³³ The headmasters of the schoolhouses both said proudly, however, that they had access to “native” Russian speakers to help “correct” the children’s accents when they spoke in Russian.

language teacher at her school in Ulan Ude, but the woman left before I arrived in Russia for observations. Surana's mother said to me: "Such teachers have low salaries and today it is hard to find one with enough skills to teach our language" (Interview, Surana's mother, January, 2014).

The old Soviet system of socializing children in political education classes to be good Soviet citizens was not in evidence during my fieldwork. When I visited schools in Ulan Ude and Kyatka, Buriatia, I was told that Russian patriotic education was no longer strictly enforced as it was during Soviet times. In every school, however, there were pictures of the Russian leader, Vladimir Putin, the Russian flag, and at times the Buriat flag as well. (See Figure 43).



Figure 43. Surana’s school hallway: 20 years of Post-Soviet Russian rule.

Buriat parents told me that they were not concerned with political education; instead they were concerned about the way their children interacted with ethnic Russians. Buriat mothers told me that they feared sexual misconduct when their children interacted with ethnic Russians. Other adult Buriats told me that students emulated gangsters, and called their president a gangster. As will be demonstrated shortly in an episode, a young ethnic Russian born in Buriatia casually explained to me that bullying and emulating gangsters was common in Buriatia. (See Figure 44).

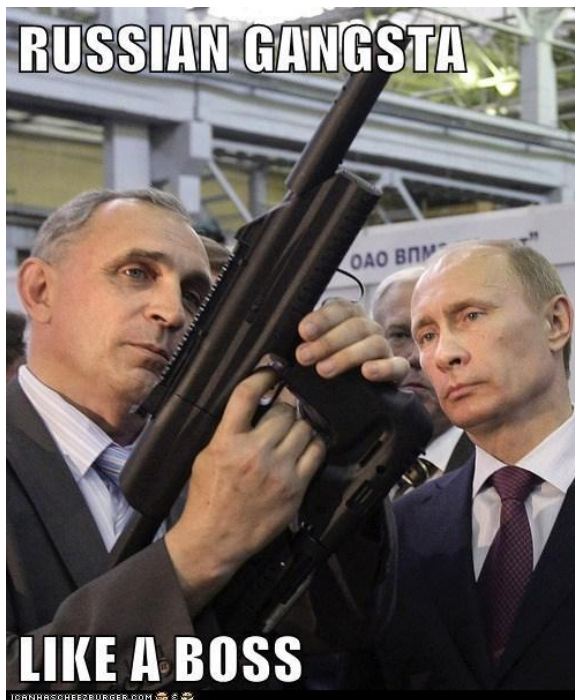


Figure 44. Putin as gangster.

The economic situation in post-Soviet Russia may have generated the youth phenomenon for idolizing gangsters and listening to US gangsta rap. The Buriat focal children all listened to the commonly called “gangsta rap” while in China; they wanted to identify with global popular music, and perhaps they also wanted to listen to music that identified with the ways in which they found themselves positioned. Like African American gangsta music, Mongolian and Russian gangsta rap exposes social and economic inequities (Dyson, 1996).²³⁴ According to Varese (2001), after the collapse of the USSR in 1991, the Russian Federation has not been able to create a police force that can protect its population. Instead, thousands of different types of private protection agencies have appeared throughout Russia. They both protect and embezzle their clients, who may range from small kiosk

²³⁴ M.E. Dyson (1996) *Between God and gangsta rap: bearing witness to Black culture*. Oxford University Press. His book outlines issues that African American youth sing about, especially when they began singing gangsta rap.

owners trying to sell trinkets, to businessmen owning large factories and dealerships. Varese states that Russian businesses are being protected by thugs and mercenaries, and it appears that government leadership has strong connections not only to the new and thriving businesses, but also many unscrupulous protection rackets as well. Buriat children, like other Russian children, are savvy to the situation; it is common knowledge. Some focal children also appeared to idolize gangsters, and to see their way of life as successful. Bata Nimah told me one day as we were walking to school in Hohhot;

1. BN: So do you like motorcycles?
2. V: Sure, but I don't ride them, they are dangerous.
3. BN: Harley, I want to get a Harley...gangsta style
4. V: What?
5. BN: Are there gangsters in the US, in Los Angeles?
6. V: I guess so, the Mafia is in New York, and Chicago.
7. BN: Russia has gangsters.
8. V: Yeah.
9. BN: I eat at the KFC, that one.
10. V: Oh?
11. BN: Our leaders are gangsters.
12. V: Oh.
13. BN: I want to have a lot of money, so I can go to the US and ride a Harley.
14. V: If you study hard, that might be possible.
15. BN: Did Putin study hard? (Laughs)...He's rich...he didn't memorize Chinese
16. words all day and all night...

17. V: “What do you mean?”
18. BN: Be a gangster, ride a Harley...(Not understood)...
19. He puts on his earplugs.
20. BN: I’m gonna listen to my music now.
21. V: Okay, what kind of music?
22. BN: Rap - gangsta rap (laughs)

Bata-Nimah perceived success as having “a lot of money.” He commented that gangsters had much money. He wanted also be mobile by having a motorcycle, and he seemed to idolize American motorcycles (Harley), as well as American (and Russian) gangsters. Some of his speech could be construed as that of almost any 14 year old boy – but some of it could be grounded in his current environment. Bata-Nimah had very little power or freedom while he was living and studying in China. He lived with Natasha, and he was expected to sit and study for many hours a day in a school where most of the students were not Buriats. His liking for motorcycles, gangsters, and gansta rap music may be an expression of his longing for some power of his own. Bata-Nimah was aware that his father paid a significant amount of money for his Chinese schooling; he knew also that the Buriat and Russian economy was not flourishing.

Additionally, Buriat parents worried about the national Russian economy and their Buriat economy. Infrastructure and jobs had both suffered terribly since 1991, when the USSR collapsed (Humphrey, 1996). Their current salaries remained low; public services such as health care and education were housed in old buildings that needed repair. Jobs were hard to find. People did not trust banks. In order to survive, Buriats, like other Russian

citizens, relied upon a system of mutual aid called *blat* in Russian.²³⁵ This concept was based upon the Soviet economy of scarcity, and it has evolved and continued into post-Soviet society as well (Ledeneva, 1998). The ongoing economic crisis for the majority of Buriats has caused families to continue to rely on each other and to help each other. This means that Buriat children are socialized not only to the Buriat traditional system of communal life and property, but also to the more shady dealings necessary in the Russian system meant to help family and friends. Thus, the post-Soviet economy has a dark side that has impacted Buriat youth by influencing their perceptions about honesty, especially regarding government and business practices.

Throughout Russia, corruption remains rampant. The post-Soviet economy in Russia is based upon groups of people gaining property and wealth through their personal connections (Varese, 2001). Bodyguards and security services force businessmen to submit to protection or their businesses may be destroyed (Varese, 2001). Russian schoolchildren glorify their leaders and wealthy billionaire businessmen, while at the same time labeling them as crooks and gangsters. In Russian schoolyards, it is common for young students to bully their classmates, by demanding that lunch monies, phones, and other valuables be handed over.

²³⁵ To summarize the role that *blat* practices played in a state centralized economy;

- *Blat* was a form of sociability that allowed the use of personal networks (kin, friends and acquaintances) for obtaining goods and services in the economy of shortage;
- *Blat* was a parallel currency in an economy where money played little role and served a particular type of informal exchange – exchange of ‘favors of access’ given at the expense of the institutional resources;
- *Blat* satisfied needs of personal consumption and provided niches of co-operation against the system, thus being instrumental for people.
- *Blat* was a ‘know-how’, an unwritten rule, needed to operate a system that could not work according to its own proclaimed principles and to cope with the extreme centralization of the Soviet system, thus being instrumental for the state.

(Ledeneva, 2003:3).

This connection between Russian socialization in terms of gangsters and the Buriat focal children is important: Two focal boys were involved in a bullying event that resulted in them leaving China before completing the full school year. The event involved four Buriat participants: two focal boys (Mergen and Bata-Nimah) and two participants (Ayur, 15 years old and a recent graduate of the bilingual school; Serdar, 15 years old, also a graduate). In December 2012, the boys met after classes and walked along a local shopping street. There they accosted for Han Chinese youth in succession, and demanded their money and cell phones. As they harassed the fourth Chinese youth, adults noticed what was going on. They approached the Buriats, who fled. One boy, Mergen, was caught and taken to the police station. He gave the names of the other boys. The Chinese court system ruled that these boys were juvenile delinquents. By Chinese law, any boy age 14 or older is considered to be a serious offender (personal communication Dr. Epstein, 2013), so the consequences of the boys' actions were grave.

In spring 2013, after paying an initial fine of almost 1000USD, Mergen's aunt and Bata-Nimah's father both obtained permission to take their children out of China. They returned to Russia. Before they left, however, they paid a second, additional fine of almost 1000USD.²³⁶ Serdar and Ayur did not obtain permission to quit China; the police have kept their passports. As of March 2014, these two Buriat boys are still under Chinese police surveillance; neither has the right to exit the country. Every week they must report to the regional police station and write an account of how they have spent their week, who they have spoken with, and what activities they have carried out. Dr. Epstein, a specialist in Chinese juvenile law, told me that this surveillance is the softest punishment they could

²³⁶ One thousand US dollars equals twice the monthly salary of a Chinese college professor in Hohhot.

incur. In a conversation with him in March 2013, he explained that the boys very well could have been sent indefinitely to a youth camp, where they would have been forced to live and work without salary for the Chinese state.

I could not get much information from either the Buriat boys or their parents and guardians regarding this event, or any other problems, either in Russia or China. Buriat cultural norms, as discussed in the literature review, do not encourage speaking about negative events, or speaking badly about anyone. But in 2013, I befriended an ethnic Russian student from Ulan Ude. When I asked him about gangsters in Russia and the effect of gangsters on young boys, he laughed uproariously and said to me in English:

You know nothing about Russia and Russian schoolboys! The four boys knew that this is done in Russia, all schoolboys know this. They are just imitating the gangsters, who run the country today. They live good by bullying others, so why shouldn't we; that's what Russian schoolboys think. It's no secret. And put on top of that the combination of hormones, at 14 or 15 you think you can do anything. Then consider that they are being ignored by their teachers, and treated as if they were wild, dirty Mongols by the Han Chinese, well, why not mug a few Chinese? Why not?

After a pause, he continued;

There is a generation gap that has been produced by political belief systems. Young people make fun of the Soviet system, but we, the ones who lived, and yes suffered through it, also feel that this system worked. You could see a doctor in a hospital, or go for a cure (at a sanitarium). Today, these things are gone; transport, hospitals, schools, everything is almost destroyed and no one is going to fix it. If you need a

doctor you had better have much money... if you're a kid, gangsters are heroes, because they get the good life... (Interview in Hohhot, September 18, 2013).

Young Buriats are aware that Buriatia and Russia have economic problems. Those that come to China perceive the Chinese State as powerful, thriving and in good working order. Buriats who return home to Russia feel obligated to try to support themselves and their family and kin as best as they can; is it unsurprising that some would consider criminal activities as a valid way to achieve economic success? Moreover, the literature (Humphrey, 1996) confirms that youth crime throughout Russia is on the rise. Moreover, Siberian youth are conceptualized today as a social problem, as drug users and criminals, whereas in the past youth were perceived as social assets toward building the socialist state (Glending, 2005). For young Russian citizens, peer networks allow them social space in their communities that extend beyond the family (Glending, 2005). In the Chinese case, the four Buriat boys had a secure friendship network that they used to express the things that mattered to them in their daily lives. Because they were adolescent boys, their criminal act may have happened spontaneously and without much thought.²³⁷ Their actions resulted in the bilingual school leaders' decision to stop accepting Buriat children. Professor Epstein, a scholar on youth crime in China, wrote me that it is quite likely this criminal activity will remain on all the boys' records. Fan Yuan, a Han Chinese law professor at a local university, commented that it is likely that none of these boys, even if they obtained a Chinese medical license, would be allowed to practice medicine in China. Chinese laws toward youth are harsh and long term (Epstein, 2000).

²³⁷ Serdar told me later that it was a spur of the minute thing; and his motivation came from the fact that his liver had too much "bitter" – this made him angry.

The boys' actions reflected their previous socialization in Russia, as schoolboys, where bullying acts were routine. As mentioned, current post-Soviet Russian ideology glorifies gangsters. The boys were also resisting the socialization practices they encountered in China. In terms of the Chinese colonizing ideology discussed in the literature review, the Buriat boys sensed that being classified as Mongolians meant that they were labeled by the dominant Han population as a minority group who were "little brothers" to the Han big brothers. Williams (2002) discusses the hegemonic practices condoned by the ancient Han Confucian policies and the Chinese state.²³⁸ For example, in the 19th and 20th centuries, incoming Han Chinese settlers forced the Mongols off their grasslands, justifying their takeover and invasion by stating that the Mongols were too backward and primitive to undertake modern Chinese agriculture. Williams (2002) also discusses how, during the Communist regime, the Marx/Lenin/Mao line of political thought reemphasized and strengthened these attitudes, regulating Mongolians and other minority peoples as backward, lesser than, and inferior to the Han Chinese (pp. 66-67). As Mongolians, the Buriats were also potentially threatening to the Han: Bulag (2004) discusses the hidden tensions between Han and Mongol inside Inner Mongolia, and despairs of a thriving future for Mongolian language and culture. The Chinese also classified Buriats as foreigners - and not as exotic, envied foreigners such as those Caucasians from the USA and the UK - which meant that Buriats were considered outsiders; at times, unwelcome outsiders. For adolescent Buriat boys, these hegemonic labels must have been hard to endure, despite their Buddhist beliefs and family socialization.

²³⁸ Williams, D. M. (2002). *Beyond great walls: environment, identity, and development on the Chinese grasslands of Inner Mongolia*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Chinese Socialization

Now I turn to Chinese socialization in the Mandarin/Mongolian bilingual school in Hohhot, in regard to the Buriat focal children. Chinese practices are as follows: 1) obedience and loyalty to authority/teachers and to the state; and 2) acting as a member of the group, not as an individual.

Obedience and loyalty to authority/teachers and to the state. As discussed in the literature review, many Chinese socialization practices are based upon Confucian norms. For example, children are expected to respect and obey their parents and anyone who is older. As Nina, an Indigenous (Tuvian)²³⁹ woman from Russia who is married to a Han Chinese man said:

Chinese culture, Confucian concepts, demands veneration of ancestors and parents, and, so, on this basis there's the attitude: parents want their child to be educated, parents want their child to follow their advice, so, that means the child must obey. Second, education is highly valued; teachers are highly respected as authorities and as people of knowledge.

Linda Liu, an English language professor at the local university, told me one day when we were having lunch:

You know, Valerie, that teachers have the most respect. We are not paid well, but Confucian philosophy awards respect to teachers because we Chinese value education over everything. To sell things is not really quite so honorable. To teach: that is important, that is worthy (Chat, Hohhot, March 2013).

²³⁹ Tuvians live in the Altai region of Russia/Outer Mongolia/China; they are related linguistically to the Altaic People, but they have also mixed their blood over the centuries with Turkish peoples.

Third, Confucian practices value those who do not try to bring undue attention to an individual; instead, the idea of participating as a member of the group, of serving the group, is highly valued over individualistic tendencies. Finally, overt criticism is considered bad manners,²⁴⁰ as it endangers the face (dignity) of both the critiqued and the one doing the criticism (Kwang, 1987). These concepts are relevant in relation to the Buriat focal children at the bilingual school.

As mentioned in the section on Buriat socialization, Buriat children, like Chinese children, are socialized to respect and obey their parents. Given this similarity, one might expect that the Buriat children's experiences at the Chinese school be positive. Certainly the children respected, appreciated and enjoyed their Inner Mongolian teachers. The teachers made conscious and enthusiastic attempts to be kind to the Buriats and to other non-Chinese Mongolian students. The children were aware of this. For example, Katya, in talking about her teacher, said:

1. VS: Do you like the school?
2. K: Like? Maybe the teachers...Especially Saranchana. She's great.

Here is another example of the Buriat students' appreciation of their Inner Mongolian teachers' positive behaviors toward them. A Buriat girl, Ouyunika, who had graduated from the school said:

1. VS: What did you like the most about the bilingual school?
2. O: At that school? Hmmmm...I liked being with other Mongolians...the
3. teachers were kind, too. They understood we needed help because we Buriats

²⁴⁰ Another source on face and criticism for those who travel and work in China is: Seligman, S. D. (2008). *Chinese Business Etiquette: A Guide to Protocol, Manners, and Culture in the People's Republic of China*. Hachette Digital, Inc.

4. didn't understand Chinese or their Mongolian, and they were kind.

The Buriat children did not talk back to their teachers, or overtly express any displeasure with them. But they resisted nevertheless. Their resistance against their teachers and other adult authorities was passive. For example, every two weeks it was customary in Katya's class for all students to rotate in their seats. Katya refused to move. She said that she liked sitting in the back of the room, despite the fact that the seat rotation was designed to give every student at some point in time, more direct access to both the teacher and the blackboard in the front of the room. Another class rule was to raise one's hand in a certain way to try to get the teacher's attention. Katya resisted. She said to me as I sat and observed her in her class: "I will not raise my hand in that stupid way... And I will not move my seat; I like being in the back. It's stupid" (Chat, Hohhot, November 2012).

Another issue that caused contention was the display of patriotism in the school. Every day at 10AM all the students of the bilingual school were expected to file outside onto the large track and field area for twenty minutes. At this time, school staff and students participated together doing exercises, listening to announcements, and affirming their loyalty to the school and to the state. The Buriat children, however, resisted this physical and political exercise. Katya, for example, often simply refused to leave her classroom. The other Buriats would file out to the track and field, but they would stand apart from their classmates. (See Figure 45). When I stood with them, they would mock the ceremony, or wave their arms wildly in a comic pretense of doing the group exercises. Like Shirazi's (2012) Palestinian boys in Jordan who did not feel motivated to be loyal to an alien nation, Bata-Nimah, a Buriat boy commented to me as we were standing outside during the morning exercises: "I

didn't grow up in Soviet times. I don't want to start doing this (commie) stuff now" (Chat, Hohhot, November 2012).



Figure 45. Bata-Nimah and Mergen watching daily exercises.

The Buriat children were also politically aware that Russian schools no longer condoned the absolute authority of teachers and staff. They told me that the Chinese bilingual school administered corporal punishment. I had, in fact, witnessed an example of corporal punishment in Mergen's and Bata-Nimah's classroom. In November 2012 a young Outer Mongolian boy came to class wearing a crystal earring in his left ear. This was against the school's dress code. When the teacher noticed the earring she said nothing, but approached the boy and literally ripped the earring out of his ear. He flinched and his ear began to bleed. The teacher then took the boy by the ripped ear and dragged him out of the classroom. Students told me that teachers in their school had the right to strike pupils on their hands and

backs with wooden pointers. The Buriat children told me that they would not tolerate such behavior from their teachers. In speaking, the focal children used their knowledge of Russian ideology to protest against the power of Chinese schools. At school, Bata-Nimah protested the way Inner Mongolian teachers were able to administer corporal punishment:

They cannot hit us in school (in Buriatia); it is against Russian law. No one ever hit me in primary or secondary school. My mother said, in Soviet times, they did that, but not after 1991 (Chat, Hohhot, November 2012).

Mergen also told me, in talking about teachers meting out corporal punishment: “If she dares to touch me, I’ll slug her” (Field Notes, Hohhot, November 2012). This statement not only displayed Mergen’s resistance to the school’s policies and practices, but also her personal anger at being physically threatened.

Acting as a member of the group, not as an individual. Another issue that caused the Buriat children to rebel and resist had to do with Chinese socialization norms revolving around group identity. At the school, the teachers addressed the class as a group. As one Inner Mongolian teacher, Saranchana, remarked: “I get the class to act as a group, to save time; we do things as a group, not as one” (Field Notes, Hohhot, October 2012). This teacher understood that her teaching methodology was governed, to a large extent, by the fact that she had so many students in her classroom. In order to be an effective teacher she had to manage the students as a group; there was little or no time to offer each child individual attention.

Buriat children both resisted and disliked the way discipline was administered and the way they were ignored as individuals. Likewise, the Buriat children resented the ideological forces at the school, which tried to force them to conform to Chinese group norms, by

participating in groups in a highly structured way. Surana, for example, commented about Russian and Chinese differences:

We do stand to greet our teacher (in Russia), and I stand to answer questions, but it's different. It's respect (standing up), not the army, you know. And it's my answer. (Field Notes, Ulan Ude, February 2014).

Here Surana has made a comparison between her experiences in the Chinese bilingual school in Hohhot and her school in Ulan Ude, Russia. She expressed her desire to respect her teachers, but qualified it by stating that it was based upon her own choice. She was not acting politely to be a member of a group; she was doing this because Buriat children are socialized as individuals to respect teachers and adults.

Chinese classrooms, even in the bilingual Mongolian/Mandarin school, had a structured format that required students to behave as a group. To illustrate this structure, I now outline two typical 45 minute lessons. During these lessons, the Buriat children kept their heads down, and wrote everything down. They did not participate by raising their voices or their hands. The format for many Chinese lessons in the Chinese sheltered class was always the same:

Before class, two students sweep up the classroom (5-8 minutes).

Teacher enters room. (Sometimes on time; sometimes late). Students stand. Teacher tells students to sit.

Teacher writes ten Chinese characters on the chalkboard. Students copy them.

Teacher explains each character, gives two or three examples in phrases, writes them on board.

Students copy.

Teacher asks a question about the character; “How do you use this character?”

Students yell out answer.

Teacher confirms “Correct or incorrect” and moves on to second character

Teacher tells students to recite the character, each one four times.

Students recite.

Teacher erases board and writes ten new characters. Students copy them.

Teacher explains each character, gives, two or three examples in phrases, writes them on board.

Students copy.

This sequence continued until class ended. For this vocabulary class there was no textbook, no other lesson format. The Buriat students did not yell out the answers. They simply wrote the characters and then looked in their Russian-Chinese dictionaries for the translation. They did not speak or move around. Every day, this format was repeated in two of the three Chinese classes. The third class was grammar, with a book. The format of grammar class was as follows:

Teacher enters room. (Sometimes on time; sometimes late). Students stand.

Teacher tells students to sit.

Teacher tells students to open book to page X.

Teacher tells students to re-read yesterday’s passage chorally, twice.

Students read loudly. Teacher looks out the window or at her cell phone.

Teacher points out characters in text. Asks class at large to translate into Mongolian

Students yell out translation.

Teacher reads grammar point in book, asks if students understand.

If there are blank looks, she speaks in Mongolian to explain.

Teacher reads book.

Teacher tells students to recite sentences which are examples of each grammar point in lesson.

Students read chorally.

Teacher asks if everyone understands.

Students shout “Yes!”

Teacher continues until class ends.

This lesson took up two class periods, and then it was time for lunch. The Buriat students never spoke out in these lessons; again, they searched for words, or remained silent, watching the teacher and their classmates. I asked one Buriat boy if he understood, he told me that most of the time he was able to understand, but the classes required so much memorization that he was tired. He also said it was hard to stay awake sometimes. Clearly, life as a student in the Chinese bilingual school could not attend to individual students’ needs and desires. Learning was also standardized, with choral answers and rote memorization being the norm. This way of being and learning differed significantly from that of schools in Buriatia, and must have been discomfiting to the young Buriat focal children.

In Buriatia, as described in the literature review, post-Soviet educational policies incorporated assessment measures that evaluated the student as an individual and as a team player. Surana’s mother, in Ulan Ude, told me about the assessment process (building a portfolio) for students at Surana’s school. She explained that, in Russia, the children also encountered Russian socialization forces. Post-Soviet education, as discussed in the literature review, encouraged Russian students to perform as individuals, and to construct

individual, creative identities. “It’s very, very important that this portfolio reflect the child’s ability as well as be creative...” she said. There were, however, remnants of the Soviet educational era, as exemplified by the way teachers assessed students during the end of the year talent shows. Surana’s mother then added: “...and that it includes her classmates, because the judges look at her individually and as a member of the group” (Interview, Ulan Ude, February 2014).

In China, however, Buriat children were perceived only as members of their class. For example, every week Katya’s grade four class was evaluated in regard to the other grade four classes. Because Katya refused to strive for high marks, she was blamed for keeping her class from succeeding. One Inner Mongolian mother whose child sat in Katya’s class said to me:

In China, the class is considered as a group; all the marks are averaged together. If one child refuses or cannot do well, other children will resent her, even act mean.

This (Buriat) child is not only a foreigner - different - but also lazy. She holds her group back (Chat, Hohhot, December 2012).

Chinese Confucian principles were partly responsible for socializing children at school to behave as a group. Another important factor, however, was the fact that China’s population is so large. Everywhere I went in China was full of people: Schools were crowded; cities were crowded; restaurants were crowded. Population density at times overwhelmed me.

Too Many People

The pattern “Too many people” addresses population by examining two significant population densities: the relationship between Indigenous Buriats in Buriatia and the

relationship between minority peoples in China, specifically Chinese Inner Mongolians in relation to Han Chinese. Today the Buriats, as an Indigenous people living on their ancient homeland, are far outnumbered by the ethnic Russians who arrived as colonizers, settlers, and exiles, starting in the 17th century. Yet Buriats in this study expressed their willingness to tolerate, even welcome the Russians. With this tolerance, however, came the knowledge of being outnumbered. A Buriat mother said:

They (Russians) outnumber us, and have for a long time.

And, as Buriats, we tolerate them; we acknowledge the good they have brought, not the bad. But I wish my child to marry a Buriat, and hopefully she will (Chat, Ulan Ude, January 2014).

Buriats also feared that their language and culture would disappear due to both Russian and Chinese dominant languages and ideologies. While I lived with Surana's family, her mother said one evening:

If she had stayed in China, she would have learned Chinese and Mongolian. That's wonderful, but we think her learning Buriat and living here will make her more conscious of being Buriat, as opposed to being Russian. The Russians have influenced us so much that we are Russian Mongols, and if she stayed in China, she might forget that she is Buriat (Chat, Ulan Ude, February 2014).

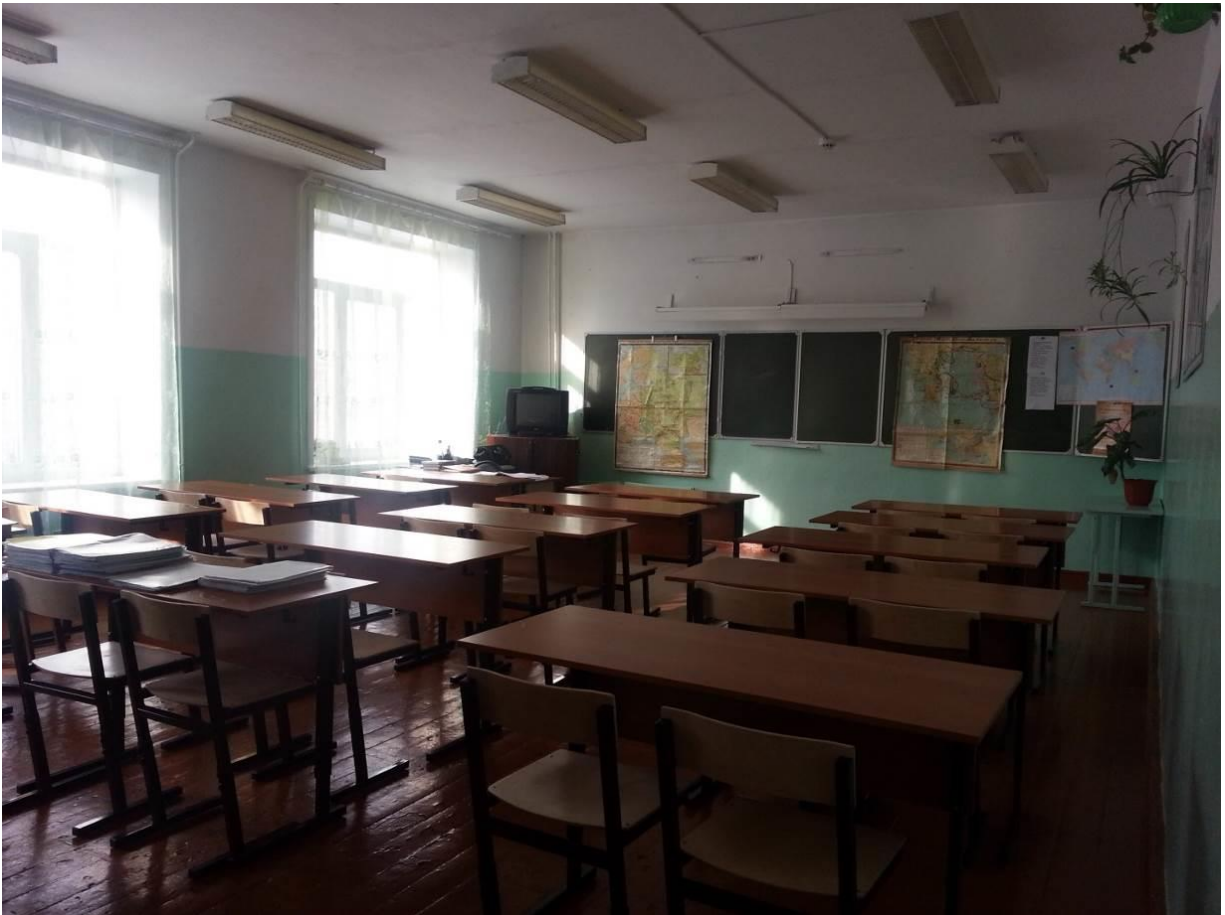


Figure 46. Surana's Homeroom classroom – Ulan Ude Russia 2014.

Significantly, in China, as well as in Buriatia, the young Buriat students were also outnumbered. At the bilingual school, the majority of the student population consisted of Inner Mongolian children, most of whom spoke fluent Mandarin and varying degrees of Temut Mongolian. For Katya, sitting alone in the Mongolian track classroom, life was not easy. (See Figure 47). For example, she refused to cooperate and she resisted. Katya said to me as I sat and observed her in class: “I hate sitting, being quiet; it’s stupid. It’s boring...” (Field Notes, Hohhot, October 2012).



Figure 47. Mongolian Track Classroom (Katya).

Because Chinese schools were (and still are) crowded, teachers throughout China have strategies that structure their lessons, how they position children, and how they teach. Inner Mongolian teachers at the school told me that structure and control were necessary for learning. One Inner Mongolian teacher, Suranchana, explained:

We organize them this way to control them; they are too many, our job is to make them obey, not to play...to be an excellent teacher, you must be effective in managing large classes...(Field Notes, Hohhot, November, 2012).

The Buriat children did not like the large class sizes. One young Buriat boy, Ayur, who had attended this school and was now at the medical institute, gave me an interview in

December 2012. When I asked him what a person had to do to be a model student at this school, he replied:

1. A: You must pay attention and study hard there. It's difficult because there are so
2. many people. If you want to answer and get attention, you have to raise your hand
3. and shout at the top of your voice and everyone around you is doing the same
4. thing, you must cry out with all your strength, and there were 65 others all around
5. me...it was weird but you had to behave this way...

As mentioned, Buriats told me that their classes were boring. They did not like shouting out answers, as their Inner Mongolian peers did. They did not like memorizing large blocks of information and reciting it back to their teachers in choral form. The Buriats in the Chinese track were expected to write everything that was presented on the board, memorize it, and to prepare for their Chinese language (HSK) exam. (See Figure 48). The children complied but were not enthusiastic. No Buriat child raised his or her hands and shouted out answers, or even made eye contact with their teachers or peers. They simply hunched over their notebooks and wrote the requisite characters.

In her Mongolian track classes Katya simply ignored most of the teaching taking place; she played with her iPad, phone or iPod most of the day. In sum, during my observations inside the bilingual school, I concluded that Chinese socialization was based upon both Confucian philosophies and Chinese population dynamics.



Figure 48. Chinese Track Classroom (Mergen & Bata-Nimah).

Buriat socialization practices had some similarities and some differences with the socialization practices of the bilingual school in Hohhot. Because Buriats were socialized to obey their elders, resistance in class was often passive. Yet when they actively resisted, the four Buriat boys created grave consequences for themselves and for future Buriat students. In sum, socialization differences, especially the educational differences between group and individual dynamics, was enough to cause the Buriat children to encounter many challenges as students at the bilingual school in Hohhot. The Buriat youth in China experienced many kinds of challenges that made them reevaluate how they wanted to be defined. Although the

bilingual school was supportive of these children as Mongolians, they sensed political undercurrents which did not honor their ethnicity.

In Part Two, my work explores a second major theme: Evolving identities. The two patterns attached to this theme are: What is a “pure” Mongol, and “We are all Mongolians.

Part Two

Evolving Identities

Evolving identities allows me to discuss identity by looking at the following points: 1) Relationships Buriats had with their Inner Mongolian teachers; 2) The relationships Buriats had with Outer Mongolian classmates 3) Resistance as an act of identity; 4) Biracial children and intermarriage among the Buriat; and 5) The Internet and global identity.

Relationships Buriats had with their Inner Mongolian teachers. As shown previously, the Buriat children in general spoke very highly of their Inner Mongolian teachers and the school staff. One young Buriat, Namdak, who had graduated from the school, told me that he had lost his homesickness because a teacher regularly played chess with him: “We played chess in the cafeteria together. He told me Buriats are excellent chess players” (Interview, Hohhot, December 2012). When I asked him what he liked the best about the school Namdak reflected and said:

I liked the teachers; they were kind. I liked the discipline, at first, of course, it was difficult. But then I understood that they were doing all of this properly, to form our characters, and we couldn't just wander about (Interview, Hohhot, December 2012).

Here Namdak, a focal participant, emphasizes the positive experience he received as a Buriat at the Chinese bilingual school. Inner Mongolian teachers were proud to work at their school. They referred to the student body as “our Mongolians;” they included all the non-

Chinese Mongolians as “their” students. One teacher, Saranchana, stated that this school had an ongoing mission to help their students learn about being Mongolian. She was concerned with economic security but this teacher was also focused upon her work: teaching Mongolian children. When she referred to students, she globally encompassed them as “my” children:

Ah, what I get from it (teaching)... the most important thing, among the most important, is that the job is a permanent one, and I can get a stable salary. Then I can teach my children in the Mongolian language. That's the best part (Interview, Hohhot, November 2012).

Thus, by attending the school, the Buriats were exposed to a consciousness of being Mongolian. Many Buriat participants who were aged 17-24 told me they also considered themselves as “Asiatic.” But some of them were surprised because they did not feel welcome in China. Masha, a Buriat girl of 21, told me while drinking coffee: “I look like them (the Chinese); I am Asiatic. But Chinese only like each other” (Chat, Hohhot, December 2012).

Another Buriat participant, Namdak, also mentioned in an interview that the bilingual school was “Asian” rather than Mongolian. He saw the school as a kind of hybrid, because he viewed his Inner Mongolian classmates as less Mongolian and more Chinese; “Let me think a minute (pause)...this school united Mongolian and Chinese culture. It united them together and was a pure Asian school” (Interview, Hohhot, December 2012).

Namdak, Masha, other Buriat participants and the focal children all identified themselves as Buriats, Russian Buriats, or Buriat Mongols before they self-identified as “Asian.” When I asked why, Masha said:

Asian is how we look, you know, our eyes, our hair; it means I am not western, like you. Asian is only appearance: it is not culture. By culture I am Buriat. By politics I am a Russian Buriat (Chat, Hohhot, December 2012).

Here Masha has clearly positioned herself as a Russian Buriat because she understood Russia to be a superpower equal to China. She did not want to be positioned simply as a Mongolian, or as a Buriat. She had already sensed that the Han Chinese would consider her ethnic status (Buriat Mongolian) as being inferior to the Han Chinese; in conversations she told me of her initial dismay, and later anger, at being treated this way.

For the Buriats, physical appearance was very important for many reasons. First, young Buriats, especially adolescents, were undergoing enormous physical changes as they grew. Second, the Buriat focal children encountered people in China who looked like them but believed and acted differently; this must have been a shock. None of the focal children ever expressed to me any sense of being discriminated against, but as Buriats, these children may have chosen not to speak about negative incidents. They certainly understood that Inner Mongolians had conflicts with the Han Chinese.

In 2011, for example, several Buriat families called me to report that they feared going outside, because a Han Chinese lorry driver had run over and killed an Inner Mongolian herder who tried to prevent the truck from driving over sacred land.²⁴¹ Other incidents of ethnic tension were also apparent to me as researcher in 2012 and 2013; for example, I noted personally that many Mongolian cafes were forced to close after 8PM,

²⁴¹ Please refer to: http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/31/world/asia/31mongolia.html?_r=0

In this article is a significant statement: The root cause of the problem is not money," Mr. Togochoog said. "The problem is the conflict between the Mongolian people's efforts to maintain their distinct culture and way of life and the Chinese authorities' attempts to exploit the natural resources of the region."

because the Han Chinese police did not like groups of Mongolian men gathering together after dark.

Third, in China I noticed how European students often received more positive attention than Central Asians, Southeast Asians, or Buriats. One young American male of 21 bragged to me: It's so great being white here: people treat me like I'm minor royalty.²⁴² The Han Chinese deferred to Caucasians because many spoke English, a language that symbolized a way to be more successful and more mobile.

Finally, on the Internet, Buriat children could see images, which glorified one ethnicity, political power, or language over another. Such messages may have caused the Buriat focal children to feel conflicted in defining themselves as Mongolians, despite the good relationships they had with their Inner Mongolian teachers.

The relationships Buriats had with Outer Mongolian classmates. At the bilingual school, the Buriats in the Chinese class preferred to socialize only with their classmates, who were Outer Mongolians. As mentioned above, Buriats seemed conflicted, however, when they identified themselves as Mongolians in China. For example, Buriat children did not think that their Inner Mongolian classmates were really Mongolian. Bata Nimah and Katya, in talking to me, said:

1. BN: Chinese here pretend they are Mongolian. The only Mongolians here are
2. us!
3. K: Yeah!
4. VS: And your Outer Mongolian classmates?

²⁴² The opposite was true for men and women of color: An African American scholar from Michigan told me that she became depressed frequently and hated to go outside because people would stare at her and call her names. Likewise, an African male from Togo told me that he had experienced racism in many forms, but was particularly annoyed when taxi drivers refused to allow him in their vehicles.

5. M: Yeah, them too. Anyone not Chinese...(laughs).²⁴³

Yet many times the Buriats at the school identified themselves as Russians, or as Russian Buriats. Sometimes Bata Nimah and Mergen insulted the Outer Mongolians by calling them names. For example, Mergen told me on the school track one morning:

They (Outer Mongols) are peasants. They think they are better than us, because they speak Mongol and we speak Russian. But we are classy and they are just herders with a little money (Chat, Hohhot, November 2012).

Perhaps linguistic inequities, as well as adolescent competition, caused the Buriat boys to generally keep their distance from their Outer Mongolian peers, and sometimes to criticize them or call them names. Perhaps Mergen saw himself as having a more sophisticated cultural outlook, because he had been russified. He knew that the Outer Mongolian economy did not perform as well as that of the Inner Mongolian or the Buriat Mongolian, and he implied that his Outer Mongolian classmates were the fortunate Outer Mongols who had some money. Yet they, in his eyes, remained herders; living at a lower level than Buriat Mongolians. Mergen had internalized the ideology of Russian culture, at the expense of his own sense of being a Buriat Mongol. This did not surprise me with Mergen, as his aunt had clearly outlined her preference in valuing Russian culture over her own Indigenous culture; her nephew may have picked up this preference.

I term Mergen's speech *negative competition*. Mergen was by ethnicity a member of the Mongolian people; he was a Buriat born in Buriatia to Buriat parents. His rejection of his own culture and of his affiliation to other Mongolian people was a form of negativity. This

²⁴³ Note the laughter: this speech act could connote embarrassment, nervousness, anxiety – it is unclear but it happened frequently in chats and interviews among all participants.

negativity insidiously upheld the hegemonic ideology of the Russian state by glorifying it as better than that of a free Mongolian people and nation. One could also argue that Mergen's statement was more than adolescent name calling; it can be tied into Bakhtin's (1981) ideological becoming, discussed in the literature review. Mergen's statement has demonstrated the historical and political context by describing hierarchies among the Mongolian people. The Buriats, for example, had lorded over the Outer Mongolians, by helping the Russian Bolsheviks invade and eventually conquer them in the early 1920s; then Buriats served as senior advisors for the first independent Outer Mongolian nation (Sneath, 2010). Even today, many Buriats are currently instrumental in trying to help Outer Mongolia modernize (Zhargal, personal communication, Feb 2014).

Despite being the so-called poorer, wilder brothers among Mongolian groups (Graber, 2012), by the Buriats and the Inner Mongolians, Outer Mongolians have retained an aura of being the "pure" Mongolian. One of the arguments presented for being a "pure" Mongolian by the focal participants is the fact that Outer Mongolians speak Mongolian in many linguistic domains – while Buriats speak Buriat primarily in the home. Since the breakup of the USSR in 1991, Outer Mongolians have reverted back to Khalk as their national language; it is the language of government, business, entertainment, and education in Outer Mongolia. Yet this argument was refuted by an Outer Mongolian girl, who reminded me that even foreigners could speak Khalk if they studied the language. More significant was the fact that Khalk served as the standard, national language in Outer Mongolia: this gave Khalk prestige, importance, and merit in Inner Asia.

After the breakup of the USSR, Outer Mongolia plunged into a severe economic crisis, worse than that of the Buriats in Buriatia. Initially, this crisis sent many Outer

Mongolians fleeing from the city back to the land, in an effort to survive (Sneath, 2003). For some families, their lifestyles reverted back to traditional nomadic practices. In the early 1990s, land was easily available, as Outer Mongolia was never colonized as extensively as Buriatia (or Inner Mongolia). Today, the majority of Outer Mongolians outside of the capital and in a few scattered townships live a simple life herding animals. But this lifestyle is now endangered. *The New York Times* regularly reports that mining interests in Outer Mongolia are growing, with international mining consortiums and the Chinese constantly trying to develop and mine more ground. Yet most Outer Mongolians remain impoverished (Nixson & Walters, 2006). Paradoxically, Buriat focal participants both admired and criticized the Outer Mongolians: They were perceived as wild and poor – but they were also free and pure. Buriats could not say that they were free of their colonizers: the Russians.

Many Buriats, having been colonized by the Russians for hundreds of years, adapted their culture and lifestyle by tolerating Russian rule and by accepting Russian culture to some degree. Some of this internalization may have been passed inter-generationally (Duran & Duran, 1995). Mergen's statement reflects his acceptance of the covert ideology of the Russian oppressor, past and present. He has elevated his group (Buriats) by calling them "classy," and denigrated the Outer Mongolians, who are free but poor, by calling them "peasants." Yet later, this same group of boys, like many other Buriat youth and adults, referred to the Outer Mongolians as "pure." Such internal conflict is not unique to the Buriats.²⁴⁴

²⁴⁴ For example, refer to: Parry, B. (1987). Problems in current theories of colonial discourse. *Oxford Literary Review*, 9(1), 27-58.

In Feb 2014, in a small village near Lake Baikal, I asked a Buriat elder, Zhargal, to make his own analysis of Mergen's name calling. He said:

1. Z: Well, (pause) they are boys; name calling is part of boys' competition. They
2. might be competing for grades, or in sports?
3. VS: Perhaps....is there any political or historical reason for this kind of name
4. calling?"
5. Z: If you want to put children's words in a political context...I guess that has
6. been done, as in China with the Cultural Revolution, with kids denouncing their
7. parents and teachers...Yes, there are possible reasons. We Buriats have had
8. contact with the Russians for over 300 years; it has changed the way we live. I
9. cannot say I love the Russians, but I accept that they have brought us many kinds
10. of advanced technologies. We eat like Russians and like Buriats. We use Russian
11. machines. We speak Russian and Buriat. I was educated in Moscow; I could not
12. speak Buriat to get my education, and this education has changed the way I think,
13. my life....But Mongolians, they only received a small dose of Russification, after
14. 1924 --- and, you surely know, it was we Buriats who helped set up their first
15. government, and Buriats still advise the Mongolians. If they have no access to
16. other great languages, they remain mired in the past. Even now, they look
17. romantically to the past, the far far past, because they have nothing solid to look
18. at in the last 100 years or so... They have no tradition of higher learning, of
19. technology, of even food...But Buriats have incorporated their Buriat culture with
20. Russian culture, and we have risen past living so simply. It may be romantic to
21. live as a Mongol, but it is a harsh life. A simple life, so perhaps that is why the

22. Buriat boys used the word peasant.

This older gentleman may have internalized Russian hegemonic ideas as well. Like Mergen, he has positively interpreted the hegemonic ideology of the Russian state, because it has offered him a more comfortable life. He has also cited historical circumstances to place Buriats above Outer Mongolians. Indigenous knowledge and lifestyle was perceived as harsh and inferior. Finally, he has also stated that adolescent boys in general are competitive, and that these Buriat boys in China were seeking ways to feel secure, if not equal to or superior to their peers.

Resistance as an act of identity. In the first theme I discussed and analyzed resistance as an act of identity by describing how four Buriat boys bullied four Han Chinese youth on a public street. Their actions had serious consequences, with two of the boys leaving China before completing their studies. In addition to bullying, focal Buriats also resisted Chinese socialization practices in other ways. They resisted acting as a member of their class group; most of the time, the Buriat focal children held themselves aloof from both the Inner Mongolians and from the Outer Mongolians. They also refused to raise their hands or shout in an attempt to get their teacher's attention.

Another significant form of resistance that deserves mention is dress. None of the focal children in this study would wear the Chinese school uniform. Katya's Russian jeans, jewelry, and makeup were forbidden at school and also, unsurprisingly, considered as high status symbols among all the children. Her dress style reflected a Russian identity: She appeared more sexual and mature than that of her classmates. Katya's tight jeans and tops, as opposed to the baggy sweat suits that were the school uniform, made her stand out. In chatting with Ayur, a former pupil at the school, he mentioned Katya:

1. V: What does a person need to know or do to be a good student at that school?
2. A: Well, for example, you should always wear the uniform, and a red scarf, the
3. Red Pioneer scarf...without it you can't enter the school.
4. V: But Katya doesn't wear a uniform or scarf?
5. A: Katya is Katya; I dunno what they said to her about this -- but everyone wears
6. the uniform -- it's mandatory.

The Buriat focal boys also refused to wear the school uniform. They wore Russian leather jackets and jeans to school. The boys were proud of their Russian clothing. The school authorities said nothing about Buriats' defiance of their dress code. Perhaps the Inner Mongolian staff was tolerant of the children's need to identify themselves as different from the Chinese; perhaps the staff did not want to create any conflict. (One teacher, however, as discussed earlier, did punish an Outer Mongolian boy for wearing an earring).

As mentioned previously, the Buriat children also resisted school socialization norms. They refused to shout out answers in class, the protocol previously described above. Bakhtin (1976) outlined how people mean much more than the words they utter. In addition to looking at utterances in context, understanding communicative acts, one must go further than what is spoken, and find what is assumed or unsaid. This unknowable something resides in the unconscious of the speaker; "Assumed value judgments are therefore not individual emotions but regular and essential social acts" (Bakhtin, 1976:100). In their refusal to act like the Inner Mongolians (who were socialized to respond in this way) or like the Outer Mongolians (who yelled and shouted as a way to scorn the socialization), the Buriat focal children identified themselves as different from both Mongolian groups. Their silence was an attempt to establish their dignity, and perhaps their superiority, over the other Mongolians.

Yet not all of the four Buriat focal children had the same experiences at the bilingual school. One focal child, Katya, was biracial; her daily actuality was different from the other three focal children. Now I discuss identity and the issue of being biracial, as well as intermarriage among the Buriat.

Biracial children and intermarriage among the Buriat. In this study I observed one biracial child, Katya. She had two older sisters; each of her mother's daughters had a different father. Katya's older sisters were 19 and 18 years old at the time of fieldwork; they both had Buriat fathers, and they looked physically different from their baby sister. In fact, Katya's mother, Natasha, told me that "they pass more easily in China because they look Asian," adding, "As you accompany her to school, people think she is your daughter, not mine!"

Few Buriat parents wanted to discuss racism. It was a hidden topic, and as a Caucasian American, perhaps these parents thought I would take offense if Russians or other ethnic groups were criticized. But one afternoon Katya's mother Natasha said some extraordinary things about racism in both Russia and China: "I'll send my daughters to Beijing before Moscow, because Moscow is dangerous for us Asiatic people, and Beijing is an Asiatic place." She went on to say that "in Moscow they may say we are not Russian; we may not find work...that - here (in China) for Asiatic people it's easier" (Chat, Hohhot, December 2012). Then Natasha said that she "realized only after I came here that my Katya wasn't Asiatic...She laughed and added: "In my head I had no idea that these people (the Chinese) would view her so differently and treat her so differently...In Buriatia there are many like her and it is nothing - but here...People stare at her (Chat, Hohhot, December 2012).

Here Natasha has implied that Katya's life would be easier in Buriatia, where she claimed people of mixed race were not treated differently; in China, due to her European features, Katya was regarded as different, as non-Asiatic, and yet non-Western, too, as she spoke little English. Moreover, Natasha has said that for Buriats of full or mixed blood, living in European Russia (St Petersburg/Moscow) holds potential danger: they will not find work, or be treated well. Other Buriat adults, during my fieldwork, told me that they preferred to live in "Asiatic" countries (China, Outer Mongolia, Viet Nam) rather than European Russia, because they feared potential violence from racists. They also expressed consternation and fear over the fact that some young adult children wanted to relocate to European Russia (St Petersburg/Moscow). The young people were aware of discrimination, but they, like many young Siberians, sought to live in less provincial towns and cities (Habeck & Ventsel, 2009).

Sadly, the Buriat boys, Mergen and Bata-Nimah, also did not accept Katya at the bilingual school. Here again is a previous quote, now extended:

1. BN: Chinese here pretend they are Mongolian. The only Mongolians here are
2. us!
3. K: Yeah!
4. VS: And your Outer Mongolian classmates?
5. M: Yeah, them too. Anyone not Chinese...(laughs)...Katya's not Mongolian...
6. K: What!?!? What did you say?
7. M: You're Russian.
8. K: Hey! Stupid! I'm Mongolian too.
9. BN: (Talking to researcher) He means, like, her dad is Russian.

The boy's comments imply that even among the Buriats, children who have mixed blood encounter acceptance issues from their peers. This is a topic that requires future research: how biracial children are treated in school and out of school.

Biracial children come from interracial unions. I found no statistics to compare interracial marriages among the Han Chinese and Inner Mongolians, or statistics related to marriage between the ethnic Russians and the Buriats. During my fieldwork I was told that Han Chinese will marry Inner Mongolians and sometimes declare their children to be of Mongolian ethnicity (or another "minority" ethnicity), in the hopes that their children will receive educational handicap points. These points allow Chinese ethnic minorities to enter universities with lower standardized test scores.²⁴⁵ The three mixed marriage couples I met in Inner Mongolia did not speak Mongolian in the home, although one family sent their child to the bilingual school "to learn Mongolian for a few years." Children from these Han/Mongol marriages often did not seem to look different than the full blooded Inner Mongolian children I saw every day at the school.

Some interracial children, like Katya, were more easily distinguished as having mixed blood. Buriat parents told me that these children could either look like "Europeans, like you, Valeria," as Katya did, or they would look "Asian but with blue eyes." Buriats were reluctant to comment upon these children, or upon interracial marriages. Surana's mother, as quoted earlier, did state when she spoke about Buriats being outnumbered by the Russians in their own homeland that: "But I wish my child to marry a Buriat, and hopefully she will" (Chat, Ulan Ude, February 2014).

²⁴⁵ This is discussed previously in the literature review.

A participant's mother, who was also a critical friend in this study, spoke to me over the course of a year of her anguish at watching her son get engaged to and eventually marry, an ethnic Russian girl. "She will not understand our ways," this mother said. When I pointed out gently that the children would most likely be Russian speakers, she exclaimed, "I will teach my grandchildren Buriat!" This surprised me, as she rarely conversed with her own children in Buriat.²⁴⁶ Another Buriat parent, a man, aged 54, who I met by accident in a coffee shop in Ulan Ude, pointed out to me his fear about interracial marriage partners: "They are fine here; we Buriats are tolerant and accept everyone. But if they go to Moscow....well, it is cause for worry" (Chat, Ulan Ude, February 2014).

Again, the issue of racism in European Russia cropped up in conversation, as this father feared that his Buriat son with an ethnic Russian wife would anger the males in Moscow. In the same vein, however, many Buriats over age 50 told me that they felt interracial marriages should be forbidden. One grandmother in a rural village outside Ulan Ude said: "They (Russians) are so many. We should not mix our blood and lose our people" (Chat, Rural Buriat Village, February 2014).

The subject of mixed race children and intermarriage deserves more research. It is complex, delicate, and little has been written on it, specifically from a Buriat-Russian perspective. Perhaps the fact that I was an outsider and a researcher made people hesitant to talk about this subject with me. Perhaps it is a taboo subject among the Buriat. I did note in Buriatia that multiracial children seemed to be accepted by their peers in the primary schools I visited. In school hallways, these children seemed more interested in evaluating and

²⁴⁶ This is discussed in the Competing Languages Pattern.

examining cell phones than each other's ethnicity. Now I turn to the subject of how the digital technology and the Internet impacts young Buriats in terms of identity.

The Internet and global identity. I did not gather specific data on how the Buriat children surfed the Internet, but at times I was able to observe the ways in which Buriat focal children and other participants used the Internet, cell phones and other forms of technology. My impressions were that the children all wanted to connect with the world outside of Russia and China. Buriat children wanted to see themselves as young members of a hip, global community. For example, the majority of participants and all of the focal children preferred western music. They liked British and American rap and techno-music; all of it was in English. One morning when I asked Bata Nimah, a focal child, why he preferred gangsta rap, he gave me no clear answer. Later that day, walking home from school, he casually mentioned that he had heard Black people and White people disliked and even fought each other in the US, the way Mongolians and Han Chinese disliked each other. I speculate that his own sense of being oppressed – by the Russians in Buriatia and by the Chinese in Inner Mongolia - might have drawn him to identify with African American musicians and the gangsta rap genre. It may be that the Buriats who listened to gangsta rap identified with African Americans due to the ways they were positioned as lesser than Mongolians by the Han Chinese. The Buriats might also have listened to gangsta rap because it is popular music; they liked it because it held appeal to young people around the globe. The Buriats may have been aware of the Outer Mongolian gangsta rap, which is violently racist against the Chinese and angry over environmental degradation that results from international mining consortiums. Russian gangsta rap imitates in lyrics African American gangsta rap, in that it emphasizes drugs, violence, and misogynistic attitudes toward women (Dyson, 1996). The

appeal of gangsta rap music among Buriat and other Mongolian youth deserves further research.²⁴⁷ Identifying with music is one aspect of identity. Another important aspect of identity revolves around the concept of being a “pure” Mongolian.

What is a “pure” Mongol? One pattern that is connected to evolving identities is the concept of: What is a “pure” Mongol? This question can be linked to the ideas of Bakhtin (1973; 1981), who asserted that, in terms of identity, no one can see himself clearly, regardless of age. We can only see a part of ourselves through the values of others. “Self-awareness is always a matter of gauging one’s self against some social norm” (Bakhtin, 1976: 76-77). As outlined previously in the literature review, Bakhtin perceived the concept of identity not as a subject or an essence in its own right, but rather as something that exists dialogically - in relation and in reaction to the other, notably other selves. People view and imagine reality from their personal point of view, which is unique and separate from others, including those in the same community or even family. Moreover, others see us as we cannot see or imagine ourselves, making it possible to create a different reality, a different identity. Bakhtin asserted that this kind of refractory identity creation goes on all our lives; it is not finite or static. The dynamic and evolving idea of purity among Mongolians is one example. The fact that Outer Mongolians have only recently received independence from the former USSR has allotted them status, and in effect, purity from other Mongolian peoples who are still oppressed by dominant nations – China and Russia. Furthermore, Bakhtin argued that the self consists of the sum of these discursive practices that people experience through time and space, and some people are more aware of their identity transformations than others. For

²⁴⁷ There are scholars who write about Outer Mongolian gangsta rap – how it serves as a way to expose inequities between Mongolians and Chinese, and how globalization has contributed to environmental problems in Mongolia. For example, <http://fulbright.mtvu.com/laurenknapp/2012/06/20/gee-mongolias-most-notorious-rapper/>

example, some Buriat children denied at times their connection to being Mongolian, because they sensed that the “Other” – the Han Chinese, had labeled Mongolian as inferior to Han. In the same sense, the parents of these focal children told me that they felt Buriats had been labeled during the Soviet regime as inferior to ethnic Russians. Yet in China, the young Buriats identified themselves as Russians, because it may have appeared in their eyes to be a more powerful label than being Mongolian or Buriat.

Clearly, for the Buriat children, the sense of having a Mongolian identity was both conflictive and complex, because it related to politics, geography, and ethnicity. All the participants - Han Chinese, Inner Mongolian, Outer Mongolian, and Buriat, had an opinion on the concept of what it meant to be a “pure” Mongolian. Their ideas were tied into political, historical, and geographical paradigms, which in turn reflect Bakhtin’s dialogical ideas covering the historicity of time and space. Many people made references to their own ethnicity as an Inner Mongolian or as a Buriat Mongolian and then compared themselves to “pure” Mongolians, whom they perceived to be Outer Mongols – because the Outer Mongols were currently members of an independent nation. These groups conveniently forgot that this independence was new (since 1991); Outer Mongolians had (as described in the literature reviewed) been colonized by both the Chinese and the Russian empires for long periods of time.

Additionally, in listening to the Buriats talk, I realized that “pure” Mongolians held in their eyes both positive and negative features. Buriat adults called the Outer Mongols both poor yet free (Graber, 2012). Buriat participants viewed the Outer Mongolians as more traditional, freer, yet economically worse off than themselves. One 56 year old Buriat man living in Kyatka said:

We still love the horse, the nomadic life, but one must eat, and few of us can herd horses and cattle successfully. This is why; too, we see our Outer Mongolian brothers are pure. They are still living the true nomad's life. (See Figure 49).



Figure 49. Outer Mongolian Steppelands.

In the same way, Han Chinese participants made similar statements in evaluating Outer Mongolians, seeing them also as freer and more traditional. One Inner Mongolian man whose son attended the bilingual school said: “It (Outer Mongolian nomadic lifestyle) is a poor living in money but a rich life with animals and nature” (Researcher Journal, January 2013).

A Buriat professor, Agvan, told me this about Outer Mongolians:

1. VS: So language, Mongolian language being prominent, means they are pure?
2. AG: Yes, and their culture, it's very important.

3. VS: But those that live in UB (Ulaan Baatar), they live like you do. They even
4. speak English...
5. AG: Despite that, that is society, urban life, but they keep their culture...they
6. speak Mongolian in the city and in the countryside...they have not taken on
7. Chinese or Russian culture, not to any great measure...they keep the Mongolian
8. traditions. That's how I think. (Interview, Ulan Ude, January 2014).

Thus, among other Mongolian groups, (Buriat and the Inner Mongolians), Outer Mongolians were perceived as “pure” – because the majority of the population still lives and migrates along the steppes, deserts and savannahs on their own, recently independent nation. Outer Mongolians herd animals without benefit of much of today’s modern technology and instruments. Outer Mongolians, unlike the Buriats and Inner Mongolians, have their own land and nation: they are currently free of the invader. This, combined with a traditional lifestyle for the majority of the population, has caused many Buriat participants to yearn nostalgically for “the old days as nomads under Genghis Khan.”

Thus, in the course of many interviews and chats, I was able to discern that the notion of a “pure” Mongol had many aspects. Chapter Four illustrates that “pure” Mongolians are those who are not ruled over (currently) by other groups. Additionally, they have never left their original homeland and have their own independent nation. Pure Mongols claim ancestry to Genghis Khan. They adhere to traditions and they speak their language and it is the national standard. Finally, pure Mongols still live a nomadic life. Yet, although both Inner Mongolian and Buriat participants admired the Outer Mongolians for all these things, they also criticized them, stating that Outer Mongolians were impoverished, and at times, uncouth, drinking heavily and living at a lower standard. Katya remarked, for example: “...but

Mongols like meat and alcohol, mainly their stomachs are different” (Chat, Hohhot, November 2012).

From my researcher’s journal I noted that a highly educated Buriat elder also joked with me in Feb 2014 about the Outer Mongolian diet: “And what did you eat: mutton, mutton, and mutton fat?” he asked me rhetorically, and we both smiled (Researcher’s Journal, Buriatia countryside, February 2014).

At the bilingual school, Buriat boys identified Outer Mongolian Khalk as a better language than Inner Mongolian Temut. If they criticized the Outer Mongolians, they also affiliated themselves more closely to Outer Mongolians than to the Inner Mongolians. Was this because the Outer Mongolians were pure and free, and because their language had predominant status in their own country? For example, Bata Nimah and Mergen chatted with me:

The boys told me that they taught themselves to speak Khalk by listening to the Outer Mongolian students. They also listened to their Inner Mongolian teachers and learned the Mongolian inflections and grammar patterns but Mergen commented: They (Inner Mongolian teachers) use so many Chinese words... (Researcher’s Journal, Hohhot, Nov 2012).

Despite any negative criticism, such as Mergen’s name calling, Buriat participants and focal children saw themselves as more closely affiliated with Outer Mongolians. Buriats stated at times that all Mongolians were brothers, and from the same blood. This pattern is discussed next.

We are all Mongolians. In conjunction with the concept of “pure” Mongol another pattern emerged: We are all Mongolians. This pattern illustrates how Mongolian people

talked about their common roots as Mongolians via a set of concepts upon which they all agreed. For example, Mongolian languages are similar to each other. This is documented in the literature, but more importantly, it was verified as an identity marker by the focal children. Bata-Nimah said, for example; “My father speaks all the Mongolian languages, because he travels a lot (throughout Outer Mongolia and Inner Mongolia) (Chat, School Hallway, Hohhot, September 2012). A participant’s mother also remarked: “Yes, I speak it (Khalk) – it’s not like Buriat, but it is still Mongolian” (Chat, Hohhot School Gate, November 2012).

The Inner Mongolian varieties of Mongolian were also acknowledged by adults as authentic Mongolian languages. As demonstrated above, the children ridiculed Inner Mongolian Temut, because it had many Chinese loan words. What they did not say or perhaps realize was that Buriat varieties had large numbers of Russian words, especially Khori, the variety in which the focal children had varying fluencies. Yet despite foreign loan words, both Temut and Buriat were perceived as Mongolian varieties.

The second point that bound Mongolians together was the concept that national borders have redefined Mongolians but not separated them as a people. It was not by choice that Inner Mongolians became part of China and Buriats and Outer Mongols (for some time) became part of Russia. All the Mongolians viewed their ancient homelands, despite political boundaries, as part of one larger realm, which was originally unified and controlled by Genghis Khan and his lieutenants. This relationship to the great warrior Genghis Khan²⁴⁸ was repeated over and over to me. For example, one Inner Mongolian said: “Because then we

²⁴⁸ As discussed in the literature review, this mythical relationship cannot possibly accommodate ALL Mongols; please see Sneath, D. (2007). *The headless state: aristocratic orders, kinship society, & misrepresentations of nomadic Inner Asia*. Columbia University Press.

served under Genghis Khan long, long ago, we, I guess we used to be pure (laughs) (Chat, Hohhot, December 2012). (See Figure 50).



Figure 50. Genghis Khan.

Additionally, one Buriat father explained the Buriat relationship to both Genghis Khan and the original homeland as follows:

Buriats, well, Buriats, they, in the time of Genghis Khan, in the era after, they left for the north, the words “*buuru garad*” ... how to say, uhh, from the meaning of “*buuru garad*,” “*buuru garson Mongol*,” those that left improperly (Chat, Ulan Ude, January 2014).

Another Buriat elder said Buriats were nomadic in the past, and a few, like the Outer Mongolians, were still semi-nomadic. The Soviets had curtailed nomadic freedoms by

creating borders but Buriat, like other Mongolian people, were related. A Buriat elder remarked to me in English in Ulan Ude: “Mongolian past is based upon being nomadic, and Genghis Khan, and being free, living on the earth lightly” (Chat, Ulan Ude, January 2014).

In addition to the land and genealogy, I noted similar patterns in traditional dress, food, celebrating holidays and carrying out traditions among all the Mongolian groups: Inner, Outer and Buriats. Spiritual and religious practices also bound the Mongolian groups together.²⁴⁹

Humphrey (2013) has written about the revitalization of a Buddhist monastery in Inner Mongolia. (See Figure 51). My observations indicated that Buriats and Outer Mongolians seemed to spend more time and energy on Buddhist and shamanistic practices. I had less contact with Inner Mongolian families than I did with Buriats, and to some extent, Outer Mongolians. Yet one young Buriat girl, Ouyunika, did tell me:

1. VS: You are a Buriat, are you a Buddhist?
2. S: Of course!
3. VS: Are there many Buddhists here in Inner Mongolia?
4. S: Yes, the (Inner) Mongols are the same as us.

²⁴⁹ In China, however, Inner Mongolians could not welcome their spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama. In Outer Mongolia and Buriatia he has been reverently and warmly received.



Figure 51. *Datsan* (temple) outside Ulan Ude.

In sum, in my observations, I noted that Buriat children spoke about Mongolians and being Mongolian differently, dependent upon where they were located geographically and politically. In China, the focal children appeared hesitant to express themselves as Mongolians; in fact, the majority of the time I watched them interact while shopping or riding bicycles, they would say: “I am a Russian,” or “I am a foreigner from Russia.” When I traveled twice for a week to Outer Mongolia with a Buriat family, however, the children proudly stated that they were “Mongolians, but Buriat Mongols.” In Buriatia, two focal children stated: “I am Buriat” or “I am Russian” interchangeably. This conflicted sense of ethnic identity appears to be based upon context and upon ideological forces that were at work in each country the children inhabited.

Competing Languages

The third and final theme I term “Competing languages,” because during the course of this study I noted how the focal children, their parents, and other participants had a definite linguistic hierarchy regarding the status and importance regarding languages. People spoke about English, Mandarin, Mongolian languages, and Buriat; within their hierarchy, Buriat was devalued. In this section I address the ways in which Buriat was utilized by the focal children, their parents, and other Buriat participants. In both China and Buriatia, Buriat parents did not seem overly concerned about Buriat language being passed down to their children. Adults were focused upon making sure their children spoke the dominant languages well. Buriat was used just for family interactions, if at all. Surana’s father told me, for example: “To be educated, one must speak proper Russian. I think it is just as important as Chinese” (Interview, Hohhot, November 2012)

In my Mergen’s aunt told me that she communicated with him only in Russian, because her Buriat was inadequate, and because: “Russian and Chinese and English were the important languages” (Field Notes, Irkutsk, January 2014).

Some young Buriats used more Khalk Mongolian than Buriat Mongolian. For example, Ouyunika a Buriat girl studying at the Hohhot medical institute, said:

I use (Khalk) Mongolian (at school), because I’m always with other Mongolians...in my circle of friends I’m the sole Buriat. We speak Mongol. Other Russian speakers are rare, if I see them I speak Russian, there are one or two in my classes (Interview, Hohhot, March 2014).

For many participants, adult and child alike, English was perceived as the most important language. Chinese was also considered very powerful. Dashka, a young Buriat girl

at the medical institute, remarked: “You must know Chinese, because they are so many, they are everywhere. Chinese is the second most powerful language after English” (Chat, Hohhot, March 2013). Buriat parents commented to me about how they thought about English:

During my stay Surana’s parents politely asked me to speak to her in English’ because “English, like Russian, is a language for success.” They also asked me during my stay to tutor her in English, sometimes along with her friend Inna; I agreed. In contrast, I did not see the parents speak to Surana in Buriat, except to chastise her occasionally in front of me...they used Russian in communicating with her, while they mixed languages while conversing with each other. They used Buriat only to scold Surana in my presence (Researcher Journal, Ulan Ude, February 2014).

Even more interesting is the fact that some Buriat participants, due to their close interactions with Outer Mongolians, told me that they were fluent in Khalk Mongolian rather than in Buriat. Bata-Nimah, for example, never admitted to me while he was in China that he spoke Buriat. Yet when I visited him briefly in his home town of Kyatka, Buriatia, I observed him sitting on a sofa chatting animatedly with his relatives in Buriat. In fact, some of his older relatives, such as his great grandmother, only spoke Buriat: he had to speak to her in this language in order to communicate.

Another significant example is Namdak, a Buriat boy of 20 studying at the medical institute. He told me that his life and studies in China had caused him to increase his fluency in Khalk, and decrease his fluency in Buriat:

1. VS: So you learned Mongolian, does that mean you can speak better Buriat, too?
2. ND: At home in Buriatia I can ask questions, sure. Sometimes I use words my
3. parents do not know.

4. VS: Buriat words?
5. ND: I guess they are Mongolian (Khalk) words. It's as if I think first in
6. Mongolian and then try to say it in Buriat. It's confusing for my parents at times.
7. VS: So you're really talking to them in Mongolian (Khalk)?
8. ND: Yes. I have a Mongolian accent, too.

Yet Namdak also expressed his pride in being a Russian speaker, as opposed to a Buriat or Mongolian speaker. During this interview he added:

I love my Russian language, because compared to Chinese and Mongolian and even English, it's special, maybe the Russian grammatical structure is beautiful, I don't know; you can change meaning by changing sentence forms, you can't do that with Chinese English or Mongolian...they have a strict word order. And our Russian is the most powerful. (laugh) (Interview, Hohhot, May 2013).

In sum, for the focal children and the other Buriat participants I interviewed and spent time with, it appeared that they were learning Khalk Mongolian because their classmates and future friends (if they remained in China) were Mongols, not Chinese. As Ouyuninka said: "I am better in Mongolian, because I'm always with other Mongolians...Chinese - they are not real friends" (Researcher Notes, Hohhot, May 2013).

For some focal children Buriat was used for family gatherings and it was often mixed with Russian. Some Buriat guardians, such as Mergen's auntie, used only Russian with him. The focal children who studied and stayed in China picked up, over time, both Mandarin and Mongolian, presumably Khalk Mongolian. These languages were used in more social domains than Buriat. Whether the children and their parents were conscious of devaluing Buriat is unknown. Another point of interest is that the Buriat focal children and other Buriat

focal participants did not socialize with the Han Chinese. They dutifully studied Mandarin, but they did not have Han Chinese friends. Their friends were either Outer Mongolians or Inner Mongolians, who were bilingual in Temut and Mandarin. This lack of interaction between Buriats and Han Chinese deserves more research.

Discussion

Anthropologists and ethnographers have long employed informal communicative genres to observe and analyze ethnic identity. Humphrey (1994), for example, focused on casual chat among Buriats, while Basso (1979) analyzed joking among the Apache. Goodwin (1990) examined arguments among African American children. Humphrey (1994) defined chat as an informal, unfocused communicative act, often with haphazard reiteration. My chats with Buriat focal children have demonstrated the evolving nature of their identities, as well as the importance of examining identity in sociocultural context. I have illustrated the primary markers of Buriat identity in this study are related to Buriat socialization practices: maintaining a reverent attitude toward Buriat lands, learning and practicing spiritual ways that relate to Buddhist and shamanistic teachings; having a profession, such as Mongolian doctor, that upholds these teachings; and honoring and interacting with family and kin. Fluency and literacy in Buriat, however, seemed to serve only as a symbolic identity marker for the focal children and their families in this study. This closing section discusses ethnicity in Russia, offers an overview of the focal children's evolving identities, and reaffirms the need to acknowledge my researcher positionality. Finally, in closing the results chapter, I present a vignette about a contemporary young Buriat adult, a man who has successfully completed the process of becoming a Mongolian alternative doctor.

Buriat ethnicity and identity in contemporary Russia. It is my opinion that the Russian Federation's current position on ethnicity, like the former USSR's position, is based upon two opposing philosophies. Over time, for the Buriats, these philosophies have generated competing policies. On the one hand, the state strives to uphold all Buriats as a *nationalnosti* (ethnicity); on the other hand, the state has also supported individual Buriats, urging unique people to excel within the established Russian social order. Buriats, traditionally a communal people, today continue to seek to maintain their culture and language as an ethnic group. Buriats as individuals wish to do this within their group, but they also desire to achieve individual successes. Some Buriats, such as Mergen's aunt, may end up partially (or fully) rejecting Buriat cultural norms in order to excel under the ideological umbrella of the Russian Federation. This paradigm has resulted in several generations of conflicted people: the Buriat children, their parents, and to some extent, their elders and grandparents.

The Russian government projects both soft and hard policies in regard to these philosophies. Soft policies that are pro-Buriat promote affirmative action, language revitalization in the schools, Buriat TV news segments on a major TV channel (Russia Channel 1, for 15-20 minutes daily), official acknowledgement of Buriat holidays and traditions, etc. Current Russian hard policies, which were also enforced during Soviet times, severely punish (or execute) any Buriat who showed extreme nationalistic tendencies. The issue of individual choice also enters into these philosophies; for example, when a Buriat marries outside of his or her ethnic group, or when a Buriat decides that Russian and perhaps another dominant language (such as Chinese or English) has more importance than the

Indigenous Buriat tongue, or finally, when a Buriat accepts Christianity over Buddhism and shamanistic beliefs.

These ideals – being a member of an ethnic group versus achieving on an individual level – may become internalized in varying levels of strength during youth. They may increase or decrease over time. In this research I have explored the ways Buriat youth are socialized by their own school culture and the alien Chinese school culture, in order to seek understanding as to how these young people understand their sense of self by and through communicative actions. Yet these young people did not arrive in China with their minds as empty slates: they had already internalized and accepted, to varying degrees, the ideology of the Russian state concerning their membership in Russia as Russian citizens, and the Buriat ideology of what they learned from their parents and elders about being Buriat and being a Russian citizen. Upon resettling in China, despite attending a pro-Mongolian school, these young people were confronted with another philosophy: being Mongolian under the Han Chinese regime. The focal Buriat youth have all responded differently to this added stand of self-identification.

There is, however, a pattern. Focal Buriat identities are initially woven around these three major strands: being Buriat, being Russian, being Mongolian. The image I see is that of a plait, similar to a French braid, because this kind of weave adjusts to the wearer, and can be braided with each strand varying in thickness or thinness as the braid is wound or bound around the head. The first strand represents the fact that the children at various times during my research identified themselves as Russian Buriats - in essence, a form of nationalism - Russian Buriats - as opposed to Outer Mongolian Buriats or Inner Mongolian Buriats. The second strand represents being simply Buriats; this weave may thicken or thin as the focal

child grows and matures, as the child returns to the homeland or communicates extensively with Buriat family, elders, and other members of the social community. The third strand represents Buriat Mongols - a political tie, equating to a pan-Mongol relationship of brotherhood. But not all brothers are equal. Buriat focal children expressed to me that they were brethren to other Mongols, but superior to these Mongol brothers – both Inner and Outer – because they have also internalized the ideology of the dominant Russian state. I feel that this strand evolved during the time the focal children lived and studied in China, as their political consciousness as members of a pan-Mongol ethnic group was aroused. Also, the Buriat focal youth viewed the Outer Mongols as closer kin than the Inner Mongols, perhaps due to historical myth, their current freedom as a nation state, and the fact that Buriats perceived the Inner Mongolians as more “Chinese” than Mongolian.

My two trips to the Republic of Buriatia (August 2012; February, 2014) also indicated the importance of Indigenous identity in relation to a physical connection to the homeland. In Buriatia, these identity strands are wound differently than when the focal children are physically located in China. For the Buriat focal children, parents, elders and other community members located at home serve as powerful and primary agents of their Indigenous socialization and their communicative practices. When in China, these strands seemed to loosen, and created different patterns for self-identification. Identity, in effect, can be greatly dependent on context.

For young people, parents are another significant influence on their ethnic identities. In Buriatia, all the Buriat adults and elders that I interviewed oscillated in their perceptions of what it meant to be an ethnic Buriat living under the regime of the Russian Federation. Some seemed keen to have their children be socialized the Russian way, while simultaneously

lamenting the loss of Buriat culture and language. Others declared their Buriat nationalism, but spoke in Russian to their children and sent them to another imperialistic country to learn another dominant language. Many Buriat parents and other adults I met in China also displayed similar ambivalence. Some embraced and sought to revitalize Buriat cultural and spiritual concepts, especially regarding Buddhist and shamanistic rites and rituals. At the same time they ignored the fact that their children had no opportunity to communicate with anyone but themselves in Buriat, yet they rarely²⁵⁰ spoke the heritage language to their children while in China. Consequently, any fluency a focal child may have started with may have lessened the longer he or she lived in China. Parents appeared oblivious to this loss. Focal Buriat parents seemed to expect somehow to preserve the language without making any significant efforts.

In their denial of increasing Indigenous language loss, these Buriat parents also insisted to me that Chinese and/or English were much more important languages than Buriat, because many adults beseeched, demanded, and attempted to hire me to be their child's English tutor. A few added that they, as future grandparents, would make sure the next generation understood the Buriat language. I wondered if they were saying that to placate me or appease themselves. Buriat parents were conflicted: One mother told me she was agreeable to the idea that her son would marry a Chinese, because "they are such hard working people, and successful." Yet this same mother had severely criticized her older son's new wife, an ethnic Russian. She told me how she and her husband had tried for months to

²⁵⁰ I observed this use of Buriat in China only in the form of reprimands. I do not know if Buriat shamans use Buriat exclusively for their spiritual work. There are ethnic Russians who use Russian when performing Buriat shamanic rituals. In the Buriat datsans I heard Tibetan chants, as well as Mongolian language chants.

prevent the marriage. Perhaps these convoluted conversations reflected economic anxiety, as no Buriat parents wanted their children to stop being Buriat.

Buriat parents also had mixed ideas about Chinese educational practices. Education in Russia is technically free, so paying for education in China symbolized a huge economic investment, and the Buriat focal children were expected to perform and excel. Yet one Buriat mother, Natasha, never visited Katya's classroom or met with her teachers once throughout my fieldwork. Another mother constantly brought gifts to the director and teachers, in the hopes of "buying a little" of her son's success. My observations also indicated that the Buriat focal children had a much heavier, tedious, and time consuming workload placed on their shoulders than students under the Russian educational system. Adults seemed unaware of this burden. Those Buriat families with enough money tried to get their children back to Buriatia for holidays, to reconnect with family and traditions, yet these parents seemed unaware that this alien Chinese culture and academic burden might cause a child discomfort, or even cause him or her to revolt. The children in this study should be commended for their efforts, despite the fact that they may not have obeyed the laws and injunctions of those holding authority over them.

Another point: parents in Buriatia that I interviewed also accepted the Russian state as their only viable economic option for cultural survival. Many told me that they feared if they had not agreed to realign with the Russians in 1993, then their republic would have experienced the ongoing economic woes that Central Asian countries, such as Tajikistan, are still undergoing since the breakup of the USSR in the early 1990s. This resignation and acceptance also contained the insight, sometimes conscious, sometimes unconscious, that the

Russian state was not really promoting and nurturing the interests of any minority group, Buriat or otherwise. Again, Buriat/Buddhist fatalism seemed to justify this train of thought.

The Buriat focal children, too, had mixed feelings regarding the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China. Surana, a focal child who returned at her parents request back to Buriatia before the academic year ended, remarked that China was more exciting, a superpower, with better shopping and more things to do and see. Yet later, in Buriatia, she said that she wanted to be a Buriat dress designer and only be a tourist in China and Mongolia - her real home was in Ulan Ude, in Buriatia. In another example: Katya, who lived continuously in China, reported that she disliked the Chinese; she also said, however, that she did not want to return to Russia; as it was "too poor." Katya could not make up her mind as to how to self-identify - as a Mongolian or as a Russian girl. She fluctuated. Katya, like the other young participants, never identified herself in an officially political way: as a socialist or as a communist. Yet significantly, in China, no Buriat focal child wore the Chinese style pioneer red scarf, which is modeled after the Soviet young pioneer, and represents being a good communist/socialist citizen.

In Ulan Ude, the capital city of Buriatia, rest many architectural motifs from the Soviet era. Lenin's head (the largest in the world) still sits in the main city square.²⁵¹ Throughout Buriatia, near government institutions, one may view statues of Lenin; they have not been torn down. Yet no Buriat family that I stayed with or talked with ever started a political discussion with me, or told me that they were members of any political party or wing. The Buriats seemed indifferent to the ruling party of their republic. The only comment

²⁵¹ Many of these monuments were enthusiastically destroyed elsewhere in Russia in the early 1990s.

I heard concerned the fact that one ethnic Russian leader in Buriatia could actually speak Buriat.

The Russian state makes symbolic efforts to support Buriat culture and language. There are public Buriat motifs, with buildings displaying traditional ornamentation, as well as yurts as restaurants, and other Buriat architecture in Ulan Ude, the capital city. There are artistic displays and gallery openings featuring Indigenous Buriat artists. But the Buriats I talked to did not say that their city was beautiful. They always assigned beauty to the northern Russian city of Irkutsk, or to Moscow and St Petersburg. Additionally, the language for the majority of public signs is in Russian only. This contrasts with China, which in 2002 mandated that all public signs in Hohhot, the capital city of the IMAR, be written in both languages.²⁵² Notably, there is also an obvious economic difference between the Buriat city Ulan Ude in Buriatia and the neighboring northern Russified city of Irkutsk in Irkutsk Oblast, further suggesting to the Buriats that all things Russian bring more wealth and prosperity. Buriats will tell foreigners to be sure to go to Irkutsk, because it is a “much more beautiful city than Ulan Ude, with all the wonderful Russian architecture.”

Russians also outnumber Indigenous peoples throughout Siberia. Russian settlement patterns in Buriatia, beginning in the 17th century, have resulted in Russians far outnumbering the Buriats in their own republic. With ethnic Russians as the dominant group in Buriatia, Indigenous language use outside the home and family gatherings has lessened; that which exists, such as the Buriat news, or a few advertisements in Buriat on TV, seem to represent symbolic efforts to attract viewers and consumers by appealing to their ethnic

²⁵² Jankowiak (2013) suggests that this bilingual signage is government propaganda to attract tourism, to display the city as exotic and peacefully “Mongolian”

pride.²⁵³ Buriats I interviewed seemed resigned to this situation. Some even commented that there was enough room for everyone, including the new migrants, Tajiks, and Chinese. This scenario contrasts with that of Inner Mongolia, and Hohhot, where population density is much higher; hence competition for jobs and resources among various groups can be expected to create ethnic tensions that are higher as well. There is a longstanding undercurrent of ethnic tension between the Han and the Mongols in Inner Mongolia (Bulag, 2003); it may result from historical animosity, or demographics, or both. Inner Mongolia is more densely populated than Buriatia and resources/jobs must be more keenly competed for in order to survive. Resignation and acceptance toward the dominant group (Russian/Chinese) outnumbering both Buriats and Inner Mongolians, however, has not resulted in full scale assimilation, or the disappearance of either of these unique Mongolian ethnic groups.

The current Russian model for promoting multiculturalism (and the Chinese and the American models) is based on ancient French philosophy of De Tocqueville (Appardurai, 1996), who postulated that good governments must attract talent from the lower economic classes and minority groups, so that these elites will not oppose the state. Minority talent must be co-opted to prevent resistance against the ruling powers. Certainly, educated minorities, including Buriats, have, since the breakup of the USSR, helped create and/or resisted state laws, but they are operating under the umbrella of the state - not as guerrilla groups advocating the downfall of the government. Their pro-Buriat advocacy is, in effect, controlled by the Russian government; they are leashed in and weak advocates (Graber, 2012).

²⁵³ Sweet & Chakars (2010) comment on this extensively.

Ironically, for the socialist and communist nations, De Tocqueville's paradigm values individual merit over ethnic privilege. The strategic motive seeks to incorporate and assimilate individuals more than to woo ethnic groups. By doing so the non-mainstream educated elite are neutralized because they come to see the state as their benefactor. For Buriats, this process has generated a feeling that hard-working Buriats are equal to Russians; they are valuable, loyal citizens of Russia (or the former USSR). Such educated Buriat have absorbed the dominant ideology of the state. If a Buriat feels that the Russian technology, culture, language, and world view are more "civilized" then he or she is much less likely to resist state laws and doctrines. As Buddhists, Buriats are more likely to accept things the way they are, and have faith that the state has their best interests in hand. Buriat Buddhists believe that everything is good, and that prayers and rituals are powerful ways to communicate with sacred powers. The Russian state has been able to generate more of a sense of unity among the Buriat, as opposed to other ethnic groups. In this study, Buriats did look toward the central government for assistance and guidance. Some Buriats even bemoaned the loss of Soviet power, stating that "things were more in order then, life was a bit easier." This actually is a collective rewriting of history - as innocent Buriats died by the thousands under Stalin's regime (Martin, 2001).

In an attempt at creating a sense of equality and national solidarity among all citizens, the Russian Federation has reaffirmed the linguistic and cultural equality of minority languages and cultures, such as the Buriat (Hirsch, 1997; Sweet & Chakars, 2010). Yet there is a covert language policy also being practiced. As mentioned, there are no official laws for signage in two languages. More importantly, Russian remains not only a prestigious language but also the pragmatic language choice. If you wish to have an excellent higher education, or

work for the state, or enter the market economy, you must speak Russian in Buriatia, as elsewhere throughout the nation (Khilkhanova & Khilkhanov, 2004). Language acquisition studies in China (Han, 2011) indicate that minority children refuse to learn a language that they perceive as inferior. This internalization of what a language is worth comes from parents as well as state venues. It suggests that the Buriat parents and their children in this study have accepted and internalized the idea that Buriat language is a cultural marker, an identity marker, but not particularly a marker for social and economic success (Khilkhanova & Khilkhanov, 2004).

Only one Buriat participant, Natasha, Katya's mother, ever expressed to me the idea that Buriat culture was backward or inferior. All the other adults bemoaned the loss of their language while arguing that it was impossible for Buriat language and culture to go extinct. In the same breath, these parents (and Buriat youth) beseeched me for English lessons. Both youth and adults understood that it was important in today's world to become multilingual - but the languages they chose: Russian, English, Mandarin - excluded fluency and literacy in Buriat. In terms of a sociolinguistic analysis, the Buriats involved in this research seemed to be located in Stages Four or Five of Joshua Fishman's scale of language loss.²⁵⁴ Fewer young people are literate or fluent in Buriat; the majority of fluent speakers are over 50 years of age.

²⁵⁴ Fishman's Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale

Stage 8: most vestigial users of Xish are socially isolated old folks and Xish needs to be re-assembled from their mouths and memories and taught to demographically unconcentrated adults

Stage 7: most users of Xish are a socially integrated and ethnolinguistically active population but they are beyond child-bearing age

Stage 6: the attainment of intergenerational informal oracy and its demographic concentration and institutional reinforcement

Stage 5: Xish literacy in home, school and community, but without taking on extra-communal reinforcement of such literacy

Stage 4: Xish in lower education (types a and b) that meets the requirements of compulsory education laws

Stage 3: use of Xish in the lower work sphere (outside of the Xish neighborhood/community) involving interaction between Xmen and Ymen

Stage 2: Xish in lower governmental services and mass media but not in the higher spheres of either

Stage 1: some use of Xish in higher level educational, occupational, governmental and media efforts (but without the additional safety provided by political independence)

Buriat adults seem oblivious to the fact that their language is in danger of extinction, and unaware that the family and the community must take responsibility for the preservation. Instead, many parents in Buriatia told me: “My child gets Buriat lessons at school.” The reality is that there are not enough capable Buriat language teachers, that teacher’s salaries are low, and that the children are not always interested in taking such classes.

What are the personal implications of this ongoing language loss in Buriatia, along with the migration of the Buriat focal children to China? Gradually, for both Buriat parents and their focal children involved in this study, these competing spheres of influence generate a sense of multiple identities, as well as ambivalent loyalties. The focal Buriat youth were proud of their Indigenous heritage; they were also proud of being Russian; finally, they are proud of being part of the Mongolian group. No Buriat ever expressed to me any indication that he or she would like to add a “Chinese identity.” But this three tiered identity is fluid; hence, the aforesaid analogy of a braid suits what I observed among the young people.

Each of the children has braided his or her identity in different ways, and these ways are also dependent upon the how their parents have constructed their own sense of self. Perhaps as very young people, being Buriat was integral to the child: parents spoke only Buriat, elders were visited and rituals were consecrated in Buriat. But then the child started school, where she or he was outnumbered by the Russian ethnicity; this gave rise to a sense that being Russian was estimable, perhaps even more favorable than being just Buriat. Upon starting their studies in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia, China, these young Buriats plaited in yet another identity strand: that of being Mongolian. They chose to identify somewhat with Outer Mongolians as their third strand, but it was weaker, less desirable strand. No Buriat child wove into his or her identity the idea of being a “Chinese” Mongolian.

Moreover, the significance of identifying with Outer Mongolia is often contradictory for these young Buriats (and other Mongolians). Sometimes the focal children perceived Outer Mongolians idealistically, as “pure Mongols;” because of language and historical homeland and the modern tradition of worshipping Genghis Khan.²⁵⁵ They also see Outer Mongolians as uncouth, poor; as “peasants.” But in talking to these young people over the course of my fieldwork, none of them expressed any anxiety about switching their identity awareness.

As the literature review noted, scholars have long debated the definition of how to define an ethnic group, and more specifically, what constitutes ethnic purity. Is it based on blood, language, shared cultural world view, or something other? For the Mongolians, tracing their descent to Genghis Khan is crucial, although David Sneath (2010) has pointed out that this is a modern myth; it is not possible for all Mongolians to be related to this great leader. As for “purity” among Mongols, homeland, as well as language and descent, and the current independent state of the Outer Mongolians has marked them by other Mongolian groups as the “pure” Mongols, as discussed previously.

Currently, on Russian territory, marking one’s ethnicity as a Buriat is a choice. In the past, during Soviet times, ethnicity was marked clearly on one’s passport, and could have both positive and negative political, economic, and social implications, as previously discussed. Significantly, with the breakup of the USSR, contemporary Buriats are recreating their culture and rituals, just as the Outer Mongolians are doing (Humphrey, 1992). However, the Buriats are not all united in how they position themselves as an ethnic group, and how the

²⁵⁵ Khan Almaz (1996) describes this new ritual of setting up an altar with a picture of Genghis Khan among various groups of Mongols.

traditions and ritual must be constructed is open to debate. As with the Inner Mongolians (Jankowiak, 2013), Buriat adults may express four separate ethnic postures. They are as follows: nationalist, multiculturalist, traditionalist, and assimilationist. These four categories are heuristic and not definitive, as people, young and old, may change their stance according to the political climate, the physical environment, and their social or economic status within society. In brief, ethnic loyalty can be variable, fluid, and even fickle. The focal children and their parents in this study can be categorized at various times and in various contexts, as fitting into these typologies.

The first stance is the ethnic nationalist view. This position strives to uphold, advance and promote Buriat minority interests. In many cases, there is a desire for more political autonomy, a questioning of the dominant culture's history between the Buriat and the Russians, and a viewpoint that holds the Buriats as the rightful (perhaps sole) users of the political territory in which the Buriat define their homeland. Among the focal children and their parents, I did not find one strong ethnic nationalist; I did find that parents questioned their agreement to realign with the Russians in 1993, but in a resigned way, often stating that it would be worse if Buriats were truly independent. No parents ever spoke to me about past Buriat heroes who upheld ethnic nationalism. One Buriat parent, a father, told me repeatedly that he was a nationalist but he was disinterested in discussing past history, preferring to focus instead on talking about the current economic struggles his family members were facing. Others seemed apathetic about nationalism or politics in general. Consequently, the focal children, given their age and their parents' attitudes, showed little support for the ethnic nationalist viewpoint. It is not pragmatic to be an ethnic nationalist in Buriatia, as life is

already hard; furthermore, adult Buriats realize that any kind of ethnic separatist movement would be harshly and quickly punished by the Russian state.

The second and most popular stance that the Buriats take regarding their ethnicity is that of a multiculturalist, tolerant point of view. This position advocates mutual respect for all groups living on Buriat lands (including Tadjiks and Chinese), and seeks a harmonious life that upholds affirmative action. This position also strives to preserve and revitalize Buriat culture, to place Buriat culture as equal to that of Russian culture, and to allow non-Buriats access and participation in the culture. It segues neatly with Buriat Buddhist philosophy. Buriats who are multiculturalist expressed their pride in being Buriat, with different people finding different ways, and they honored their Buriat culture by teaching their children to love, honor and revere their homeland. Among the Buriat parents and focal children in this study, most espoused the multiculturalist view most of the time. (But one mother, Natasha, openly stated that Russian culture was “more civilized” while claiming herself proud of her Buriat heritage). A signal of the multiculturalist viewpoint can be found in names: parents and children with Buriat names supported cultural pluralism (although they could also potentially be nationalists). Multicultural advocates were those parents who made some effort to speak to their children in Buriat, wanted their children to marry only Buriats, prepared traditional Buriat foods, and celebrated Buriat rituals, shamanistic and Buddhist. Likewise, the focal children who expressed pride in eating Buriat foods, in understanding things about their culture - these were the young cultural pluralists. Surana is an example: she returned to Ulan Ude and became deeply focused on exploring Buriat designs, and said that she would become a Buriat dress designer in the future; she also greatly enjoyed the attention from her male ethnic Russian classmates, worrying her mother deeply. Bata-Nimah, living in an area

where Buriat is spoken frequently, realigned himself into this position after leaving China. This could be because his home town of Kyatka has for centuries been a border area - merging Russian, Buriat, and Mongolian and Chinese cultures. Mergen, however, with his aunt currently living in Irkutsk, speaking primarily Russian and living an economically successful Russian lifestyle, is, like Katya, oriented much less toward the multicultural point of view that the other two children. These last two children tend toward a more predominant Russian identity. At the same time, however, their identities were always in flux, and dependent upon the context: who they interacted with and where they interacted.

The third stance is that of the assimilationist view point. Such Buriats who chose this posture reject their culture and language. They attempted to live a Russian lifestyle, speak only Russian, and may express their citizenship as Russian as being much more important than their ethnicity as a Buriat. These Buriats may have abandoned their religious views, intermarried with Russians, and emigrated from their homeland. Natasha, Katya's mother, at times expressed this point of view. Likewise, her daughter often changed her mind in regard to her self-identification. Katya also had to resolve the dilemma of having an ethnic Russian father and an ethnic Buriat mother. Because her mother expressed no desire to have Katya return to Buriatia, and because her mother demanded that her Russian (and English) be constantly improved, there was no chance for the girl to consider learning Buriat. This is ironic, as the child was enrolled in the Mongolian-only track of the school, and the language variety she was learning had a linguistic relationship to Khori Buriat. The same situation was true for Mergen: his aunt told me that she communicated with him only in Russian, because her Buriat was inadequate, and because "Russian and Chinese and English were the important languages." Mergen studied approximately one year and a half at the bilingual

school; he must have picked up some Mongolian from his peers, but he told me that he struggled more with Mongolian than Chinese because he had no formal language lessons in anything but Mandarin. His Mandarin was, in fact, much better than his Mongolian. Yet he, along with three other boys, aligned themselves together as Mongols and became involved in a criminal incident directed against some Han youth. Furthermore, his aunt displayed her Buriat identity when she brought Mergen home - because she acknowledged the power of Buriat lands and wanted him to be safe.

The fourth stance is the traditionalist view point. A Buriat taking this posture has an all-encompassing commitment to Buriat culture, and speaks, reads and writes Buriat fluently. Most Buriats who espoused this point of view were educators; they may also had nostalgic and romantic views of the past. None of the Buriat parents or their focal children expressed this stance to me. A few elders over age 70, including one retired schoolteacher, spoke about her longing for the past, but then contradicted herself and said that the Russian way was more comfortable. The focal children in this study were not oriented toward a traditional outlook. They wanted access to the world, via the Internet, via their multiple languages, via their travels...looking toward the past was not in their consciousness. (In Inner Mongolia, however, Suranchana, Katya's Mongolian teacher, expressed this posture, perhaps sensing the collective loss of her culture and striving to regain some aspects of that loss by teaching in the Mandarin/Mongolian school).

Note that the Buriat parents and the focal children do not fit neatly into only one of the four categories; they may be typified as a combination²⁵⁶ of several categories simultaneously, or they may change their orientation when circumstances and locations

²⁵⁶ see Sartor (2014) Shaman, *Ovi Magazine*-online; <http://www.ovimagazine.com/art/10812>

change. Certainly ethnic intermarriage constitutes an index for determining the degree of ethnic closure. Buriats do intermarry with Russians, with other Mongolians, and with westerners. Buriat participants stated that the intermarriage rate for Buriats has risen over time; there are no official statistics. Religious views are also another primary index of ethnic closure; significantly, however, many Russians in Buriatia are adopting Buddhist and shamanistic points of view from the Buriat.

The Buriat collective identity, as among other groups, is greatly influenced by myth and narratives. There are several important Buriat myths; many stories and proverbs, along with a collective recounting of the past from the Russian Imperial Era to the present day membership in the Russian Federation. The question is, however, how many of these myths and narratives are being passed on to today's Buriat youth?²⁵⁷ To imagine oneself as a Buriat, does a child need this creative stew of the real, the imagined and the recreated? For the focal children, who have spent much time in China listening to non-Buriat narratives, who are far from their homeland, their family and their loved ones - can they hold onto the weave of being Buriat, being Russian, and being Mongolian, and plait their identities as Buriats in the same way in which their parents and ancestors have done? These young focal children were also engrossed in learning new, international narratives from western countries, via the Internet, via texting and SMS with foreigners. These focal youth also have added another strand to the weaving of their identities: the global information strand. With all four strands being wound in various combinations over time and space, these young people are transforming themselves in ways that their ancestors would never have imagined.

²⁵⁷ There were many books about these myths and narratives, with the majority of them printed in the Russian – not the Buriat – language. When I asked the clerk in the bookstore why, she said: “Only the old ones can read Buriat.”

Ethnic identities and cultural identities have histories, both collective and individual. Empires and ideologies depend upon young people absorbing their 'correct' version in order to be loyal citizens of the state (Harrell, 1995). The young focal Buriats and their parents both expressed an emotional attachment to the narrative that Buriats, having become Russian citizens, were "better" than the neighboring Outer Mongolians and "more civilized - more western" than the Chinese Inner Mongolians. In China, the focal Buriat youth then encountered the Chinese narrative, which designated all Mongolians as second class citizens. Even if these young Buriats could "pass" as Russian, the Chinese narrative again defined them as "outsiders" and therefore, according to Chinese ideology, inferior. This must have been quite a shock to them; it might be a motive for the four Buriat boys' act of criminal resistance against the Han. The narratives these focal children had previously absorbed in Russia told a story of how the Buriats helped the Russians, welcomed them, and tolerated them. Although today Buriats are greatly in the minority, Buriat homelands are indisputably Buriat lands. Furthermore, the Buriats are generous, tolerant and friendly to the Russian invaders/colonizers/settlers: this narrative, in effect, takes the high ground and does not accept the second class citizenship taped upon them by the Han Chinese state.

Identity resembles a mosaic; it is a multilayered phenomenon. The focal children in this study have demonstrated ambivalence concerning their sense of self. All four focal children have, in differing mixtures and patterns, a Buriat identity, a Russian identity, and a Mongolian identity. Russian is their national identity; Buriat is their ethnic identity; Mongolian is their romantic/historical identity - but these definitions can mix and merge as they move through space and time, in a Bakhtian sense, as these young people interact and

create dialogues with different groups, and as they developed in China a growing sense of political consciousness.

Qualitative research breaks the conception that one may classify groups of people as a homogenous unit in terms of communicative interactions, identity, and life orientations. This research has demonstrated how the focal children absorbed, internalized and spoke in multiple voices, which changed, blended, and evolved over time. For these four focal Buriat youth, their cultural identities were based on narrative and their Bakhtian dialogue in turn evolved from historical remembrances, stories and tales told by adults and elders to them, and also by the narratives they received from their Russian and Chinese schools. For the Buriat children, as for all of us, identity is never fixed or complete. Identity is as much a byproduct of internal processes (Bakhtinian dialogue) as it is a response to external events (one's family, socioeconomic status, geographical position, language fluencies) (Hall, 1993).

In closing this section, I would like to end with an event that brought me personal pleasure as well as academic insight. My summer fieldwork in Buriatia coincided with a wedding. One of the focal Buriat boys had an older brother who was getting married; he happened to be my godson as well. To my shock, surprise, and delight, this wedding consisted of rituals and languages from a variety of different cultures. The bride and groom rode horses up to the wedding yurt, in Buriat tradition. But before entering the yurt, together with their parents, the bride and groom had a glass of champagne and then smashed the glasses - as people might do in a traditional European or Jewish wedding. Inside of the yurt, symbolic behavior also demonstrated fused cultures. For example, the guests addressed the bride and groom (in Russian or Buriat) and offered gifts for everyone to view, per Buriat tradition, while the food served was catered and classically Russian, with Buriat dumplings

as an aside, all handmade made by the groom's mother. The entertainment during the feasting began with Cossack dancing (in Russian), proceeded to Buriat dancing girls, and ended with the groom rapping in Khalk with a famous Outer Mongolian singer. The feast ended at three the next morning, with everyone, young and old, dancing to rap music, and making hand gestures that had originally been created by African American rappers.

This hybridity of cultural practices reflected in the wedding made me rethink what Buriat adults had said (and accepted) in terms of defining themselves as an "ethnic group" (*nationalinosti*). Employing the term hybridity for contemporary Buriat social practices can be politically incorrect for some Indigenous peoples, who perceive their identity as something primordial and fixed (to the land, to the language, to the ways of doing and behaving) and as something rooted in the past; unchanging and traditional. Indigenous leaders may support this point of view because it is meant to both clearly define and to legally protect the rights of the Indigenous group, such as the Buriat, regarding their land, resources, language and culture. The wedding also illustrated how young, modern Buriats are committed to creatively become active members in what we now know as global youth culture (Appardurai, 1996).

Yet in conversations in Buriatia, even Buriat elders admitted that at times and the ways of being Buriat had changed in some ways, while adhering to the past in other ways. Their comments affirmed the Bakhtian concept of how identity is expressed in terms of large-scale historical processes of power and situational perspectives, as well as the stance (Lemke, 2002) that identity is more accurately theorized as ever-changing. As Comaroff and Comaroff (1992) state, identity is "both a set of relations and a mode of consciousness" (p 54). My summer visit also coincided with over a decade of struggle by the Buriat people to

actively reaffirm their Buriat identity (Balzac Mandestam, 2012), and much of what I witnessed in Buriatia demonstrated, like the wedding, that contemporary Buriat identity was an ongoing fusion of many diverse components among children and adults: Soviet, Siberian, *rossiianin* (citizen of Russia), Russian, Mongol, Indigenous Buriat and even African-American rappers. Buriat identity was at times fixed and at times fluid for the younger Buriat generation. Buriat adults also had hybrid²⁵⁸ identities, that seemed to flow from Soviet to Russian to Buriat, but their performances were more predictable - while the youth aged twenty five and under often surprised me. I learned from listening, too, that the concept of "Buriat identity" was contested between the generations, and even between the same age groups at times. Regarding the focal children in this study, it is still evolving.

²⁵⁸ At times they seemed ambivalent toward the dominant Russians, at times nationalistic and aggressive toward Russians; at times tolerant, at times intolerant toward Russians.

Chapter Six: Concluding Remarks

This brief concluding chapter is meant to address five questions regarding my research:

1. What can we conclude about Chinese education and identity?
2. What are the implications regarding an American researcher in China?
3. What can we learn from this work?
4. What does the future hold in terms of the Buriat language and culture?
5. What are the implications of these findings in regard to other Indigenous populations?

I answer these questions by integrating my research questions and results in broad categories: Indigenous/heritage language education and identity; language socialization and multilingual Indigenous populations; and the socio-cultural, economic and historical factors that impact Indigenous populations today.

Chinese Education and Identity Issues

In the past, Chinese schools offered a clear, consistent message, containing a shared public morality expressed in ideological form that also encompassed undivided loyalty to the state. In recent decades, in China, there has been gradual but marked decline in the power of the state regarding the power and authority of the communist leadership over educational discourse (Ross, 2000). The official communist ideology has been eroding around China; schools and educational institutions are becoming more attuned to and influenced by local communities and economies. In Hohhot, for example, my research school site received several hundred thousand Chinese Yuan to renovate the school grounds. According to the school director, monies came from state, national, and private funders. The school is seen as

a symbol for the construction of Mongolian identity and culture. Just as the local Mongolian tailor shops are now experiencing a great boom in business, with people buying Mongolian national dress, jewelry, shoes and other accouterments, so the school is receiving funds from eager donors.

Yet the outcome of this research has shown that the ways in which the Mongolian children are being schooled, whether they are Inner, Outer or Russian Mongols, is still in keeping with traditional Han ideology. Standardized state exams still must be passed, in Chinese, not Mongolian. Teachers, despite the fact that they proudly profess a Mongolian identity, adhere to Han ways of socializing their students. They use the dominant language, Mandarin, for all important events and announcements. This could be a self-preservation strategy, as the school is owned, operated, and controlled by the Chinese government. Jobs at this bilingual school were considered prestigious and comfortable. It would not be appropriate to start advocating a pan-Mongolian nationalism or suggesting that Mongolian culture could challenge the status of the ruling Han. As China shifts more and more towards a market economy and opens information channels to the western world, the school, the students, and the teachers and administrators remain in a delicate situation.

Researcher, Ideology and Identity Issues

I was an outsider, a member of the dominant Anglo culture of the US, an older childless woman who studied non-mainstream children in a foreign country. My position was precarious. Yet any researcher in this postmodern age, regardless of ethnicity or age or gender or citizenship, is situated in a precarious position. Because of shifting sociopolitical contexts, questions regarding the nature of ethnographic fieldwork and what constitutes fieldwork, as well as what are field notes and field data is now being questioned and

contested (Berg & Lund, 2004). There are also questions regarding the complex field of relationships and obligations that shape how the ethnographic researcher conducts her fieldwork. Fieldwork is more than geographical location; it also is composed of a complex net of obligations and relationships between the researcher and the researched (Wolcott, 1990; 1991). These relationships and their dialogues reside in the historical present but they are also linked to dialogues conducted in the past of both the researched and the researcher (Bakhtin, 1976). My recent past included living in northern China near the Buriat, and having established friendly relationships with the Han people in Hohhot as well.

I initially returned to China assuming that Chinese society, like American society, was composed of unequal distributions of power, and that these inequities were upheld by the school systems. I also thought that educational research at its best was meant to illustrate and transform inequality into more equitable educational structures and methods. Moreover, I thought that my training and education would be respected. Now, after almost two years in the field, I have revised these assumptions and presented what I have experienced. Certainly, Chinese educational research does not appear to be focused on transformations, but rather upon looking at what is good and making it better, for there are few local Chinese researchers interested in critiquing the educational system, and these researchers all tend to live safely abroad.

The Chinese point of view regarding educational research holds a different paradigm from that of western scholars. In many ways it is a positive paradigm, seeking the good. It has protected me from criticism while doing fieldwork, as everyone assumed that my goal was to praise the school and its teachers. Due to the fact that I was a foreign researcher and scholar living and working in China, criticism, public or private, was not an option.

Secondly, I found that there is great fluidity regarding power in field relationships. Because I entered the field as a low key researcher, someone from a non-famous university, without a prestigious grant and infrastructure, someone whose Chinese was not excellent, the administrators at the school, as well as the Buriat families, seemed to create an assumption that I was harmless while wandering about collecting notes. Sometimes I realized that my own physical appearance, as a White American female, signaled meaning that could at times enhance my work - or harm my research. For example, a camera in my hands was more threatening to Buriats and to Inner Mongolian teaching staff than a Mongolian friend holding the same device. While in Buriatia, among the Buriats, I found that my gender mattered. I spent more time with women. I found Buriat women more open and friendly to me than Buriat men, who tended to lecture me, or seemed to feel uneasy spending much time with me. Yet in China, my western appearance and native English often caused Han Chinese and Inner Mongolian doors to offer me privilege: doors opened more easily to me as a White, English speaking American than they would to another.

During my fieldwork I was also caught between being so engrossed in my own thoughts - this tense idea that I am my field notes - versus being also aware of my differences as an outsider, that I could lose sight of the culturally different Others I was observing. To keep from wavering toward either of these two extremes, I periodically took breaks from my research, and tried to focus on my Chinese language studies at the local university. I also left the city to spend time with friends outside of Hohhot.

During the process of conducting fieldwork I began to understand why Bakhtin's ideas were so important to my ethnography: this ethnography strove to depict a few youths' social reality in the context of time and space, but unlike a photograph, everything they did

and said was connected to a sociopolitical and socio-historical past. As an ethnographer, I too viewed my work in a historically contingent fashion, based upon postmodern assumptions about researcher positionality and rights to research Indigenous peoples.

I did not want to essentialize the people I studied or to forget the history surrounding them. I understood also that everything I did was subject to local re appropriation, and another way of viewing both the work and the results. For example, at times my Han Chinese colleagues lectured me that my postmodern thinking about research conflicted with their goals, which remained grounded in the beliefs that education served to help people transform themselves *if* they had the proper will, and that Chinese people have the right to shape and control their environments as well as those of *their* minority peoples. I quietly disagreed with them and went about my work.

As an ethnographer, I believe narratives are important in understanding and constructing portraits of schooling and identity, and that thick descriptions of classroom settings can illustrate how teachers, students, and even the researcher as observer practice 'culture.' By employing ethnography, I have tried to show how communicative interactions, especially language, socialize children to practice culture in ways that are acceptable to those with whom they interact. I have also demonstrated how schools, even schools with the best of intentions – hoping to nurture and preserve Indigenous languages and cultures – may end up also advocating strongly for established hegemonic practices. This is true especially when funding comes from the dominant group, and when power has been and remains established by rulers using force. When conducting ethnographic research in these settings, the fieldworker must step lightly: be prudent and discreet.

It doesn't always work smoothly, as culture and language are not fixed; likewise, the ways in which these young Buriats present themselves is also in constant flux. Culture and identity are influenced by social forces, sometimes global forces, and today's social patterns, today's sense of self, can be influenced and even directed by the past.

In the end, what I have offered you, as reader, is a portrait of young Buriats during a certain time of their lives, when they were studying at a bilingual Mandarin-Mongolian school. This portrait evinces their struggles and their transformations, and it illustrates how young multilingual youth studying in China have had similar challenges to confront as other young non-mainstream people in schools in the USA and elsewhere.

Is it possible to conduct neutral qualitative research and does 'neutral' equate with 'objective'? Wolcott (1995) stated this question was inappropriate when assessing 'objectivity' in research. Instead, a certain amount of interest in the population being studied is necessary to stimulate the researcher's interest. Every scientific inquiry begins with some kind of expectation; there is no unprejudiced observation. Every researcher will approach her study with a certain 'interest', a 'curiosity', which Stenhouse (1979, p.14) regards as 'the impulse behind all research' - or in Wolcott's term, a 'bias' – that offers relevant information about the researcher's orientation and intentions related to the study in question. This bias should not be confused with 'prejudice', the result of irrational, out of context judgments, which have nothing in common with a systematic, objective process of inquiry. 'Bias should stimulate inquiry without interfering in the investigation' (Wolcott, 1995, p.165).

Granted, as the writer, I have had the power to select which stories will be told and which will be suppressed, and my ethnographic eye will always be limited and subjective. Nevertheless, as an educator, I can only hope that their current flexibility will aid them as

they move forward through time, and help them to build better lives for themselves. Finally, I hope that this study adds to a global understanding of school systems, enhancing the way we, as researchers, understand how schooling practices and systems are connected within one educational world.

In this work, I have viewed Buriat youth identity on a continuum between the primordial and the instrumental. While I feel that ethnic identity, can and is claimed from a primordial emphasis, with ethnic categories as rooted in a common past or shared heritage and as remaining intact despite cultural contacts (Geertz 1973; Gurvich 1980; Gumilev 1990) I also feel that ethnic identity has instrumentality, per Abner Cohen (1974) and Fredrik Barth (1969) in the sense that political aims are served by and justify the maintenance of ethnicity. Ethnic identity was a political instrument for the young Buriats, who resisted and attempted to define themselves in positive ways that belied the Han Chinese interpretation of (all) Mongolians as lesser than the Han (Bulag, 2004).

I also do not want to minimize or overlook the broader historical and hegemonic processes influencing identity, as both parents and focal youth in this study were living through times of significant social change: the USSR had collapsed, the Russian Federation had serious economic issues, and China had risen to become a global superpower. Using Bakhtin's dialogical ideas (1976, 1981), I have tried to understand the presentation of self among young Buriats in China, in relation to current and past politics. Indeed, some social scientists analyze identity by examining historical and contemporary social forces that have impacted a group or an individual's sense of self (Constable, 1997; di Leonardo 1993; Gilroy, 1987; Rosaldo, 1980). Such research illustrates the multiple social forces: economic position, racial categories, gender, and geographical location that have the power to impact

identities. Likewise, individuals and groups may resist these forces which also play a significant role in the process of identity formation.

The way people use language upholds hierarchies in Chinese society, just as it does in other countries around the world. Language choices position people, and language is one way to assert one's identity. This research has demonstrated that the ways in which young Indigenous people express their ethnic identity using not only language, but also land, both of which are rooted in larger historical and political forces. Such forces have impacted their ancestors and will impact their future children as well (Bakhtin, 1981). Moreover, for Indigenous youth with access to Internet and social media, their social identities are seldom static and bounded; the Buriat youth identities presented here are evolving and existing in flux, with blurred boundaries that are reflecting cultural hybridity and global cultural transformations (Appadurai, 1996).

I have described how the Buriat youth identities were not just situational and something they chose; many factors in time and space have impacted the way the Buriat focal children chose to present and perform their identities while students in China, and at home in Buriatia as well. Political relations power, politics, borders created by dominant powers – all these things impacted the Buriat focal children. Despite the fact that the youth identities presented here are ostensibly Buriat identities, they can be seen as a part of the post-modern youth identities representing the influence of larger, global processes, and a part of historical past processes, on young people around the world. Migrations, hegemonic practices and digital technologies have all played a role on the ways in which today's youth define themselves (Sowell, 1996). One must remember also the human element, concerning family and individual character, also influences the way that people choose to define,

develop and transform themselves. Each of the four focal children has chosen unique ways to react to and to resist the socialization processes that they experienced at the bilingual school, and they have been influenced by the socialization they received from their parents and their kin. How they transform themselves in the future will be the topic of another manuscript.

What Can We Learn?

In terms of Indigenous/heritage language education, American scholars such as Cummins (1989, 1990) have long asserted that promoting Indigenous/heritage languages in school will help solve present US patterns of school failure among non-mainstream students. The use of the Indigenous/heritage language as the medium of instruction, on the other hand, is a clear affirmation of the value and status of the heritage language and of those who speak it (Cummins, 1989, 1990). Thus, in addition to the linguistic advantages of Indigenous/heritage language education, there are also potential social benefits. By enhancing Indigenous children's self-esteem through encouraging their Indigenous/heritage language, academic success is also enhanced (Cummins, 1989, 1990; Nieto & Bode, 2008; Romero, 2003). The argument is that children who think highly of themselves and their cultures will have better chances of being successful in school, and later, in life (Covington, 1989; Harter, 1986).

Regarding this study, certainly the Chinese born Inner Mongolian children attending the bilingual school were receiving positive support regarding their Mongolian heritage. At this school, I found the teachers and staff to be sincere, industrious, proud, and eager in serving "their" Mongolian children. But what about the transnational Buriat Mongolian focal children? The school certainly welcomed them; all the Buriat youth emphasized the kindness of their teachers. Each Buriat child, however, had a personal identity deriving from personal

attributes, skills, and socialization experiences he or she had received in Russia. Their prior socialization made them different from the Inner Mongolian children. Nevertheless, like children everywhere, these focal Buriat students tried to fit into their new Chinese school culture. Lamentably, my observations indicated that the Buriat children were all ill at ease.

In particular, Katya, one of the focal children, had difficulties in adjusting. This young girl self-identified as biracial; she physically looked different from her classmates. On a personal level, she expressed great discomfort as a student in this school, and she acted out by refusing to learn or participate according to established school norms. For her, attending the bilingual school seemed to threaten her personal self-esteem, because she was not fully accepted by her peers, and because she was conflicted internally as to her ethnic identity.

Additionally, the two focal Buriat boys, perhaps to try to bolster both their personal and collective self-esteem, (as boys, as Mongolians, and as Buriats from Russia), seemed very constrained in the classroom. Later, out of school, they committed an act of public bullying, and they were arrested. The boys reflected their second level of identity – the collective self – which encompasses group memberships. In the case of the Buriat focal children this collective self involved their ethnic heritage, family, and peer groups in the classroom. Research has shown that self-esteem is also tied significantly to the social or collective self (Crocker & Luhtanen, 1990; Cross, 1987). In the case of the Buriat boys, their collective lack of self-esteem appeared to have caused them to break Chinese law.

These outcomes belie the principle of Indigenous/heritage language education, which strives to spare Indigenous children from any negative self-evaluations. The goal is to make Indigenous children feel more comfortable, more secure, and more likely to succeed. It is supposed to prevent negative situations, such as those I just described. Yet the case of the

Buriat in this Chinese bilingual school we are faced with a unique situation. These Buriat Mongolian children did not easily blend into the bilingual school, despite being ethnically Mongolian themselves. As Buriats they were Mongolians who spoke in varying proficiencies a different variety of the heritage language taught at the school, and it was not easily intelligible. They dressed differently. Finally, their Buriat cultural practices did not resemble those of the Inner Mongolian culture.

What can we learn from this? Clearly, not all Mongolians are alike. Politics and history had created significant schisms between Buriats, Outer Mongolians, and Inner Mongolians. These Buriat children were citizens of a different country (Russia) and they had undergone different kinds of socialization practices in terms of education, culture, and even national ideology. Thus, despite being “Mongolian” these children were outsiders and foreigners – definitely not like their Inner Mongolian peers.

Additionally, there are implications for educators. In the United States, my home country, critical ethnographers have focused upon the fact that the teaching population in the US is predominantly white – but the student population is increasingly racially diverse (Sleeter, 1993). For the Buriats in this study, in Russia most of their teachers seemed to be ethnically Russian. If teachers come from a dominant culture and espouse a dominant ideology, how then do they define themselves and their non-mainstream students? And what messages do they send to these students about race, privilege, and power? Some American educational systems examine teacher race by addressing teacher education from a critical and multicultural point of view - but the fact that teacher identities are predominantly white may be ignored. Teachers bring to schools their own perspectives about what race means and this impacts how young people define themselves. If we want ethnically diverse schools to

reverse rather than to reproduce racist practices, (either covert or overt), schools could seek to balance their workforce with non-mainstream teachers. Meanwhile, mainstream teachers around the world would be well served by being encouraged to reexamine their political and cultural perspectives, when working in multicultural classrooms.

Second, children are just as politically savvy as adults. As described, three of the four Buriat focal children (Surana, Bata-Nimah, and Mergen) were placed in a Chinese track classroom with Outer Mongolian students. One child, Katya, attended the Mongolian language track and sat with Inner Mongolian students. The three in the Chinese track understood that the Chinese language equated directly with the knowledge and skills necessary for achievement and status. They, in fact, were studying Chinese in order to pass a standardized Chinese language exam, despite the fact that their future school required them to become fluent in both Mandarin and Mongolian. To make up for any deficit in Mongolian, these children attended tutoring sessions for three hours on Sundays to “pick up” the Mongolian language and script. Despite being assigned to learn both languages, the children understood that Mandarin held the greater prestige. One could speculate that the two Buriat boys resented being identified by the Chinese as Mongolians, e.g., as lesser than the Han, and acted out by bullying four Han Chinese youth.

Third, we must acknowledge racism in schools, even in bilingual schools and among Indigenous populations. Specifically, racism toward biracial children is a difficult topic in the literature; I found nothing in Russian or English about biracial Buriat youth. This kind of discrimination occurred in the school that was meant to promote Mongolian Indigenous/heritage language and culture. Katya refused to cooperate or participate at this school. She refused to focus on learning either Mongolian or Mandarin, other than the

minimum. Yet can she be blamed for her refusal, as her peers ridiculed her and refused to accept her? Katya's mother Natasha also was at a loss; she wavered in trying to decide whether to switch Katya to the Chinese track or to allow her to continue in the Mongolian track. Natasha, was caught in trying to bolster her daughter's identity as a Buriat girl, but also believed that Mandarin, as a global language, was more prestigious and powerful than any Mongolian language variety. Neither mother nor daughter coped well with Katya's cruel classmates.

Katya's mother stated to me her shock and dismay at how Katya's classmates refused to accept her daughter as a Mongolian. She had explained to me how people in European Russia were racist toward Buriats and other Indigenous peoples. European Russians often considered Buriats as Asiatic people and as sometimes as inferiors. Natasha thought China would be a "good place" for her daughter, a safe and accommodating place. Yet Katya, as half Buriat and half ethnic Russian, was not accepted at the school or in China at large as an "Asiatic." Instead she was perceived as a foreigner, an outcast, a *Western* looking child. In Russia, ironically, she was perceived as biracial - a half caste *Asiatic* looking child, and subject in European Russia to possible racist practices. Katya's sense of safety in Asia and European Russia is compromised by the fact that she is biracial.

What more can we learn from this study and others like it? Certainly, youth act as critical agents for forming sociolinguistic phenomena: young people can and do act as crucial agents toward both language ideology and language shift. Children have agency; they understand political and linguistic ideology and they react to it, by positioning themselves in relation to linguistic and political ideologies. They choose whether or not to learn, and they choose specific linguistic codes in which to express who they are.

My research confirms another point that has been reiterated in the literature: identity is complex, fluid, and often dependent upon place, person, and interaction. My work has paid careful attention to four young multi-linguals and explored how they used their languages: Buriat, Russian, Khalk Mongolian and Mandarin Chinese, to mediate their sense of self over time and place – both present and historical. Multilingual identity can be extremely convoluted, and understanding it means understanding what has happened in the past. How Buriat focal children performed their identities at the bilingual school in Hohhot, required me not only to assess their attitudes, but also to use a socio-cultural perspective and understand the dynamics of their material, physical setting. Historical, political, social and economic circumstances have greatly impacted and influenced the focal children and their families in Russia, as well as the teachers and staff and students in the bilingual school research site in China. My conclusion is that, in a Bakhtian sense, these children were set up to resist the Chinese school's socialization practices, because they were born in post-Soviet Russia during an era that advocated (and still advocates) the linguistic and cultural equality of its Indigenous citizens. Their master narrative opposed that of the Chinese master narrative. The Chinese State has an opposite paradigm, which advocates assimilation, despite having created its showcase bilingual school.

The next significant factor concerns the Buriat children's parents. Parents everywhere make decisions and socialize their young in ways that may impact a child her entire life. Buriat parents and guardians in this study were instrumental in socializing their children regarding Buriat language and culture. Per Buriat cultural norms, they also made decisions about their children's educations and future professions. The choices parents made to send their children to China were preceded by the judgment that it was worse at home. The still

shattered economy and infrastructure in post-Soviet Buriatia (and other parts of Russia) made it seem better to educate children to China. Buriat adults perceived the Chinese economy as booming. They thought that the Chinese, as fellow Asiatic people, would welcome and nurture their young. The bilingual school appeared to be well funded, offering linguistic choices (Mandarin/Mongolian) that would create opportunities and successful professions for their children. This school seemed ideal as a way to linguistically prepare the students for entry into the Hohhot medical institute. Buriat parents dreamed that their children would benefit educationally and financially, and participate in the global economy, by having increased their linguistic repertoires and achieved a profession that can be used in many countries. None of the parents and guardians expected anything but the best for their children.

As for the Buriat children, they did not criticize their parents' decisions to relocate them in the name of educational self-improvement. The children, per Buriat socialization norms, obeyed their parents. They accepted that ultimately they were to become alternative doctors of Mongolian medicine. Although young, each child understood that this migration was a family effort towards building a better socioeconomic condition, as well as toward creating positive Buddhist karma for themselves and their kin.

My final reflection from this study is to acknowledge that every kind of relatedness is constructed. Watching how these Buriat children at times incorporated or diverted themselves from being identified with other Mongolians, showed me as a researcher how they were using their agency to create new constellations of relatedness with others. I observed flexible kinship networks across inter-ethnic groups. I noted how political ideologies as well as national boundaries impacted the ways in which young Buriats

interacted inter-ethnically. This in turn caused me to think about differences in how elders and children identified themselves cross-culturally; the Soviet generation of Buriats is not today's generation of Buriats, for reasons of politics as well as digital communications. I also pondered the problems associate with interethnic marriages, especially for children resulting from that match. Finally, I perceived how easy it is for members of dominant cultures to often create monolithic ideals of the “Other” – as the Han Chinese did and still do in classifying “the Mongolians” and the Anglo Americans did and still do in classifying the “Indians” – such stereotypes remain in place and continue to harm Indigenous children everywhere.

What can be gained by this work? This study has provided some initial insights into the language socialization experiences of a unique ethno-linguistic minority. The Buriat focal children and their North Chinese educational context were unique. Yet by illuminating their struggles and their resistance toward the school's efforts to socialize them, one can see that other Indigenous and non-mainstream groups have encountered the same kinds of challenges. In the future, it would be useful to closely compare these findings with other Indigenous language groups in different educational settings. Additionally, longitudinal work would help to determine whether any of these findings impact the children's future educational and life experiences.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁹ A clearer understanding of the forces at work in regard to the way Chinese institutions and people treat the so-called minority peoples, as well as foreigners, might ultimately have caused Katya's mother to reevaluate whether her daughter would feel comfortable attending the bilingual school in Hohhot. But Natasha, her mother, was situated in a precarious social and economic bind, and she migrated to Hohhot, hoping to start a better life for herself and her child. Although it would be practical to consider Bata-Nimah's and Mergen's situation as a simple form of male and adolescent revolt, it is neither and both at once: It is a complex kind of behavior with the attendant confusions and missteps, an adolescent reaction to injustice – anger at the inequity which hegemonic situations generate.

Katya's case may be even more challenging to interpret—she is young and self-identifies as biracial, and the school – teachers, staff, students and Buriat peers – all seem to feel that she does not really belong.

The sociolinguistic situation among the Buriat participants interviewed and observed in this study in both Russia and China, indicates that both Russian and Buriat as languages are related to Buriat identity. Many of the children and their parents were bilingual in these two languages. They integrated both Buriat and Russian cultural practices into their lives. In effect, the Buriat displayed hybrid identities, and at times both adults and children appeared conflicted.²⁶⁰ For the Buriat, hybrid identity and discordance is due to the historical impact of Russian colonization that began in Buriat homelands from the 17th century onward. When conducting fieldwork in Russia, I observed how the Buriat focal children experienced their Buriat Indigenous identities as being both denigrated and promoted in Russian discourses. For example, the recent cultural and linguistic revitalization in Buriatia has promoted Buriat language and culture; yet the current economic and political situation favors Russian language and culture. At school and through the media, Buriat children were socialized to think that Russian culture and language were more prestigious and powerful than Buriat. Yet these children were also socialized at home to identify themselves as Buriat, through their family and kinship ties, as well as through spiritual practices connected to their homeland, and for some, through their language use.

These already conflicted children then migrated to China. There the Buriat children's identities were further impacted by language socialization practices they encountered in school and other domains. At school in China, the Buriat youth were further socialized by the communicative practices they encountered from Inner Mongolian adults and peers. Their Inner Mongolian teachers, like their parents, were also bilinguals, but in other languages:

²⁶⁰ I have had Native Americans in New Mexico tell me they feel conflicted in this way too, in terms of their indigenous language and culture merging at times with Anglo culture and the Catholic faith.

Temut Mongolian and Mandarin Chinese. These adults, too, had been subjugated to a dominant ideology – the Han Chinese discourse that regulated Inner Mongolians as a minority people and lesser than the Han. Yet at the school Inner Mongolian adults had the opportunity to create an environment that supported and nurtured a sense of pride and significance for Mongolian language and culture. In China, as in Russia, ideologies of language were also intertwined with related themes of identity as Indigenous people and as citizens of a dominant nation. Is it any surprise that the Buriat focal children might have felt confused and conflicted about their identities?

What does the future hold in terms of the Buriat language and culture?

Because this qualitative study consisted of a small sample, and was conducted for only eighteen months, I am leery to make any solid predictions about the future of the Buriat language and culture. My time in the field was limited; if possible, I would encourage others to conduct similar but longer term studies that would surpass my own. What I can do, however, is point out concisely what I saw and place it beside the scholarly literature. The most significant issue concerns language: the Buriat participants viewed their Indigenous Buriat language as a symbolic marker of their identity, and these people did not seem aware that the potential for further language loss was possible. Currently, many varieties of Buriat are endangered.²⁶¹ Perhaps the enthusiastic linguistic and cultural revitalization movement that started in the mid-1990s, along with the belief that schools will protect the Buriat language, has clouded the way Buriat parents and other participants evaluated the linguistic

²⁶¹ <http://www.endangeredlanguages.com/lang/bxr>

strength of their native language. I feel that, without a concentrated effort to preserve Buriat, this language could be lost for future generations.

And Buriat culture – will it also be lost? One Buriat participant remarked that the Buriat and other Mongolian cultures are flexible; they adapt and flourish, despite having experienced oppression and domination from other cultures. I feel he is right. The Buriats, with their positive Buddhist outlook, and with their deep shamanistic reverence for the land, will thrive. The young Buriat focal children in this study gained academically and culturally, by living and studying in China. It has enhanced their outlook, focused their political consciousness, and strengthened their love of their homeland and their families. They have not lost anything by their struggles in China; they have received a wider culturally diverse perception of the world. Their parents all cherish and love them deeply, which holds immeasurable value in their lives and in the future lives of their children. This tenacious bond to family, land and spiritual beliefs may be tested as the Russian Federation continues to centralize and consolidate power, and as the Russian economy continues to slacken and straggle.

Implications

Because of Internet and digital technologies, young people everywhere have the potential for learning more, learning faster, and have a wider range of information sources and types than ever before. This means that culture, Indigenous and mainstream, may evolve and change faster than ever before. Anyone over forty reading this manuscript is forewarned that their children and grandchildren may be more than a generation gap away because of technology, mobility, and the Internet. Understanding these changes and understanding the value of raising youth with a healthy sense of self is imperative in today's global world.

Future ethnographic work might be wise to keep in mind the power of digital technology over Indigenous youth culture, and the speed at which today's technology can impact youth culture (Appadurai, 1996).

Formal education for Indigenous youth creates many dilemmas. This research has shown how the Buriat children's communicative acts were often organized into particular discourses that were voiced, called upon, contested, or silenced. These multiple discourses interconnected and formed part of children's dynamic identity practices. My work has also demonstrated ideological multiplicity in young Buriats' discourse and sense of self. Ethnographic research such as mine offers insights into how language use intersects with types of social change, hegemonic and otherwise. In this study, I have paid particular attention to specific interactional instances among a small population of Russian born Buriat attending a bilingual school in China. Studies in other ethnographic contexts among other non-mainstream youth in China are needed. Such research could examine language socialization practices and how Indigenous communities adapt to internal and external social changes through ongoing socialization, by investigating youth encountering sociolinguistic situations that include both an Indigenous and a colonial language. These hegemonic forces, combined with the power of digital communication, need to be examined carefully in order to best serve Indigenous youth populations around the world.

Additionally, more research is needed about education in post-Soviet Russia and contemporary China, especially in regard to minority (and mainstream) Russian youth migrating to China for higher education. In these two countries, as elsewhere in the world, national school systems focus upon developing national identities. In addition to teaching from a mandated, common curriculum, schools act as national systems to socialize their own

citizens as well as their non-students. The Chinese government, like other countries, relies on education as a way to establish legitimacy by promoting the idea that all can benefit from participation in the system. Because China has a massive population, classrooms accommodate large numbers, even in minority bilingual schools, and the educational system is highly structured, teaching obedience toward adult authorities and the state. Schools also covertly teach loyalty toward hegemonic systems.

Because China has many so-called minority peoples, the nation's leaders have tried to generate patriotism and harmonious relationships by offering bilingual education incentives. In China, as in Russia, such bilingual schools have been staffed with Indigenous educators, who have valiantly tried to preserve and promote Indigenous languages (e.g., Temut and Buriat). At the same time the covert linguistic ideology of the ruling group has intruded into these schools and classrooms. Economically and historically, the Russian and Chinese languages have dominated at the expense of Indigenous languages. Likewise, the adults that the Buriat children interacted with – both their parents and Inner Mongolian teachers – had already internalized in varying degrees, the hegemonic ideology of their oppressors.

How Chinese schools socialize Indigenous youth – both domestic and international – can have great effects upon the future Indigenous cultures. Education is a prime instrument in creating national loyalties, in developing alliances across countries, and in determining legitimacy regarding governmental control of land and resources – which in effect, maintain inequitable socioeconomic boundaries between dominant and Indigenous cultures. To my own personal sadness, while in the field I met many Inner Mongolian young adults who knew little or nothing about their language and culture. They told me that assimilating and being Chinese, not Mongolian, was more important, and that learning another dominant

language, English, had greater value than learning Mongolian. The Buriat children in this study, however, have not reached that stage. In China, they resisted being anything but Buriat.

The intersection of language and identity is where people constantly shift and rework their view of their lives. Buriat parents, living in Russia, remembered their past but were ever conscious of ongoing socioeconomic struggles, as they tried to plan for their children's futures. For most Buriat families, life in post-Soviet Russia has not been easy. Life in China for the Buriat focal children has not been easy, either. Although the Buriats valued the Chinese school practices and recognized the worth of the knowledge schooling brought, their children have refused to assimilate. The result is that some young Buriats resisted and/or have not continued their studies in China. Some of the focal participants are back in Buriatia; some are still in China. In China, the young students have tried to stay focused on their goal: to learn Mandarin and Mongolian in order to qualify and enter the Hohhot medical institute. As of this writing three young Buriats have mastered the ancient Mongolian medical practices and three more are still enrolled at the medical institute. These young people are striving to preserve and validate Indigenous knowledge and spirituality in the form of medical practices. These struggles continue.

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Appendix A: Notes on Buriat Myth, Spiritual Practices, Shamanism and Kinship

Buriat mythology assigns a central place to bull ancestors, horses with superhuman wisdom, and sheep endowed with magical properties.

Buriat social organization is centered around the joint principle of patrilineal descent and agnatic relationship (related or akin through males or on the father's side)- diachronic/vertical relationship of society.

Buriats all descend from a single common ancestor – a mythical figure who may differ from group to group. All Buriats are theoretically related by ties of agnatic consanguinity.

The Buriats are fundamentally shamanistic, although they have an overlay of Lamaism – Khori Buriats show a greater role to Lamaism than others.

Buriats organize themselves into three social classes as well as tracing social descent. The three are: aristocratic, commoner, and slave – synchronic/horizontal organization of society. (Slaves were formed by capture).

Descent lines are marked according to the seniority of the founder; the rank order of birth in relation to founders of other descent lines in the same generation. The senior descent line or lines are the aristocrats, the junior are the commoner.

With each a different type of religious phenomenon is associated. Both are explicitly set forth in intellectual life, mythology and religion.

In addition to the two modes of aristocrat and commoner are the two modes of craft specialization – the shamans and the smiths – which both have a religious function. There is also a dual organization of the spirit world reflecting the material world.

Doctrines, beliefs, rites and myths of shamanism are far older than Lamaism for the Buriats. The essences of the Buriat worlds of sacred and profane are twin and coordinate with each other.

The primary element of this coordination of the two worlds is the triple division of the spirit world and the three souls of men.

Spirits are very important to Buriat religion: prayed to, sacrificed to, invoked for blessing, used to exorcise evil & sicknesses in man and animal. Spirits are divided into high, middle, and lower. High are called *tengeri* – live in heaven, control everything, take care of man.

Middle – *boxoldoy*, are for commoner Buriats, they intervene between man and higher beings. The lower spirits are for the slaves; both middle and lower are subordinate to higher spirits.

The Buriat soul is also threefold:

1. The first soul is housed in man, in the bones and skeleton- if bones are broken, this soul is harmed. Animals also have this type of soul; Buriats have a deep concern to protect the bones of sacrificial animals.
2. The second soul can leave the body and fly; it can transform into a flying thing, like a bee or wasp. It can do things without the person being conscious. It lives in the man's organs; if it flees out, it must be tempted back, especially regarding children. This soul is projected, manipulated and invoked in curing ceremonies. If the man owns a horse the soul also rides this horse; this continues after death.
3. The third soul is the highest soul. It is the soul which is called on death by the chief *tengeri*; its passing marks the mortal end of the man; it resembles the second soul, both reflect the physical and social condition of the possessor in health and wealth in this life and in the afterlife.

Another version:

1. After death the chief soul goes upward to the afterworld, lives for a time there, and is reborn. This chief soul can have good or bad character; if good, can be used by kin for intercession with *tengeri*. If bad, can hurt women and animals and must be placated by offerings. Negative sentiments of men of ill character continue after death; the soul acquires greater power, must be propitiated.
2. The second remains on earth wandering and frightening people and attaching itself to the sick or drunks.
3. The third is evil- remains with body and when corpse disappears, it vanishes, too.

Thus, the Buriat relationship with life and death is pragmatic, manipulative, and optimistic – for in the struggle to master his fate, there are control bearing techniques at man's disposal.

The number 3 and its multiples (9, 90, 99) recur in Buriat mythology and ceremonials.

The major number of communal sacrifices (*tailgan*) in a year is three.

At weddings, the bride sprinkles fat around the tent of her husband 3 times; she sprinkles her husband's father with fat three times.

A shaman can cure or prolong a man's life for 3 or 9 years.

The heavenly spirits (*tengeri*) are 99 in number.

Buriat Shamanism – soul projector, powers obtained through a special gift or special training – Accompanying the shaman cult are worship of rocks, high places and peculiar features of a landscape; also, of fire and the hearth.

Shaman often a transvestite, a highly nervous person, subject to nervous disorders. Psychically mediated seizures. Shaman may have a disciple – professional relationship of pupil to master.

Buriats continue that form of shamanism developed in the time of Genghis Khan; the specialization of shamanism was hereditary; at the time of his initiation the shaman had 9 assistants.

There is a difference between the gift that descends upon the shaman after the death of a shaman kinsman and the status to which he or she is born. Buriats have both, in quasi hereditary the power is not inherent in the descent line, as the kinsman from whom it was transmitted to the shaman in question may have received the gift personally.

When it is in the descent line, members have right of birth to become shamans.

Buriat shamans have origins in the eagle – son of a *tengeri*. Learn to be shaman from infancy on.

Shaman is bold in relation to the spirits as he is in political matters (like a hereditary priest). Once shamans had unlimited powers, but one bit the cheek of the high god of the dead (Erlen Khan) in a struggle, a power diminished afterwards.

The shaman's relationship with the spirits is a dual one:

1. Seized by spirits for his future calling
2. Uses the power thus derived to seize the spirits to his own ends

Power can be dangerous or ambivalent; a spirit can be good to one and evil to another. Sacrifices and rites can help to effect some control.

There are 2 sources of sickness and death: decision or Erlen Khan or inadvertency – caused by a spirit that is in service of a shaman. These spirits have differing degrees of power, depending on the power (*udxa* = essence) of that man in life (often a shaman).

Thus, the ideas of innateness, immanence, and inheritance and descent are joined in the Buriat worldview. The shaman's power is not his own, but rather that of his descent line, just

as the individual is not a fully articulated being, but rather a momentary incumbent of the earthly existence of his lineage.

Shamans are dual – hereditary and charisma – and they also have a dual nature: black and white. Two kinds of shamanistic consecrations as well. Distinctive tremes for male and female shamans.

- ✚ White shamans preside over births, adoptions, weddings, illnesses and deaths.
- ✚ Black shamans are invoked mainly against illness.
- ✚ Only good shamans (powerful support against disease and death) are remembered – bad are gradually forgotten by the people.

Spirit of past shamans can intercede with *tengeri*- thus, every locality, every clan, has separate spirits and souls of the dead for act on their benefit. On death these spirits dwell in the mountain or wood (öbö mark places that are sacred) – they have power only for their group...Relationship between communal rights and kinship structure.

Black shamans are not honored after death; they are forgotten.

Evil influences are central to Buriat belief in psychosomatic disease – also, one can substitute an animal for a human in the case of illness and death.

Shamans are inverted in descent marriage residence and succession as compared to normal people. Shamans are odd, individualistic, abnormal – in a society noted for communal living . They live an uncalm life, in an excited manner, and in a dangerous world which is not the world of everyday life.

Smiths: Black and White: another special occupational group (*darxad*), with a line of descent that gives mystical power. Good and evil: white and black = good ones protect man, their spirit can be found represented in the form of a doll among some Buriat. Buriats have long been expert metal workers. The smith has always been an honored position among Mongols. Iron and metal work are an important part of shamanism, the paraphernalia of the shaman (metal disks, etc).

Dual Organization of Spirit and Social World

Divine ancestor of all Buriats is *Buxa-Noyen* (Father Bull) and his wife was a shamaness. The son of the Father Bull found in an iron cradle by the river, his name was *Bulagat*. He played with a boy who rose out of the river , the shamaness gave him a meal that put him to sleep, his name was *Ekirit*. Their descendants are the Buriat. (One myth variation).

Common Knowledge:

Certain mineral springs have great power to heal.

Southwest is the holiest direction.

Rite of fire purification; nothing sharp in the fire.

Hearth spirit is the house deity....fire is symbol of fertility

Source: Krader, L. (1954). Buriat Religion and Society. *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, 10(3): 322-351.

Appendix B: Methodological Items

Interview #1: Questions for Buriat Students at the Chinese Bilingual School

How long have you been attending this school? Как долго Вы учитесь в этой школе?

What do you learn here at the school? Что Вы изучаете в этой школе?

What do you like most about this school? Что Вам больше всего нравится в этой школе?

How would describe this school and your class to strangers? Как бы Вы описали эту школу и Ваш класс незнакомцу?

Please describe the best teacher you ever had at this school. Пожалуйста, опишите Вашего лучшего учителя в этой школе.

Why is he/she the best? Почему он/она лучший(ая) в э той школе?

What does a person have to know to be a good student at this school? Что человек должен знать чтобы быть хорошим студентом в этой школе?

What kind of attitudes do you need to be a good student at this school? Какие черты характера необходимы человеку чтобы быть хорошим студентом в этой школе?

What kind of person would not be a good student here at this school? Какой тип человека не был бы хорошим студентом в этой школе?

How is this school like your school in Buriatia? How is it different? Похожа ли эта школа на Вашу школу в Бурятии?

Which do you like better? Why? Какая школа Вам нравится больше? Почему?

Interview # 2: Questions for Buriat Students at the Chinese Bilingual School**Вопросы для Бурятских студентов в Китайской Двухязычной школе**

Where do you use Russian? Buriat? Temut? Mandarin? With whom? Когда и где вы используете Русский? Бурятский? Темутский? Мандарин?

Do you like one language more than another? Какой язык вам нравится больше других?

Are there certain languages you use for certain reasons? Есть ли какие-то языки которые вы используете с определёнными целями?

When you have children, what language(s) would you like them to learn and know well?

Когда у вас будут дети, какие языки вы хотели бы чтобы они знали?

How easy is it for you to understand Temut? Насколько легко понимать Темутский язык?

Do you like learning languages? вам нравится изучать языки?

What languages are the most useful? Какие языки наиболее полезные?

Who do you play with at school? What languages do you use?

С кем Вы играете в школе? На каких языках Вы разговариваете во время игры?

Interview Questions for Adults at the Chinese Bilingual School

中国双语学校 面试问题

Tell me a little about yourself. 请你介绍一下自己(Qing ni jie shao yi xia zi ji)

How did you come to be the school principal/ teacher? Why did you choose this position?
你是如何成为这个学校校长/老师? 为什么选择这个职位? (ni shi ru he cheng wei zhe
ge xue xiao xiaozhang/laoshi? Wei shen mo xuan ze zhe ge zhi wei?)

How long have you been a teacher/principal? 你当老师/校长多长时间? (ni dang lao
shi/xiao zhang duo chang shi jian?)

Have you taught/administered at other places? If so, where? 你还在其他地方任教过吗?
如果有, 在哪里? (ni hai zai qi ta di fang ren jiao guo ma? Ru guo you, zai na li?)

How would you characterize your work? 你如何评价你的工作? (ni ru he ping jia ni de
gong zuo?)

What does a Chinese/Mongolian language teacher/principal need to know to do a good
job? 为了做好工作, 作为一名中国/蒙古语言老师/校长需要掌握什么? (wei le zuo hao
gong zuo, zuo wei yi ming zhong guo/meng gu y u yan lao shi/xiao zhang xu yao zhang wo
shen mo?)

What kinds of attitudes must you exhibit to do a good
job? 在工作中你必须具备什么样的态度? (zai gong zuo zhong ni bi xu ju bei shen mo
yang de tai du?)

What does a good day in your class look like for you? What happens? How do you decide if
the teaching has been really good that
day? 好的课堂是什么样子的? 发生了什么? 你是如何教学使得课堂效果如此好? (hao
de ke tang shi shen mo yang zi de? Ni shi ru he jiao xue shi de ke tang xiao guo ru ci hao?)

What does a bad day in class look like for you? 一趟不好的课堂是什么样子的? (yi tang
bu hao de ke tang shi shen mo yang zi de?)

What kinds of things do you pay attention to when you teach
here? 当你在这里教课时, 你最关注什么? (dang ni zai zhe li jiao ke shi, ni zui guan zhu
shen mo?)

How is this teaching different from your other
teaching? 与以往教学相比, 在这里教学有什么不同? (yu yi wang jiao xue xiang bi, zai
zhe li jiao xue you shen mo bu tong?)

How do you self-assess your teaching? Have your methods changed over
time? 你如何定义自己的教学? 你会随时改变教学方法吗? (ni ru he ding yi zi ji de jiao
xue? Ni hui sui shi gai bian jiao xue fang fa ma?)

What has influenced you the most in the way you teach? 在教学过程中，什么因素影响你最大？(zai jiao xue guo cheng zhong, shen mo yin su ying xiang ni zui da?)

Would you describe for me an outstanding teacher/administrator in this school? 你能描述一位这个学校优秀的教师/校长吗？(ni neng miao shu yi wei you xiu de jiao shi/xiao zhang ma zai zhe ge xue xiao?)

What do you enjoy the most/the least about teaching/administrating in this school? 在这个学校的教学，你最享受的事情是什么？(zai zhe ge xue xiao de jiao xue, ni zui xiang shou de shi qing shi shen mo?)

What satisfaction do you receive from doing this? 从事这个工作，你能获得什么？(cong shi zhe ge gong zuo, ni neng huo de shen mo?)

Has your satisfaction level changed over time? 你所获得的受益随时间改变吗？(ni suo huo de shou yi sui shi jian gai bian ma?)

What would you most like the students to learn at this school? 在这所学校你最喜欢学生学到什么？(zai zhe suo xue xiao ni zui xi huan xue sheng xue dao shen mo?)

What else would you like to share about the school or your role at the school? 在这所学校教学你还有什么能与我们分享？(zai zhe suo xue xiao jiao xue ni hai you shen mo neng yu wo men fen xiang?)

Interview Questions for Adults – Buriat Parents

Tell me about your life here in China/Buriatia.

Расскажите, пожалуйста, о Вашей жизни здесь в Китае/Бурятии

Tell me about your child/children.

Расскажите, пожалуйста, о Вашем ребенке/ детях

Why do you want your children to learn Chinese?

Почему Вы хотите, чтобы Ваши дети изучали китайский?

What language is the most important to you, and and your family?

Какой язык является для Вас и Вашей семьи наиболее важным?

Would you be sad if your child could no longer speak Buriat? Russian?

Вы будете расстроены тем, что Ваш ребенок не сможет более разговаривать на бурятском?русском?

What have you noticed about your child since he/she has been learning Mandarin in Inner Mongolia?

Что Вы заметили в Вашем ребенке после того как он стал изучать Мандарин во Внутренней Монголии?

What kind of education do your children receive here in Buriatia?

Какое образование получают Ваши дети здесь в Бурятии?

What are the best aspects of Buriat/Russian education?

Что, на Ваш взгляд, является наиболее важными аспектами в образовании в Бурятии/России?

What kind of education do you hope your children will receive in China?

Какое образование на Ваш взгляд получат Ваши дети в Китае?

How well do you think you speak Buriat?

Как Вы думаете, насколько хорошо Вы разговариваете на бурятском языке?

How well do your children speak Buriat?

Ваши дети хорошо говорят на бурятском?

When do you speak Buriat and with whom?

Когда вы говорите на бурятском и с кем?

What do you speak about? Where do you speak Buriat?

О чем Вы говорите на бурятском языке? Где Вы говорите на бурятском языке?

Who do your children play with in Buriatia, in China? What languages do they use with them?

С кем играют Ваши дети в Бурятии, Китае? На каких языках они разговаривают во время игры?

Appendix C: Original Language Snippets from Chapter Five Results

The Mongolian past, it's all around us, nomadic culture is in our blood, and we are all related to Genghis Khan. We live lightly upon the earth. Монгольская история – везде кружит потому что мы кочевники кровь от Чингисхана. Мы живем легко по всему земному шару

BN: ...but (Buriat) children do not complain. We have some kids that take drugs or run away from home...

M: Or cry for their mommies...

BN: But that is bad. Parents will be blamed.

M: Because we listen to parents, and if we do badly, that means we are raised badly by them.

BN: You must behave properly (smiles). We are raised from an early age to conduct ourselves properly, you know? And if you are raised properly, you behave properly. If you do those things (drugs, run away) it means (your parents) did not raise you well.

BN: ...но (бурятские) дети не жалуются. У нас есть дети, которые принимают наркотики или убегают из дома...

M: Или зовут своих мамочек...

BN: Но это плохо. Родители будут виноваты

M: Мы ведь слушаемся собственных родителей, а, если мы плохо себя ведем, то это значит, что нас плохо воспитали.

BN: Нужно вести себя хорошо (улыбается). Нас ведь с малых лет учат хорошо себя вести. И если тебя правильно вырастили, то и поведение будет соответствующим. И если ты делаешь такие вещи (убегаешь, принимаешь наркотики), это значит, что тебя плохо воспитали (родители).

In the future he will be a doctor, I decided this for him. He can go to any country to work as a doctor, with this job and these languages. В будущем он станет врачом, я решила так для него. Он может поехать в любую страну работать врачом по профессии и со знанием языка.

I see my profession as a way of life; we (doctors) help to heal not only the body but the soul. Indeed, the psychological state – is a very important factor for healing. Because my medicine came from Buddhism, for physicians educated in these Mongolian/Tibetan practices, we are always feeling, and always helping people. It's a lifestyle. Medicine is very closely associated with the culture of the Buryats, as Tibetan medicine came from Buddhism, which came to Buryatia in the 16th century. Before that Buryat people treated the body's illnesses using shamanistic and pagan traditions. At times, I apply the same to this day. I can tell you many interesting things...

Моя профессия как образ жизни, мы помогаем лечить не только тело но и душу. Ведь психологическое состояние - очень важный фактор.

Потому моя медицина вышла из буддизма, во врачах воспитывали всегда чувство сострадания, помощи людям.

Это стиль жизни. Медицина очень тесно связана с культурой бурятов, т.к. тибетская медицина вышла из буддизма, который пришел в Бурятию в 16 веке, а до этого народ лечился системой Дом- это шаманские и языческие традиции народа. Их культуру я применяю так же по сей день.

Знаешь столько могу тебе рассказать-)) но не знаю что ты конкретно хочешь, так что я думаю при встрече я тебе о многом расскажу, что тебя интересует-)

I will return home (to Buriatia). It is my homeland. вернусь на Родину,

“You are embarrassing my friends. They have lost Buriat, it was Soviet times, people were supposed to speak only Russian.” "Ты смущаешь моих друзей. Они забыли бурятский язык, это было в советский период, люди должны были говорить только на русском языке."

In Russia, since perestroika, many types of schools have appeared. Some are better than others, and this school is considered very good. Our teachers have good reputations, but they get low pay (15,000 rubles per month; 30 rubles to the USD). This is a problem - teachers leave all the time, looking for better pay. We just lost her Buriat language teacher, so there are no longer Buriat language lessons. В России во время перестройки, появилось много школ. Некоторые из них лучше, чем другие, и эта школа считается очень хорошей. Наши преподаватели имеют хорошую репутацию, но они получают низкую заработную плату (15 000 рублей в месяц; 30 рублей за доллар США). Это проблема – учителя уходят все время в поисках лучшей заработной платы. Мы недавно потеряли учителя бурятского языка, так что больше нет уроков бурятского.

We Buriats have had contact with the Russians for over 300 years; it has changed the way we live. I cannot say I love the Russians, but I accept that they have brought us many kinds of advanced technologies. We eat like Russians and like Buriats. We use Russian machines. We speak Russian and Buriat. I was educated in Moscow; I could not speak Buriat to get my education, and this education has changed the way I think, my life... Мы, буряты, живем вместе с русскими уже больше 300 лет; это повлияло на наш жизненный уклад. Я не могу сказать, что я люблю русских, но я принимаю тот факт, что они показали нам много разных развитых технологий. Мы питаемся как русские и как буряты. Мы ездим на русских машинах. Мы говорим на русском и бурятском. Я училась в Москве; я не могла учиться на бурятском языке, а ведь это образование поменяло мой образ мышления, мою жизнь... Иногда я считаю себя и тем, и другим (и русской, и буряткой).

Bata-Nimah's Father's Remarks

Of course, the most important language for my son is Russian, his native language. After that – English, and then Chinese. With English and other powerful languages we say: many languages, many paths, and many friends. Сейчас можно изучать много языков , много путей и друзей . Для моего сына русский , английский , потом китайский в будущем будет врачом , я решил , может везде работать , языки помогают.

Chatting with Focal Participant

VS: What did you like the most about the bilingual school? А-Что больше нравилось?

O: At that school? Hmmmm...I liked being with other Mongolians...the teachers were kind, too. They understood we needed help because we Buriats didn't understand Chinese or their Mongolian, and they were kind. А-Что мне больше нравилось?...Ну мне нравилось общаться с моноглами,они очень доброжелательные,всегда поддерживали,помогали.Учителя очень хорошие-понимали что мы не понимаем,ну как бы ни китайский ни монгольский-они все время нам помогали,объясняли...что еще...мероприятия у нас были,но учась среди монголов-мы тоже участвовали в соревнованиях там,очень интересно было-весело.Приятные воспоминания –еще наши учителя экскурсии для нас делали-мы ездили в парки,аттракционы,достопримечательности Хухо-Хото,музеи.Очень интересно было

Chatting with Surana Excerpts

We do stand to greet our teacher (In Russia), and I stand to answer questions, but it's different. Its respect (standing up), not the army, you know. And it's my answer. В Улан-Удэ, в моем классе было 24учеников. Мы вставали каждый раз для приветствия учителя, так же я вставал для ответа на вопросы. Это мой ответ.

S: Of course I am Buriat, and, uhh, I speak Russian....

VS: I asked her to tell me about being Buriat...

S: “Well, you should live here, I mean be born here, and have Buriat parents, ‘cause Russians are here but they are not Buriats...and we have our culture...

VS: Are Buriats Mongolians?

S: “Yes of course! We are northern (Mongols), my dad said our ancestors protected Genghis Khan.

VS: Really? How did they do that?

S: We Buriats were bodyguards.

VS: Oh.

S: Are you hungry? I can make tea...

VS: What kind of tea?

S: Russian tea, of course! With biscuits and chocolates, Russian chocolates.

“Я люблю свой дом, хотите взглянуть на мои дипломы и награды?

“Конечно.”

“Это за бурятский язык, она мне больше всех нравится. Эта за посещаемость, эта за математику...” “Почему тебе нравится награда за бурятский язык больше всех?”

“Его очень трудно учить.”

“Ага.”

“И моя мама хочет, чтобы я говорила на нем как на русском.”

“Ты хорошо говоришь?”

“Эээ... может быть...”

“тебе нравилось учить китайский?”

“Вполне.”

“Было трудно?”

“Да, трудно.”

“Почему?”

“Учителя были строгими. Они хотели, чтобы я была как другие дети, но я не могла...”

“Почему?”

“Я не все понимала.”

“Это очень тяжело. Я даже сейчас не все понимаю в китайском языке.”

“Это не был просто китайский, это был еще и монгольский... он отличается от бурятского, и дети были другими.”

“Почему?”

“Они говорили, что были монголами, как я, а на самом деле были китайцами.”

“Правда? Почему ты так говоришь?”

“Буряты стеснительны и аккуратны; китайцы громкие и неряшливые.”

“А буряты монголы?”

“Да, конечно! Мы северные монголы, мой папа говорил, наши предки охраняли /защищали Чингисхана.”

“Правда? Как они это делали?”

“Буряты были охранниками” “Ух ты.”

“Кушать не хотите? Я могу приготовить чай...”

“А какой чай?”

“Российский чай, конечно! С печеньем и шоколадом, российским шоколадом.”

“Прекрасно! Тогда чай!”

Buriat Nationalist/Historian View on Mongols and “Pure” Mongols (loincloth excerpt, improperly left excerpt)

VS: What is a pure Mongol?

BE: Of course, a pure Mongolian is a Mongol who remained in Mongolia, in my opinion those who stayed, they are pure Mongolians.

VS: And how do Buriats fit in the picture?

BE: Buriats, well, Buriats, they, in the time of Genghis Khan, in the era after, they left for the north, the words “*buuru garad*” ... how to say, uhh, from the meaning of “*buuru garad*,” “*buuru garson Mongol*,” those that left improperly, in the end, “*buuru*” they said were Buriat...

VS: You mean Buriats are those that left improperly?

BE: Yes. Those that left, in the long past.

VS: So who are the Kalmyks?

BE: They are from *Khalkmyk*, that is, mixed Mongols...they went west, we went north...they are mixed with Tatars, Turks, Kazakhs, Uzbeks, others...

VS: And those Mongolians in China?

BE: Chinese Mongols, they are *Ur* Mongols,

VS: *Ur*? What does that mean?

BE: It means that they are a type of those who left long ago for the East..

VS: Are they pure Mongolians?

BE: No, no they are not pure. Also they, well, of course, time has passed, and they have mixed blood, so, ..., how to say...they have kept some of their culture.

VS: But they are not pure?

BE: No, The ones who have really kept their culture are the Mongols (in Outer Mongolia)..

VS: Why?

BE: They, the Mongolians themselves kept the culture, but those who left, we the Buriats, the Kalmyk, the *Ur* Mongols...the *Ur*, they are closer than we are to the real Mongols, they are closer, but there is a border...they are on Chinese side, and we, there is a border too, we are located closer to the Russians, we are more Russian, this is a fact.

VS: Where is the heart of Mongolian culture? The heart of the pure Mongolian culture?

BE: Well, it is Ulan Baatar, or it is the former ancient capital, you know, Karkarum, the old capital, from long ago.

VS: But the Inner Mongolians say the Outer Mongolians look and act a little like Russians, what do you think?

BE: Well, yes, it is the times...

VS: Then how can they be the "pure" Mongols? If they resemble the Russians. like you (Buriat)?

BE: Time passes, civilizations pass and change...they have kept their culture, it is kept.

VS: But they dress like you (Buriat), like Russians, like westerners...

BE: But what do you want? That they run around in loincloths? (laughs)

VS: (laughs)

BE: Culture does not depend on dress; civilizations go forward...in Europe there has been change, too. The thing is that there are borders -- you need visas to go abroad to Europe if you are Buriat, because we are Russian, but the Outer Mongolians, they go freely wherever they want..they are free, they can go everywhere. Since Peter the Great we have been joined to Russia...

А: Что значит быть "чистым" монголом?

В: Конечно, те монголы, кто остались и живут в Монголии, по моему мнению, те и есть "чистые" монголы.

А: А как буряты вписываются в эту картину?

В: Буряты? Ну, буряты, он во времена Чингисхана, после этого периода, они ушли на север. Слова "бууру гарад"... как это сказать, от значения фразы "бууру гарад", "бууру гарсон монгол" – те, кто ушли неподобающим образом, в конце. "Бууру" они называли бурят.

А: Вы имеете ввиду буряты – это те, кто ушли неподобающим образом?

В: Да, те, что ушли в далеком прошлом.

A: Тогда, кто такие калмыки?

B: Они из Хальмг, это смешанная кровь с монголами... они ушли на запад, мы ушли на север... они перемешались с татарами, турками, казахами, узбеками и другими...

A: А монголы в Китае?

B: Монголы в Китае – это увур монгол.

A: Увур? Что это значит?

B: Это значит, что они ветвь монголов, которая ушла в далеком прошлом на восток.

A: Они "чистые" монголы?

B: Нет, они не "чистые" монголы. Ну, конечно, время уже много прошло, и они смешались уже с другими народами, поэтому..., как сказать, они придерживаются частей своей культуры.

A: Но они не "чистые" монголы?

B: Нет, только те, кто полностью придерживаются культуры – настоящие монголы (т.е. Внешняя Монголия)...

A: Почему?

B: Они, сами монголы, следуют собственной культуре, но те, кто их покинули, например: мы (буряты), калмыки, увур монголы... Увур монголы, они ближе к настоящим монголам, чем мы, они ближе, но между ними граница... они на китайской стороне. Что, касается нас, мы тоже за границей, мы больше русские – это факт.

A: А где сердце монгольской культуры? Сердце настоящей культуры монгол?

B: Ну, это Улан-Батор, или бывшая столица, вы знаете, Каракорум, древняя столица.

A: Но внутренние монголы говорят, что внешние монголы выглядят и ведут себя, как русские, что Вы думаете по этому поводу?

B: Ну, да, это все время...

A: Тогда, как их можно называть "чистыми" монголами, если они схожи с русскими, как, например, буряты?

B: Время проходит, цивилизации уходят, меняются... Они сохранили свою культуру.

A: Но они одеваются как вы (буряты), как русские, на западный манер.

B: Ну, а что Вы хотите? Что они будут бегать вокруг в набедренной повязке? (смеется)

Культура не зависит от одежды; цивилизация развивается. В Европе тоже были изменения. Основной вопрос – это то, что есть границы, нужны визы для того, чтобы съездить в Европу, если ты бурят, потому что мы россияне. Что касается, Внешней Монголии, то ее жители могут ездить куда захотят... они свободны, они могут ехать куда захотят. Мы были объединены с Россией со времен Перта Первого...

Chatting with Russian/Tuvian Parent

Chinese culture, Confucian concepts, demands veneration of ancestors and parents, and, so, on this basis there's the attitude: parents want their child to be educated, parents want their child to follow their advice, so, that means the child must obey. что китайское воспитание, оно более традиционное. Оно более традиционное и сохраняет традиционные устои, то есть, ну вот это китайское почитание родителей, послушание родителей и, соответственно, исходя из этого всё и отношение: если надо учиться, если надо слушаться, то ребенок должен слушаться полностью. Вот в этом смысле это традиционное, такое патриархальное воспитание, да, послушание родителей, взрослых, уважение к старшим. Русское воспитание, оно, конечно, испытало на себе

зна... очень сильное влияние уже цивилизации. И патри... вот это традиционное воспитание, то, что у нас... то, что было в России, конечно, ну это до революции было... тоже такое же, такие же традиции были: полное послушание, подчинение взрослым - это, конечно, разрушено полностью, я считаю.

Chatting with Katya

VS: Do you like the school?

K: like? Maybe the teachers... Especially Saranchana. She's great.

В.С.: Вы любите школу?

К: нравится? Может быть, учителя ... Особенно Saranchana. Она замечательная.

...but Mongols like meat and alcohol, mainly their stomachs are different. Люди любят мясо и алкоголь . Пищеварение другое

I hate sitting, being quiet; it's stupid. It's boring... Я ненавижу сидеть тихоней это глупо. Это скучно.

I will not raise my hand in that stupid way... And I will not move my seat; I like being in the back. It's stupid. Я не буду так поднимать руку, это глупо! Я не буду пересаживаться, мне нравится сидеть на заднем ряду. Чужь какая-то.

Chatting with Bata-Nimah Excerpts

BN: "So do you like motorcycles?"

V: "Sure, but I don't ride them, they are dangerous."

BN: "Harley, I want to get a Harley...gangsta style"

V: "What?"

BN: "Are there gangsters in the US, in Los Angeles?"

V: "I guess so, the Mafia is in New York, and Chicago."

BN: "Russia has gangsters."

V: "Yeah."

BN: "I eat at the KFC, that one."

V: "Oh?"

BN: "Our leaders are gangsters."

V: "Oh."

BN: "I want to have a lot of money, so I can go to the US and ride a Harley."

V: "If you study hard, that might be possible."

BN "Did Putin study hard? (Laughs)...He's rich...he didn't memorize Chinese words all day and all night..."

V: "What do you mean?"

BN: "Be a gangster, ride a Harley...(Not understood)..."

He puts on his earplugs.

BN: "I'm gonna listen to my music now."

V: "Okay, what kind of music?"

BN: "Rap - gangsta rap" (laughs)

"И так, тебе нравятся мотоциклы?"

"Конечно, но я не катаюсь на них, они опасны."

"Харлей, я хочу Харлей... gangsta style"

"Что?"

"В Штатах есть бандиты, в Лос Анджелесе?"

"Я думаю, да. Мафия есть в Нью-Йорке, в Чикаго."

"В России есть бандиты"

"Да."

"Я кушаю в KFC, вот в этом."

"Да?"

"Наши главы государства бандиты."

"Ага."

"Я хочу, чтобы у меня было много денег, тогда я смогу перебраться в Штаты и ездить на Харлее."

"Если будишь учиться усердно, то это возможно."

"А Путин усердно учился? (Laughs)...Он богат...Он не запоминал китайские иероглифы день и ночь..."

"Что ты имеешь ввиду?"

"Быть бандитом, ездить на Харлее...(Not understood)..."

He puts on his earplugs.

"Я хочу сейчас послушать музыку"

"Хорошо, а какую музыку?"

"Rap - gansta rap"...Laughs

Inner Mongolian Mother's Remark about Katya

In China, the class is considered as a group; all the marks are averaged together. If one child refuses or cannot do well, other children will resent her, even act mean. This (Buriat) child is not only a foreigner - different - but also lazy. She holds her group back.

在中国，班级被认为是一个集体；所有的分数都会被平均。如果一个孩子拒绝或不能好好表现，其他孩子

就会怨恨她，甚至对她很不友好。这个（布里亚特）孩子不仅仅是个外国人 —

与众不同 — 而且还还。她拖了班级的后腿

Surana's Mother Excerpts

Это очень-очень важно, что портфолио влияет на возможности ребенка, так же, как и на возможность проявить творческую часть себя said Surana's mother. "And that it include her classmates, because the judges look at her individually AND as a member of the group" Судьями

учитываются ее индивидуальность и умение взаимодействовать в группе, в том числе и с ее одноклассниками.

Ulan Ude Buriat Buriat Parents/Participants

“They (Russians) outnumber us, and have for a long time, Они (русские) превосходят нас по численности с давнего времени said her mother, “And, as Buriats, we tolerate them, we acknowledge the good they have brought, not the bad. But I wish my child to marry a Buriat, and hopefully she will.” И, как буряты, мы толерантно относимся к ним, мы признаем, что они принесли нам хорошее, не плохое. Но я хочу, чтобы моя девочка вышла замуж за бурята, надеюсь это так и будет.

If she had stayed in China, she would have learned Chinese and Mongolian. That’s wonderful, but we think her learning Buriat and living here will make her more conscious of being Buriat, as opposed to being Russian. The Russians have influenced us so much that we are Russian Mongols, and if she stayed in China, she might forget that she is Buriat. Если бы она осталась в Китае, она бы выучила китайский и монгольский. Это прекрасно, но мы думаем, что ее обучение бурятскому языку и проживание здесь помогут ей осознать, что такое быть бурятом, а не русским. Русские в такой степени повлияли на нас, что теперь мы русские монголы; а, если бы она осталась в Китае, то скорее всего она забыла бы, что она бурятка.

It’s difficult now to find a Buriat language teacher, one who can teach Buriat well. Сейчас трудно найти учительницу Бурятского языка, чтобы хорошо изучать Бур Язык.

I will teach my grandchildren Buriat. Я буду учить внуков бурятскому языку.

I’ll send my daughters to Beijing before Moscow, because Moscow is dangerous for us Asiatic people, and Beijing is an Asiatic place. Я пошлю мою дочь в Пекин , а не в Москву . Это опасно , а Пекин азиатское место.

Teacher at Mandarin/Mongolian Bilingual School

We organize them this way to control them; they are too many, our job is to make them obey, not to play...to be an excellent teacher, you must be effective in managing large classes....我们用这这的方式把他们们起来, 控制他们 ; 他们 人数太多, 要想成为一名优秀的教师, 你必须能够有效地管理大

I get the class to act as a group, to save time; we do things as a group, not as one. 我让班级以集体的方式行动, 以节省时时 ; 我们以集体的名义做事, 而不是个人

Focal Children and Buriat Participants From Interviews – Excerpts

I didn’t grow up in Soviet times. I don’t want to start doing this (commie) stuff now. Я рос не при коммунизме СССР. Я не хочу следовать всем этим коммунистическим догмам сейчас.

They cannot hit us in school (in Buriatia); it is against Russian law. No one ever hit me in primary or secondary school. My mother said, in Soviet times, they did that, but not after 1991. В России, учителя не имеют права бить детей, это против закона. Никто ни разу не ударил меня в начальной или средней школе. Мама говорила, что в Советское время, такое бывало, но не после 1991года.

“My father speaks all the Mongolian languages, because he travels a lot (throughout Outer Mongolia and Inner Mongolia). Мой папа говорит на монг , он много путешествует,Монг.

“Yes, I speak it (Khalk) – it’s not like Buriat, but it is still Mongolian. Да я говорю на монг . яз он похож на бурятский, монг. Яз своеобразный

I use (Khalk) Mongolian (at school), because I’m always with other Mongolians Это и то и се спросить,потому что все друзья-монголы ...in my circle of friends I’m the sole Buriat. We speak Mongol. Other Russian speakers are rare, if I see them I speak Russian, there are one or two in my classes.

“I didn’t grow up in USSR time. I don’t want to start doing this (commie) stuff now.” Я рос не при коммунизме СССР. Я не хочу следовать всем этим коммунистическим догмам сейчас.

VS: I understand. Anything else (to be a good student)?

A: You must pay attention and study hard there. It’s difficult because there are so many people. If you want to answer and get attention, you have to raise your hand and shout at the top of your voice and everyone around you is doing the same thing, you must cry out with all your strength, and there were 65 others all around me...it was weird but you had to behave this way...

Ты должен слушать учителя и хорошо учиться . это трудно т.к. много людей . Если хочешь отвечать ты должен кричать изо всех сил, если ты хочешь ответить или привлечь внимание и поднимать руку . И каждый рядом так делает. Рядом 65 других учеников. Это было странно и так надл делать.

We played chess in the cafeteria together. He told me Buriats are excellent chess players. Н-Да учитель увэр монголов и можно было с ним-он как бы делал...в столовой мы с ним играли, он меня похвалил-сказал буряты очень хорошо играют.

Ah, what I get from it (teaching)... the most important among the most important, is that the job is a permanent one, and I can get a stable salary. Then I can teach my children in the Mongolian

language. That's the best part.

啊...获得...最重要的是有个稳定的工作。有稳定的收入。然后就是用蒙语教蒙古孩子。就是最好。用蒙语教学。

I look like them (the Chinese); I am Asiatic. But Chinese only like each other. я похожа на китайцев – я азиатка , но китайцы любят только друг друга

VS: You are a Buriat, are you a Buddhist?

S: Of course!

VS: Are there many Buddhists here in Inner Mongolia?

S: Yes, the (Inner) Mongols are the same as us.

А-Да я Бурятка, буддистка

В-А здесь,они тоже буддистки,ты думаешь?

А-Которые монголы здесь?

В-Да

А-Да

В-Тоже самое?

А-Да тоже самое..\смеется..\верят как бы в одного бога-получается

Let me think a minute (pause)...this school united Mongolian and Chinese culture. It united them together and was a pure Asian school.

Э-Как бы ты описал незнакомым людям эту школу?Ну,например-приехал в Россию и как бы ты ее описывал

Н- Мм...Дайте сейчас подумать\пауза...\ Это школа,которая соединяет в себе-монгольскую и китайскую культуру.Он соединяет и то и то,вроде бы...ну как этот...что-то такое чисто азиатское

Э-Чисто азиатское?

Н-Да.Можно сказать

Asian is how we look, you know, our eyes, our hair; it means I am not western, like you. Asian is only appearance: it is not culture. By culture I am Buriat. By politics I am a Russian Buriat. Я похожа на азиатку – глаза , волосы значит я не западная , как ты Валерия , Азиатское лицо , но культура бурятская , а в политике я русская бурятка.

“They (Outer and Inner Mongols) are peasants. They think they are better than us, because they speak Mongol and we speak Russian. But we are classy and they are just herders with a little money.”

Внешние монголы деревенщины. Они думают, что они лучше нас, потому что они говорят по-монгольски, а мы по-русски. Однако, мы одеты по последней моде, а они простые пастухи с малым количеством денег.

V: What does a person need to know or do to be a good student at that school?

A: Well, for example, you should always wear the uniform, and a red scarf, the Red Pioneer scarf...without it you can't enter the school.

V: But Katya doesn't wear a uniform or scarf?

A: Katya is Katya; I dunno what they said to her about this -- but everyone wears the uniform -- it's mandatory.

что еще нужно , чтобы быть хорошим студентом? Ну,например, ты должен всегда носить костюм, носить галстук красный . Без этого нельзя ходить в школу . Катя есть Катя . Я не знаю , что они сказали ей , но каждый ученик должен носить.

What are you gonna do when classes end?

Go back to Russia, of course!

How long? Hey do you have money for a drink?

You always ask for money! Are you going home, too?

Maybe...

Russia, homeland Russia.....(laughs)

But better than here. I would live in Russia anytime.

I miss my mom. I talk to my friends online, but the Internet sucks here.

Russia?

Siberia; it's cold there now.

It's still home.

I will pass the HSK and leave; this school sucks.

I'm sure you will do well in your studies. Did you learn Mongolian as well as Chinese?

Chinese here *pretend* they are Mongolian. The only Mongolians here are us!

Yeah!

And your Outer Mongolian classmates?

Yeah, them too. Anyone not Chinese...Laughs....Girl One's not Mongolian...

What!?! What did you say?

You're Russian.

Hey! Stupid! I'm Mongolian too.

(Talking to researcher) He means, like, her dad is Russian.

Девочка 1: Что ты будешь делать, когда семестр закончится?

Мальчик 1: Домой, конечно, поеду!

Д. 1: На долго? Кстати, у тебя есть деньги, чтобы купить попить?

Мальчик 2: Ты все время деньги просишь! Ты тоже домой собираешься?

Д. 1: Может быть...

М. 2: Россия, матушка Россия... (смех)

М. 1: Ну, лучше, чем здесь. Я бы все время жил в России.

Девочка 2: Я скучаю по маме. Я разговариваю с друзьями он-лайн, но интернет здесь тормозит.

Исследователь: Россия?

М. 1: Сибирь, сейчас там холодно.

Д. 1: Это по-прежнему дом.

М. 1: Я сдам HSK и уеду, эта школа - отстой!

Ис-ль: Я уверена, ты разберешься со своей учебой. Вы учили монгольский, так же, как и китайский?

М. 1: Китайцы здесь прикидываются монголами. Единственные монголы здесь - это мы!

Д. 1: Точно!

Ис-ль: А твои одноклассники из Монголии?

М. 2: Да, из Монголии. Все те, кто не китайцы... (смех)... А девочка 1 не монголка...

Д. 1: Что!? Что ты сказал?

М. 2: Ты русская.

Д. 1: Эй! Тупица! Я тоже монголка!

М. 1: (Обращаясь к исследователю) Он имеет ввиду, что ее папа русский

Excerpts from Interview with Namdak (Buriat Participant)

VS: So you learned Mongolian, does that mean you can speak better Buriat, too?

ND: At home in Buriatia I can ask questions, sure. Sometimes I use words my parents do not know.

VS: Buriat words?

ND: I guess they are Mongolian (Khalk) words. It's as if I think first in Mongolian and then try to say it in Buriat. It's confusing for my parents at times.

VS: So you're really talking to them in Mongolian (Khalk)?

ND: Yes. I have a Mongolian accent, too.

Э-На каком языке тебе больше всего легко общаться?Разговаривать-какой язык лучше всего знаешь?

Н-Лучше всего конечно знаю-русский\смеется...\

Э-После русского?

Н-Монгольский кажется,потому что китайский не изучал-чтобы прямо...не жил с китайцами,не знаю как это-для меня не было никогда.Был один знакомый-ну чтобы прямо с ним с утра до вечера-нет

Э-Кх...если ты приехал и не знал бурятский,а как ты теперь уже с родителями по бурятски разговариваешь?

Н-Дома по бурятски-спрашиваю на родном языке.Иногда родители не знают некоторых слов,которые я знаю

Э-По бурятски?

Н-Ну монгольские,потому что бурятский как бы...на монгольском потом на бурятском.Они же похожи немножко.Родители иногда понимают,иногда непонимают.Вот такая вот ситуация

Э-Получается ты с родителями разговариваешь по монгольски?

Н-Да-у меня монгольский акцент

I love my Russian language, because compared to Chinese and Mongolian and even English, it's special, maybe the Russian grammatical structure is beautiful, I don't know; you can

change meaning by changing sentence forms, you can't do that with Chinese English or Mongolian...they have a strict word order. And our Russian is the most powerful. (laugh).

Э-Какие языки ты считаешь наиболее полезными сейчас?

Н-Сейчас?

Э-Да

Н-Но это-английский и китайский,потому что они мировые стали,но...Я люблю русский язык,потому что по сравнению с китайским и монгольским,также с английским-у него есть необычные черты,где можно...структура такая-что можно...мм..менять предложение как угодно,а вот в китайском,монгольском,в английском нельзя вставить в предложениях по разному.Обязательно есть определенный порядок...И потому наш язык самый могучий\смеется...\

Э-Русский язык-могучий?

Н-Да-я так считаю сам

Katya's Mother

In Moscow they may say we are not Russian; we may not find work...

Here (in China) for Asiatic people it's easier.

But I realized only after I came here that my Katya wasn't Asiatic...

(laughs) In my head I had no idea that these people (the Chinese) would view her so differently and treat her so differently...

In Buriatia there are many like her and it is nothing - but here...People stare at her.

Европеец , как мы , Валерия , он азиат, но глаза голубые в Москве говорят , что буряты – это не русские люди , могут не найти работу . В Китае для азиатов легче найти работу.

После того как я приехала в Китай – Катя не азиатка. Я не думала , что китайцы будут смотреть на нее не как на азиатку – обращаются с ней как с иностранкой.

Other Buriat Adults

They are fine here; we Buriats are tolerant and accept everyone. But if they go to Moscow...well, it is cause for worry. Им хорошо здесь – мы гостеприимные , но если наши дети поедут в Москву – мы беспокоимся. Они не понимают наши традиции

They (Russians) are so many. We should not mix our blood and lose our people. ... Русских много . нам не надо смешивать кровь с ними.

We still love the horse, the nomadic life, but one must eat, and few of us can herd horses and cattle successfully. This is why; too, we see our Outer Mongolian brothers are pure. They are still living the true nomad's life. Мы до сих пор любим лошадей, кочевой образ жизни,

но надо кушать, и мало кто из нас умеет пасти лошадей и скот. Вот почему, мы считаем, что наши монгольские братья чисты. Они все еще живут жизнью истинного кочевника.

It (Outer Mongolian nomadic lifestyle) is a poor living in money but a rich life with animals and nature. Это бедная жизнь в финансовом смысле, но богатая - в плане животных и природы.

“English, like Russian, is a language for success.” Английский, как русский язык - это язык успеха.

To be educated, one must speak proper Russian. I think it is just as important as Chinese. Чтобы быть образованным, надо говорить на надлежащем русском языке. Я думаю, что это так же важно, как китайский.

You must know Chinese, it is the second most powerful language after English. Ты должна знать кит . язык – это 2 язык мира , после англ. Языка.

I am better in Mongolian, because I’m always with other Mongolians...Chinese - they are not real friends. я лучше говорю на монгольском языке, потому что одни корни , китайцы - не мои друзья

Inner Mongolian Interview: Excerpt “used to be pure”

VS: So what exactly is a pure Mongolian? Are Inner Mongolians pure Mongolians?

哪样的人才是纯粹的蒙古人？内蒙人是纯粹的蒙古人吗？

D: Well, we are all Mongols....but Horchin Mongols, like my family, we are, we are Chinese citizens, and we speak Chinese as well as the Mongolian language.

我们都是蒙古人，但我们全家都是科尔沁蒙古人，同时也是中国人，我们既说汉语也说蒙语。

VS: Are Horchins pure Mongolians?

科尔沁人是纯粹蒙古人吗？

D: Maybe long ago...

或许很久以前是.....

VS: Why?

为什么？

D: Because then we served under Genghis Khan long, long ago, we, I guess we used to be pure (laughs).

因为很久以前我们受成吉思汗统治，我想我们曾经是纯粹的蒙古人（笑）。

VS: Are there any pure Mongols in China?

中国境内现在有纯粹的蒙古人吗？

D: I don't know....there are many different kinds of Mongolian people here, you know that?

我不知道.....中国有很多种蒙古人，你知道吗？

VS: Yes, I know there are different languages, the Erdos, the Horchin, the Temut, the Buriat...

是的，他们讲的蒙语各有不同，有鄂尔多斯人，科尔沁语，布里亚特人等.....

D: We are all Mongols, but we are now also Chinese -- I mean part of China....I mean we have Chinese passports.

我们都是蒙古人，同时我们也是中国人.....是中国人的一部分，持有中国护照。

VS: So are the Outer Mongolians pure?

那么外蒙人是纯粹的蒙古人吗？

D: Yes. Yes.

是的，是的。

VS: Why? 为什么？

D: Because they are free. They are always Mongolian.

因为他们是自由的。他们一直是蒙古人。

Excerpts from Elder -Why Did Buriat Boys Call Outer Mongolians “Peasants”?

On the remote shores of Lake Baikal I was resting for a few days at a state sponsored sanitarium. There I met a retired 72 year Buriat academic, who was taking a mud cure for arthritis. After we had shared a lunch table twice, I asked him for advice.

“Can you tell me why some young Buriat boys would called Outer Mongolians peasants?”

Можешь мне объяснить, почему некоторые молодые буряты называют внешних монголов "деревенщина"? I queried him.

He responded, “Are they schoolboys?” Они школьники?

“Yes,” (да) I said, “They are studying together in a class in Inner Mongolia, China.” Они учатся вместе в одном классе во Внутренней Монголии в Китае.

“Well,” (ну) he said after a pause, “They are boys; name calling is part of boys competition. They might be competing for grades, or in sports?” Они – мальчики; мальчики любят состязаться в обзывательствах. Они соревнуются в оценках, в спорте.

“Perhaps,” (может быть) I replied, “But I would think they would show solidarity, against the Chinese, instead of calling each other names...is there any political or historical reason for this kind of name calling?” Я бы предпочла солидарное отношение друг к другу, но не по отношению к китайцам, вместо того, чтобы обзываться... разве есть какая-то политическая или историческая причина для такого рода поведения?

The elder was silent, and then looked at me thoughtfully. “If you want to put children’s words in a political context...I guess that has been done, as in China with the Cultural Revolution, with kids denouncing their parents and teachers... Yes, there are possible reasons.” Ну, если вы хотите вставить слова ребенка в политический контекст... Я

думаю, это уже случилось так же, как и в Китае с Культурной Революцией, с детьми, осуждающими своих родителей и учителей... Да, это возможные причины.

I waited for him to continue.

“We Buriats have had contact with the Russians for over 300 years; it has changed the way we live. I cannot say I love the Russians, but I accept that they have brought us many kinds of advanced technologies. We eat like Russians and like Buriats. We use Russian machines. We speak Russian and Buriat. I was educated in Moscow; I could not speak Buriat to get my education, and this education has changed the way I think, my life....But Mongolians, they only received a small dose of Russification, after 1924 --- and, you surely know, it was we Buriats who helped set up their first government, and Buriats still advise the Mongolians. If they have no access to other great languages, they remain mired in the past. Even now, they look romantically to the past, the far far past, because they have nothing solid to look at in the last 100 years or so. Mongolian past is based upon being nomadic, and Genghis Khan, and being free, living on the earth lightly. They have no tradition of higher learning, of technology, of even food -- have you been to Mongolia?”

Мы, буряты, живем вместе с русскими уже больше 300 лет; это повлияло на наш жизненный уклад. Я не могу сказать, что я люблю русских, но я принимаю тот факт, что они показали нам много разных развитых технологий. Мы питаемся как русские и как буряты. Мы ездим на русских машинах. Мы говорим на русском и бурятском. Я учился(-лась) в Москве; я не мог(ла) говорить на бурятском (я должен(а) был говорить на русском), чтобы получить образование, и это образование поменяло мой тип мышления, мою жизнь... А вот монголы, они были в меньшей степени русифицированы, после 1924 года, как вы знаете, это были мы, буряты, кто помогли им организовать их первое правительство, и буряты до сих пор советуют монголам. Если у них не будет доступа к другим великим языкам, они погрязнут в прошлом. Даже сейчас, они смотрят с романтизмом в прошлое, в далекое прошлое, потому что у них за последние 100 лет нет ничего обстоятельного, на что можно было бы посмотреть. Прошлое монголов основано на кочевничестве, и Чингисхане, и на свободе, легкой жизни на земле. Они не привыкли получать высшее образование, изобретать новые технологии, у них даже нет традиции питания – вы были в Монголии?

“Yes,” (да) I replied. “I was just there a few weeks ago.” (несколько недель назад)

“And what did you eat: mutton, mutton, and mutton fat?”И чем вы питались: баранина, баранина и бараний жир? he asked rhetorically, and we both smiled.

“But Buriats have incorporated their Buriat culture with Russian culture, and we have risen past living so simply. It may be romantic to live as a Mongol, but it is a harsh life. A simple life, so perhaps that is why the Buriat boys used the word peasant.”Буряты объединили свою культуру с русской, и мы поднялись из нашего прошлого, живя очень просто. Может быть это и романтично – жить как монгол – но это суровая жизнь. Простая жизнь, возможно, поэтому бурятские мальчики использовали слово "деревенщина".

“I think of peasant in the Russian sense, as someone who is a farmer and subservient to a feudal lord, who takes all the harvest and the peasant lives poorly,” Я думаю об этом слове в русском понимании, то есть это крестьянин, который подчиняется барину, который собирает урожай, и деревенщина обычно живет бедно, I replied.

“Mongols were feudal, so were Buriats,” he answered, “But the key is that peasants are poor. Few Mongols, only those working deals with the government in UB have any wealth at all. Most Mongols, as far as I know, live with their herds on the land, very simply. They may not be obliged to anyone, but they are peasants, nonetheless, in this sense.” “У монголов был феодализм, как и у бурят”, – ответил он, – “но ключевой момент заключается в том, что деревенщины бедные”. Лишь у некоторых монголов, что работают в Улан-Баторе с правительством, имеют некоторое состояние. Большинство монголов, насколько я знаю, живут очень просто: вместе со своими стадами в степи. Они никому ничего не должны, но, не смотря на это, они деревенщины, в этом понимании.

Addendum: After my defense one committee member suggested that I conduct a linguistic analysis of the transcripts incorporated into this dissertation. She asked that I mark the transcripts to show rising and falling intonation, emotion, etc. After I researched this idea I decided not to accept this suggestion. My reasons are as follows: 1) This form of analysis does not enhance the manuscript. 2) It does not change the results in any way. 3) Similar general ethnographic research cited in my work and among similar studies do not use this technique. 4) If employed the analysis should be done in the original language: Russian. No committee member is fluent in Russian; my general academic audience consists of non-Russian speakers. 5) No mention of this technique was brought up during the proposal defense, or while I was in the field. My chair did not suggest it after reading this manuscript. 6) Time and work constraints limit my ability to learn this technique, and to apply it to the transcripts. In the future, I will enthusiastically incorporate linguistic transcription and analysis, as needed, under the mentorship of Russian linguists, in order to master Russian transcription in theory and practice and to use it in future research.